

MAN'S WAY VS. GOD'S WAY

God shows us the stark contrast between His way and man's way in dealing with life and its problems. In addition, He tells us His ways are far higher than our thoughts and ways (*Isaiah 55:8-9*). God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (*1 Corinthians 1:20*), and He has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (*1 Corinthians 1:27*). In spite of this great contrast, many in the Body of Christ continue to look to the world for wisdom on how to deal with the difficulties of life. Often, they think this is necessary because they do not realize that God's Word is completely sufficient for that which pertains to life and godliness (*1 Peter 1:3-4*).

Some of the most common ways that reveal the vast chasm between man's way and God's way are indicated in the following comparisons:

Man Says	God Says
Search for the latest or most accepted views. Look for the latest research to determine which one you will follow in deciding how to deal with problems.	Search the Scriptures. God has His perfect ways which have not changed with time.
Save self. Think better about yourself, become comfortable with yourself, and develop your inner potential.	Die to self and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, your example, the Author and Perfector of your faith.
Get in touch with your feelings. Feel good about yourself. If you feel bad about your situations or relationships, get out of them.	Obey God's commandments as a demonstration of your love for the Lord. Regardless of how you feel, do the Word through Christ who strengthens you.
You are not responsible for your deeds. It may be that others or your heredity are hindering you from being successful in living life. Learn coping skills	God holds all responsible for their deeds. As a believer, you are not doomed to sin. You can be an overwhelming conqueror because of the empowering of the Holy Spirit.
Concentrate on finding out what was in your past for answers to problems. It is important to analyze and understand why you have your problems.	Focus on obedience in the present, regardless of what was in your past. You may not understand the "whys" of your problems, but nothing and no one can prevent you from experiencing God's peace and joy, even in the middle of trials.
Solutions are complicated. It may take years of counseling and therapy to sort things out, and you may need to try a variety of ways to find answers.	The secret to living is simple - all of God's commands can be summarized in this: love God and love your neighbor.

In the rest of this article, we will address the first of these contrasts between man's way and God's way. Look for future articles to address the rest of the comparisons above.

Contrast #1: The "Latest Research" in contrast to the Scriptures

While the world does not label man's counseling ideas as theology, it is important to note that any theory about how man relates to God (which includes rejecting Him), how man relates to others, and how he responds to the problems of life is really a theology. It may be bad theology, but it is theology nevertheless.

The world's view of man is diametrically opposed to God's view. Egypt had immense libraries and was touted as having the world's largest repositories of man's knowledge in Isaiah's day. Yet, God says that Egypt's help is vain and empty (*Isaiah 30:7*). Because the Israelites went to Egypt for wisdom, God said "Since you have rejected this word and have put your trust in oppression and guile and have relied on them, therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall, a bulge in a high wall whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant" (*Isaiah 30:12-13*).

The world can only offer theories about the inner man (heart of man). Because the Lord created us, He knows best how we should live. He claims only for Himself the understanding of man's heart, and tells us that man cannot understand the heart (*based on Jeremiah 17:9-10*). When man attempts to take onto himself what God says is His, he meddles in God's realm.

The world's "experts" can identify physical properties of the brain and explain how it controls various parts of the body, but they cannot dissect the mind. The reasoning of the mind, which Jesus at times equated with the heart (*Luke 5:22*), cannot be put in a test tube to be experimented upon. That is why it is not possible to predict anyone's thought processes other than God. It is no wonder each new humanistic theory that comes along fails to produce the desired results. Amazingly enough, some of the leading experts in the secular community are beginning to realize that there is something wrong with the current humanistic theories.

God's Word is perfect

Now, let's contrast this picture of man's failure with the unchanging, perfect Word of God. The Bible is the only complete source that identifies causes and provides solutions to all of life's problems. Written over a period of 16 centuries, it has endured another 1,900 years. The promises and authority of God in the Old and New Testaments offer the basis for a vital, abundant life. The Bible contains solutions to every problem of attitude, relationships, communication, and behavior and provides everything pertaining to life and godliness (*II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:3-4*).

The Bible is our owner's manual from God. He (who made us) gives us His specific directions in His manual (the Word) for how we should live and for the changes we need to make for fruitfulness in our lives. The Bible provides explicit instructions to God's children for how to face, deal with, and endure every aspect of life before Him. To use, even partially, any other book or teaching is to invite confusion and defeat in a believer's life.

God's truths and man's ideas do not mix

Adding man's ways of dealing with problems of life to God's truths are strongly forbidden by God. Here are examples of God's warnings:

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (*Deuteronomy 4:2*)

"Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar." (*Proverbs 30:6-7*)

It is a sad commentary that, in recent years, more and more Christians are abandoning the truth that God's Word is totally sufficient to instruct us on how to live. Instead, believers are becoming increasingly enthralled with worldly philosophies. This is very much illustrated in the many articles on self, written by noted Christian authors. We are being told to love ourselves, to improve our self image, to raise our self esteem, etc.

The preoccupation of self will be the next article in our series on comparing man's way and God's way.

NOTE: Much of the information in this article is taken from the **Self-Confrontation** manual and its accompanying **Instructor's Guide**.