

# The **GO/PEL** *without* **RELIGION**

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GWR03

## **RECOGNIZING ATTRIBUTES OF RELIGION**

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

It is only after we have studied the Bible carefully with the desire to understand that we 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 to knowing God. Human knowledge is not Spiritual knowledge. 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 to impart to human beings the necessary understanding and revelation of the [Mysteries of God](#). (*Read 1Corinthians Chapters 1 & 2*)

There are certain sects and denominations who do not hesitate to call their practices "religion" while other groups, notably the evangelicals, like to say that they are practicing is not religious. Yet, if we take a more critical look we can indentify many attributes that retain religiosity. Christianity and church life are filled with religious 'trappings.' In the following writings I would like to describe some of the religious practices which are ingrained in what we might 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 and other countries. Although there is what appears to be a disturbing tendency for institutional churches to depart from their fundamental roots allowing the tenets of worldly thought and values to enter to their detriment. There is meant to be no condemnation toward those wonderful, faithful and morally upright people who regularly attend the traditional Christian 'Churches'. 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 of these writings is that there is more, more, always more to be known and to be experienced. And these experiences are entirely Scriptural consistent with apostolic teachings. The more freedom and liberty is given to the Holy Spirit, The more spiritual growth will be "experienced" when those believers gather together. More activation bearing evidence of The Kingdom of God occupying 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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