

“Can Christians Practice Buddhism?”

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

As I was searching the net for local Buddhist temples I came across Probe's website and came to [your explanation of the differences between Jesus and Gautama](#). It was very eye opening, and I've never heard it explained that way before. I was raised in a Christian home but am also interested in Buddhism. Do you think there is a way for Christians to also practice Buddhism? Or is that not possible?

Generally speaking, Christianity and Buddhism are built on two different worldviews. So at their foundations they teach contradictory positions. Northern Buddhism usually adheres to a pantheistic worldview while Southern Buddhism and schools like Zen Buddhism teach atheism. Buddhism may have some teachings that agree with Christianity such as some of the ethical teachings, but at the basic level the two have contradictory teachings.

For example, what happens after death? Most Buddhist schools teach reincarnation while the Bible teaches “It is appointed for each person to die once, and then comes the judgment” (Hebrews 9:7). Jesus taught His disciples to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” Buddha taught to relinquish all desires. The Bible teaches that life is found in a relationship with God through Christ. Buddha taught life is about the emptying of the self. Buddhism teaches that man is basically good and the answer to man's problem is enlightenment. The Bible teaches that man is sinful and the answer to his problem is not within him but in a perfect savior who died for his sins, Jesus Christ. So at the foundational issues, the two systems are contradictory.

Can a Christian study about Buddhism? Sure, but as in all things, one must be discerning and measure all teachings with God's word, the Bible.

Thanks for your question.

Patrick Zukeran