

The **GO**SPEL *without* **RELIGION**

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RECOGNIZING ATTRIBUTES OF RELIGION

It takes a long time to understand the Scriptures recorded in the **Holy Bible**. Not many who call themselves Christian believers desire to spend much serious amount of time studying the Bible and become grounded in the truths and promises of the word of God. What about this Bible? To you Is it history or fable? Is the Bible partly true and partly fable? Does it meet the criteria for truth or not? Is the Bible the **Word of God** and entirely relevant to life in the 21st Century?

Opening the Word of God. God's Holy Book

The apostle Paul tells us that spiritual matters are absurdities to the person without the Spirit. Such may follow any wind of doctrine or demonically conceived teaching that parades as truth. It is only after we have taken the first steps that bring us to redemption that we have any desire to understand this mysterious book and can begin to glimpse its consistency and focus. The Bible has been called many things, such as the "Makers users manual," and "A love letter from God." Amazingly, it also describes prophetically things that have transpired as well as future events. Theologians and academicians dig into the study of Scripture but at times leave with a lot of facts but too little understanding, what we know as *precepts*.

The apostle Paul academically brilliant, was highly educated and well situated in his Jewish religion but later declared that scholarship, philosophy and theology does not lead one to knowing God. Neither theology or human knowledge is a sure pathway to knowing God. Truth and wisdom is a Spiritually derived gift. Spiritual life is outside of religion. For it is only God himself who through the revelation of the Holy Spirit imparts to human beings the necessary understanding and revelation of the [Mysteries of God](#). (*Read 1Corinthians Chapters 1 & 2*)

There are many sects and denominations who do not hesitate to call their practices "religion" while other groups, notably the evangelicals, like to say that the version of Christianity they practice is not religion. Yet, as I explain in the course of these writings, if we take a more critical look we can indentify many attributes of Christian tradition that are entirely that, religion.

Christianity and church life are filled with religious 'trappings.' In the pages that follow I will describe some practices that are more of human aurthership and tradition are ingrained in what many will call *the normal Christian life*.

RELIGIOUS ATTRIBUTES INDEED HINDER THE MANIFESTING OF GOD'S KINGDOM

- Schisms and division in the body of Christ from denominational boundaries
- Schism and division result from the designation of clergy and the subordinate laity
- Some form of priesthood remains as the controlling voice in fellowship
- Human headship, Hierarchy of authority controls followers and imposes obligations
- Formalistic rituals or orders of service prohibit God interacting with the body

- Religious services become a form of performance or entertainment
- Congregations (the laity) undervalued and serve mostly to support institutional mission
- The members of congregations become as "sheep" to be exploited
- The institutional church is focused primarily on maintenance, continuance and growth
- Religion becomes imbued with worldly aims, values and methodology
- Doctrines of institutional Christianity often at variance with scripture
- Individual believers are not disciplined to mature, minister and assume leadership
- Traditional religious practices lack a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Although Christianity is the outgrowth and fulfillment of Judaic roots there is little acknowledgment of these foundations In the following chapters, we will take some time with these topics.

THE PERILS, PITFALLS, PROBLEMS OF RELIGION & RELIGIOUS ATTRIBUTES

An important caveat:

There are degrees of spiritual content in many traditional churches today. Individuals remain faithful within these institutions and sustain the values that laid the moral and social foundations of our nation. There has been a noble and historic inheritance of Christian Churches in America as well as other countries. In the United States the nation was founded upon the faith in the living God who is the father of all creation and moral rule.

Unfortunately there is a disturbing tendency for America to follow a course of casting off these commonly held views of a nation under God. Meanwhile a growing number of institutional churches are departing from their fundamental roots allowing the tenets of worldly thought and values to enter to their detriment.

There are multitudes who practice the faith of their fathers despite any shortcomings inherent in these practices. So I will proffer no condemnation toward those faithful and morally upright people who continue to regularly attend such 'Churches' and find community and fulfillment there. These believers remain the salt of the earth and have been virtuous and upstanding pillars of the best of American culture. God, certainly knows how to find His way into the churches who worship in more formalized ways. To the extent that the Word is taught and valued and *true worship* of God is encouraged, there is fruitfulness.

The principle lesson premise of these writings is that there is more. There is always more to be known and to be experienced. And these experiences are entirely Scriptural consistent with apostolic teachings found in the Bible. The more freedom and liberty is given to the Holy Spirit, the more spiritual life and growth will be "experienced" when those believers gather together. More discipleship serves to activate the 'gift of God' within individuals so that they may bear evidence of The Kingdom of God does the work of the Kingdom until He comes.

Traditionalism in Christian meetings does not perfectly address the great commission, discipleship or freedom in worship. Negative attributes of the Religious paradigm described throughout these writings are the elements which impact faith in negative ways and in fact can actually keep individuals from ever experiencing the life of the Kingdom of God or God's Gift of salvation.

In order to escape the restraining power of religious paradigms, it is time to rethink Christian religious traditions. We will examine these in chapter topics in the list above.

- How does religion become a dividing force? - - Denominational empires
- Examining Jesus' Final Exclamation: "It is finished" What was brought to a finish?

- The Clergy-Laity doctrine- How Biblical is this traditional form
- Religion: What does Jeremiah's stale cisterns parable speak to us?
- Pharisee-ism: What behaviors of the Pharisees are seen in religious practices today?
- Religious emulation, church house behaviors we learn and practice.
- We learn and follow ritual and acceptable mannerisms
- Looking at externals
- Performance frames church programs; performing to entertain, showmanship infuse successful ministries;
- Personality cults build upon a single leaders gifts.
- Vines, True Vines and others . . . If Christ is the true vine, what are the counterfeits
- The pattern of Jesus Christ's ministry. Jesus life, the supernatural spiritual nature is a template
- Jargon and religious Terms: often heard phrases that have become spiritually empty

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E Book 2:

[A Disciples Handbook](#)

E Book 3:

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Resources: Understanding Home Fellowships

<http://churchinthehouse.org/>

[Frank Viola Interviews a typical church-goer](#)

(Discussion of Open Church)