

JEFFERSON BETHKE



Jefferson Bethke was a student athlete with a knack for poetry before he became an overnight YouTube sensation. As a Christian on a secular campus, Jeff heard criticism from students who equated religion with hypocrisy and legalism. He wanted them know Jesus was different from what they'd seen and experienced, so he created a spoken word video, [Why I Hate Religion but Love Jesus](#), and posted it at YouTube. The video was produced for his campus; he never expected it to go viral. "Not in a million years," Jefferson laughs. "In fact, my roommates and I predicted how many views we thought it would get in 24 hours. The highest guess was like 9,000. Turned out to be 1.6 million, I think." Jefferson's video scored six million views in 72 hours, and topped 16 million views in two weeks. Today it's almost hit 30 million views.

Jefferson could have been a one-hit YouTube wonder. But he's proven himself to be a social media native, taking the message of Jesus to the crossroads of the 21st century. He makes weekly videos on [his popular YouTube channel \(which currently totals over 62,000,000 views\)](#), writes at his [blog](#), creates [podcasts](#) with wife Alyssa that has hundreds of thousands of downloads, and speaks at events around the globe. As a self-acknowledged bookworm ("My wife jokes that books are my love language"), Jefferson gravitates towards words, and in 2013 he authored a *New York Times* bestseller entitled *Jesus > Religion* (Thomas Nelson). His next book, [It's Not What You Think: Why Christianity Is So Much More Than Going to Heaven When You Die](#) (Thomas Nelson) hits stores in October 2015. And yes, you can buy it as an e-book.

Though his days are filled with words – both spoken and typed -- Jefferson is equally committed to making sure his words are matched with action. "Every generation has their non-negotiables," he explains. "One vital issue for my generation is social justice. Because of the internet age we can see just how deeply hurt and broken the world is in many places. We want to do something about it. We won't listen to someone who speaks it but doesn't live it." So alongside a good friend Jefferson co-founded [Claro Candles](#), which donates profits to fight injustice in nine areas of life.

Jefferson grew up in Tacoma, WA, with his single mother. He has two older sisters. He started playing baseball at age four and played straight through college at Pacific University, where he graduated with a degree in Politics & Government. His education continues at Western Seminary. . . online, of course.

Jefferson and [Alyssa](#) married in 2012, and their daughter Kinsley just celebrated her first birthday. They swim, read and live in Maui, Hawaii, with a yellow lab named Aslan. Drop by and say hello to the Bethkes at [www.JeffBethke.com](#).

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Website/blog: [www.JeffBethke.com](#)

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