

We Value Biblical Authority and Authentic Relationships

Message 2 of 4 in the series: "Values"

A. Our values matter.

Values = deeply held principles, beliefs, and commitments that motivate people to act one way or another. Values also guide an organization's actions, define its identity, and shape its culture.

1. Values are "caught" more than taught. "The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. **They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.**" Acts 4:13 (NLT)
2. Our values shape our children's values. "**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.**" Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

B. We value Biblical authority.

1. The Bible is truth. "Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. **I have given them your word.** And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. **Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.** Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth." John 17:13-19 (NLT)
2. The Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice. "**Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path... Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil.**"
Psalm 119:105 & 133 (NLT)

- If we don't get trustworthy guidance from God's Word, we will get faulty guidance from our culture. "**There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.**" Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)
"Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. **You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature.**"
Ephesians 2:1-3 (NLT)

3. The Bible is like no other book ever written because it is living and powerful. "**For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.**" Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)
"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. **It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.** God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

- The same Holy Spirit who inspired the writers of the Bible will help us understand and apply what they wrote. "Above all, you must realize that **no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.**" 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NLT) "No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths... **we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.**"
1 Corinthians 2:11-13 & 16b (NLT)

- The Bible will do us no good unless we read it and do what it says. "But don't just listen to God's word. **You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.**"
James 1:22 (NLT)

C. We value authentic relationships.

1. We value authentic relationships because Jesus values authentic relationships. "**Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?**" Jesus replied, "**You must love the Lord your**

God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:36-40 (NLT)

2. God sacrificed His only Son, Jesus, to make it possible for sinful human beings to have an authentic, loving, personal relationship with Him. “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. **God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.** This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that **he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.**” Ephesians 1:4-7 (NLT)

“Now we call him, ‘**Abba, Father.**’ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, **together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory.**” Romans 8:15b-17a (NLT)

- The primary goal of our worship services is to help us develop an authentic relationship with God. “Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. **Teach and counsel each other** with all the wisdom he gives. **Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs** to God with thankful hearts.” Colossians 3:16 (NLT)
 - We structure our worship services so that people look forward to participating in them. “I **rejoiced** with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’” Psalm 122:1 (NIV)
3. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have authentic, loving relationships with others, just like Jesus had with His disciples. “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. **Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.**” John 13:34 (NLT)
 - The primary goal of our Connect Groups is to help us develop authentic relationships with each other. **“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them.** Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other... When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality... Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!” Romans 12:9-10, 13, & 15-16 (NLT)
 - Developing authentic relationships with God and with other believers takes time and effort. **“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do,** but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” Hebrews 10:25 (NLT)
 - Authentic, loving relationships with others prove reality of our faith. “Your love for one another **will prove to the world** that you are my disciples.” John 13:35 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Acts 4:1-14. Why do you think the members of the council could tell that Peter and John were men who had been with Jesus? What stood out to them? Can our friends, neighbors, and coworkers tell if we have been with Jesus? (John 13:35)
2. How does it make you feel to know that our church’s values are taught and modeled to every age group from cradle to grave at Centerpoint? (Proverbs 22:6)
3. Why does it matter that the Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice? (Psalm 119:105 & 133)
 - The Bible is truth. (John 17:13-19, Psalm 33:4, Proverbs 30:5-6)
 - If we don’t get trustworthy guidance from God’s Word, we will get faulty guidance from our culture. (Proverbs 14:12, Ephesians 2:1-3)
 - The Bible is like no other book ever written because it is living and powerful. (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

4. Discuss the following statements regarding our church's value of authentic relationships:

- We value authentic relationships because Jesus values authentic relationships. (Matthew 22:36-40)
- The primary goal of our worship services is to help us develop an authentic relationship with God. (Colossians 3:16)
- We structure our worship services so that people look forward to participating in them. (Psalm 122:1)
- The primary goal of our Connect Groups is to help us develop authentic relationships with each other. (Romans 12:9-16)
- Developing authentic relationships with God and with other believers takes time and effort. (Hebrews 10:25)

5. Read the following statements about God:

- God sacrificed His only Son, Jesus, to make it possible for sinful human beings to have an authentic, loving, personal relationship with Him. (Ephesians 1:4-7, Romans 8:15-17)
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have authentic, loving relationships with others, just like Jesus had with His disciples. (John 13:34)
- The same Holy Spirit who inspired the writers of the Bible will help us understand and apply what they wrote. (2 Peter 1:20-21, 1 Corinthians 2:11-16)

How do our beliefs about God impact on our values?