

## ***Following the Pattern God Gave Us***

Many churches today have decided to simply ignore clear scriptures that God gave us. The subjects are varied, but the outcome is the same – just ignore what God says. Maybe it's homosexuality, maybe it's the value of unborn human life, maybe it's church organization and worship, but it's still the same, simply put culture over scripture.

God directed Paul to leave a young preacher named Timothy to remain at Ephesus to accomplish certain things for God. Notice the clarity of the mission in 1 Timothy 1:3-6:

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (English Standard Version)

It doesn't take a Bible degree to understand that the young preacher, Timothy, would face a plethora of problems from within the church that were spawned by those who promoted things **not** found in scripture. Note that their "confident assertions" apparently sounded quite good to some, but had nothing to do with God's written word (beyond which true Christians were not to go, 1 Corinthians 4:6).

To solidify the concept, God gave us 2 Timothy 1:13,

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

The word "pattern" here means literally that. A first century Greek speaking woman would use the same word for a clothing pattern. Every time she cut out material using the same pattern it would be exactly the same! Likewise, every time we use scripture for our pattern we will create the same thing God planned.

This makes it quite easy to understand God's statement through Paul's pen in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment," (ESV). That obviously cannot happen if and when we don't actually *follow the pattern of sound words...*"

In coming weeks our lessons will endeavor to understand and apply God's word on what it means to "follow the pattern of sound words."

God has great plans for His people, and we can get to the right place, here and hereafter, if we follow the right plan – His plan, to get us there.

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