

Christian Values OR Truth?

Justin A. Hopkins

Many in today's society speak of the significance of Christian values, or of "Judeo-Christian values." This term is thrown about in political discussions, as many cry for legislation that reflects these values, values that are said to be based on the Bible. BusinessDictionary.com defines a value system as, "A coherent set of values adopted and/or evolved by a person, organization, or society as a standard to guide its behavior in preferences in all situations."

Values, as such, can be deeply personal, or can be shared by an entire group, community, or culture. There are competing value systems, which hail from differing systems of religious and philosophical thinking. Each value system is understood to be equally valid for those who embrace it.

Notice that these values serve as a guide for behavior, but only for those who have, of their own free will, decided that they would live by those values. Even then, those values are not hard and fast rules, but are merely "preference." What does this mean for the "Judeo-Christian Value System"?

While these values may be true and valid for those who claim to be Christians, they have not been accepted and adopted by those not claiming

to be Christians. Since these values are personal, and subjective, what right do we have to try to impose them on others? It is for this reason that the cry for a separation between Church and State has been so pervasive in western culture. After all, the government deals in matters that are objective and have an effect on all citizens, regardless of their value systems. This being the case, should not government be based on the realm of facts and objective truths, rather than the subjective realm of feelings and values?

If we approach these matters from a system of values, what right do we have to make claims on or demands of the lives of others based on our value system? Should they not live and be judged by whatever value system they have decided will work for them?

Is the Christian system merely a set of values? Is it simply personal preference in matters of moral and behavioral decisions? Or, do the teachings of the Bible reach farther than this? As we consider the concept of truth, then; we must ask the question that Pilate asked: "What is truth?" (John 18:38).

Truth is something that is **always valid** and **accurate in all places, times, circumstances**, and **for all people**. The problem is how can anybody

know for sure that anything meets this standard for truth? Is anything really a universal truth, or is it simply true for you? The only possible source of universal truth would be an infinite being, one who knows everything, and is everywhere all the time, having infinite power. Only in the existence of the God of the Bible can any truth be found. Jesus summarized the matter when He declared, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

All truth, then, whether it is religious truth, moral truth, or mathematical truth emanates from the very person of God! Two plus two will always equal four because God decreed it to be so. In the same way, then, moral and religious truths, as revealed by Jehovah, are not merely values, or personal preferences. No, they are universal truths that are equally valid and true for all people in all times and places.

It is Just as Jesus said, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak*" (John 12:48-49). When we come to the realization that Christianity is not merely a system of values, but a system of truth, we have

a moral obligation to help others to understand these truths, for it is by these truths that they will be judged.

To be evangelistic, or to call for society at large to conform to Biblical standards of morality and living, is not to be bigoted and small minded by forcing your personal values onto others. Instead, it is compassionate care that seeks to help those around you prepare for the coming day of judgment!

Because the truths of Christianity are universal and objective, we are bound to the great commission. *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15-16). We are to go into all the world because all the world is affected by the truths that we hold.

We go into all the world, because all of the world must answer to the Gospel. There is no limit to the influence that our Christianity is to have. We are to be Christians, and to live by and share the truth of Christianity in our personal lives, and in the public arena. Our Christianity should affect our actions when it comes to politics. Our Christianity should affect our actions when it comes to education and the pursuit of

knowledge. Our Christianity should affect our actions in the work place. Our Christianity should affect our actions in the home, and among our neighbors.

We must not be apologetic, accommodating, or compromising when it comes to the demands of the Gospel, because the souls of those around us hang in the balance, and the truths by which they will be judged do not, and will not change!

To relegate the Gospel to the realm of values is to rob it of its power and influence. No, Christianity is much more than values, ***It is truth!***

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