

Being Willingly Ignorant

By Ron Boatwright

There are many in today's world who are willingly ignorant of God's word. This spiritual ignorance is even in the Lord's church. God's word says, "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth...being overflowed with water perished" (2 Peter 3:5-6). Those who are willingly ignorant of God's word end up being "scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3). People are willingly ignorant "because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

When people demand to hear only the "positive" they want to be "willingly ignorant". They are basically saying, "Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). God's complete truth of both the positive and negative is necessary for our salvation. We must declare "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The apostle Paul warns us, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Some think if they ignore what God's word says on certain subjects that they don't like such as: marriage divorce & remarriage, dancing, drinking alcohol, instrumental music, denominationalism, etc., that it will somehow disappear. Pretending that these scriptures do not exist will not make them go away. Even though people try to ignore what the Lord says, Jesus says, "the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). But many don't want to hear the truth of God's word. They "Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling" (Ephesians 4:18-19). It is sad and hopeless when people become past feeling.

Many people don't want to know the truth of God's word so they close their ears to the truth. Jesus says, "For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should

understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15).

There is much false doctrine which is being taught today that is designed to cause people to be eternally lost. They do not have the proper knowledge and love of God's word. God says, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you" (Hosea 4:6). There are those who "have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3). Being ignorant of God's righteousness encourages people to establish their own righteousness. Concerning those who are ignorant of God's righteousness, Jesus says, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). Even though many people may be sincere, they are sincerely wrong if they are following the doctrines of men. All who follow the doctrines of men will be eternally lost.

What should you do in order to "make your calling and election sure"? (2 Peter 1:10). Only by the truth of God's word can we go to heaven. Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We must "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame" (1 Corinthians 15:34). This same shameful condition exists today, even in the Lord's church. This is the reason many congregations of the Lord's church are apostatizing. We should "no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4:14). In order to not be willingly ignorant we must "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV). We can only rightly divide and understand God's truth when we diligently study it.