

# Jordan Peterson Is Back... and He May Have Found God

Jordan Peterson has returned!

After spending the last year and a half in various hospitals in America, Russia, and Serbia battling the symptoms of [Benzodiazepine](#) withdrawal, the author and public intellectual has [released](#) a [new YouTube video](#).

Peterson was quietly living a successful academic career as a clinical psychologist and professor at the University of Toronto when he exploded into stardom and controversy in 2016. Refusing to abide by Canada's Bill C-16, which mandated the use of preferred pronouns, Peterson became a hero to free-speech advocates and an enemy to social justice warriors. His book, [12 Rules for Life](#), has sold over three million copies, and his lectures have sold out venues on three continents. All of that came to a halt when, in September 2019, news broke that Peterson had entered rehab for prescription drug dependency.

The months of silence, however, appear to be ending.

"I'm alive, and I have plans for the future," Peterson says in the video. Although he admits that his health is still "severely impaired," his plans include a [lecture series](#) on the Book of Exodus and short-form videos unpacking the Book of Proverbs.

For many, this news is an answer to prayer. Millions of people have been inspired – some would say "saved" – by Peterson's [books](#), [videos](#), and lectures. This is especially true of young men, to whom mainstream culture offers plenty of criticism for their supposed toxicity, but little in the way of encouragement or direction.

I [count myself](#) among these young men. Peterson's message to us is simple: clean up your room, shoulder responsibility, pursue meaning, accept suffering. The near-messianic status Peterson occupies in the eyes of many of his disciples suggests just how badly that message was needed.

Even before his health problems emerged, however, Peterson was already the subject of prayers of a different kind, for the health not of his body, but of his soul. It appears those may have been answered as well.

"With **God's grace and mercy**," Peterson says near the end of the video, "I'll be able to start generating original material once again and pick up where I left off."

For the casual observer, that first phrase might appear to be a figure of speech, but I've read Peterson's book and listened to dozens, if not hundreds, of hours of his interviews and lectures. This isn't how he talks.

Peterson doesn't shy away from religious themes. He often speaks glowingly of the wisdom contained in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and of Christ as a powerful archetype, but he is always careful to couch his religious analyses in psychological language.

Though not a member of any denomination, Peterson has expressed [interest](#) in Christianity, especially [Eastern Orthodoxy](#), but when [interviewers](#) try to get a straight answer about what he actually believes, Peterson's replies usually imply a sort of agnosticism.

His [lecture](#) "Who Dares Say He Believes in God?" offers his clearest statement on his religious beliefs:

*"I act as if I believe in God, or to the best of my ability... I'm afraid that he might exist... Let's say you say you do believe in God... you believe that there's a divine power that oversees everything, that is fundamentally ethical, that's*

*watching everything you do... so what effect does that have on your behavior if you believe it?... Are you sacrificing everything to this transcendent entity that you proclaim belief in?... [If you aren't] the best person you could possibly imagine being on an ongoing basis... then I don't see why you have the right to say that you believe in God."*

There's something admirable about this explanation. His idea of Christianity may be short on divine mercy, but it's refreshingly free of the cheap-grace antinomianism common in modern feel-good Christianity. "Do not disobey the fear of the Lord," the Jewish sage Yeshua ben Sira [writes](#). "Do not approach Him with a divided mind."

Peterson appears to be caught between the two prongs of this statement. He understands better than most what it means to believe in God: not just to "state that you believe a set of propositions," as he puts it in one video, but to "[take captive every thought](#)" and to [offer yourself as a living sacrifice](#). He is paradoxically humble enough to shy away from approaching God with anything less than perfect devotion, yet not humble enough to obey the divine fear he so clearly feels and surrender himself to God with all his imperfections.

This is the stuff of which saints or madmen are made. For people like Peterson, existence between those two poles is possible only as a temporary refuge.

One frustrated commentator [begged](#) Peterson to "acknowledge that he can't put off the question [of God's existence] indefinitely," while another article [suggested](#) that Peterson's actions seem like he's running from something.

His long illness may have changed that. Peterson's brief reference to "God's grace and mercy" is far from conclusive, but it is certainly out of character and may constitute a sort of dog whistle intended to tip off Christian viewers before he makes a more explicit announcement of his conversion. At least

two people have suggested to me, unprompted, that a Christian Jordan Peterson could be the next C.S. Lewis. Perhaps Peterson, in the midst of his hellish sufferings, fell to his knees in a hospital room halfway around the world and, [like Lewis before him](#), became another “reluctant convert.”

Peterson might not be running anymore. The [Hound of Heaven](#) may have chased him down at last.

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Image Credit:

YouTube-Jordan B Peterson, " Return Home "