

Life Notes *Understanding Our Core Values*

with Pastor Stephen

Core Value #1 - Biblical Authority:

- God is speaking to us through the Scriptures. Therefore, the Bible is our ultimate authority concerning all of life's issues.

What does this Core Value Mean?

- We live in a culture that denies the concept of absolute right and wrong. Absolute Truth, they say, is non-existent or undiscoverable. Moral Relativism expresses the belief that accepted behavioral actions ("morals") fluctuate from group to group and change as circumstances shift. This world-view is best summed up by the Scriptural description of the days of the Judges - "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (see Judges 17:6; 21:25; Proverbs 16:25)
- Embracing this first Core Value is an act of worship - the supreme surrender of our wills. We submit our logic and human wisdom to a higher power. We freely live with the understanding that the Bible, when properly interpreted and applied, is the final, authoritative voice that shapes our world-view.
- The opening proposition of Paul's letter to the Romans explains that a result of human depravity (caused by our rebellion against God in Eden) is our insistence on re-shaping God into an image acceptable to our human logic. The result of that flawed logic is a loss of morality and righteousness which can only be based on an absolute truth.

Why is this Core Value important?

- The danger of ignoring this Core Value:
 - With no "absolute", mankind loses any true sense of right and wrong. In a bid to become "free", we become ensnared in wicked living and deny the existence of any power beyond us to truly liberate us. Like a compass without a "true north," our lives become chaotic and conflicted.
 - Morality then becomes a moving target that changes whenever the majority wishes to avoid guilt or responsibility. "Morality" therefore, changes whenever a majority want to change the rules. This capricious change can occur through the ballot box, media influence, educational systems, courts, or government agencies.
 - Unless we have an absolute authority, we have no concrete idea of right and wrong apart from the changing whims of society.
- The principle we embrace:

- We believe mankind is lost. Our original relationship with God was destroyed by the rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of God. God's mercy to us is evidence by the mission of Jesus, who calls us to return to our Creator. His divine initiative is called The Gospel, and the message of this Good News is articulated in the story of the Bible. It is a book that is spiritually alive, and God is actively communicating through His Word, by His Spirit, to all who will listen.
- In order to accept the Bible as the absolute authority in our lives, several other corollary convictions are also embraced:
 - The Bible is divinely *inspired*.
 - The Bible is *free from error* in its original form.
 - The Bible is more than a collection of inspiring thoughts expressed as best as human authors are able to do so. We believe in the *plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible*. This means the authors were carried along by The Holy Spirit as they wrote, and were guided by Him to choose the exact words willed by God. Preserved from error while they wrote, we believe the Bible is a supernatural book free from error and contradiction. Because of this, we believe the Scriptures can be trusted as our "absolute authority."

How can I make this Core Value part of my life?

- By reading the Scriptures consistently and devotionally.
- By attending preaching and teaching venues in which Biblical principles are explained.
- By daily Bible readings in our family altar times.
- By conscious deliberate obedience to all the teachings of Scripture.

The result of believing this Core Value:

- Paul explains that the victorious Christian Life is achieved, at least in part, by conscious, obedient embracing of God's Word, which results in a renewed minds and transformed life!
- Romans 12:1, 2 ESV "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 ESV But as for you, continue in what you have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.