

In the midst of an increasingly secular society, yoga recognizes our complete being: body, soul, and mind. The practice of yoga can strengthen not only our body, but deepen our faith. The eight limbs of yoga teach moral discipline both within and toward others. It also practical ways to develop concentration, and pull away from worldly concerns to a meditative lifestyle with a mind trained on things of eternal value. Music, art, and books are expressions that inspire our faith. We choose the books, songs, or paintings that serve us best and leave the rest aside. The same is true of yoga for Christians looking for practical ways to draw near to God.

The “Advanced Training and Lifestyle” Yogafit Manual (2016) describes yoga as “best understood as a spiritual practice, rather than a particular religion”. Although yoga is not a religion, it has been heavily used by religious traditions of the East. The natural result is that a yoga session is highly influenced by the cultural and religious associations of the yoga instructor, leading to much current confusion as to the religious nature of yoga.

Experts argue that Patanjali’s Sutras were purposely written in a simple and vague fashion so that a variety of faiths can interpret their practice through the lens of their own faith and experience. Satchidonanda describes yoga as a science of the mind and the first section of Patanjali’s Sutras deal with renewal of the mind, and key concept for believers in Jesus Christ as found in Romans 12:2 which states “*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect*” (NLT)

Yoga instructors are altruistic in nature, a group of individuals that truly care for their students welfare. Yoga instructors have a unique teaching opportunity because we are free to share from our personal faith perspective, unbound by the restraints of secularism. It is for this reason, I recommend choosing a yoga instructor that shares your personal faith. I am a Christian yoga instructor, and this affects my yoga classes and my intention to assist participants to grow in both body and spirit. I hope the following information will help you decide if my yoga classes will be the right environment for your personal yoga experience.

The following is my statement of faith:

- I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I believe the Bible in a literal sense, for instance that Adam and Eve were real people and not merely stories to inspire us. I have read the Bible daily for as long as I can remember- since I was a child. I believe the Bible to be a powerful weapon in training the thoughts and intentions of our heart (Hebrews 4:12) and to find strength in God while standing against temptation (Ephesians 6:10-17)
- I believe Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God, who came to earth “While we were yet sinners” to die for us (Romans 5:8) which I consider an incredible act of love. I believe He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 14:6). I believe in His literal and bodily resurrection. I made a personal faith decision as a child in Clear Lake Iowa, July 4th 1977. I believe I am imperfect, and that the sacrifice on the cross made by Jesus was an extension of grace that has covered my sin in forgiveness. I believe that God does not want any to perish, and patiently waits wishing for all to choose repentance (2 Peter 3:9)
- I believe in the trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons of God are represented in Matthew 3 when Jesus is baptized by John, the Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father’s voice is heard from heaven claiming Jesus and His beloved Son.
- I believe in the ten commandments. (Exodus 20) There is one God- with no other gods before Him; We are to make graven images or bow to them; We are not to use the name of God carelessly; Sabbath rest should be kept a holy practice; parents should be honored; Murder, adultery, and stealing are wrong. Do not deceive others. Do not covet what others have such as their home, family, or livelihood. I believe it only takes one lie to be a liar, and that the teachings of Jesus further explain the commandments such as adultery being more than physical- but an action that begins with lust of the mind (Matthew 5:27-28). I believe that I am a sinner that has fallen short of God’s standards, and I rest in His power to forgiveness with gratitude. My moral shortcomings are described in Scripture as sin.
- I believe God created the world in six days and rested on the 7th day. I believe these are literal 24 hour days per the language in Genesis 1 that “evening and morning were the first day”.
- I believe we are to love each other. Perfect love casts our fear (1 John 4:18). Truth must always be communicated in a loving fashion (Ephesians 4:15). I believe myself unable to pull off some concepts such as loving my enemy or joy during difficult times (Philippians 4) without a daily walk with God. I believe when I draw near to God He will draw near to me (James 4:8) allowing me to live as a new person (Ephesians 4:22-24). I believe when I live a life in surrender and seeking the Fruits of the Spirit awaken the power to miraculously live out these principles and my life will be a life of love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galations 5).