

ESSENTIAL TRUTHS FOR OUR TIMES

GOD'S DESIGN FOR LOCAL CHURCHES: HIS FAMILY BUILT UPON HIS WORD

It is incredible how misunderstandings about God and His Word abound. Many mistakenly think that He wants to make people miserable or spoil their enjoyment. God's design is the complete opposite! "*God is life/love*" (Psalms 36:9, John 1:5, 4:8, 5:26, 14:6), and His Word "*leads us to life*" (Psalms 119:50, 93, John 6:63, 12:50), both now and forever.

If we are honest about it, most of the pain we cause, or experience, is when people selfishly pursue their way with little regard or ability to stop the negative effect on others. Selfishness has a way of destroying the most precious things in life (people) and leaves one with many regrets. Then when this life is over, we face God and give an account for our lives.

In contrast to self-centered pursuits, His way of living - with Him and by His word - is the best life anyone can live. After all, He created us and as our Designer, He knows the best way we operate. He shows us this way of living in His instruction manual, His Word.

Paul writes to his spiritual son, Timothy, about God's design for local churches. They are to live as His family upon His unchanging Word and displaying that life in both beliefs and practices.

- *I am writing this to you in case I'm delayed. I want you to know how people who are members of God's family must live. God's family is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. - 1 Timothy 3:14-15*
- *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. - 2 Timothy 3:16*

Jesus was the "*full manifestation of God's word in bodily form*" (Colossians 2:9, John 1:1-14).

Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's word will not*" (Matthew 24:35, Psalms 89:34, 1 Peter 1:25).

When it comes to God's Word, there has always been a threat and drift towards humanism. Humanism is a way of thinking (philosophy) that sees human beings, not anything divine, as central to life and meaning.

Demonically inspired humanism is nothing new. It was the first temptation of humanity that led to the original sin. That sin brought corruption upon humans and the earth that we still deal with today. Satan approached Eve with the words, *"Did God really say that...do what you want and become your own god"* (Genesis 3:1,5).

We see demonically inspired humanism throughout the Bible with instances like the Tower of Babel, *"Let us build a city and tower for ourselves to make ourselves great"* (Genesis 11:4).

Humanism (choosing your own way) expressed in rebellion against God is the foundational sin for which our Lord and Savior, Jesus, came to deliver us, *"We all like sheep have gone astray and turned to our own way, and God has caused the sin of us all to fall upon Him"* (Isaiah 53:6, 1 Peter 2:25). When people who self-identify as God's people begin to embrace humanism, they will feel empowered to disregard God's Word. This way of living leads to death, destruction, and the wrath of God (Romans 1:18-32). It also creates a false testimony in the earth about who God is.

God's Word is both inspired and authoritative (2 Timothy 3:16). The idea of inspiration means His Word is "God-breathed." God inspired the Scriptures, and therefore, they are authoritative in the lives of His people. Throughout Biblical and Church history, God's people have embraced this way of living.

Some try to hold that only parts of the Bible are inspired; therefore, only parts are authoritative (Partial Inspiration). Once they go down that road, they are open to another heresy, "Gnosticism," in which they have "special revelation" about something that enables them to live in violation of God's Word and feel justified in doing it.

Jesus warned us that the cultures of this earth would grow darker during the "Last Days." People *"will fall away, betray one another, lawlessness will increase, and false prophets will arise and mislead many"* (Matthew 24:1-25, Mark 13:5-27). The abandonment of the authority of God's Word is part of this great deception.

In the latter days, the slide towards deception is why God's people need to affirm the inspiration and authority of God's Word. His Word is our objective basis of faith and practice as Holy Spirit leads us as the body of Christ.

- *Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. (16) Hold firmly to the word of life. - Philippians 2:15-16*