

How Culture Corrupts Christianity

Culture can be defined as **all the ways of life including beliefs, era, geographical location, race, arts, and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation**. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society." As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, art. **It has become THE BASIS of what defines an individual and groups of people.**

God made it clear that there is only ONE basis - 1 Cor 3:10-11- 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 **FOR NO ONE CAN LAY ANY FOUNDATION OTHER THAN THE ONE ALREADY LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.**

Some things that represent the foundation of Christ

Never compromise God – 2 Cor 11:3-4 - 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and **PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST**. 4 For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, **you put up with it easily enough**.

No adding and taking away of the Word - 1 Cor 4:6-7 - 6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, **"DO NOT GO BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN."** Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

Recognize who are we trying to please? – Gal 1:10 **Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?** Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I **WOULD NOT BE A SERVANT OF CHRIST**.

***We are seeing churches changing Christianity to fit culture while instead, the culture should be adjusted to Christianity**

Below are examples of culturally based churches, with scripture to show their error

Experts and culture are their guides instead of it being the Bible –

They will accept the best placed arguments instead of TOTALLY trusting in Christ - Col 2:2-5 - 2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by **FINE-SOUNDING ARGUMENTS**.

Many ungodly policies, rules and customs will be used, even though they are not supported by the Word of God - Col 2:20-23 - 20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because **THEY ARE BASED ON HUMAN COMMANDS AND TEACHINGS**. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

They force human customs over Godliness and introduces ungodly practices –

God revealed that man would push their agenda over His - Mark 7:6-9 - 6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." 9 And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!"

Here is an example of how we use a "man made" explanation in order to disobey the Word of God - 1 Cor 11:3-6 - 3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head — it is just as though her head were shaved.

***Most churches use a historical Human answer instead of the Word from God**

Adding ungodly forms of worshiping God, instead of Reverently worshiping God His Way! - 1 Cor 10:21-22 -21 **YOU CANNOT** drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; **YOU CANNOT** have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

There is an honor and allegiance of some sort with the world and a respect of worldly structure over Godliness-

Our choice of our relationship with the world also dictates our relationship with God - James 4:4-5 - 4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

Loving the world denies our Christianity - 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Treating insiders with love while disrespect outsiders –

Favoritism of any type (racism, sexism, ageism, classism, nationalism...) is SIN - James 2:8-13 - 8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But **IF YOU SHOW FAVORITISM, YOU SIN AND ARE CONVICTED BY THE LAW AS LAWBREAKERS.** 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. 12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy WILL BE shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Our Job is to minister to them and not reject them without accepting their wrong, - 1 Cor 9:19-23 - 19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Some major things to consider in order to avoid being pulled into culturally based Churches

MAKE SURE the foundation is Christ - Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, WHICH DEPENDS ON human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Revalue everything through Christ instead of self - Phil 3:7-11 - 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but **THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST** — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.