

# ESSENTIAL TRUTHS FOR OUR TIMES

## GOD'S DESIGN FOR EQUALITY

Equality is not primarily defined by political ideology (found in rights and freedoms) or the current cultural campaign (found in association and demonstration); the template for equality is located within the truth of Scripture (understood as inherent value). As such, Scripture must be the foundation from which it is espoused. Within the framework of both the Old and New Testaments, the value of mankind is understood in having been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The certainty of this value is understood further in the writings of John, wherein he wrote of God's love for the world and the authenticity of Christ Jesus being given as the propitiation for the sins of humankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2) – regardless of race, nationality, or ethnicity. The understanding that all men are created equal was not *suddenly* realized as an ideology during the establishment of American Independence (Consider, for example, the 17th-century works of John Locke and 18<sup>th</sup> century Thomas Paine - and obviously, to a much earlier and greater degree, the Scriptures.). Moreover, equality cannot be *fully* realized as the result of a presidential proclamation or an act of Congress. Although man is created for good works (Ephesians 2:10) - inclusive of the works of equality - equality can *only* be realized in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28); therefore, it's achievement will not be realized within the realm of human accomplishment alone.

Within the context of a post-truth society in which feelings – not facts – commonly provide the basis for what is true, the concept of equality is found vacillating between differing perspectives. However, equality is a term of measurement which specifies an equal distribution of weight. It must have a fixed definition that is independent of peripheral conditions to maintain proper balance. The Book of Proverbs expounds upon this verity: "*Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the Lord*" (Proverbs 20:10). God requires the measure of humanity and the measures humanity makes to be equivalent. The allowance of differing perspectives toward humanity – particularly those dependent upon peripheral conditions (i.e., gender, age, social status, skin color, etc.) - contradicts the biblical principle of equality and is an abomination to the Lord.

God is not biased in His perspective of equality. Moses revealed this truth in his Deuteronomic discourse: "*For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality...*" (Deuteronomy 10:17). The New Testament writings of James – who wrote during a time in which many were filled with

prejudice and detestation towards those of dissimilarity - illustrate that partiality is sin (James 2:9). For that reason, those who put their trust in God must not be associated with partiality; the Church must be instructed to never hold its faith in Christ Jesus with an attitude of bigotry toward other people groups (James 2:1). Furthermore, those who are in Christ, having been born again and filled with the Spirit of God, have become a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). As Spirit-filled disciples, we are all the same in our being "made new." As a result, we must display and demonstrate to each other and to those yet to be saved what it truly means to reflect His image in the earth.

To show enmity to others is to display what is opposite to the nature of the Godhead. Enmity produces division with our fellow man; it causes us to look at those around us as "the other" and splinters mankind into factions. It has produced the separation of brothers since the days of Cain and Abel; it is what produced separation between Jew and Gentile; it is what now produces separation between those of differing cultures. In the ancient world, Jew and Gentile were separated by numerous barriers (i.e., racial, cultural, social, etc.). This reality was specifically understood in the Temple, in which a literal dividing wall separated the two; non-Jews were forbidden to enter the inner courts. Symbolically, enmity is a dividing wall that brings separation. It is this wall that Jesus broke down through the cross so that unity might be obtained, peace might be established, and reconciliation might be accomplished (Ephesians 2:14-16). Removing that barrier is what allows mankind to walk together as part of one holy nation in which Christ is all and in all, resulting in there being "*no distinction [no inequality] between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman...*" (Colossians 3:11).

The Apostle Paul stood among the Council of the Areopagus and proclaimed: "*He [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...*" (Acts 17:26). Consequently, this indicates there being a brotherhood of sorts among men and nations. This familial dynamic provides a frame of reference for the language and life of love prescribed for those who follow Christ and should evoke preference for one another without discrimination or hypocrisy (Romans 12:9-10). It must be understood that love for God demands a love for others; to love others is a primary commandment (John 15:12-17, 1 John 4:21, et al.). **Accordingly, to love others - regardless of race, nationality, or ethnicity - is God's design for equality.**