

## **You Always Do What You Really Believe**

*“If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” Romans 10:9-10*

Some of us grew up with parents who raised us in a Bible-believing church and who lived out their faith on a daily basis. Others of us were raised in homes where we were brought to church on a regular basis, but it was a largely “going through the motions” type of experience. Still others of us were raised in unchurched homes.

Yet we were all raised with a particular value system or belief system or worldview, which made sense to our parents, and which influenced them in every decision they made. Syncretism is a combination of different belief systems, a common occurrence in America.

The church at Pergamum represents the Christian church from 312 AD to 606 AD, a period of time when the Roman church was heavily influenced by paganism. Mysticism, ritualism, and unbiblical practices came to dominate the church.

### **Four Key Elements to Incorporate into Our Belief System:**

#### **1. Faithfulness to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Word of God).**

- a. *“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.” Revelation 2:12 “The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.” Ephesians 6:17*
- b. Is the Word of God at the center of your belief system? The Evangelical Free Church of America was founded on the slogan, “Where It Stands Written We Stand”. Is that true of you and your family?

#### **2. Faithfulness to \_\_\_\_\_ (Jesus Christ) as God’s Son.**

- a. *“I know where you live – where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city – where Satan lives.” Revelation 2:13*
- b. Is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, front and center in your value system? Would you rather please him or please the crowd? Is WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) more than a bracelet or bumper sticker to you?

#### **3. Faithfulness to \_\_\_\_\_ (Sexual Purity).**

- a. *“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.” Revelation 2:14*
- b. Sexual purity is a big deal to God and it should be a big deal to us. Why is that? There is no faster way to totally mess up your life than to be sexually impure.
- c. *“Normally we deal with sexual issues first. Ninety nine point nine percent of the time, sexual sin is an issue. Sexual sins are garbage that blurs the other*

*issues of life and this tends to feed and create the ground for other unhealthy patterns.” Dr. Richard D. Smith, A Journey to Wholeness, pg. 321-322*

**4. Faithfulness to \_\_\_\_\_ (Personal Responsibility).**

- a. *“Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” Revelation 2:15*
- b. Nicolaitanism is the doctrine of a strong ecclesiastical hierarchy ruling over the laity. Bishops, cardinals, and popes were instituted. In 500 AD, the clergy started dressing differently than the people. In 600 AD, the clergy started conducting worship services in Latin. In 1079, celibacy for priests was instituted. In 1229 AD, the Bible was forbidden to laypeople. In 1414 AD, the cup was forbidden to people at Communion.
- c. It finally got to the place where the spiritual health and well-being of the people was totally dependent on the clergy. The people only knew what the clergy told them. Though there is a proper authority and responsibility given to church leaders by our Lord, they are to never be a substitute for or to in any way lessen the responsibility of every single Christian to walk with Christ.

**Truth is too precious to naively take in whatever you hear or see. Compare what is said with the Word of God. Ask yourself whether this teaching honors Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Consider whether personal purity, especially sexual purity is exalted and praised. Take responsibility for your own walk with God, and don't be led astray!**