

# Values and Willingness to Change

## (Part 1 Values Series)

Someone has said that on this earth..."The only thing certain about change is that there will be change!" The longer one lives, the more likely they are to agree. While God and His Word are unchangeable, the earthly world and human experience are filled with change. So how can we understand change and thrive for God in it?

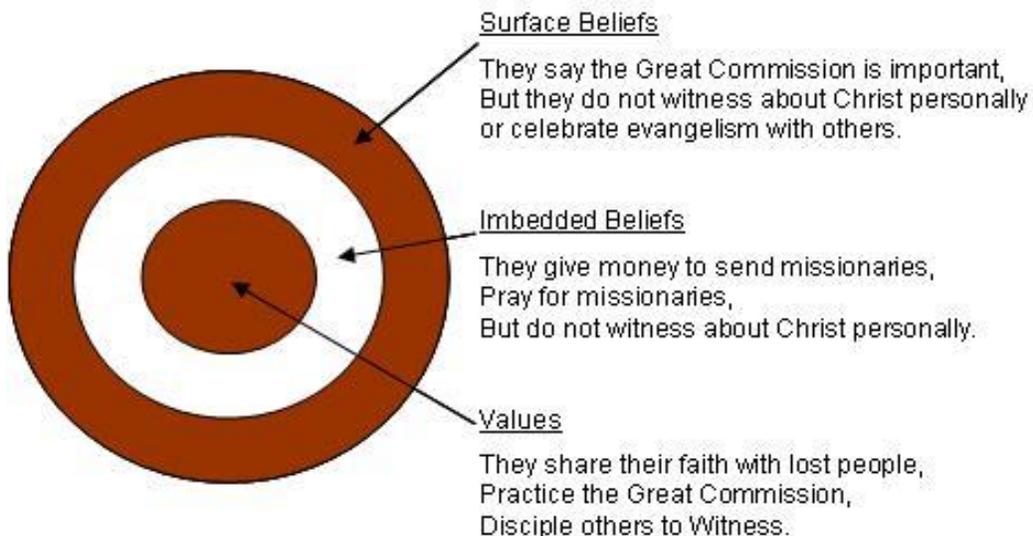
How we handle change and whether we are willing to allow changes to be made will depend on our "Values". A value is a standard or measure of what is important, desirable to believe, to have, or to do. A value is a belief acted upon. Values are in effect **decision-making measuring sticks**. Every person has a set of values that help him make decisions and change even if he does not realize it.

For the believer, values should come from the Word of God, Christian fellowship, (godly parents), and successful teachers and disciples. In reality however, even Christians have picked up values from "the world, the flesh, and the devil" in our culture and life. While it should be easy for Christians to change in order to do what God instructs, too often that change is blocked because we actually value something more that works against that obedience and change. For instance, we may "know" that the "Great Commission" of Matthew 28:18-20 states God's desire and intention for a Christian to be a witness and win disciples to Christ so they can enter God's family and Heaven. But if a Christian values their own comfort, convenience, and isolation from lost people more than God's instruction, they will not make friends with lost people and lead them to Christ. The behavior we observe in them is determined by their values.

When a church values its exclusive Christian fellowship and emotional safety more than it values obedience to God's Great Commission it will not want to make the changes necessary to reach the lost culture around them. The fellowship/safety/tradition values will make it very difficult to embrace and implement a change that is needed in order for them to grow again as a church. Their values will keep them in a rut and a decline pattern as a church.

In review, a value is a standard or measure of what is important and desirable to believe, to have, or to do. They are measuring sticks for decision making.

Just as everyone has a set of values by which they live and make decisions, they also will have various levels of belief that may look or sound like values, but actually have very little impact on their life. A belief may become a value, but unless it does, it will remain only on the surface and not affect decisions or acceptance of change. The following diagram pictures the difference in relation to Matthew 28:18-20 "The Great Commission".



The ability of an individual or church to make changes in order to become more effective for God will depend on their values. If they do not want to change or are unable to change, they will continue to do things the same way as in the past. They will prefer it this way and their church will plateau or decline. On the other hand, if they are able to change their values and give up some of their past preferences, traditions, and comforts, they will also be able to make the changes in methods, programs, and attitudes necessary to see this church grow for the glory of God, as it reaches its culture with the Gospel.