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I AM WHO I AM—The God Who Depends on No One

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KAVOD SERIES · PART ONE · ARTICLE 3

THE GLORY DUE HIS NAME — GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

MEMORY VERSE

> *“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”*
>
> **—Exodus 3:14**

The Answer No Creature Could Give

We have heard the LORD **bind His name to His promises**. Now we return to the words spoken from the fire:

> *“I AM THAT I AM.”*

Moses had asked what he should say when Israel demanded to know who had sent him. God did not answer by comparing Himself with Egypt’s gods. He did not trace His beginning, identify the source of His authority, or name some greater power from which He received life.

He answered from Himself.

Every creature must say, *I am because*. I am because God gave me life. I continue because He sustains me. Everything I possess—breath, strength, knowledge, time, and opportunity—has been received.

But God does not say, *I am because*.

He says, **I AM**.

The LORD receives life from no one. He borrows no strength, answers to no higher authority, and depends upon nothing He has made. Before there was a world to display His glory, God was. If everything He created were taken away, God would remain fully and eternally God.

This is not theology meant to be admired from a distance. It is the foundation beneath every promise God has made and beneath the feet of every believer who trusts Him.

“I AM THAT I AM”

The title of this article uses the familiar rendering *I AM WHO I AM*. The King James Version renders the same Hebrew declaration, *I AM THAT I AM*. Neither form gives us a definition that places God within a category we can master. God identifies Himself by Himself.

The same Hebrew form stands behind God’s promise to Moses, “Certainly I will be with thee,” and His declaration, “I AM.” The One who sends Moses is not merely announcing that He exists. He is assuring Moses that His presence does not rest upon Moses’ sufficiency or Pharaoh’s permission. God will be present because He is eternally and freely Himself.

Theologians sometimes call this God’s *aseity*. The word may be unfamiliar, but the truth is simple: God does not receive His existence from anyone or anything outside Himself. He has no cause, no source, no beginning, and no unmet need that creation must supply.

Everything else depends upon God. God depends upon no one.

The Giver Who Needs Nothing

When Paul spoke in Athens, he distinguished the living God from every god fashioned by human imagination and human hands:

> *“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”*
>
> **—Acts 17:24–25**

Human hands cannot complete God. Our worship does not add glory that He lacks. Our service does not supply strength that He has lost. Our belief does not make Him more real, and our unbelief cannot make Him less God.

Yet this does not make worship unimportant. It reveals why worship belongs to Him. We do not worship because God is needy; we worship because God is worthy. We bring Him nothing that did not first come from His hand.

Nor does God's independence make Him cold or distant. Need is not the source of His love. The Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world. God did not create because He was lonely, and He does not redeem sinners because something is missing in Him. He loves from the fullness of who He is.

Grace is not God bargaining to fill a lack. Grace is the God who needs nothing giving Himself freely to those who can give Him nothing in return.

From Everlasting to Everlasting

Moses would later pray:

> *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."*
>
> **—Psalm 90:2**

We move from yesterday into today and from today toward tomorrow. We remember beginnings, measure years, watch strength fade, and know that our days will end. God does not move toward an expiration.

He is not merely very old. He had no first morning. No moment brought Him into existence. Before the mountains stood, before the earth turned, before there was a sun by which a day could be measured, God was God.

He will never become less than He is. Time cannot deplete Him, surprise Him, educate Him, or carry Him somewhere He did not intend to go. The LORD who met Moses at the bush was not a diminished remainder of some greater past. He was—and forever is—the eternal God.

Everything within creation that we lean upon is temporary. Generations pass. Institutions rise and fall. Bodies weaken. Possessions decay. Even mountains wear away. But from everlasting to everlasting, He is God.

Free, Yet Never False to Himself

The psalmist declares:

> *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."*
>
> **—Psalm 115:3**

God is free. No power outside Him can force His hand, overturn His purpose, or deny Him what He wills. He does not seek permission from His creation. He is never cornered by circumstances or surprised into changing His plan.

But God's freedom is not caprice. He does not act on a whim or become something contrary to His nature. Everything that pleases Him is consistent with His perfect holiness, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth.

Scripture says:

> *"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."*
>
> **—2 Timothy 2:13**

God's inability to deny Himself is not a weakness. Falsehood and unfaithfulness are not freedoms that a perfect God lacks. He cannot cease to be God. He cannot become unholy, unwise, unjust, or untrue. His character is not a costume He may discard.

Therefore, God's promises do not rest upon a passing mood. When He binds His name to His word, He acts in perfect freedom and perfect faithfulness.

“I Am the LORD, I Change Not”

Through the prophet Malachi, God gave His covenant people this reason for hope:

> *“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”*
>
> **—Malachi 3:6**

God’s unchanging nature does not mean that He is inactive or impersonal. The living God speaks, judges, shows mercy, answers prayer, enters history, and acts toward His creatures. But nothing can make Him cease to be holy, loving, just, wise, or true.

His faithfulness is not held in place by favorable circumstances. He does not need the world to cooperate before He can keep His word. Israel’s preservation rested finally upon the character of the LORD: “I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Our moods change. Our strength changes. Our understanding changes. Sometimes our grip upon God’s promises feels firm; sometimes anguish leaves us barely able to hear them. But the LORD is not carried by the currents that carry us.

His faithfulness is not the reflection of our steadiness. It arises from who He eternally is.

“Before Abraham Was, I Am”

Centuries after Moses stood before the burning bush, Jesus spoke with men who appealed to their descent from Abraham. They asked how Jesus, not yet fifty years old, could speak as though He had seen Abraham.

Jesus answered:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*
>
> **—John 8:58**

Jesus did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was." He said, "I am." In this setting, His words are more than a claim to unusual age or even existence before Abraham. He speaks with the language of divine identity. His hearers understood the weight of the claim; in the next verse, they took up stones to cast at Him.

The Son did not begin at Bethlehem. The eternal Word took flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is not a dependent creature pointing toward a distant God. He is the eternal Son who makes the Father known and gives life to the world.

We do not confuse the Father with the Son, nor the Son with the Holy Spirit. The three Persons are distinct, yet the divine glory is undivided. The God who revealed Himself to Moses has made Himself known supremely in Jesus Christ.

The One who said, "Before Abraham was, I am," entered our time, bore our sin, died under judgment, and rose bodily from the grave. The self-existent God did not remain beyond our reach. In the Son, He came near to save.

Because This Is Who God Is...

Because God depends upon no one, His promises cannot fail because He runs out of strength, wisdom, authority, or time.

Because He gives "life, and breath, and all things," we must receive His gifts thankfully without turning them into the foundation of our lives.

Because He is free, we cannot bargain with Him as equals or recruit Him to serve plans He has not ordained. We belong to Him.

Because He is eternal, no crisis in our generation places Him in danger or forces Him to hurry.

Because He does not change, we can trust His character when everything visible appears unstable.

Because Jesus declared, “Before Abraham was, I am,” we must not reduce Him to a teacher, example, or messenger. We must confess Him as Lord and trust Him as Savior.

A man may build his identity upon strength, usefulness, provision, competence, or control. Time will expose every one of these as temporary. The answer is not to become less responsible, but to stop asking created strength to carry divine weight.

Dear Christian, God does not ask you to pretend that created supports do not matter. Family, work, health, church, and daily provision are good gifts from His hand. But no created thing can bear the weight that belongs to God alone.

When strength fades, plans collapse, people disappoint, or the future becomes difficult to see, the believer’s foundation has not moved. Everything around us may change, but the God upon whom we depend depends upon no one.

We began this journey with the petition, *Hallowed be thy name*. We then heard YHWH bind His name to His covenant promises. Now the words *I AM THAT I AM* deepen our worship. The LORD is faithful not because circumstances support Him, but because His life, power, and character are borrowed from no one.

I AM WHO I AM—the God who depends on no one—hallowed be Thy name.

Prayer

Eternal LORD, You are from everlasting to everlasting. You receive life from no one, yet You give to all life, breath, and every good thing. Forgive us for resting the weight of our

hope upon created things that cannot bear it. Teach us to receive Your gifts with gratitude without making idols of them. When our strength fades and circumstances change, anchor us in Your unchanging character. Thank You that the eternal Son entered our time, bore our sin, and rose to give life to all who trust Him. By Your Spirit, make us faithful witnesses. I AM WHO I AM—hallowed be Thy name. In Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The God who depends upon no one is the One upon whom everything depends. Next we open Scripture's first sentence and behold **Elohim—the Mighty Creator** who speaks the heavens and the earth into being.

Next in the journey: Elohim—The Mighty Creator.

Scripture to Carry With You

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

—Exodus 3:14

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

—Psalm 90:2

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

—John 8:58

Previous: YHWH—The LORD Who Reveals Himself

Series: KAVOD: The Glory Due His Name

Next: Elohim—The Mighty Creator

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YHWH—The LORD Who Reveals Himself

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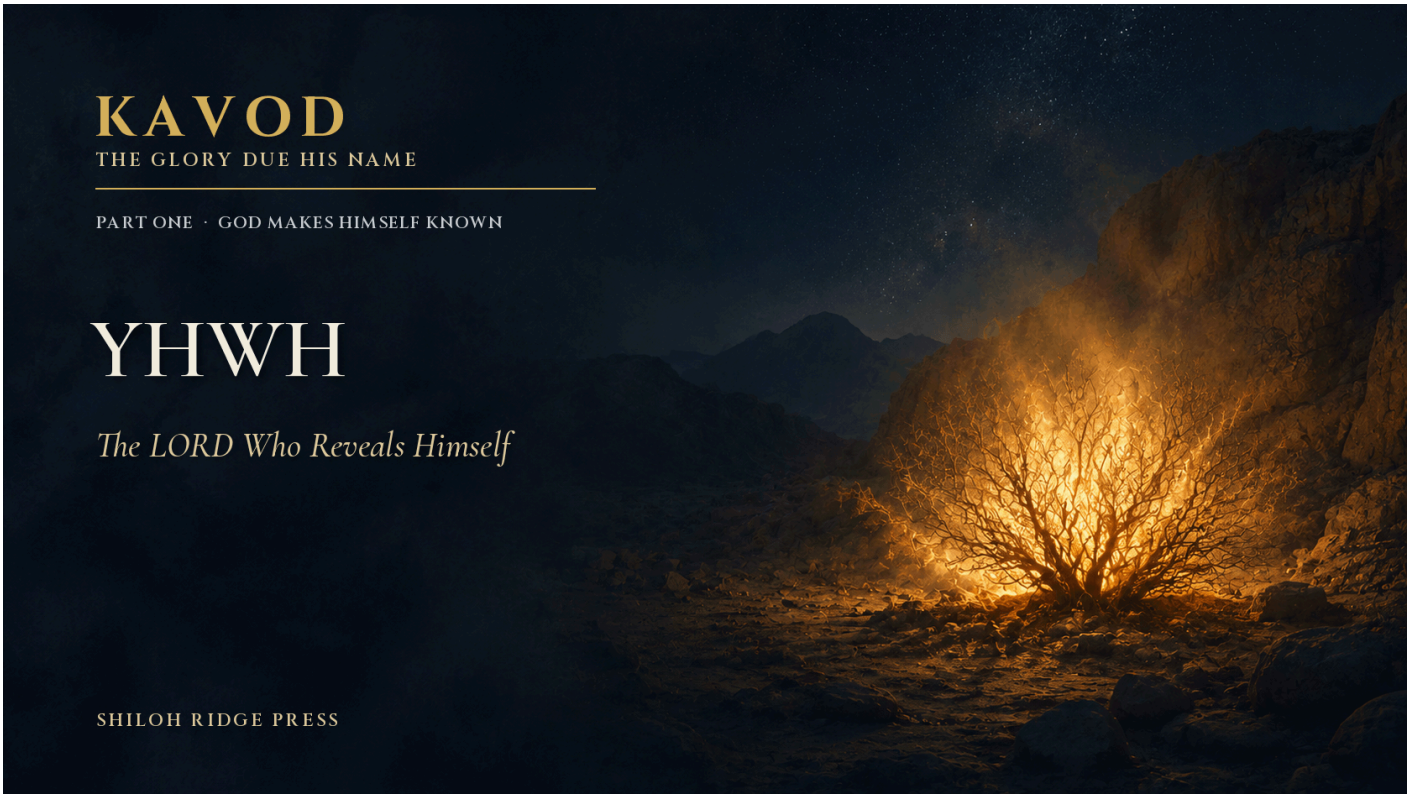

KAVOD SERIES · PART ONE · ARTICLE 2

THE GLORY DUE HIS NAME — GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

MEMORY VERSE

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

—Exodus 3:15

A Name Spoken in the Fire

God has not left us to name Him.

That truth carries us from Jesus' prayer—*Hallowed be thy name*—into the **wilderness of Midian**, where a man tending his father-in-law's sheep turned aside to see a bush that burned but was not consumed.

Moses was not searching for a religious experience. Israel was groaning beneath Egyptian bondage, and Moses had spent years far from the people he had once tried to defend. But there, on ground made holy by the presence of God, the LORD called Moses by name and commanded him to return to Egypt.

Moses then asked the question Israel would ask:

> *"Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"*
>
> **—Exodus 3:13**

God's answer was not a religious word to be examined from a safe distance. He revealed the name of the God who had seen His people's affliction, heard their cries, remembered His covenant, and come down to deliver them.

Before **YHWH** becomes a term on our page, we must encounter the LORD who speaks, remembers, promises, and acts.

"What Is His Name?"

God had already identified Himself to Moses as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look upon God. Yet Moses still needed to know what he should say when Israel asked the name of the One who had sent him.

This was not idle curiosity. Egypt was filled with named gods, and Pharaoh ruled as though Israel belonged to him. The Hebrew people needed more than Moses' private conviction. They needed to know who had spoken, by what authority Moses had come, and whether the God of their fathers had remembered His promises.

God first answered:

> *"I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."*
>
> **—Exodus 3:14**

Then God gave Moses the name represented in English by the four letters **YHWH** and bound that name to the covenant history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Moses did not discover this name through meditation. Israel did not invent it to express its religious aspirations. God spoke. God identified Himself. God determined how He would be remembered among His people.

"This is my name for ever," He declared, "and this is my memorial unto all generations."

Four Letters—and the LORD

The Hebrew name is written with four consonants commonly represented in English as **YHWH**. Scholars sometimes call these four letters the *Tetragrammaton*, a word that simply means "four letters." The technical term is less important than the biblical truth: this is God's revealed covenant name.

Most English Bibles usually represent YHWH with the word **LORD** printed in small capitals or all capitals. The title *Lord* rightly speaks of authority and mastery, but the capitalized form **LORD** ordinarily tells the reader that the Hebrew text contains God's personal covenant name.

Later in this part of the series, we will consider why readers encounter forms such as *Yahweh* and *Jehovah*, and why Jewish readers developed a reverent tradition of not pronouncing the name as written. For now, the important habit is simple: whenever you see **LORD** in capital letters, slow down. Scripture is not speaking vaguely about a higher power. It is speaking of the God who revealed Himself to Moses and joined His name to His covenant promises.

The name is not a charm. Its letters do not place spiritual power in our hands. God did not reveal His name so that His people could control Him, but so that they could know whom they were called to trust, worship, and obey.

The LORD Who Sees, Hears, Remembers, and Comes Down

Before God told Moses His name, Exodus had already shown us His covenant heart. God heard Israel's groaning. He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked upon the children of Israel and acknowledged their suffering.

God's remembering does not mean that the all-knowing God had forgotten them. In Scripture, when God "remembers" His covenant, He moves faithfully to act upon what He has promised.

At the burning bush, the LORD told Moses:

> *"I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."*
>
> **—Exodus 3:7–8**

Notice the movement: **I have seen. I have heard. I know. I am come down to deliver.**

God's name is revealed in the setting of His covenant action. He is not the distant god of human speculation. His revealed name assures Israel that the God of their fathers has neither

abandoned His people nor withdrawn His promise.

When Moses answered God's call by asking, "Who am I?" God did not build Moses' confidence by praising Moses. He gave him something better:

> *"Certainly I will be with thee."*
>
> **—Exodus 3:12**

The mission would not rest upon Moses' sufficiency, but upon the presence and faithfulness of the One who sent him.

Known by His Faithfulness

Moses returned to Egypt, but Pharaoh did not immediately release Israel. In fact, the people's burden became heavier. Their suffering grew worse after Moses began to obey.

That difficult turn matters. The revelation of God's name was not a promise that obedience would produce immediate comfort. It was a summons to trust the LORD when circumstances appeared to contradict His word.

In that darkness, God spoke again:

> *"I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."*
>
> **—Exodus 6:2–3**

Genesis uses the name YHWH in the accounts of the patriarchs, so this statement is best understood as more than their first acquaintance with a word. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew the LORD and received His covenant promises. The Exodus generation was about to

know the full weight of that name through the public fulfillment of those promises in redemption.

The LORD followed His declaration with a succession of promises: “I will bring you out.” “I will rid you.” “I will redeem you.” “I will take you to me for a people.” “I will be to you a God.” “I will bring you in.” “I will give it you.”

Yet Scripture tells us that the Israelites “hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage” (Exodus 6:9).

They were too crushed to feel hopeful. But their anguish did not make God unfaithful. The LORD continued to act even when His people could barely receive the promise.

The LORD Made Known in Jesus Christ

The New Testament does not lead us away from the God who revealed Himself to Moses. It reveals the saving glory of the one true God in Jesus Christ.

Paul writes:

> *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*
>
> **—Romans 10:9**

Only a few sentences later, Paul quotes the prophet Joel (Joel 2:32):

> *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*
>
> **—Romans 10:13**

Joel's original promise concerns calling upon the name of the LORD. Paul places that promise in the setting of confessing Jesus as Lord. Jesus is not a messenger who turns our attention away from God. The Son makes the Father known and accomplishes the salvation planned by the Father and applied by the Holy Spirit.

We do not confuse the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Neither do we divide the glory of the one true God. The covenant LORD who came down to deliver Israel from bondage has accomplished the greater deliverance from sin and death through Jesus Christ.

God has not merely given us information about His name. In His Son, He has drawn near to save.

Because This Is Who God Is…

Because the LORD speaks, we must receive His Word rather than inventing a god of our own imagination.

Because He sees, hears, and knows, we may bring our suffering before Him without pretending it is small.

Because He remembers His covenant, delay must not be mistaken for forgetfulness.

Because His presence—not our sufficiency—is the ground of obedience, we can follow Him when His calling exceeds our strength.

Because He is faithful to His name, we can trust Him even when obedience appears to make the burden heavier before deliverance comes.

Dear Christian, YHWH is not a promise that every painful circumstance will end tomorrow. Israel's bondage worsened before Pharaoh released them. God's name is something greater than a guarantee of immediate relief: it is the assurance that God will never cease to be faithful to who He is and to what He has promised.

If anguish has made it difficult for you to feel hopeful, remember Exodus 6:9. The LORD was not defeated by His people's exhaustion. He continued to work according to His covenant faithfulness.

The question is not merely, *Do I recognize the name YHWH?*

The deeper question is: **Do I trust the LORD who has made Himself known?**

We began this journey with the petition, *Hallowed be thy name*. Now that prayer carries greater covenant weight. The name is no longer an abstraction. It belongs to the covenant LORD whose character and promises never fail.

YHWH—the LORD who has made Himself known—hallowed be Thy name.

Prayer

LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, You see, hear, know, remember, and act. Forgive us for treating Your name as information while resisting Your authority or doubting Your faithfulness. Teach us to trust You when Your promises appear delayed and to obey You when we feel insufficient. Thank You for drawing near to save and for making Yourself known fully in Jesus Christ. Fix our hope upon Your unchanging character, and let our lives testify that You alone are the LORD. YHWH—the LORD who sees, hears, remembers, and saves—hallowed be Thy name in us and through us. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We have heard the LORD bind His name to His promises. Next we listen as He unfolds the mystery inside that name—I AM WHO I AM—the God who depends on no one.

Next in the journey: *I AM WHO I AM—The God Who Depends on No One.*

Scripture to Carry With You

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

—Exodus 3:15

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.”

—Exodus 6:6

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

—Romans 10:13

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Hallowed Be Thy Name: Why the Names of God Matter

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KAVOD SERIES · PART ONE · ARTICLE 1

THE GLORY DUE HIS NAME — GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

MEMORY VERSE

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

—Matthew 6:9

What Does Glory Weigh?

Some words can become lighter through familiarity. *Glory* may call to mind brightness, majesty, or something beautiful—but distant. Scripture brings it much closer.

The Hebrew word often translated *glory* is *kavod*. It belongs to a family of words associated with weight or heaviness. Depending on its context, *kavod* can speak of honor, dignity, importance, splendor, and glory. It points us toward something—or Someone—too weighty to be treated lightly.

That is where our journey begins.

God is not an accessory to an already crowded life. He is not one interest among many or a religious subject to consider when convenient. He is our Creator, our King, our Judge, and—for those who belong to Christ—our Father. Everything exists by Him and for Him.

His glory is not something we give Him as though He lacked it. Glory is already His. We are called to recognize it, declare it, delight in it, and live beneath its weight.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism expresses our purpose with beautiful simplicity:

> *"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."*
>
> **—Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 1**

The same catechism later explains that when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we ask that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in everything by which He makes Himself known.

To glorify God and to enjoy Him are not competing purposes. The God who commands our worship also invites us to know Him. The more truly we know Him, the more reason we have to trust Him. The more deeply we trust Him, the more readily we obey Him. And the more we see of His goodness, holiness, mercy, power, and faithfulness, the more our hearts find their proper joy in Him.

At the beginning of this journey, we may know several names and titles of God without having considered what they reveal. But as Scripture opens them before us, the fearful will meet the LORD of Hosts, the weary will hear the voice of the Shepherd, the needy will look to the God who provides, the guilty will discover the LORD our righteousness, and the lonely will be reminded that He is Immanuel—God with us.

We are not gathering religious vocabulary. We are drawing near to the God who has made Himself known.

The First Desire Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He began with the Father:

> *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."*
>
> **—Matthew 6:9**

Before daily bread, forgiveness, temptation, or deliverance comes this first petition: *Hallowed be thy name.*

The verb translated *hallowed* means to sanctify—to regard, treat, and honor as holy. Jesus was not suggesting that God's name could become more holy than it already is. God is eternally and perfectly holy. We are praying that His name would be recognized and honored as holy—within our own hearts, among His people, and throughout the earth.

This prayer turns the light upon us. Do we treat God as holy? Does His revealed character carry its rightful weight in our decisions? Do our words, desires, worship, relationships, and conduct testify that He is worthy?

We can speak God's name while living as though He were distant. We can sing of His holiness while resisting His commands. We can ask Him to bless our plans without first asking whether those plans honor Him.

Therefore, “Hallowed be thy name” is not an ornamental beginning to prayer. It is a plea for God to put our hearts, priorities, and lives in their proper order.

It is a prayer of devotion—and of surrender.

More Than a Name

In Scripture, a name is often more than a label used to identify someone. A name can represent identity, character, authority, reputation, and the person who bears it.

God’s names do not give us mastery over Him. They are not secret formulas, charms, or words by which we can control spiritual power. God’s names are gifts of revelation. The incomprehensible God has stooped to make Himself truly known.

We must also distinguish carefully between God’s personal name, His titles, descriptions of His character, and names connected with particular places or events. They do not all function in precisely the same way. Yet each may direct our attention toward something God has revealed about Himself.

This is why His name can be loved, feared, trusted, praised, proclaimed, glorified—and profaned. How we treat God’s name reveals something about how we regard God Himself.

“Show Me Thy Glory”

One of Scripture’s clearest connections between God’s glory, His name, and His character appears after Israel’s terrible sin with the golden calf.

Moses pleads with God to continue with His people. Then he makes an astonishing request:

> *“I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”*
>
> **—Exodus 33:18**

God answers:

> *“I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee.”*
>
> **—Exodus 33:19**

Moses asks to see God’s glory. God responds by displaying His goodness and proclaiming His name. Then the LORD passes before Moses and declares Himself merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving sin, yet never treating guilt as though it did not matter.

This is not accidental. God’s glory is inseparable from who He is.

His glory is seen in His holiness and His goodness, His mercy and His justice, His patience and His truth. We cannot honor God rightly while accepting only those attributes that comfort us and ignoring those that confront us. The God who forgives is also the God who judges. The God who is near is also high and holy. The God whose love is beyond measure never separates His love from truth.

Moses wanted to see God’s glory. God proclaimed His name.

That is why the names of God matter.

The Glory Due His Name

Psalm 96 calls the families of the earth to respond:

> *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.”*
>
> **—Psalm 96:8–9**

The psalm does not call us merely to think correct thoughts about God. It calls us to sing, bless His name, proclaim His salvation, declare His wonders, bring an offering, worship in holiness, tremble before Him, and tell the nations that the LORD reigns.

God’s revelation calls for a whole-person response.

Biblical obedience is not dependent upon our emotions. We obey God because He is Lord, including on days when our feelings lag behind the truth. But God does not call us to cold obedience stripped of affection. Scripture commands us to love Him, fear Him, delight in Him, hope in Him, grieve over sin, and rejoice in His salvation.

Truth instructs the mind. Worship awakens the affections. Faith submits the will. Obedience carries that response into life.

We do not give God glory that He does not possess. We give Him the glory “due unto his name” by recognizing, confessing, displaying, and proclaiming the glory that has always been His.

The Name Made Known in Christ

God’s self-revelation reaches its fullness in His Son.

John writes that the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us:

> *“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*
>
> **—John 1:14**

John then writes:

> *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”*
>
> **—John 1:18**

The language echoes God’s revelation to Moses—His glory, goodness, mercy, and truth. But now the glory of God is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus could say to the Father:

> *“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.”*
>
> **—John 17:6**

Christ did more than pronounce a divine name. He made the Father known through His words, His works, His holiness, His compassion, His obedience, His death, and His resurrection.

As the cross approached, Jesus prayed:

> *“Father, glorify thy name.”*
>
> **—John 12:28**

The names of God cannot be studied rightly apart from Christ. He is not merely another entry in our journey. He is its center. The Son makes the Father known, and the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to receive the truth He has revealed.

Because This Is Who God Is…

Because God is holy, His name must never be treated lightly.

Because He has made Himself known, we must listen.

Because His glory is weighty, He must not be pushed to the margins of life.

Because He is gracious, we may draw near through Christ.

Because He is worthy, we should desire that others know and worship Him.

So begin this journey with a simple prayer: *Father, hallow Your name in me.*

Ask Him to expose whatever you have treated as more important than His glory. Ask Him to move His truth from the page into your thoughts, affections, choices, and conduct. Ask Him to teach you not merely to recognize His names, but to know, love, trust, obey, enjoy, and proclaim the One who bears them.

The question is not only, *What does kavod mean?*

The deeper question is: **What has true weight in my life?**

Prayer

Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Forgive us for treating lightly what is holy and for allowing lesser things to carry greater weight in our hearts. Make Yourself known to

us through Your Word. Teach us to behold Your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Awaken our affections, strengthen our faith, and bend our wills toward joyful obedience. May our thoughts, words, worship, and conduct give You the glory due unto Your name. And through our lives, make Your name known to others. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Next in the journey: *YHWH—the LORD Who Reveals Himself.*

Scripture to Carry With You

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

—Matthew 6:9

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts."

—Psalm 96:8

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

—John 17:6

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The Promise of Rest for the Burdened | Promises of God

JUNE 19, 2026
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMISES OF GOD

The Promises of God

God's promises are irrevocable

Matthew 18:19 - **Answered Prayer**: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." **Matthew 11:28** - **Burdened People**: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." **John 14:27** - **Christ's Peace:** "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." **1 Corinthians 6:14** - **Death is not the End**: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." **Jeremiah 32:40** - **Everlasting Covenant:** "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." **Psalm 103:12** - **Forgiveness**: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."	**Joshua 1:9** - **God's Presence**: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." **Ezekiel 36:26** - **Heart and Spirit:** "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." **Psalm 32:8** - **Instruction**: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." **Mark 9:31** - **Jesus' Resurrection**: "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." **2 Peter 1** - **Knowledge of God**: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." **John 6:63** - **Life from the Spirit**: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The promises of God reveal his particular and eternal purposes to which he is unchangeably committed and upon which believers can totally depend. These promises are, however, conditional upon obedience on the part of believers.

Matthew 11:28 – Burdened People

Introduction

Life's challenges weigh heavily on our hearts and minds. The pressures of daily life, work, family responsibilities, and personal struggles can become overwhelming. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus extends a gracious invitation to those who are weary and burdened. This promise offers a profound sense of peace and rest that only He can provide, making it a crucial promise for believers to embrace and share.

What Does Matthew 11:28 Promise?

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This promise is both comforting and empowering. Jesus acknowledges that we all experience weariness and burdens in life. His invitation is not limited to a specific group; it's for everyone who feels weighed down by life's challenges. The promise of rest is His assurance that we don't have to carry our burdens alone—He is ready to bear them with us.

Understanding the Rest Jesus Offers

The rest that Jesus offers is more than just physical relaxation; it is a deep, spiritual rest that brings peace to the soul. It is the kind of rest that comes from knowing that God sees and understands our struggles. When we come to Jesus with our burdens, He offers relief beyond mere comfort. It's a rest that restores our souls, renews our strength, and gives us the courage to keep moving forward.

Jesus contrasts this rest with the burdens of the world. The world often imposes heavy demands on us, promising fulfillment through achievement, material success, or social status. But these promises frequently leave us more exhausted and empty. In contrast, Jesus' rest is rooted in His love and grace. It's a rest that satisfies the deepest needs of our hearts and provides true peace, regardless of external circumstances.

How to Come to Jesus with Your Burdens

Coming to Jesus with our burdens requires an act of faith and surrender. It involves recognizing that we cannot manage our struggles on our own and trusting that Jesus is willing and able to help us. This act of coming to Him is a conscious decision to let go of our own efforts to control and fix everything and instead place our trust in His care.

Prayer is a crucial way to bring our burdens to Jesus. Through prayer, we can express our concerns, fears, and struggles and ask for His help and guidance. Reading and meditating on Scripture also helps us focus on His promises and find strength in His words. Additionally, sharing our burdens with fellow believers can provide support and encouragement as we are reminded that we are not alone in our struggles.

A Note on the Promises of God

The Bible contains thousands of God's promises, each offering hope and assurance to Christians. Among these, the 12 promises in this series are especially significant because they strengthen the faith of believers and serve as powerful tools for evangelism. By understanding and sharing these promises, believers can effectively communicate the depth of God's love, His offer of salvation, and the hope of eternal life to those who do not yet know Him. These promises are foundational truths that every believer can use to guide others toward faith in Christ.

Conclusion:

The promise of rest in Matthew 11:28 is a beautiful reminder that we don't have to carry life's burdens alone. Jesus invites us to come to Him and find the rest our souls so desperately need. This promise is for you whether you're facing physical exhaustion, emotional strain, or spiritual weariness. Accept His invitation and experience the peace and renewal only He can provide.

Inductive Bible Study Questions:

1. **Observation:** What does Matthew 11:28 reveal about the nature of Jesus' invitation to those burdened?
2. **Interpretation:** How does the rest that Jesus offers differ from the kind of rest the world offers?
3. **Application:** What burdens do you need to bring to Jesus? How can you practically come to Him for rest this week?
4. **Reflection:** Reflect on a time when you experienced Jesus' rest amid a difficult situation. How did it change your perspective?

Short Prayer for Personal Application: Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise of rest that Jesus offers to those who are weary and burdened. Help me to come to You with my struggles, trusting that You will give me the rest and peace I need. Strengthen my faith as I learn to rely on Your grace and guidance. In Jesus' name, Amen.es while effectively communicating the key message of Matthew 11:28.

Three Senators, Three Choices: What a Virginia Senator Showed Us About Christian Neighborliness

APRIL 24, 2026
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

On the morning of April 23, 2026, the Virginia Senate chamber was not at its best. Two days earlier, voters had narrowly approved a mid-decade redistricting referendum by roughly three percent, and what began as routine session business dissolved into nearly two hours of partisan speeches from the floor.

The full session is available on YouTube at **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aeDRSb8PBU**. Timestamps throughout this article let readers hear the senators for themselves.

A chamber should be a place of respect, regardless of disagreement. Senators will differ on policy. That is the nature of the institution. But there is a way to disagree that honors the office, the chamber, and the people being addressed — and there is a way that does not.

Three senators, on that morning, illustrated the difference.

Senator Surovell Chose Contempt

At the 1:05:41 mark, **Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell** (D-Mount Vernon, 34th District) rose for a point of personal privilege. For ten minutes, he repeatedly attacked the sitting President of the United States, referring to him as "that man across the river" and "this guy." He accused Republican-governed states of rigging democracy. He listed what he called seven offenses, suggesting the only "rigging" of American elections in the last six years had come from the White House.

Readers can judge the tone themselves at the timestamps above. A senator may strongly oppose a president's policies. A senator may warn against perceived abuses of power. What a senator should not do, in a chamber where George Washington's statue stands just outside the door, is substitute venom for argument. Contempt is not an argument. It is an avoidance of one.

There is an additional irony worth noting. The day before Senator Surovell delivered this speech accusing Republican-led states of rigging democracy, a Tazewell County Circuit Court judge had ruled the very referendum he was defending to be unconstitutional — a ruling Virginia Christian Alliance covered at length in **"Court Blocks Virginia's Redistricting Amendment — But the Real Threat Is What Comes Next."** A senator accusing others of rigging elections on the morning after his own side's referendum was blocked for constitutional violations is a posture that invites, at minimum, humility.

Senator Surovell can be reached at **senatorsurovell@senate.virginia.gov** or at his district office at (571) 249-4484. Readers who believe the chamber deserves better are encouraged to write respectfully.

Senator Obenshain Pushed Back Without Returning Contempt

Beginning at 1:13:48, **Senator Mark Obenshain** (R-Harrisonburg, 2nd District) rose to respond. His speech was sharp. He warned that the referendum had disenfranchised vast swaths of the Commonwealth. He named the disdain that rural and small-town Virginians feel when power is concentrated in a handful of urban districts. "There will be a reckoning," he said. "It may not be today. It may not be tomorrow. If this stands, there will be a price that will be paid here in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Obenshain, a Presbyterian elder and a longtime member of First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, did not return the contempt in kind. He did not call the governor or his Democratic

colleagues names. He named a concrete wrong and warned of consequences. That is what legitimate opposition sounds like.

Then came the speech that made the morning worth remembering.

Senator Stanley Described His Neighbors

At 1:16:00, **Senator Bill Stanley** (R-Moneta, 7th District) rose to speak. Stanley represents Franklin County and most of Southside and Southwest Virginia — Carroll, Floyd, Franklin, Grayson, Henry, and Patrick counties, along with Galax and Martinsville. He is a Methodist. His family moved to Franklin County in 1983 after his father retired from a career as a Navy aviator, and Stanley has practiced law there since 1999.

For eleven minutes, he did something different from what the chamber had heard all morning. He did not insult anyone. He did not demonize a president. He did not relitigate the vote. Instead, he described his neighbors.

What he described, whether he intended it or not, was the visible fruit of Christian community in Virginia.

The People Stanley Described

Stanley asked his colleagues to take a drive. Leave Richmond, head southwest past Roanoke, past the New River Valley, past the last exit where the radio station stops coming in clearly. Keep going. Eventually you arrive somewhere different — different in how people live, in what they count on, in who they are.

He then introduced the chamber to specific people:

The man who sees a stranger broken down on Route 19 at seven in the morning, in the cold, in the rain, with no cell service. That man does not keep driving. He stops. He gets out. He offers jumper cables, his time, and coffee from his thermos. And if you try to pay him, he looks at you like you have insulted him.

The woman who notices her neighbor — the one going through chemotherapy, the one who just lost his wife — has not mowed his grass in three weeks. She does not file a complaint with the county. She fires up her own mower and spends her Saturday afternoon in someone else's yard. When he thanks her, she says, "Don't worry about it. That's just who we are. That's just what we do."

The volunteer firefighters who drive forty-five minutes to a structure fire at two in the morning. No pay. No pension. They go because someone needs help and they can give it.

The teachers who buy classroom supplies with their own money, without a press release or a GoFundMe page. The farmers who work from sunrise past sunset through drought and flood and unfavorable markets, because the land has been in the family for four generations and they will not be the ones who give it up.

These were not abstractions. These were Stanley's actual neighbors, the people he grew up with, the people he represents.

A Pattern the Bible Already Named

Stanley did not cite scripture. He did not need to. Every example he offered mapped directly to a biblical pattern that Christians have recognized for two thousand years.

> *"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him."*
> *— Luke 10:33*

The man on Route 19 is the Good Samaritan. He stops when others would pass by. He gives what he has. He refuses payment because the giving itself is the point. Jesus told that parable to answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Stanley answered it the same way — by describing someone who acts like one.

The woman mowing the widower's lawn lives out the second great commandment. "Love your neighbor as yourself," Jesus said, and she does, without needing to be asked, without expecting recognition. The volunteer firefighters embody what Jesus called the greatest love — laying down one's life, or at least one's sleep and safety, for a friend.

The teachers giving from their own pockets follow the apostolic pattern: "Freely you have received; freely give." The farmers tending land across four generations walk in the long obedience of Deuteronomy, where faithfulness is measured not in a single lifetime but across the ones that follow.

None of this is accidental. These behaviors are the civic and social fruit of communities that have, for generations, been anchored in biblical Christianity. The church shaped the character. The character shaped the community. The community shaped the way people treat strangers on the side of the road at seven in the morning.

Why the Crime Statistics Are Not a Coincidence

Stanley asked his colleagues a pointed question. Why does Southside and Southwest Virginia have less crime? Less murder? Fewer violent felonies committed against the people who live there? His answer was simple: character and integrity.

But character does not grow from soil or altitude. Character grows from what a community believes about God, about human nature, about sin, about accountability, about the dignity of the neighbor. Where the gospel has taken root across generations, the fruit is visible. Where it has been uprooted, the fruit disappears.

The differences Stanley pointed to are not a Southern thing or a rural thing. They are a downstream effect of an upstream reality. A community that still believes in final judgment, in the image of God stamped on every person, in the obligation to love one's neighbor — that community behaves differently from one that does not. You can measure it in crime rates. You can measure it in how long a mower runs on a Saturday afternoon.

The Milky Way From the Front Porch

The most striking passage of Stanley's speech was not about people. It was about the sky.

On a clear night in Southside and Southwest Virginia, he said, you can walk out your front door, look up, and see the entire arm of our galaxy stretched across the darkness — so thick with stars it looks like someone spilled light. City people pay thousands of dollars, even hundreds of thousands, chasing that kind of silence. For his neighbors, it is a Tuesday.

> *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." — Psalm 19:1*

Stanley described general revelation without naming it. The psalmist said the heavens are preaching every night, in every language, to every ear willing to listen. Where the light pollution of modern urban life has drowned out that sermon, people pay enormous sums trying to recover it. Where the sermon still plays freely, people take it for granted — not because they do not value it, but because they have never lost it.

What Is Actually Being Lost

The subtext of Stanley's speech was that his way of life is being legislated against by people who have never visited his district. That is true. It is worth naming. But the deeper loss is not cultural or

political. It is spiritual.

When secular governance treats rural Virginia as a problem to be managed, what it is actually dismissing is the pattern of life that grows where the gospel has taken root. The stopped stranger on Route 19. The mowed lawn. The volunteer firefighter. The four-generation farm. These are not quaint. They are the visible evidence that a Christian moral imagination still shapes a community's daily life.

The seven core issues Virginia Christian Alliance tracks — sanctity of life, biblical sexuality, our nation under God, obedience to God, creationism, godly relationships, God-ordained family — are all questions about whether God's created order remains visible in Virginia's public life. Rural Virginia is one of the places where that order still shows up in ordinary human behavior. That is why it is worth defending. Not for nostalgia. Not for political advantage. For God's glory.

The Chamber, at Its Best

The lesson of April 23 reaches beyond one speech. The Virginia Senate chamber should be a place of respect, regardless of disagreement. Senators will disagree about policy. That is the nature of the institution. But how a senator speaks reveals what that senator believes about the people being addressed.

Senator Surovell chose contempt. His speech will be remembered for its venom toward a sitting president. Senator Obenshain chose firm opposition without personal attack. He warned of consequences and named a wrong, but he did not demean. Senator Stanley went further still. He did not attack. He did not defend. He simply described the people being written off, with a dignity that let the contrast speak for itself.

Christians watching from home should notice which approach bore more fruit — and which one is closer to the pattern scripture commends. "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone," Paul told the Colossians. Stanley preached a version of that instruction on the Senate floor.

A Word to Christian Readers

If you live in Southside or Southwest Virginia, the life Stanley described is the life your grandparents built and your faith community has preserved. Keep mowing the neighbor's lawn. Keep stopping on Route 19. Keep looking up at the stars with wonder. What you are doing is not small. It is the kind of ordinary faithfulness that holds a Commonwealth together.

If you live elsewhere in Virginia, do not let this pattern of life be legislated out of existence because you never bothered to understand it or defend it. Visit. Listen. Learn the names. The people Stanley described are your neighbors too, whether you have met them or not.

Readers who wish to thank Senator Stanley for his speech can reach his office at (540) 821-3066 or at district07@senate.virginia.gov. A kind note costs nothing and encourages good men to keep speaking well. Senator Obenshain can be reached at **district02@senate.virginia.gov**. Both senators represent districts where Christian witness still shapes public life, and both deserve the gratitude of Christians across Virginia.

“That’s just who we are,” the woman with the mower said. “That’s just what we do.”

May it long continue to be so.

The Beatitudes from The Sermon on The Mount

MARCH 2, 2026
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

House of David
MINISTRIES

Understanding the Radical Teachings of Jesus and Their Transformative Impact on God's Kingdom

What Are the Beatitudes?

The Beatitudes are a series of nine blessings that are part of a more extensive order of teachings, including the Lord's Prayer, called "The Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7). The Beatitudes describe the virtues and attitudes of those who will inherit God's Kingdom. The Latin beatitude derives from the Hebrew word ashrei (אַשְׁרֵי), meaning blessedness or supreme happiness. Today, the Church of the Beatitudes is built on the traditional site where Jesus, Yeshua, spoke.

The Setting: A Kingdom Proclaimed to the Outcasts

Gathering twelve disciples (fishermen, tax collectors, zealots, and other outcasts of Jewish society) and inviting them to follow Him, Yeshua began His ministry of healing, teaching, and preaching the Gospel. After many healings, demon extractions, and miracles, Yeshua gained a sizeable following of people from all over Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem, and even as far away as Tyre and Sidon (Southern Lebanon), and Decapolis, which lies east of the Jordan River, flocking to Yeshua in the hope of being touched by His healing power. Those who came to Yeshua were the poor, sick, diseased, and demon-possessed.

Yeshua spoke these nine blessings from a hill on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, addressing the disciples and a large crowd that had gathered in curiosity to hear what He had to say. In Matthew, we read, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
- Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:1-11, NKJV).

More Than Moral Teaching: A Message About the Kingdom

These declarations of Yeshua sound relatively straightforward. And yet, if we explore them more deeply, these nine simple blessings will entirely change our worldview and replace it with a clear perspective on God's Kingdom and who will be a part of it. The Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount are not merely a collection of Yeshua's moral teachings, as some erroneously think. No, these teachings follow Yeshua's admonition for all people to "Repent," for the Kingdom of God was at hand. And if the Kingdom of God was present, so was its King. Therefore, these teachings are a message to receive and understand God's Kingdom.

Redefining "Blessed": Conventional Wisdom vs. God's Kingdom

We begin by understanding what it means to be "blessed." Conventional wisdom would tell us that success is a measure of God's blessings. How often do we hear "I'm so blessed." But what do God's blessings really look like? More than one hundred years before Yeshua, a prominent rabbi, Ben Sira, wrote a book of wisdom in which he proclaimed God's blessings. He says, "Blessed is the man who sees the downfall of his enemies." "Blessed is the one who does not serve an inferior." And, "Blessed is the one who speaks to an attentive audience." Ben Sir tells us that God's blessings are manifested in those who conquer their enemies, move up the ranks to positions of rulership, gain prominence amongst men, and are given their appraisal. In other words, the healthy, wealthy, and the wise are blessed by God.

Contrast these statements with the words of Yeshua, when He said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:25-26), "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (Matthew 5:44), "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26), "For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

The Sermon on the Mount and its blessings, the Beatitudes, were purposefully spoken by Yeshua to challenge our conventional thinking, turn our world upside down (or should I say, right side up), and guide the disciples and those who followed Yeshua into a "new" and genuine Biblical life that reflected the attributes and values of God's Kingdom—love for all people, even our enemies, and servitude over acquiring earthly wealth and power. These values opposed the law of retribution (eye for an eye) provided for within the Old Covenant and the Law of condemnation under the weight of sin leading to death. They also oppose the entirety of this world's systems and values, which are measured by accumulating wealth and power. In Christ, we have a new and better covenant leading to eternal life and a soon-coming Kingdom opposite this fallen world in every way.

Good News for the Broken and Forgotten

The mixed multitude gathered to hear what Yeshua had to say would have been electrified by His message. The good news of God's Kingdom provided hope beyond the socioeconomic divide and subjugated poverty of the elite ruling class, as well as the oppressive occupation of the Roman Empire, its tax burdens, and heavy-handed laws. Yeshua's message to them was: You, the outcast, the nobodies of this world, the hurting and broken, all of you with no social status or power to change the dire circumstances of your meager existence, are all welcome into My Kingdom, where you will find rest and peace. The King had invited reject outcasts of this world, people of insignificant value to society, to be part of His eternal Kingdom, and not just subjects of the King, but kings and priests who will rule the world with Him. Wow! Let that resonate for a moment.

Yeshua had affirmed everything about these broken people: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. So, it should be of little surprise that the rich and powerful rejected His message; Yeshua warned, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:23). His message turned their whole world upside down. It challenged conventional wisdom about what His Kingdom would look like and who would be invited into it.

Not Ideals to Strive For, But a People He Recognizes

Stanley Hauerwas, a commentator on the Beatitudes, says these blessings are often misinterpreted as Christian ideals to strive for rather than descriptions of the type of people who will be a part of God's Kingdom. The Beatitudes are not about trying to act a certain way but are about Yeshua recognizing and acknowledging the kind of people He first invited into His Kingdom. Further, Yeshua is not telling us that we need to try to be poor in spirit or mourning or get ourselves persecuted. Instead, He merely affirms the people who are blessed. Despite their low circumstances, they are humble and recognize their complete dependence on God. These people who are not significant or honored in society are precisely the ones to receive the honor of being invited first into God's Kingdom.

Nine Panels, One Window: A Portrait of One People

Another essential detail is to see these blessings as the sum of the whole picture, like a stained-glassed window comprising nine interconnected panels that make up one whole. In other words, the blessings do not speak of nine different types of people but of one people group who are likely to experience many, if not all, of these nine characteristics. Most of those gathered to listen to Yeshua were financially poor, but Yeshua also said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Financial poverty is often associated with spiritual poverty, but not exclusively. The poor in spirit are those in society nobody admires, looks up to, or thinks are important. Still, Yeshua tells them that their experience of being in their lowly, insignificant condition is the most favorable position they could be in, for to them belongs the Kingdom of God.

People in desperate and helpless circumstances are often the most open-minded and ready to receive help from someone outside their impoverished circumstances. In contrast, well-off and self-sufficient people usually feel they do not need someone to rescue them. It is why Yeshua said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). And Paul said, "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). It was precisely those who felt the need to be rescued from their financially, and more importantly, their spiritually impoverished condition that Yeshua came for. Another favorable misconception was the common belief that poverty and sickness were the consequence of direct or generational sin—the opposite of being blessed by God was to be cursed. In other words, these people longed for someone to save them from their sinful condition and deliver them from the curse of sin, which, they believed, led them to poverty and sickness. They hungered and thirsted for a Savior and their Messiah.

Hungering for Righteousness: Mourn, Meek, and Hungry

Yeshua declared: "Blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, and blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." First, let's consider how it feels to be hungry or thirsty. These are not pleasant conditions, and one does not intentionally choose to be hungry or thirsty unless they are fasting. These conditions are forced on a person by circumstances beyond their control. Righteousness is about having the "right relationship" with God and others. And acts of righteousness either restore or maintain these relationships. Hence, connecting the physical condition of hunger and thirst to its spiritual condition infers that these people have been forcibly subjected to unrighteous relationships. Considering the corrupt rulership in Israel and the Roman occupation, it should be of no surprise to anyone that those forced out of this earthly political and economic system would hunger and thirst for righteousness. In contrast, those comfortably living within it would not be seeking any changes lest it move them outside their positions of power, affluence, and material comfort.

Here, again, Yeshua is using earthly circumstances to demonstrate spiritual principles; these physical conditions often lead people to spiritual poverty, causing them to mourn because they have a deep, unmet longing to see righteousness in the world. Yet, they know righteousness does not exist in a fallen, sinful world; they only see broken and unrighteous relationships. They have become meek, or as the world thinks, weak because they are helplessly incapable of influencing or changing anything. Therefore, Yeshua says, blessed are the people who are intensely bothered by the tragedies of this world yet are powerless to fix them. From the world's perspective, these people are unimportant. Yet, in God's eyes, they are the most important ones who will inherit His Kingdom. A Biblical example is Moses, who was called meek but was extremely important, maybe not to Pharoh, but certainly to God and the Israelites. It is precisely because of these dire and humbling circumstances that Yeshua appeals to the outcast and downtrodden, as these are more likely to seek a kingdom that is not of this world.

Merciful, Pure in Heart, and Peacemakers

Yeshua continued, "Blessed are the merciful." Mercy is an act of care and compassion to help someone suffering. In other words, blessed are the unimportant outcasts of this world who, despite their dire circumstances, are grieved by the pain and misery they see and will go out of their way to help others. Even their small acts of kindness, unlikely to change the world in any significant way, will manifest a small piece of God's Kingdom. Yeshua affirmed this by saying, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart," the people who are not looking for prestige or worldly recognition, and the only thing that is important to them is seeing God and His Kingdom. The Psalmist declared, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple" (Psalm 27:4). Simeon, a just and devout man waiting for the Consolation of Israel, when the Holy Spirit came upon him, said, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

Yeshua said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," those who see all the broken and unrighteous relationships in this fallen world yet hunger to see the King and His Kingdom because they love all people, even their enemies, and hunger and thirst to see all these broken relationships restored, especially with God. These people are willing to insert themselves into conflict and seek to love all people in the hope of bringing peace and reconciliation. If we are in Christ and already at peace with God, we should be willing to insert ourselves into uncomfortable situations to bring peace to others. Therefore, we read, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us

the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Reconciliation that restores broken relationships and brings lasting peace is one of the highest values of God's Kingdom.

Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

Lastly, Yeshua said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake." If we see ourselves as the kind of people who are rejected by the powers of this world and if we reject the ways of this world to seek First God's Kingdom and His righteousness, then Yeshua tells us this life will give us tribulation. He said, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:8); "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). We will be hated, despised, and rejected by this world for following Yeshua and seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness. And we will be despised for trying to do the right thing.

The Narrow Path: Comfort, Challenge, and Kingdom Promise

Yeshua's Beatitudes were not a formula for a better life. They were intended to comfort and assure the insignificant, powerless, and physically and spiritually broken people that God's Kingdom was at hand, and those who sought after the King and His Kingdom would enter into all these blessings. God's Kingdom turns our world values upside down, and these blessings come with a challenge: Following Yeshua in this fallen world will be difficult. Hence, He said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). But those who are pure in heart and worship God in spirit and truth will seek to do what is right despite what the world throws at us. We do these things not to earn God's blessings. We recognize that we have already been blessed because our dire circumstances have caused our hearts to be inclined towards the only one who can deliver us from this fallen and broken world and that Yeshua's Kingdom already belongs to us.

One Body, One Blessing: The Church as the Blessed Community

It should be evident that I speak of God's church, His ecclesia, as those who are the blessed of His Kingdom, not nine different kinds of people, but one group of people who are all one in Christ. Paul said, "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). These nine blessings are for us, and yet if we see all nine panels of the stain-glassed window joined together, we also see a complete picture of one man who represents every aspect of these nine blessings.

Yeshua: The Perfect Embodiment of the Beatitudes

Yeshua came from poor and insignificant circumstances. He mourned and grieved over the state of this world and the broken people he met. The arrival of Yeshua was extraordinarily significant, yet He did not consider himself important. Yeshua longed to see God's world set right, so with a small act of mercy to hurting individuals, He showed his pure devotion to the cause of God's Kingdom, inserting Himself into dangerous situations with people who hated God and hated each other. In doing so, Yeshua was persecuted and was killed. Christ is the stained-glass window, and as we are now in Christ, we are members of His body and will experience one or more of the nine circumstances that Yeshua described, and yet, we are recipients of all of His blessings.

The crucifixion of Yeshua, who is the perfect embodiment of these nine blessings, is not the unfortunate death of a great social worker. His death is how He epitomized the values of God's Kingdom by setting aside His status. As the representative for all humanity and dying in our place, He took upon Himself the consequences of God's judgment and justice for our sins and all the unrighteous things we have done to each other and God in this fallen world. In His resurrection, Yeshua's commitment to the goodness of God in our world and by redeeming it, He offers hope, forgiveness, and life to the unimportant, hurting people who will lay hold of Him and follow in His footsteps along a narrow and challenging path that leads into His Kingdom. Now, that is good news.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

Jethani, Skye. *What If Jesus Was Serious?* Moody Publishers.

A special thanks to Pastor Tim Mackie, lead scholar and creative director for BibleProject, who inspired me with much depth of revelation and understanding to write this teaching.

John 4:24.

Myth-Busting the Supposed Pagan Roots of Christmas

DECEMBER 23, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Equipping Christians to Answer with Confidence and Evidence

You've Heard the Claims—Now Get the Facts

Every December, you see them. The social media posts. The memes. The confident assertions that Christmas is really just warmed-over paganism. Your co-worker mentions it. Your skeptical uncle brings it up at dinner. Maybe even a fellow believer has shared their doubts.

And if you're honest, you've felt that uncomfortable twinge. *What if they're right?* What if everything you've celebrated your whole life has pagan origins? What if honoring Christ's birth actually dishonors Him?

That concern is legitimate. No Christian wants to participate in idolatry—knowingly or unknowingly. But here's what you need to know:

The claims about Christmas having pagan roots don't hold up when examined against actual historical evidence.

This article will equip you with the facts, the timelines, and the responses you need to answer these claims with confidence. Not with emotion or tradition, but with documented history.

Because when you examine the primary sources, the archaeological record, and the actual dates, the pagan-Christmas narrative doesn't just weaken—**it collapses entirely.**

Watch: The Historical Evidence in 28 Minutes

If you prefer an indepth visual walkthrough, this video presents the same historical evidence you'll find in this article, but expanded and we highly recommend watching,includes timelines and primary sources displayed chronologically:

Myth-Busting the Supposed Pagan Roots of Christmas: Digging for Truth Episode 276
https://youtube.com/watch?v=ik7qwgy6Q4E

Related Post

Why These Claims Sound So Convincing (And Why You Shouldn't Feel Bad for Wondering)

First, let's acknowledge something: if you've felt uncertain about these claims, you're not being weak in your faith. You're being thoughtful.

The pagan-Christmas narrative spreads so effectively because it follows a persuasive pattern:

- It appeals to superficial similarities (winter celebrations exist in many cultures)
- It uses confident, absolute language ("Christmas was stolen from…")
- It rarely provides actual citations or dates
- It gets repeated so often it begins to feel true

But here's the critical point: **similarity is not evidence, and repetition is not proof.**

History requires dates, sources, and context. When we bring those elements into the discussion, the accusations crumble. Let's examine the three biggest myths one by one.

Myth #1: December 25 Was Stolen from Pagan Festivals

The Claim You'll Hear

"Christians chose December 25 to compete with or absorb pagan festivals like Sol Invictus and Saturnalia. They basically baptized a pagan holiday."

What the Historical Timeline Actually Shows

This claim sounds convincing until you ask one simple question: **What are the actual dates?**

Here's what the documented historical record tells us:

- 195 AD – Clement of Alexandria records that Christians were already discussing and calculating Christ's birth date
- 211 AD – Hippolytus of Rome explicitly identifies December 25 as Jesus' birth
- 336 AD – A Roman Christian calendar lists December 25 as the feast of Christ's birth in Bethlehem
- 354 AD – The FIRST possible reference to an 'Invictus' celebration on December 25 appears

Notice what this timeline reveals: **Christians were already honoring Christ on December 25 for over a century before any documented pagan festival on that date.**

As for Saturnalia? Ancient Roman sources consistently place it between December 17-23. Not December 25. The connection simply doesn't exist in the primary sources.

📌 QUICK REFERENCE: When Someone Says "December 25 Is Pagan"

YOUR RESPONSE: "Actually, the historical timeline shows the opposite. Christians were documenting December 25 as Christ's birth by 211 AD—over 140 years before any pagan festival appears on that date. The evidence suggests paganism reacted to Christianity, not the other way around."

*FOLLOW-UP IF NEEDED: "**Saturnalia was December 17-23, never the 25th**. If you have a source showing a pagan festival on December 25 before 211 AD, I'd be interested to see it."*

Why This Matters for Your Faith

If Christians identified December 25 *before* any pagan association with that date, then the accusation of borrowing cannot stand. The evidence doesn't show Christianity absorbing paganism

—it shows Christianity establishing its own calendar, and paganism responding to it as Christianity spread.

Myth #2: The Virgin Birth Was Copied from Pagan Gods

The Claim You'll Hear

"Jesus' virgin birth was borrowed from earlier pagan gods like Mithra, Horus, and Tammuz. They were all born of virgins on December 25 long before Christianity."

What the Ancient Sources Actually Say

This claim sounds impressive until you do what most people making it never did: **look up the original sources.**

Mithra: The Rock-Born God

*(the **iconic scenes** of Mithras show him being born from a rock, slaughtering a bull, and sharing a banquet with the god **Sol** (the Sun).*

Ancient texts, inscriptions, and reliefs unanimously show Mithra emerging *fully grown from a rock.* There is no mother. No virgin. No birth narrative resembling the Gospels in any way. Mithra was literally called the *"rock-born god."* No ancient source assigns Mithra a December 25 birth date.

Horus: Son of Osiris and Isis

Egyptian texts explicitly identify Horus as the son of **Osiris and Isis**—two divine parents, **not a virgin birth**. The claims that Horus was born in a cave, announced by a star, or visited by wise men do not appear in any ancient Egyptian source. These details come from modern internet graphics, not archaeology.

Tammuz (Dumuzi): The Spring Fertility God

Tammuz was neither born of a virgin nor associated with December. His cult centered on *springtime* fertility rituals mourning his death—not celebrating a nativity. Ancient sources identify him as the son of gods conceived through divine union.

📌 QUICK REFERENCE: When Someone Says "Virgin Birth Is Pagan"

YOUR RESPONSE: "I've seen those claims, but when you check the ancient sources, they fall apart. Mithra wasn't born—he emerged fully grown from a rock. Horus had two divine parents, Osiris and Isis. Tammuz was a spring god with no virgin birth. None of these match the Gospel accounts."

FOLLOW-UP IF NEEDED: "These parallels come from modern websites, not from actual ancient texts. If someone has a primary source showing these virgin births, archaeologists would love to see it."

The Real Issue

These alleged parallels don't come from ancient history—they come from modern assertions made without evidence. When you consult primary sources, the similarities vanish completely. The virgin birth of Christ is historically unique.

Myth #3: Christmas Trees and Traditions Are Pagan Worship

The Claim You'll Hear

"Christmas trees, mistletoe, and Santa Claus all come from pagan worship. Jeremiah 10 even condemns Christmas trees. Christians are practicing paganism without realizing it."

What History and Scripture Actually Show

Christmas Trees

While ancient cultures revered various trees, the Christmas tree as a *home decoration* appears in 16th-century Christian Europe, particularly German-speaking regions. There's no evidence Christians adopted a pagan religious ritual.

As for Jeremiah 10? Read the full chapter. It's clearly describing the **manufacture and worship of carved idols**—objects that are feared and worshiped. It has nothing to do with decorating an evergreen tree in your home. Decorating a tree is not worship.

Mistletoe

Yes, Druids used mistletoe in rituals. But kissing under mistletoe is not and never was a religious practice. The first documented use of mistletoe as a Christmas decoration appears in 17th-century England. Using the same plant doesn't mean sharing the same worship.

Santa Claus

The modern Santa Claus traces back to **St. Nicholas**, a 4th-century Christian bishop known for secret generosity to the poor. Yes, cultural embellishments accumulated over centuries, especially in the modern West. But the historical roots are unmistakably Christian, not pagan.

📌 QUICK REFERENCE: When Someone Says "Christmas Traditions Are Pagan"

YOUR RESPONSE: “The Christmas tree tradition started in 16th-century Christian Europe. It’s not in any pagan religious texts. And Jeremiah 10 is about carved idols that people worship and fear—not decorated trees in homes.”

FOR SANTA: **“Santa Claus comes from St. Nicholas, a Christian bishop famous for helping the poor**. The modern commercial version is obviously different, but the origin isn’t pagan.”

KEY PRINCIPLE: *“Using the same item (like a plant) doesn’t mean practicing the same worship. Otherwise, Christians couldn’t use candles, sing, or gather—because pagans did those things too.”*

Why These Myths Persist (And How to Think About Them)

The pagan-Christmas narrative spreads for several reasons:

- It appeals to suspicion and cynicism (which feels sophisticated)
- It reduces complex history to shareable soundbites
- It replaces evidence with confident assertion
- Social media rewards outrage over patience

But when you examine original sources carefully, the accusations unravel. **History rewards patience.**

The Real Question Beneath the Myths

In the end, the issue isn’t really about the exact date of Jesus’ birth. Scripture doesn’t command Christmas celebrations—and it doesn’t forbid them either.

The real question is this: **Can Christians celebrate the incarnation of Christ with integrity and confidence?**

History answers with a resounding **yes.**

How to Have These Conversations Well

When someone brings up the pagan-Christmas claims, here’s how to respond with grace and confidence:

1. Stay Calm and Charitable

Most people sharing these claims aren’t trying to attack you—they genuinely believe what they’ve heard. Approach them with the same grace you’d want if you’d been misinformed about something.

Try: *"I've heard those claims too. They're pretty widespread. But when I looked at the actual historical sources and dates, I found something different. Can I share what I discovered?"*

2. Ask for Sources

Many people repeat what they've seen in memes or videos. Gently ask where the information comes from:

"That's interesting—where did you read that? I'd like to check the primary sources."

Most of the time, they won't have a source. That's your opportunity to share the documented timeline.

3. Focus on Timelines, Not Emotions

Don't argue about feelings or traditions. Stick to documented dates:

"The historical record shows Christians identifying December 25 by 211 AD—over a century before any pagan festival appears on that date. That's not my opinion; that's what the timeline shows."

4. Don't Be Afraid to Say "I Don't Know—Yet"

If someone brings up a claim you haven't researched:

"I haven't looked into that specific claim yet, but I'd be happy to research it and get back to you. Can you send me where you read that?"

This shows humility while keeping the door open for continued dialogue.

Quick Summary: The Three Main Myths Debunked

The Claim	What History Shows	Your Response
December 25 was stolen from pagan festivals	Christians identified Dec 25 by 211 AD—140+ years before any pagan festival on that date	*"The timeline shows Christians came first. Show me a source with a pagan festival on Dec 25 before 211 AD."*
Virgin birth was copied from pagan gods	Mithra was rock-born, Horus had two divine parents, Tammuz was a spring god—none match the Gospel accounts	*"When you check ancient sources, these parallels disappear. They come from modern claims, not archaeology."*

The Claim	What History Shows	Your Response
Christmas trees and traditions are pagan worship	Christmas trees appear in 16th-century Christian Europe. Jeremiah 10 condemns worshiping carved idols, not decorating trees	*"Using the same item doesn't mean practicing the same worship. Otherwise Christians couldn't use candles or music either."*

The Glory of God Announced in Light

DECEMBER 23, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, JOHN 10:10 PROJECT

A John 10:10 Project Christmas Reflection

Christmas and angels clothed in radiant light have been inseparable since the night our Savior was born.

More than two thousand years later, the biblical account recorded in Luke's Gospel still stirs hearts with a universal sense of *joy to the world*. On that holy night outside Bethlehem, heaven broke its silence. Shepherds watching their flocks were suddenly surrounded by the glory of the Lord as angels announced the birth that would forever change human history:

> "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
>
> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

The angelic proclamation culminated in a heavenly chorus declaring the highest truth of all:

> “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”

While that moment was a supernatural event in ancient Israel, God has not left Himself without witnesses in creation. Even today, there are times when the natural world reflects echoes of that holy night. In the polar regions of the earth, charged particles from the sun collide with Earth’s magnetic field, producing the awe-inspiring auroras—flashing ribbons of radiant color dancing across the darkness of the sky.

The **John 10:10 Project** uniquely draws our attention to these moments, pointing us back to the Creator and to the glory that belongs to Him alone. Especially fitting on **December 23**, just two days before we celebrate the birth of Christ, this visual reflection invites us to marvel at God’s handiwork and to imagine—if only faintly—what it must have been like when *a multitude of the heavenly host* filled the night sky over Bethlehem.

Creation declares His glory.

Heaven announced His coming.

And the Light entered the darkness.

Watch: A Visual Reflection on Light, Glory, and the Birth of Christ

As you watch the video below, take a few moments to marvel at the beauty of the Northern Lights—and then try to imagine a million angels breaking the silence of a holy night to proclaim our Savior’s birth.

> “Silent night, holy night…
>
> Son of God, love’s pure light.
>
> Radiant beams from Thy holy face…”

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

https://youtube.com/watch?v=97ctQJgZD8U

Renowned Evangelical Rev. John MacArthur Remembered for Upholding Truth to the Woke

JULY 17, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Quinn Delamater | The Daily Signal

Widely renowned evangelical theologian John MacArthur has passed away at the age of 86, leaving a lasting impact on the Christian community. MacArthur, who died on Monday, refused to bend the knee to **woke ideology** and made national headlines in 2020 when he refused to follow California law to close his church during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

Los Angeles County sued Grace Community Church, and the suit ended in a settlement in 2021 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the state could not force churches to close, according to Newsweek.

Newsweek reported that MacArthur wrote in a letter at the time, "We know that there is no circumstance that can cause the church to close. The church is not only a building but is the bride of Christ and exists to proclaim the truth."

In August 2020, **President Donald Trump** called MacArthur to thank him for not closing his church, The New York Times reported. The two talked about how Christians could not vote

Democrat, and MacArthur said, “There’s no way that a Christian could affirm the slaughter of babies, homosexual activity, homosexual marriage, or any kind of gross immorality.”

MacArthur passed on Monday after contracting pneumonia, according to his ministry’s website.

He pastored Grace Community Church for 56 years and served as president of The Master’s University in Santa Clarita, California, since 1985, before transitioning to chancellor in 2019. His media ministry, Grace to You, is a nonprofit organization that distributes MacArthur’s audio programs, books, and television programs.

MacArthur opened The Master’s Seminary in 1986, which trains men “for pastoral ministry—to preach the Word of God, reach the world for Christ, and teach others to do the same,” according to the seminary’s website.

Known for being an expository preacher, MacArthur dedicated his life’s work to teaching on passages from the Bible verse by verse, to directly align his sermons with the meaning of the Scripture.

Charlie Kirk, an evangelical Christian and the founder of Turning Point USA, posted on X: “Pastor John MacArthur faithfully testified to the Truth of the Gospel for decades all while the culture, the media, and our politicians peddled lie after lie. He was a legend and he will be deeply missed.”

Josh Zeichik, director of church engagement and leader of The Focused Pastor at **Focus on the Family**, is a Master’s University alumnus. A little over a year ago, he interviewed MacArthur for “The Focused Pastor,” a resource that seeks to equip and encourage pastors.

“He had recently written a book on the **war on children**,” Zeichik told The Daily Signal. “He was so committed to proclaiming truth and protecting the vulnerable. … You hear people preach sermons. You hear them in chapel. But when you get to sit down and hear their heart face-to-face and his commitment to claiming truth because to not would leave kids vulnerable, I thought was so inspiring.”

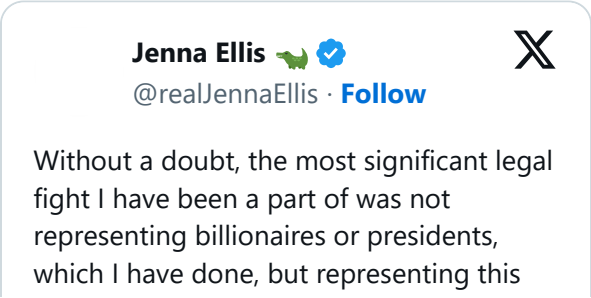
Zeichik recalled a time when we heard MacArthur speak about 20 years ago at The Master’s University when he was a student there and somebody asked MacArthur how they could pray for him. MacArthur said that he was preparing to be a guest on “Larry King Live,” on CNN and would

have an opportunity to speak to the masses. But what MacArthur said next was unexpected: His prayer request was not for him, but for King.

“He goes, ‘Pray for Larry, because I feel like Larry’s very close to believing,’” Zeichik said.

While MacArthur was known for plain, true, and unwavering commitment to proclaiming the truth of the Gospel, he ultimately wanted to see that translate to winning over people’s souls for the Lord, Zeichik said.

“Many are eulogizing Pastor John as internationally renowned, but he was not a celebrity pastor,” Jenna Ellis of the American Family Association and host of “Jenna Ellis in the Morning” said on X. “He was a humble and gracious teacher and witness to the goodness of God. He used every moment to proclaim the truth of the gospel and make the name of Christ renowned and glorified.”



One X account posted a quote by MacArthur on the day of his passing: “All death can do to the believer is deliver him to Jesus.”

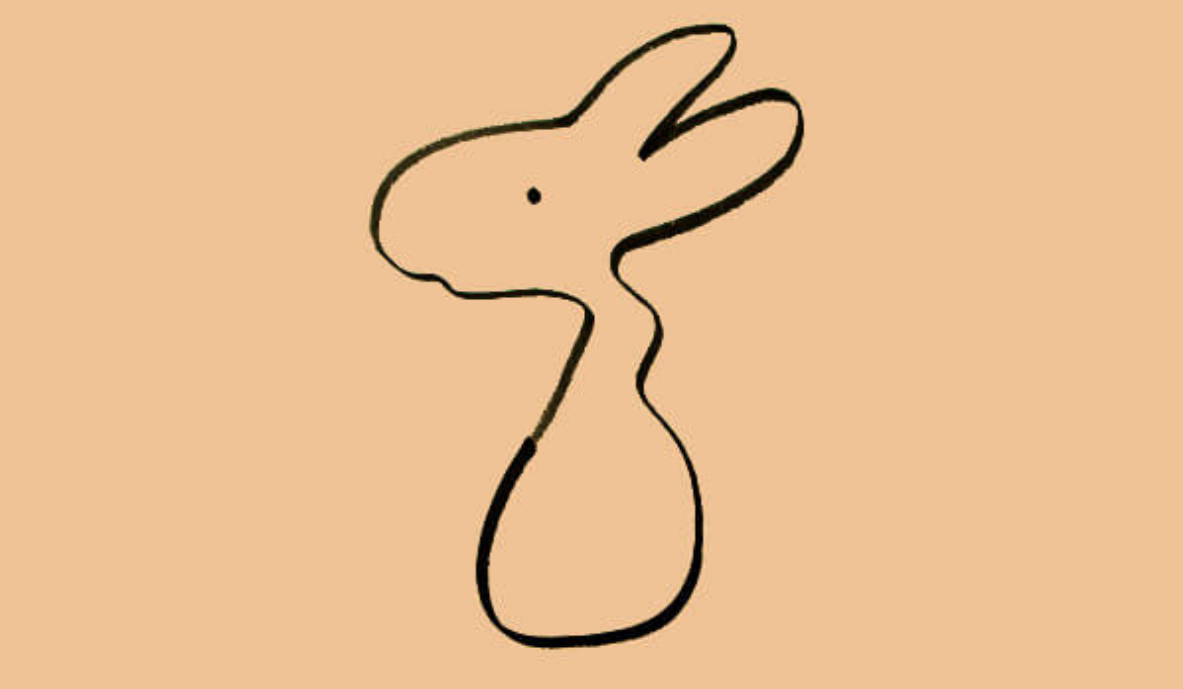
SOURCE: **THE DAILY SIGNAL**

Related posts:

1. **Religion Without Faith Will Never Bring Fulfillment**
2. **The Christian Roots of the NBA – From Naismith to This Year’s 79th NBA Finals**
3. **Another One Bites the Dust**

Our Murderous Political Divides

MAY 9, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



How Tribal Instincts Feed Our Biases

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *And they sang a new song, saying:*

  "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation." — Revelation 5:9

The things that people are divided over often have a social and political aspect to them. They are not subjects that deal with merely the physical. People can talk about the weather, or the properties of water. But, "With purely physical subjects we tend to be open to evidence and we tend to converge on a common understanding of that issue," says **Ryan Chapman** in the podcast, "Your Brain is Wired for Tribalism" episode. (April 6, 2022)

Ryan Chapman

Ryan begins with the drawing of a duck, like the one illustrated in our header art above. This drawing, we are told, is a duck, albeit one with a pretty fat beak. But, if at first you didn't see a duck

and instead you saw a rabbit, not to worry. It seems that people will be more or less divided over whether it is a duck or a rabbit.

The duck/rabbit is an innocuous example of how people will see things a certain way because they are conditioned to or simply because in their mind's eye made the connection and that was all they saw.

What would you think, however, if you were told that seeing a rabbit when others were seeing the duck was an indicator that you were not able to see the real truth. Or that seeing the rabbit proved you were racist or sexist, or some other social or cultural pejorative.

Likewise, if our conversation about water introduces a social element, the topic can change dramatically. For example, if I wanted to talk about how ocean levels will rise over time and eventually pose a threat to coastal communities—even just that part about rising water levels will provoke some people to feelings of doom or despair.

Our interlocutor will start to prepare for fight or flight, wondering who I am and where I'm going with this. In other words, mental guards in his head will begin to raise up, however subconsciously. The alarms go off.

You didn't have the mental guards in your head go up when we were talking about the properties of water or the picture of the duck-rabbit, because our biases of ducks or water are not a threat.

Some biases can be triggering. If that describes you, no worries. There is nothing wrong with you.

This is but a component of human nature.

When we think about social issues, we tend not to think in an open, exploratory way as we do talking about water or swimming, or surfing. Instead, we think around our preferences. Our preferences act like a center of gravity, and our thinking will orbit according to those preferences.

When we were very young, we were afraid of the dark, or the monster that lived in the closet. As we grew older, we began to realize those fears couldn't threaten us anymore. Our peers and our family might have prepared us to dismiss such things as childish.

And yet, that didn't mean we were no longer subject to fear. Instead, it meant we would be afraid of the things that replaced them; that continue to represent a threat to our very existence, or worse,

our personal peace. This is how, over time, we develop a bias. Everyone tends to do the same. Is that necessarily bad? That depends on what our biases are.

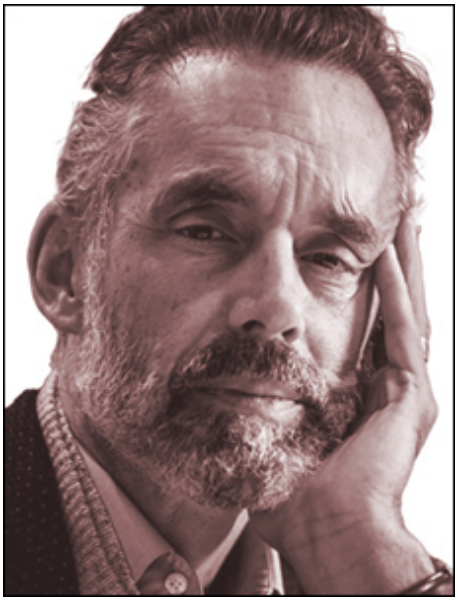
Tribalism is a component of human nature, fueled by biases and psychopaths.

The more complex or sophisticated a society may become, the more that divisive social issues polarize. Of course, it only needs someone to actively agitate for it. We contend with tribalism anytime politicos bring us contention—not from a "natural" inclination, but through the pressure of deliberate polarization.

In this present day and age, Christians still face the same enemies of our faith as we always have. The difference is the way we must contend not with the adherents of primitive beliefs, or pharisaical intervention, or Roman interference, but with the new tribes of this present age: the woke, new-agers, atheists, and secularists.

Not unlike the pharisees of ancient days, they assume a power position designed to intimidate and cudgel our liberty. In fact, power *is* their religion. They have come to believe nothing else. It either seems like it's getting worse, or it really is.

The tribes living in the Gaza Strip, or those protesting on college and university campuses in and around our country have become very threatening and frightening.



Jordan B. Peterson

You can watch and hear why this is so as **Dr. Jordan Peterson** discusses this with **Dr. James Lindsay** during a recent podcast. We learn that psychology has identified certain tribal types with **Cluster B psychopathology**. Peterson refers to such psychopaths as Luciferian.

This refers to a group of personality disorders characterized by dramatic, emotional, or erratic behaviors. These disorders are defined in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders, Fifth Edition" (DSM-5), and include:

1. **Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD):** Marked by a pervasive disregard for the rights of others, deceitfulness, impulsivity, irritability, and a lack of remorse after harming others.
2. **Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD):** Characterized by instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and emotions, along with impulsivity and intense fear of abandonment.
3. **Histrionic Personality Disorder (HPD):** Involves excessive emotionality and attention-seeking behavior, including inappropriate seductiveness and a need for approval.
4. **Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD):** Defined by grandiosity, a constant need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others.

Sources:

Individuals with Cluster B personality disorders often experience difficulties in regulating emotions and maintaining stable relationships. Their behaviors may be unpredictable and can lead to significant distress for themselves and those around them. Some of these behaviors can take on the form of cancelling, doxxing, and even death threats for people they hate or fear.

The psychopaths have formed into tribes.

How are Christians supposed to respond to tribes of psychopaths?

I genuinely support any effort to offer the Gospel wherever and whenever we can. If for no other reason than we aren't ashamed of the truth. It's not about ducks or rabbits, or rising oceans or gun control. It's always about the truth.

As we learn the scripture, hide it in our hearts, and pray for our families, our communities and our country, we can offer encouragement by giving the reason for the hope that lies within us.

Can we do anything about the psychopaths who are, and have already wrested control of our institutions, our media, our courts? Should we even try? Of course! Our bias is only for the truth. But it's always a good idea to first understand how the enemy of humanity—Lucifer—operates.

- *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* —Mark 16:15

The Quarter-Life Crisis

MAY 4, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Why Youth is Wasted on the Young

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* —Phil. 4:6

Studies are now showing what their elders have already begun to suspect: young people don't know how to enjoy life; whether it's a meal, a conversation, or even a good book.

Increasingly, younger people are expressing a loss of meaning or direction in their lives. This development has become a major contributor to rising levels of anxiety and depression among the younger Millennials and GenXers. **It's being called the quarter-life crisis.**

Psychologists are debating just how age influences happiness by studying the midlife crisis and the possibility that our outlook becomes more positive as we grow older. Recent research, including the **2024 World Happiness Report**, analyzed data from nearly 150 countries to track how happiness levels shift over time and across regions.

Historically, happiness often follows a U-shaped curve: it tends to dip in early adulthood and middle age before rising again in later years. For example, studies show that older adults, despite

facing more health challenges, frequently report greater contentment and fewer negative emotions than their younger counterparts.

But in The West, Recent Studies Reveal a New Phenomenon

In North America and Australia/New Zealand, the traditional pattern of happiness across age groups has reversed. Today, young people aged 15 to 24 are actually not as happy as adults aged 60 and older. For example, while the US ranks 23rd overall in global happiness, its ranking drops dramatically to 62nd when only measuring the happiness of its young people. In contrast, the US. is the 10th happiest country for those 60 and above.

Globally, it remains common for young people to report higher levels of happiness than older adults. But, over the past 15 years, happiness among young people in North America has "fallen sharply," according to the World Happiness Report, even as youth happiness has improved in other regions.

This generational divide is particularly striking in the West, raising questions about the unique challenges facing our young people today.

Social pressures still challenge young adults to determine their career and life paths with few ways to figure them out. This pressure is compounded by the fact that traditional milestones of adulthood, such as securing stable employment, buying a home, getting married, or starting a family have increasingly become difficult in the current economic and social climate in the West.

Many young people feel overwhelmed by the need to make significant life decisions rapidly, even as the pathways to these conventional goals become less accessible.

What are the Signs of a Quarter-Life Crisis?

This is a period of uncertainty and self-reflection that typically occurs during a person's mid-20s to early 30s. It involves questioning one's life choices, career path, relationships, and overall direction. This phase can be marked by feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and a desire for change.

Common Signs of Stress and Dissatisfaction

The young can feel trapped and stuck in a job, a relationship, or lifestyle that doesn't align with them personally. This can lead to stress and dissatisfaction.

A strong desire for change, like switching careers or relocating, may indicate a need for personal growth and fulfillment.

Experiencing instability in personal relationships appear in friendships and marriages, and feelings of uncertainty and emotional distress emerge.

Struggling to make choices about the future can lead to procrastination or impulsive decisions, exacerbating feelings of being "stuck." Decision-making skills are crucial for meeting this challenge. Those can take a lifetime to develop, but begin early in life.

Comparisons with peers, especially when fueled by social media, can result in feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt.

Factors that contribute to a quarter-life crisis

Life transitions—graduating from college, starting a new job, or moving out of the family home can prompt self-reflection and uncertainty.

Social pressures—expectations to achieve certain milestones, like marriage or homeownership, can create stress.

Financial instability—managing student loans, living expenses, and job insecurity can lead to anxiety.

Identity exploration is the process of understanding our values, beliefs, and goals, and can be challenging during this period.

The Coping Strategies From a Purely Secular Perspective

- Navigating a quarter-life crisis involves self-awareness and proactive steps:
- Start with self-reflection by identifying personal values and goals to guide decision-making.
- Set realistic expectations with the understanding that it's normal to not have everything figured out.
- It helps to seek support by talking with friends, family, or mental health professionals for guidance and reassurance.
- Focus on personal growth rather than measuring success against others, and limit making comparisons.
- Not everyone can easily embrace change. But young people should view this period as an opportunity for growth and exploration.

All of this research and advice can be found on the internet. (Just where do you think I found it?) But there is something missing that would make a tremendous, life altering difference that is rarely, if ever mentioned in these observations: that is **the source of wisdom and understanding gained from a life built on faith in God through Jesus Christ.**

We already know history is essentially no longer taught in school. Specifically, the study of "Western Civ" hasn't been a part of the core curriculum in colleges and universities in more than 40 years. And yet, Western Civilization owes most of its foundational values on Christendom.

I understand by making this declaration I will only invite outrage from those responsible for teaching and training our students; in the public and private schools, and certainly our institutions of higher learning.

Instead they are teaching *syncretism*. Syncretism is the amalgamation of differing and varying beliefs. Even objectively, we know this will usually manifest in confusion, and contradicting perspectives. I often say that if you believe everything, you will believe anything. Often as not, this manifests in cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that might lead to mental health challenges.

Manifesting the Truth Instead

This is a paradox: If we pursue joy—the true joy found in The Bible and supported in the great classics, we will obtain it. If we only pursue happiness, especially material happiness, it will prove elusive.

Scripture encourages believers to "consider it all joy" when facing various trials, teaching that even in difficult circumstances, Christians can find happiness because the testing of our faith leads to perseverance. As we endure challenges with God's help, our faith grows stronger and matures, ultimately making us more complete and resilient. This perspective reframes hardships as opportunities for spiritual development, reminding us that by God's grace, we can experience genuine happiness regardless of our circumstances.

Joy is a deep, lasting contentment rooted in faith, while happiness is sometimes viewed as a feeling tied to external situations. Scripture does not separate joy from happiness, and both are presented as positive, emotional responses that can coexist in the Christian life. True joy and happiness both stem from trusting God, and the Bible encourages believers to embrace them fully, even in the midst of trials.

Can every young Christian necessarily avoid the quarter-life crisis? Probably not. But the likelihood is much greater such a crisis will be short-lived and more easily resolved.

- *Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* —James 1:2-4

Photo by **Jack Lucas Smith** on **Unsplash**

Palm Sunday Meaning: Past, Present, and Future Hope in Christ

APRIL 13, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The **Palm Sunday meaning** goes far beyond palm branches and cries of "Hosanna." It marks the day our Savior—meek and majestic—rode into Jerusalem to fulfill prophecy, proclaim His identity, and offer the kind of peace only He can bring.

The Palm Sunday meaning runs deeper than many realize. In **Pastor Gary Hamrick'**s message from Luke 19:28-44, we see a Savior who is not only celebrated, but also misunderstood, rejected, and ultimately weeping over a lost people.

Palm Sunday Past, Present, and Future | Luke 19:28-44 | Gary Hamrick
https://youtube.com/watch?v=ouwjW9GUGPg

Palm Sunday Past: When the King Came Riding on a Donkey

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a donkey colt (Luke 19:30), fulfilling Zechariah 9:9: “Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey.”

This was no accident. Jesus publicly declared Himself the Messiah, fulfilling over 300 Old Testament prophecies. The crowd responded joyfully, waving palm branches, quoting Psalm 118:26, and praising God for the miracles they had witnessed—especially the resurrection of Lazarus (John 12:17-18).

However, as Pastor Gary pointed out, the people misunderstood the true meaning of Palm Sunday. They wanted political peace, deliverance from Rome. Jesus came instead to offer personal peace with God—a peace made possible only through the cross.

5 Truths That Still Matter About Jesus’ Triumphal Entry

1. God Uses People for His Kingdom Work

God sent the disciples to retrieve the donkey and the owners to release it. He could have created a donkey from nothing, but He chose to work through people. Today, He still calls us to go, give, or do both.

2. Jesus Is Worthy of Worship, Even When Life Disappoints

When Jesus didn’t meet the crowd’s political expectations, celebration turned to crucifixion. But our worship shouldn’t hinge on circumstances. God’s plans are always better than ours—even when we don’t see them.

3. There Will Always Be Critics and Skeptics

The Pharisees demanded that Jesus silence the crowd (Luke 19:39). But He replied, “If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” Don’t let critics define your faith. Palm Sunday meaning reminds us that Christ is worthy, even when others reject Him.

4. God Still Weeps Over Lost Souls

Jesus wept—not with a quiet tear, but with wailing and sobbing—over those who rejected Him (Luke 19:41–44). Do we share that same brokenness for the lost? Spurgeon said, “Winners of souls must first be weepers of souls.”

5. Don't Miss the Time of God's Coming to You

Jesus lamented that Jerusalem missed "the time of God's visitation." Many still miss Him today—not from lack of evidence, but from hardened hearts. Believing is seeing, not the other way around.

A Glorious Future Celebration Around the Throne

Revelation 7:9-10 gives us a glimpse of Palm Sunday redeemed:

> **"A great multitude… stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands."**

On that day, no one will reject Him. No one will misunderstand. We will join voices from every nation and tribe, crying out:

> **"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

Final Thoughts on the Meaning of Palm Sunday

The crowds missed Jesus—not because He wasn't visible, but because He didn't fit their expectations. Let us not make the same mistake.

Jesus still offers peace, but not political peace—not yet. He offers personal peace, purchased by His blood, sealed by His resurrection, and offered freely to all who believe.

> **"He whom the Son sets free is free indeed." – John 8:36**
> **"If you had known what would bring you peace…" – Luke 19:42**

CALL TO ACTION: If this message resonates with you, we invite you to share this post, comment below, or reflect in prayer. Are you ready to receive the King who brings peace not as the world gives, but as only He can?

We invite you to comment below on what Palm Sunday means to you.

How to Love Others Without Compromising Truth

APRIL 7, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction: The Cultural Trap

In today's culture, love is often misunderstood. We're told that to love someone, we must affirm their choices, celebrate their identities, and avoid anything that might offend. But this kind of love isn't biblical love—it's sentimentality dressed up as virtue.

True love, according to Scripture, doesn't compromise truth. In fact, real love *requires* truth. As Christians, we are called to mirror the love of Jesus, who was "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In our friendships, families, churches, and communities, we must learn how to love well without surrendering to the pressures of a truth-denying culture.

1. What Is Godly Love?

Biblical love is not passive, permissive, or afraid of confrontation. It is patient, kind, and selfless (1 Corinthians 13:4-7), but it also "does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

1 John 4:8 tells us that "God is love." This means that real love reflects God's character. It doesn't enable sin or embrace falsehood. It speaks life and freedom, even when it's unpopular.

Godly love has a backbone. It is both gentle and courageous.

2. Jesus: Grace and Truth in Action

Jesus modeled how to hold love and truth together:

- **The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)**: Jesus didn't condemn her, but He also said, "Go and sin no more."
  - *Modern example*: A Christian friend lovingly supports a woman in an adulterous relationship. Rather than affirming her lifestyle, they show grace while gently pointing her to repentance and healing in Christ.
- **The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-22)**: Jesus loved him, yet told him a hard truth that exposed his idol.
  - *Modern example*: A believer mentors a successful entrepreneur who claims to follow Christ but clings to dishonest business practices. The Christian lovingly shares that one cannot serve both God and money, even if the truth costs the relationship.
- **Nicodemus (John 3)**: Jesus compassionately explained that even a moral man must be born again.
  - *Modern example*: A believer talks with a churchgoing friend who believes their good behavior makes them right with God. In love, they explain salvation comes through rebirth, not good works.

Jesus never affirmed sin to make people feel better. He loved them enough to tell them the truth.

3. Loving People Without Lying to Them

Our culture says love = affirmation. The Bible says love = sacrifice + truth.

To love others without compromising truth:

- **Speak gently** (Proverbs 15:1), but clearly
- **Avoid flattery** or soft-pedaling sin
- **Ask questions** to draw people toward reflection
- **Be ready to be misunderstood** (John 15:18-20)

Real Life Example: Loving Your Gay Friends with Honesty and Grace

You may have a close friend or family member who identifies as gay or transgender. You deeply love them, enjoy their friendship, and want the best for them. That love doesn't mean you lie about God's design for sexuality. It means you continue to care for them, pray for them, and treat them with dignity, while also refusing to celebrate or endorse what God calls sin (Romans 1:26–27; 1

Corinthians 6:9–11). You might say, “I care about you deeply, and because I do, I can’t affirm something that I believe is harmful to your soul.”

“We are not helping someone when we confirm them in a lie. We are loving them when we point them to Christ.”

4. Truth Without Arrogance

Many believers fear speaking the truth because they don’t want to sound self-righteous. That’s wise humility. But silence isn’t the answer.

In Galatians 6:1, Paul reminds us to restore others “in a spirit of gentleness.” Peter urges us to speak truth with “gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). The truth should never be a weapon. It should be a lifeline offered in love.

We don’t need to win arguments. We need to win hearts to Jesus.

5. When Relationships Get Hard

Sometimes, loving well means being rejected.

- A friend may distance themselves.
- A family member might resent your refusal to affirm sinful behavior.
- A coworker may label you intolerant.

But Jesus promised this would happen (Matthew 10:34-39). Stand firm in love. **Pray. Be available. Set healthy boundaries. Don’t give up on truth or people.**

> **“Love means caring more about someone’s eternity than their opinion of you.”**

Conclusion: Love Boldly, Live Truthfully

In a world desperate for affirmation, biblical love stands out. It doesn’t shout people down, but it doesn’t shut up either.

Let us be believers who follow Jesus’ lead—speaking truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), loving our neighbors enough to point them to the Cross, and living relationships that reflect both grace and conviction.

Further Reading (Scripture References):

- – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- – 1 John 4:7-12
- – John 1:14
- – Ephesians 4:15
- – Galatians 6:1
- – 1 Peter 3:15
- – Romans 1:26–27
- – 1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Personal Application:

- – Ask God for boldness and gentleness in your relationships
- – Examine whether your love mirrors Christ's character
- – Repent where you've compromised truth or withheld grace
- – Share Scripture with someone who needs real love

Outward Witness:

– Don't be afraid to speak truth, even if it costs you something – Use social media to highlight loving truth-tellers – Encourage your church to disciple others in both love and doctrine

> **"Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14**

So, is it Philosophy or Doctrine?

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What's History Got to Do With It?

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *"What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us."* —1 Corinthians 2:12

What do we defend and what do we promote? Is it possible to promote something just by being philosophical? Why Christians use the term apologetics when defending the Christian faith? Must we explain everything as we go? And if we must, do we preach doctrine or do we share our "philosophy?"

These questions are meant to give us pause for a moment as we speed down the highway of this new roadtrip which Trump started for us. A lot has happened in the last six weeks. As I write this, now would be a good time for us to pause long enough to catch our breath. It's time to take stock of it all… as it were.

Why this might be important was made apparent to me last week. We—America and the world—have been made dizzy by the *speed of change*. Events, actions, and situations are happening at a breakneck pace.

Elon Musk

For example, now that they have Senate confirmation, **President Trump** felt compelled to remind his cabinet that they are the ones in charge of their departments—not **Elon Musk**. This to me was a sign of political pragmatism on his part. It was as refreshing as it was reassuring.

Make no mistake. Not everyone is happy about this change we experienced last week. What does Trump's critics have to offer? Be honest and admit it, "they got nothin" as the old expression goes.

For the CBS pundits, President Trump's joint session speech "signaled a rejection of bi-partisanship."

Well, you think? Save for all but a small minority of Americans, why then, was it so *very* favorable? The CBS News poll showed 76% viewers approved of his speech, with only 23% disproving. In this day and age, that is a remarkable majority of people. 51% of those watching identified as Republicans, 27% as independents, and only 20% admitted to being Democrats.

For people who still manage to think objectively, bipartisanship was over long before the speech. Still, this begs the question, "why would congressional Democrats behave so poorly, so seemingly immature?"

Perhaps because while they are grownup adults, their minds have not kept pace with their biology. Why else the Catcalls? The cheap paddles?

What it boils down to, is what each political party *promotes* as *agents* of the governmental authority. Is it their philosophy—what ideas they hold to. Or is it doctrine—what they insist others obey.

I have long been concerned about how conservatism is understood in a world shaped by decades of consistently bad doctrine. Doctrine is not the issue. It's the flawed ideas that give rise to *bad* doctrine that are at the root of the problems conservatism aims to expose.

Judging by how congressional Democrats acted on March 4 in the House Chamber of Congress, I don't believe I have ever witnessed a clearer example of how bad our corrupted politicians have become. I am far from alone in this estimation.

Donald Trump

Trump's speech was the longest in modern history: over one hour and thirty-nine minutes, beating **Bill Clinton**'s record by more than 10 minutes. For the entire time, with one notable exception, not one Democrat applauded, cheered or rose to their feet to signal agreement, appreciation, or enthusiasm. Yet, there were several opportunities they could have done so. Why didn't they?

The answer is apparent: to a person, they are fully committed to an ideology that will not permit them to evince even the most poignant moments of pride or respect lest they dilute their **doctrinal** gravitas. In plain terms, they are at some stage of losing their humanity, not to mention their minds over what amounts to **bad doctrine**. If this shapes their worldview, then in their world there is no room for agreement with another person's worldview.

What is a Worldview?

Question	**Philosophical Domain**
1. What is?	*Ontology* (model of the present)
2. Where does it all come from?	*Explanation* (model of the past)
3. Where are we going?	*Prediction* (model of the future)
4. What is good and what is evil?	*Axiology* (theory of values)
5. How should we act?	*Praxiology* (theory of actions)
6. What is true and what is false?	*Epistemology* (theory of knowledge)

Table: Summary of the worldview questions, with their corresponding traditional philosophical domain.

For that matter, what is a Christian, or biblical, world view? This illustration provides what many agree any worldview ought to answer in the context of a philosophical domain:

Comparing Worldviews

For the committed Progressive Liberal, his *ontology* is materialistic—no God. It is *explained* by scientific observation, and relying only *predictive* models of the present world. His *axiology* is vague, allowing only scientific inquiry. His *praxiology* offers no guide for constructive action. For him, there is only theory and observation as his *epistemology.*

In time, the scientific worldview, whose origins emerged in the 18th century **Enlightenment era, evolved into the Societal** worldview. Here, *ontology* is merely shared culture, *explained* only by the present, and *predicted* by political forecasts. His *axiology* is unattainable utopia.
The *praxiology* relies only on political slogans. The society worldview model of *epistemology* feeds on media sound bites.

For the committed Christian, his worldview is *ontologically* biblical and *explained* in the word of God. His *prediction* holds to the promise of life after death. His *axiology* is fixed and concrete.
His *praxiology* encourages precise actions—such as, repent and be saved. His *epistemology* flows from the word of God.

The Final Stages of the Ages

So what do we take away from the stark contrast of the two political party's leadership that we witnessed in the House Chambers last week? Simply put, worldview matters. One party celebrates hope, accomplishment, and optimism; the other seems angry, pouty, and out of good ideas. Really, paddles?

We are witness to the late stage effects of the secular/societal worldview. The Oscar Awards show is but another example of how even entertainers can be manipulated to promote that worldview. They are not satisfied any to longer merely entertain, so they are not merely thankful for the award for doing what they are paid to do.

Sharing Our Worldview Comes With Sharing Our Faith

Between the speeches and the Oscars—which I never watch anymore—I got my haircut. As my "stylist" and I discussed the things going on in the world, I asked how she was doing, knowing she is a single mother of a 13-year old boy. That's when she told me her son needed surgery in three weeks for a spinal defect that had not been fully diagnosed before.

She tried to make it sound casual—but she was scared. Sitting in the chair, talk of worldview flowed into talk of hope and encouragement, as I shared my faith with her. When I assured her I would be praying for them both, I knew she was comforted by that. And, very grateful.

Worldview matters, but the Christian worldview matters most when its praxiology inspires specific action. Prayer has the power to bring change, peace, and encouragement. I would ask you to pray for **Jackson** and his mother, **Allie.** Even as you pray for this nation.

- *"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."* —Isaiah 40:31

The Take It Down Act: A Moral Imperative to Protect Our Children from AI Exploitation

MARCH 4, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Jeff Bayard | VCA

In an era where Satan has his crosshairs set on our children, the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have created a dangerous new battlefield. First Lady Melania Trump, Senator Ted Cruz, and a coalition of bipartisan leaders are taking a stand to defend the innocence of America's youth from a digital plague—AI-generated explicit content designed to humiliate, extort, and destroy lives. The recent Take It Down Act roundtable on Capitol Hill was a resounding call to action for lawmakers, parents, and faith communities alike.

Watch the full roundtable discussion here:

Melania Trump hosts a roundtable supporting the 'Take it Down Act'
https://youtube.com/watch?v=FVwrT1PmVe8

A Coalition of Leadership Fighting for Innocence

First Lady Melania Trump deserves immense recognition for stepping forward in this critical battle. Her Be Best initiative championed online safety for children, and now, she is using her voice to expose the dangers of AI-generated explicit images and deepfake pornography that are targeting adolescents at an alarming rate. She spoke boldly at the roundtable, declaring that ensuring children's protection online is not just a responsibility but a necessity for their future.

- She has long been a champion for child safety online through the Be Best initiative.
- Her leadership in this effort puts pressure on lawmakers to act swiftly.

Senator Ted Cruz, alongside Congresswoman Maria Salazar, Speaker Mike Johnson, Representative Lisa McClain, Majority Leader Steve Scalise, Representative Brett Guthrie, and Representative Ro Khanna, demonstrated unwavering commitment to getting the Take It Down Act passed into law. These leaders refuse to allow Big Tech and predators to operate unchecked.

- Cruz emphasized the urgency of holding Big Tech accountable.
- The bill has bipartisan support, proving this is not a partisan issue but a moral one.

The Evil We Are Facing

This crisis is not theoretical. It is real and happening now. Teen girls as young as fourteen have had their faces superimposed onto explicit content without their consent. Schools refuse to act. Social media companies ignore their pleas. Parents have discovered, too late, that their children have been exploited, extorted, and humiliated—some to the point of suicide out of shame and despair.

- State Representative Brandon Guffey lost his son in under two hours to online sextortion.
- Another young woman, Bree Lou, found her face on a pornographic video she never made. The system failed her until political pressure forced action.

These are not just statistics. These are real children, real families, real lives being destroyed.

Parents: Your Child Is Not Telling You Everything

Let's be blunt—adolescents lie, and they hide things from their parents. Many parents assume their child is safe online, believing them when they say, "Nothing like that happens at my school," or "I would never do that." The hard truth? Predators, classmates, and AI technology have outpaced parental awareness.

- **Parents must actively monitor devices**—not to invade privacy but to protect their children's lives.

- Mood shifts, secrecy about phones, and withdrawal from family activities are red flags.
- Children need to know they can turn to their parents without fear of shame.

Addressing Constitutional Concerns

Critics may argue that the Take It Down Act infringes on **First Amendment free speech rights** or places an unfair burden on social media platforms under **Section 230** of the Communications Decency Act. However, this bill is **not about censorship**—it is about protecting children from **criminal exploitation and AI-generated abuse**. The law must differentiate between **legitimate speech and predatory content** while ensuring due process protections for accused individuals.

As Christians, we believe that **true freedom is never the license to sin** (Galatians 5:13). Government has a **biblical duty** to uphold justice and protect the innocent (Romans 13:1-4). The Take It Down Act is not an attack on free expression—it is a **necessary response to an evolving digital threat**.

Biblical Responsibility to Protect the Vulnerable

Scripture is clear—governing authorities exist to **punish evildoers and protect the innocent** (Romans 13:4). The rapid rise of **AI-generated sexual abuse** demands a **legal response** to prevent **Satan's influence** from spreading unchecked. We cannot allow **Big Tech** to operate without accountability while our children are destroyed by digital predators.

The Take It Down Act: A Step Toward Justice

The Take It Down Act is a crucial step toward defending children from AI-generated sexual abuse and online predators. This bill will criminalize the publishing of AI-generated explicit images of minors and adults without their consent, force Big Tech to remove such content within 48 hours, and hold predators accountable with felony charges. It provides victims with legal recourse instead of leaving them at the mercy of tech companies that refuse to act.

- Criminalizes AI-generated explicit content distribution.
- Requires Big Tech to remove harmful content within 48 hours.
- Holds perpetrators accountable with felony charges.

This is not just a political issue—it is a moral one. It is a biblical issue. The enemy is using technology to defile God's creation, and we must respond with righteous action.

Churches Must Be Watchmen

Pastors and church leaders must educate parents and youth groups on the dangers of AI-generated explicit content. **Silence is not an option.** We need **sermon series, workshops, and online resources** equipping families to **fight back against digital sin**. The Church must be at the forefront of this **battle for innocence**.

Call to Action for Christians

This battle is not optional. The enemy has declared war on our children's innocence, and we must fight back with every spiritual and legal tool available. Pray, educate, and demand action from lawmakers. The Take It Down Act must pass.

- Contact your representatives and urge them to support the bill.
- Educate your church and community about the dangers of AI exploitation.
- Support victims and advocate for justice.

Parents, rise up. Church, take a stand. Lawmakers, do what is right.

The Take It Down Act is not just about policy—it is about saving the next generation from destruction. Let's get this passed. Let's take it down.

FLABBERGASTED: The American People Are Shocked to See What USAID Was Funding

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CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The American people are outraged—and rightfully so. The recent exposé by *The Daily Signal* and *Just the News* has revealed the shocking reality of where their hard-earned tax dollars are going. USAID, the very agency that claims to be helping impoverished nations, has instead been caught funneling money into radical leftist causes that directly oppose biblical truth. From funding transgender operas to backing radical ideological programs in foreign workplaces, the corruption runs deep. Even more disturbing, reports suggest that some of this money has made its way into the hands of known terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda in Iraq.

A Betrayal of the American People

Scripture is clear about the role of government and the stewardship of resources. Romans 13:4 states, *"For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer."* Instead of fulfilling this role, our government has become an enabler of immorality, using taxpayer dollars to support sin under the guise of humanitarian aid.

FLABBERGASTED: The American People Are Shocked to See What USAID Was Funding
https://youtube.com/watch?v=JTK82S--3Ww

USAID's involvement in funding projects that align with the Open Society Foundation—led by George Soros, a known globalist pushing anti-Christian agendas—exposes how deeply embedded the forces of darkness are within our institutions. Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:15, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."* This deception is exactly what we are witnessing today.

Funding the Works of Darkness

Ephesians 5:11 commands us: *"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."* USAID has become a tool to promote radical social agendas rather than serving its intended purpose. The following are just a few of the egregious misuses of taxpayer money:

1. **Promoting Gender Confusion** – USAID has been caught funding programs that push transgender ideologies abroad, furthering the global attack on God's design of male and female (Genesis 1:27).

2. **Advancing Radical Leftist Policies** – USAID grants are linked to organizations promoting Marxist-inspired policies that seek to dismantle biblical values and Western civilization itself.

3. **Aiding Terrorist Groups** – Reports indicate that some USAID funds have ended up in the hands of terrorist organizations, the very enemies of freedom and Christian values.

4. **Brainwashing Government Bureaucracies** – Many of these funds are channeled to NGOs that push woke ideologies into the federal government, corrupting institutions from the inside.

The Call for Righteous Action

Proverbs 29:2 declares, *"When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan."* Right now, the groaning of the American people is reaching a breaking point. They have had enough of the corruption, the waste, and the blatant attacks on God's truth. The exposure of USAID's funding atrocities should not merely shock us—it should drive us to action.

Here is what must be done:

1. **Defund USAID's Radical Programs** – Congress must take immediate steps to stop taxpayer dollars from funding anti-Christian and anti-American agendas.

2. **Hold Government Officials Accountable** – Those responsible for this waste and immorality must be removed from their positions.

3. **Support Candidates Who Stand for Biblical Truth** – Christians must be engaged in the political process, ensuring that leaders with godly convictions are put into office.

4. **Pray for the Nation** – 2 Chronicles 7:14 reminds us, *"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* Our battle is not merely political—it is spiritual.

Conclusion

It is no longer enough to be passive observers. The corruption within USAID is a reflection of a greater spiritual battle being waged against truth. If we do not stand now, the forces of darkness will continue to spread their influence, using our own resources against us.

The time is now. Christians must awaken, take action, and stand firm against these evil agendas. We must demand that our government cease funding wickedness and return to policies that honor God. *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). It is time to demand that our treasure be used for righteousness, not rebellion against our Creator.

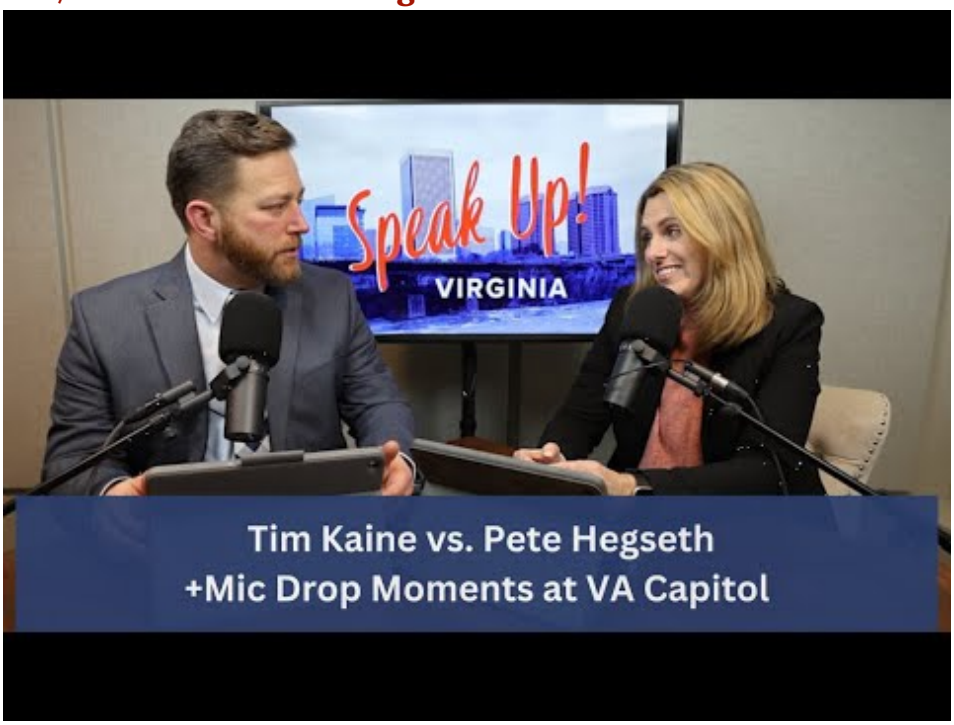
Protecting Values in Virginia: Legislative Highlights from the Family Foundation of Virginia

JANUARY 22, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CONSTITUTION, TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES, US CONSTITUTION

Virginia's legislative session is in full swing, and the Family Foundation of Virginia has provided critical updates on key battles shaping the future of the Commonwealth. From constitutional amendments to protect abortion access to legislation defending women's sports and parental rights, these issues highlight the importance of active engagement in the legislative process.

Please watch today's edition of **Speak-Up! Virginia**

Tim Kaine vs. Pete Hegseth + Mic Drop Moments at VA Capitol
https://youtube.com/watch?v=4Ii7r8Bd2Cg



Key Legislative Issues

1. **Constitutional Amendment on Abortion**

Democrats have introduced a constitutional amendment seeking to guarantee unrestricted access to abortion. The proposal raises significant concerns, including:

- **Elimination of Parental Rights:** The amendment overrides existing laws requiring parental consent or notification for minors seeking an abortion.
- **Unregulated Practices:** It would make safety standards for abortion providers unenforceable, jeopardizing the health of women.
- **Protection from Accountability:** Those involved in performing abortions would be shielded from legal liability, even in cases of negligence.

The amendment must pass two legislative sessions and a voter referendum to become law. Pro-life advocates are working diligently to prevent this from advancing.

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2. **Protecting Women's Sports**

Efforts are underway to preserve fairness in women's sports by restricting participation based on biological sex. Advocates, including national spokesperson Riley Gaines, emphasize the need to ensure opportunities, scholarships, and awards remain available for young women. Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears echoed this sentiment, saying, "We need to make sure that women's sports are for women."

Although the Senate committee has delayed advancing the bill, supporters remain hopeful and are calling for continued grassroots advocacy.

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3. **Threats to Homeschool Religious Exemptions**

Bill: SB 1031
This proposed legislation seeks to weaken religious protections for homeschooling families. If passed, it would jeopardize the ability of parents to educate their children in alignment with their faith, marking a concerning step backward for educational freedom.

The Family Foundation urges homeschooling families to contact their legislators and voice opposition to this bill.

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4. **Moral Accountability in Public Life**

In national news, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine challenged Trump's Defense Secretary nominee, Pete Hegseth, on his personal failings during a confirmation hearing. Hegseth responded with humility, acknowledging his past mistakes and emphasizing his redemption through faith in Christ. This exchange highlighted the ongoing tension over morality and accountability in public office.

Action Steps for Virginians

The Family Foundation encourages citizens to stay informed and take action to influence these critical issues. Here's how you can help:

- **Participate in the March for Life:** Join thousands of pro-life advocates in Richmond on **April 2nd** to make your voice heard.
- **Attend Mama Bear Day on February 4th:** Advocate for parental rights and educational freedom by meeting with legislators at the General Assembly.
- **Engage with Your Legislators:** Contact your representatives to express your views on important bills, especially **SB 1031** and measures protecting women's sports.

Final Thoughts

These legislative debates underscore the importance of protecting life, parental rights, and fairness in sports. As the Family Foundation works tirelessly to represent these values, they invite Virginians to join the movement. For more information on how you can get involved, visit **familyfoundation.org**.

Together, we can ensure that Virginia's laws reflect the values that matter most.

Advocating for Our Children's Future — A Call to Action

JANUARY 22, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLICAL SEXUALITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES, UNITED PATRIOTS UPRISING WITH GARY BINFORD

Elena Barbera appeared on the **United Patriots Uprising Podcast with Gary Binford** to share her story, discuss the alarming trends in education, and outline how parents and communities can fight back. This powerful interview offers insight into her motivations and the steps we can take to protect our children.

Watch the full YouTube interview below:

Elena Barbera Advocates For Saving Children Through Parental Rights And Anti-Grooming
https://youtube.com/watch?v=qBWWV076GAU

In an era where protecting our children should be paramount, it is heartbreaking to discover how far the agenda of sexualization has infiltrated our schools, media, and culture. Elena Barbera, also known as "The Based Mother," has courageously stepped forward to sound the alarm, addressing these critical issues with the determination of a mother who refuses to stand idly by.

Barbera's journey began when she noticed alarming trends in society. Initially collaborating with her son on YouTube, she soon discovered that mainstream narratives often misrepresented the truth. Her concerns deepened when she purchased and reviewed books labeled as "banned" by the media. What she found was shocking: explicit content, inappropriate even for adults, was being made accessible to children in public schools. Determined to expose this, Barbera channeled her frustration and faith into creating the powerful documentary, ***American Groomer***. (it's free!)

The Fight Against Grooming in Schools

Barbera's documentary reveals how inappropriate and explicit content has made its way into schools under the guise of inclusivity and education. Some materials go as far as teaching young children how to engage in sexual activities and normalize behaviors that no child should be exposed to. These materials are sometimes even included in summer reading lists or classroom libraries, corrupting the innocence of our youth.

She highlights how organizations, including the Department of Education, Planned Parenthood, and the American Library Association, play a complicit role in this effort to erode family values and expose children to harmful ideologies.

A Biblical and Practical Perspective

Barbera emphasizes that this isn't merely a cultural issue—it's a spiritual battle. The enemy seeks to destroy families and corrupt the next generation. Yet, as Christians, we are called to stand firm in protecting what is sacred. The Bible teaches us the value of children, reminding us that Jesus Himself said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:14).

On a practical level, parents must take an active role in their children's education. Barbera urges families to investigate their local schools, attend school board meetings, and demand transparency in curriculum and library materials. Tools like *Take Back the Classroom* provide parents with resources to challenge and remove harmful content effectively.

A Call to Action

Barbera's ***American Groomer*** documentary is a must-watch for anyone passionate about safeguarding the innocence of our children. At just 36 minutes, it's concise yet impactful, offering a clear picture of the problem and actionable steps to address it. This fight requires the commitment

of families, churches, and communities. Together, we can ensure our children grow up in an environment that nurtures their minds and souls rather than corrupting them.

To join the fight:

- **Watch the free documentary and embedded below for convenience, but share this site with others**: **AmericanGroomerFilm.com.**
- **Get involved with Take Back the Classroom**: Equip yourself with tools to protect your local schools.
- **Share the message**: Raise awareness by sharing this post, the podcast, and the documentary.

The battle for our children is one we cannot afford to lose. Their future—and the future of our nation—depends on us stepping up now. Together, let's ensure that the next generation is protected, valued, and guided by truth.

"God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless America."

REFERENCES:

1. **American Groomer Film**:

   - Website: **AmericanGroomerFilm.com**
   - Purpose: The starting point for understanding the issue. Barbera encourages everyone to watch the free 36-minute documentary, which provides an overview of what's happening in schools, who is behind it, and what parents can do.

2. **Take Back the Classroom**:

   - Website: **TakeBackTheClassroom.com**
   - Purpose: This organization equips parents with the tools and knowledge to address school boards, identify harmful materials in schools, and effectively challenge and remove inappropriate content.

3. **Parental Rights Foundation**:

   - Website: **ParentalRightsFoundation.org**
   - While not explicitly named in the transcript, Barbera mentions working with groups that legally fight for parental rights. The **Parental Rights Foundation** is one such organization that supports parents in opposing harmful gender ideologies and other issue.

Barbera emphasizes that success starts with knowledge and action. She encourages parents to watch the film, share it widely, and take steps in their communities by working with organizations like *Take Back the Classroom*. If you're ready to act, these resources are invaluable starting points for becoming a vocal and informed advocate for children's safety and rights.

36:36

Column: Democrats take aim at Virginia's marriage amendment

JANUARY 11, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

By **Bob Marshall** | Guest Columnist

UPDATED: December 28, 2024 at 6:07 PM EST

As the chief House of Delegates sponsor of the 2006 voter approved "one-man, one-woman" marriage amendment to Virginia's Constitution, I want to alert your readers to Democratic efforts to take the initial step to repeal that amendment in the first week of the 2025 General Assembly.

The Marshall-Newman marriage amendment provides, "That only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions …" Further, no other association of persons could be, "… assigned the rights, benefits, obligations, qualities, or effects of marriage."

Virginia's marriage amendment received 1,328,537 "yes" votes, to 999,687 "no" votes. This 57% pro-traditional marriage majority out-polled U.S. Senate candidates Democrat Jim Webb's 1,175,606 votes and Republican George Allen's 1,166,277 votes.

We are in this quandary because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in Obergefel vs. Hodges (June 26, 2015) that the 14th Amendment requires states to issue marriage licenses to two persons of the same sex and recognize same-sex marriages from other states.

But as long as the one man, one woman marriage amendment stays in Virginia's Constitution, its enforcement is suspended until either repealed by Virginia voters at a general election or the Supreme Court reverses itself.

To undo the effects of the 2006 marriage vote, Democrats introduced **House Resolution 9**, which would abolish the traditional definition of marriage voters put into our Constitution, but fail to replace it with another definition.

While odd, the 2015 Obergefel decision striking down the traditional one-man, one-woman marriage standard of roughly 40 states also had no marriage definition.

Chief Justice John Roberts' Obergefel dissent noted that:

- "… petitioners conceding that they are not aware of any society that permitted same-sex marriage before 2001;"
- "It is striking how much of the majority's reasoning would apply with equal force to the claim of a fundamental right to plural marriage;"
- The majority justices, "portray everyone who does not share the majority's 'better informed understanding' as bigoted."

The Democrats' anti-marriage proposal states Virginia may not, "deny the issuance of a marriage license to two adult persons seeking a lawful marriage on the basis of the sex, gender, or race of such persons."

Democrats also want the following language removed from Virginia's present marriage amendment: " … assigned the rights, benefits, obligations, qualities, or effects of marriage." Apparently Democrats can't think of any benefits or rights, etc., relating to one-man, one-woman marriage.

The Marriage and Religion Institute notes, "Marriage is the foundational relationship for all of society. All other relationships in society stem from the father-mother relationship, and these other relationships thrive most if that father-mother relationship is simultaneously a close and a closed husband-wife relationship." MRI catalogues **164 practical individual and social benefits** from natural marriage.

The Democrats' marriage repeal amendment has no conscience or religious exemption protecting clerics or members of religious denominations, business owners and others with moral or ethical objections from having to support, endorse, recognize or participate in, contract for, provide professional services or publicly recognize what "woke" ideology or social fashion calls marriage.

Roberts noted in Obergefel that not providing a religious or similar exemption will cause problems for persons of faith, such as, " … when … a religious college provides married student housing only to opposite-sex married couples, or a religious adoption agency declines to place children with same-sex married couples. Indeed, the Solicitor General candidly acknowledged that the tax exemptions of some religious institutions would be in question if they opposed same-sex marriage."

And the Democrats' marriage repeal amendment puts the word "gender" into Virginia's Constitution. But making gender an aspect of fundamental rights could adversely impact women's and girls' sports and privacy; broaden sexual harassment liability; eradicate parental consent over preventing schools or other third parties from providing sex change drugs/surgery; affect school books and much more.

Tell your delegate and senator to reject HR9.

Former Del. Bob Marshall served 26 years in the General Assembly, representing Manassas Park and parts of Prince William and Loudoun counties.

Originally Published: December 28, 2024 at 6:05 PM EST

https://www.pilotonline.com/2024/12/28/column-democrats-take-aim-at-virginias-marriage-amendment/

The Rule of Law and Order…

JANUARY 10, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Civil Rights and Sovereignty

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live.* —Proverbs 4:4

Monday, the House of Representatives "certified" the Electoral College vote count and determined the election for Donald J. Trump. For the first time since 1988, no Democrats in Congress objected to the results of the counting.

In truth Congress doesn't actually certify the election insomuch as they tally the vote. It's not even the same as UL Certified which means a product meets a certain testing requirement. UL's certification is awarded to a product that is tested for one *specific* standard.

Regardless, certification is still a valuable tool in safeguarding both tradition and the rule of law.

To certify, is *verb transitive* to testify to in writing; to make a declaration in writing, under hand, or hand and seal, to make known or establish a fact.

To be clear, the metric of 1988 is used because the House would have hardly objected to the count in 1992, since **Bill Clinton** handily won the election that year. But they certainly did in 2000. For the benefit of the Millennials, that year was the most contentious in modern history regarding the Electoral College count.

In *Bush v. Gore* legal case, decided on December 12, 2000, in which the Supreme Court of the United States reversed an order by the Florida Supreme Court for a selective manual recount of that state's U.S. presidential election ballots. The 5–4 per curiam (unsigned) decision effectively awarded Florida's 25 Electoral College votes to Republican candidate **George W. Bush**, thereby ensuring his victory over Democratic candidate **Al Gore**.

The 2000 election sparked certain Democrat leaders like **Bill Clinton** and **Barak Obama** to advocate for scrapping the electoral college.

But unlike 25 years prior, this election was not even close. An exhausted, weary, and increasingly wary electorate—which is "we the people," discovered just how bad government could get.

By most metrics, it would be the people who decided the civil authorities were no longer civil.

"The mission of civil government," writes **Gerald R. Thompson**, "is therefore two-fold: a) to punish wrongdoers; and b) to commend what is right (in the American tradition, to secure individual rights). As to punishing wrongdoers, this includes not only punishing criminals, but also providing a means of redress for private litigants who have disputes over breaches of contract, property claims, injuries to persons, or other damages, etc. These are essentially the same means used for protecting individual rights."

It would *seem* impossible to consider prehistorical man without acknowledging and understanding the story of man as explained in the book of Genesis. One reason so many people don't appreciate the role the Bible plays in the modern understanding of history is due to the century long depreciation of it by unbelieving malefactors.

You will hear some tell you the Bible is not a history book. But the Bible does indeed contain historical stories. The issue with these people is these stories have not always aligned with what are excepted historical facts.

What are the historical facts? What is the historical record?

A historical record is a collection of sources of information about the past that provide insights into people, events, and societies. These records can include:

- written documents, artifacts, oral histories, government documents, newspapers, personal letters, and photographs.
- Historical records can be kept permanently because of their long-term research use. They can exist in a variety of formats, including: digital, audio, video, film, and microfilm.
- Examples of historical records include:
- Marriage licenses, Draft cards, Birth certificates, Census records, Military service records, Immigration records, and Naturalization records.

Historical records are important for understanding past events, cultures, and societies. They help historians piece together narratives and analyze the factors that led to significant changes.

What better source than the Bible to aid historians in this endeavor?

Ironically, most historians, apart from the honest ones, accept Noah as merely a mythical figure. For them, "there is no evidence for his existence outside ancient **folkloric tradition**," according to *The Guardian* in their review of the 2014 movie disaster of the same name. For them, the Bible is only folklore.

Russell Crow in "Noah"

Even so, for the people of book, we might think of this election as cause for hope of a return to the First Principles:

- *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.* (1 Pet. 2:13-14)
- *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.* (Rom. 13:1)

Consider: Among the things just these last four years in particular have shown us are our national sins: the blasphemy of pride, the dominion of the powerful, the assault on women, the butchery of children, the elevation of ideologies over truth, the loss of the family, and the defilement of God's covenants.

But the last four years also showed us how many made assumptions concerning our understanding of the civil authorities as instituted by God.

These same authorities first accepted, then endorsed, then promoted, then legislated these sins against God. It seems even the unsaved have come to understand this now.

While many are understandably taking a victory lap over Trump's win, there are plenty who don't consider it a victory at all. They only see instead, the loss of the very things I listed as abominations to the Lord. The God of the Bible—the book they say that history sees only as mythology.

They will not easily loosen their grip on power.

The true power of the government is in the hands of the governed. It must be the governed who advance needed reforms. But how?

Voting is but one part of the equation. Education is another. Within the framework of socialist doctrine, everything must be centralized. This results in the loss of subsidiarity.

Subsidiarity is the principle of social organization that holds that local authorities are better suited to perform certain functions than a central authority. There is at least one other important factor that must be observed.

Interestingly, this will be the resurgence of Christianity attributed to an increase of certain immigration groups, which in turn is being attributed to its rapid rise around the world.

These same people are rejecting the Marxist/socialist/centralized schemes we have endured these last four years. It's funny how God, in time, will work these things out.

Homelessness is Not Where the Heart Is

JANUARY 5, 2025
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Because the Statistics Are Heartless

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *"For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land'"* —Deuteronomy 15:11

If you have ever worked or lived in a big city, you know the issue of America's homeless population has been a shoulder-shrugging topic for generations. When it gets up close and personal though, it's hard to ignore.

In my much younger days, I usually worked the swing-shift at the *Herald Examiner*—Los Angeles' other newspaper. (Yes, that was actually the slogan they used when competing against the Los Angeles Times.)

I remember one time I took the morning shift for a vacationing co-worker, and arrived to work well before the crack of dawn. Entering by the back door, I encountered a drunk fast asleep. That may have been the moment I determined that this job was not likely to develop into a long-term relationship with me much longer.

The newspaper was housed on the corner of 11th and Broadway in downtown L.A. in a wonderful mission-style building. The "Her-Ex" published both a morning and afternoon edition before declining readership forced it to become the only afternoon paper. The ten year-old strike ended my last day on the job. The paper shut down in November of 1989.

The derelict inebriate I stepped over that morning was sleeping it off in the only warm shelter he managed to find. To say he had no home to go to would have been an understatement.

Homelessness is defined as a lack of stable, safe, and adequate housing, or the means to obtain it. The definition of homelessness can include:

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1. **Living in a place not meant for habitation,** and includes sleeping in a hallway, bus station, library, or car.

2. **Living in a temporary shelter.** This includes living in a congregate shelter, transitional housing, or a hotel paid for by the government or some charitable organization.

3. **Homelessness can mean Living with someone else.** This includes living in the home of another person temporarily, or living with a parent or guardian. This definition might include a semi-permanent situation if the person is a recent college graduate.

4. **Fleeing domestic violence.** This includes fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous conditions.

5. **Having no lease or ownership interest in a permanent domicile.** This includes families or unaccompanied youth who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 days.

6. **Having moved multiple times.** This includes families or unaccompanied youth who have moved two or more times in the last 60 days.

7. **Being likely to lose housing.** This includes individuals who are likely to lose their housing within two weeks.

There is another scenario that is accounting for an increased number of homeless people—the not necessarily in-tact families who were hustled into the US by an immigration "system" that *encouraged* migrants—illegal aliens—to enter the country across an open border.

Haley Strack, National Review

As a result, "Homelessness in the United States rose 18.1 percent this year, according to newly released data from the Department for Housing and Urban Development. Federal authorities counted 770,000 people as homeless across the country, the highest recorded number," writes **Haley Strack** for *National Review* on December 27.

If that number seems small in comparison to the wildly varying estimates of migrants entering the country illegally the last four years, you must remember these figures are based on the data collected just since 2023, and may not include the millions who were already released to families who are not always their relatives. (refer to reason number 3) This situation is a big factor in any serious discussion on homelessness.

As would be expected, the homeless crisis is having the greatest impact on the most vulnerable: children.

Among America's undocumented—an excepted euphemism for illegal migrants, there are one million children under 18[i] and 4.4 million under 30[ii] living in America out of the estimated total of 11.1 million undocumented immigrants.[iii]

The figures don't begin to describe how being undocumented affects children brought into this country. In the video, "Undocumented Americans," three undocumented youth recount the issues they face.

The Feds are boasting of the reported drop in illegal migration following Biden's Presidential Proclamation 10773, designed to temporarily suspend and limit the entry of certain noncitizens at the southern border. The proclamation only took effect June 5, 2024. Too little, too late?

The high number of encounters were straining the US immigration system, so both Departments of Homeland Security and Department of Justice issued an interim final rule limiting asylum eligibility, further enhancing intervention and accountability at the border.

Some places are worse than others, but not necessarily because of proximity to the border. Understandably, California has the highest number of homeless counted: 187,084, while New York comes in at second place with 158,019 people. This was a jump of 53% from 2023 to 2024.

But California's stats appear to be as much a matter of a political shell game than a responsible program for dealing with the homeless.

Jack Crowe, also writing for National Review reports, "The State of California has allocated $24 billion over the past five years to address homelessness, but no one is quite sure how that vast sum of taxpayer money has been spent or whether it's making any difference."

He continues, "The State lacks current information on the ongoing costs and outcomes of its homelessness programs, because Cal ICH has not consistently tracked and evaluated the State's efforts to prevent and end homelessness," state auditor **Grant Parks** wrote in his introduction to the revealing report.

To put it in perspective, since 2019, California has spent a little less than the entire GDP of the Republic of Georgia. Yet, homelessness in the state has only gotten worse. Roughly 30% of the US's entire homeless population is now unhoused in California.

A common misconception with many is that substance abuse is the leading cause of homelessness, but The National Coalition for the Homeless emphasizes that many people turn to drug use only **after** experiencing homelessness.

Compared with the heated controversy of H-1B visas, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and open borders, America's melting pot resembles more of a chamber pot. Fixing the mess will not be easy or without a lot of pain. But it is big problem that will only worsen for every American over time.

Churches and denominational missions, as well as rescue missions all across America should have both the means and incentive to participate, if not lead in the efforts to work on bringing measurable results and real change to this issue.

- *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed"* —Psalm 34:18

i. **Passel & Cohn, 2011** – **http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/unauthorized-immigrant-population-brnational-and-state-trends-2010/**

ii. **Passel & Lopez, 2012** – **http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/14/up-to-1-7-million-unauthorized-immigrant-youth-may-benefit-from-new-deportation-rules/**

iii. **Passel & Cohn, 2012** – **http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/12/06/unauthorized-immigrants-11-1-million-in-2011/**

Photo by **Fredrick Lee** on **Unsplash**

Ms. Candace––Pretty Little Virulent Racist

DECEMBER 29, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Pretty counts, and pretty girls know from the time they're two-years-old that prettiness has power.

Brains count, and pretty girls with brains are quite thrilled when they realize––about age four or five––that they've been doubly blessed.

Pretty brainy Black girls who were born into the right era came of age during the Obama regime. But sometimes those pretty brainy Black girls realized that if they wanted to get noticed, they could never join the poor-me, I'm-a-victim, racist mantra of Obama's Democrat Party.

They knew they would have to distinguish themselves in an original and unexpected way, sort of like the hooker Gypsy Rose Lee, in the Broadway musical "Gypsy," who sang **"Ya Gotta Have a Gimmick."**

Aha! Why don't we go the conservative route? Here is just **one list** of strong, independent-thinking, and often courageous Black women who were authentic in their embrace of conservatism.

Also on that list is pretty, brainy Black Candace Owens, but who was 100% fake and fraudulent in her conservatism––which is not racist––but who cleverly used that political identity to insinuate her way into widespread recognition.

WHEN BEING A PHONY WORKS

From the start of her Oscar-worthy performance as an authentic conservative, Candace wanted you to know that she was nothing like those historically racist Democrats who created the Ku Klux Klan and **created the Jim Crow laws** which mandated racial segregation in all public facilities and were embraced by President Woodrow Wilson, Alabama Governor George Wallace ("segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever") and West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, et al – all Democrats! The Party that also voted *against* the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Acts of 1968, and the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972.

Ms. Smarty Pants Candace wanted you to know how loathsome she considered racism and that she was acutely aware of and in contempt of the facts that:

- In the 1980s, Democrat Senator Joe Biden supported the election of Robert Byrd (D-WVA), a former Exalted Cyclops and Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan who also recruited 150 of his friends to start a new KKK chapter, as well as **using the N-word on live television in 2001**. When Sen. Byrd died, Sen. Biden delivered an impassioned eulogy about his treasured friend.
- In the 1970s, a Democrat Congress named the Old Senate Office Building in honor of Richard Russell, a staunch segregationist from Georgia.

- And going back, in the late 1930s, Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt nominated Hugo Black, also a former Klansman, to the U.S. Supreme Court, where he served for decades.
- Even further back, it was Democrats who **fought ferociously against** President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which freed 3.5 million Black slaves.

Ms. Candace wanted to emphasize that she, Ms. Conservative, was totally unlike those vicious racist Democrats, those "tolerant" liberals.

THE TRIGGER FACTOR

Then came October 7, 2023, when the career terrorists from Hamas violently raped, tortured, and gleefully slaughtered 1,200 Israeli civilians, took hundreds of hostages, and then filmed their savagery in order for the world to see their maniacal, murderous mentality.

Apparently, this bloodthirsty act animated Candace Owens, mobilized something within her that she had successfully concealed from the people who put her on the map––most prominently Orthodox Jews Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro––and unleashed her colossally virulent, indeed malignant, hatred of both Jews and Israel. Just go to any search engine and put in *Candace Owens – antisemitism* to see the geyser of invective and lies she has vomited out since October 7, 2023.

Since then, she has been a leader in the pack of anti-Semites which recently garnered her the top award––among stiff competition––from **StopAntisemitism.org** as Anti-Semite of the Year for her non-stop blood libels, manufactured narratives, vicious lies, and fanatical obsession with, yep, both Jews and Israel…even going so far on her YouTube channel to defend Hitler and question historical facts about the Holocaust.

THE HATE FACTOR

In the history of the world, there has never been a baby born with hate in his or her heart. Hate is taught. Hate is learned, usually at a very early age, from people who have great influence in shaping the thoughts and feelings of the recipients of their hate.

Did Candace learn her volcanic hatred of Jews from her parents. teachers, coaches, counselors, religious gurus, TV, radio, Democrats?

Or is Candace yet another "I'm a victim" Black person who is angry that Democrats destroyed the Black family, and that Democrats destroyed Black education, but like them suffers from terminal envy at the success of the Jews, who only comprise a miniscule 0.2 percent in America––or about six-million Jews, out of a population of over 330 million––while Blacks comprise a significantly greater number at 14 percent?

THE HUMAN PSYCHE

The human race is driven by emotion. It's nice to fantasize that we're driven by empiricism, facts, objective truths. But both history and everyday life contradict that fantasy. Emotion rules the day.

The most powerful human emotion is fear. We all know that it was fear that literally shut down the entire world because of the Covid-19 so-called pandemic.

The second most powerful emotion is jealousy. Most crimes––including murder––are committed in the name of this raging sentiment, and lesser crimes and everyday hostility are also caused by the monster of green-eyed envy.

On the surface, it seems obvious that Candace and her ilk are experiencing blind jealousy. "How come," they seem to be asking themselves, "that with all my intelligence, talent, charm, connections, good looks and money, it's the Jews who run Hollywood and the music business and Wall St. and the media…and me???"

After jealousy, the third and hugely powerful emotion is anger, an easy emotion to access, whether it involves dealing with an irritating relative, witnessing a boyfriend who hurt your daughter's feelings, hitting a pothole that breaks your axle, even trying to reach your doctor by pushing 2, then 4, then 7, then more horrible music.

THE LAST LAYER OF THE EMOTIONAL ONION

Underneath the paralyzing layer of fear, below the obsessive nature of jealousy, under the blind rage and anger, there is the devastating emotion of despair. Of feeling that it's all too much, too impossible, too overwhelming. This is the stuff of clinical depression. This is the stuff of suicide.

After all, fear and jealousy and anger are mobilizing! What can I do? Which protest group can I join? Who can I wreak my revenge on?

But despair has no allies. It is lonely. It is scary. It is immobilizing.

It is also what the legion of anti-Semites are most afraid of, with good reason, as suicides among Blacks have **recently escalated dramatically**.

Is this what Candace Owens' fanatical obsession with Jews and Israel is all about? Does this explain her fulminating vomitus of rage? Is she fleeing from despair, or is she exulting in being the Black version of David Duke?

Bottom line, it doesn't matter. Like all soapbox fanatics, her influence will wane, and she will join the pantheon of other racists who are remembered solely for their rank repulsive racist hatred.

At this point, Candace fits neatly into my Vessel Theory of human behavior, which is simply that no matter how fancy or decorative a vessel appears to be, the real measure of its value is its contents. A beautiful crystal vase, for instance, might contain urine; a ceramic creation, sludge, while a plain vessel might pour out pure spring water.

Lesson: what's inside is the real thing!

THE SOLUTION

The absolute cure for Black rage, jealousy, anger, and despair lies in one simple word: Emulate!

Spend one month of your entire life living with an observant Jewish family, reading the Bible, learning of the extreme emphasis Jews place on family unity, education, philanthropy, and mitzvahs––good deeds that can range from a simple smile to building a cancer research center to rushing all over the world to **help in disaster areas**.

Study why Jews, because of vicious discrimination, were forced literally to **create Hollywood**, why they **were forced to build** some of the best medical and research centers in America because they were barred from internships and residencies; the list of survival strategies is long and impressive.

Stop your jealousy. Stop your rage. Start joining us Jews in fighting the real enemy, the actual powerful forces that have kept you down, defeated, and depressed: Liberals, Leftists, and Progressive Democrats and a horrific public-education system.

Or, alternatively, stay in your perpetual rageful victim mode and see how far you've progressed in the next five or 10 or 1,000 years!

*Joan Swirsky is a New York-based journalist and author. Her website is **www.joanswirsky.com**, and she can be reached at **joanswirsky@gmail.com***

So Much Preventable Degradation

DECEMBER 19, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

So Very Little Time to Stop It

By J. Jeff Toler for Shenandoah Christian Alliance **j.toler@sca4christ.org**

- *As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.* —Psalm 103:12

I receive emails from **Jonathan Haidt** of *After Babel* every week. **On December 12**, he writes of a situation that is both alarming and heartbreaking: the likely failure in implementing **KOSA**—the Kids Online Safety Act. The bill passed the Senate by a true landslide vote of 91 to 3. It passed the House where it "also enjoys strong bipartisan support."

"And then, after all that work and all that support, the House leadership **kills the bill** without giving any believable justification." Speaker **Mike Johnson** has said that he is killing the bill because he **still has free speech concerns**.

KOSA is legislation to prevent child sexualization, and because there is enormous, documented evidence that the need for such a bill to prevent the child sexual predation by users of online platforms like **TikTok** and **Snapchat**.

Internal documentation from **ByteDance**, who owns TikTok, reveal comments by one company executive who plainly says, "The product in itself has baked into its compulsive use." Another stated, "The reason kids watch TikTok is because the is really good. But I think we need to be cognizant of what it might mean for other opportunities. And when I say other opportunities, I literally mean sleep, and eating, and moving around the room, and looking at somebody in the eyes."

As of this moment, TikTok is releasing content that contains "35.71% of 'Normalization of Pedophilia content,' 33.33% of 'Minor Sexual Solicitation' content, 39.13% of 'Minor Physical Abuse' content, 30.36% of 'Leading Minors Off Platform' content—taking them to porn sites for example, 50% of 'Glorification of Minor Sexual Assault' and 100% of 'Fetishizing Minors' content was missed by TikTok's content moderation process."

So, why would House leadership, when they have a perfectly serviceable tool for putting a stop to such predations, put a halt to KOSA's passage?

According to *The Hill* correspondent **Miranda Navarro**, "House Speaker **Mike Johnson** (R-La.) cautioned Republicans against rushing to pass a bill to protect kids and teens online on Tuesday as the GOP prepares to take control of the White House and Congress."

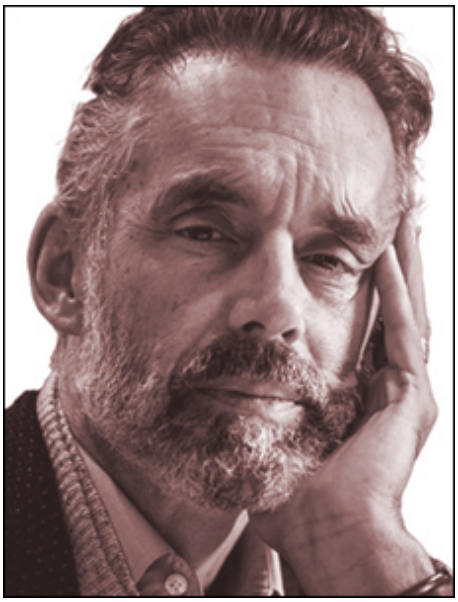
"While he said he is '100 percent' supportive of the principles behind , he still has concerns about the measure's implications for free speech. When you're… dealing with the regulation of free speech," he told reporters, "you can't go too far and it be over-broad, but you want to achieve those objectives. So, it's essential that we get this issue right."

While that might be true, at the very least, the case could be made for a distinction between free speech and the promulgation of child porn and abuse. This bill is likely to come up again in the 2025 legislature calendar. We need to make sure it does and encourage our Speaker Johnson and all our representatives to pass it. I plan on writing and phoning his office, and encourage others to do the same.

No Moral Restraint: Presidential Pardons and Selling Our Security

Few were surprised **President Joe Biden** pardoned his profligate son, in spite of repeated, and emphatic denials he would do so. Surveys show only two in ten Americans approve of the decision. He has followed it with hundreds of pardons and commutations since, many a little questionable, like former , convicted of child sex racketeering in 2011.

The Hunter pardon itself is unprecedented given the scope of it. But if we think Mr. Biden did what any loving father would do, it's arguable that he isn't even now doing his son any favors.



Dr. Jordan B. Petersen

Dr. Jordan Petersen gives an analysis of the sordid and pathetic story of Joe and Hunter Biden that brought them to this point. In a *DailyWire* exclusive, Petersen presents the "psychology and pathology associated with narcissism, addiction, infantilization, enablement, and an unyielding ability to lie, all of which have mixed perfectly to forever spoil an already tarnished Biden legacy and upend the current iteration of the Democratic Party."

The timing of the "laptop from hell," as it's now known, Hunter's drug use, and massive conflicts of interest schemes are a massive moral failing. America is again, subjected to humiliation on the world stage because of it. But an act of love? Hardly. It's much more likely a pitiable last-ditch act of self-preservation.

Peterson analyzes Hunter's potential vengeful motives by citing the timing of his laptop leak, likely with the incentive to undermine his father's presidency. He raises Hunter's affair with his brother's widow. The leaked sex tape indicates manipulative and vengeful behavior. All of this was a result of, and exacerbated by, his enabling parents.

This has become the very public reveal of Biden's codependent parenting. Being the youngest sibling, Hunter likely tried and failed repeatedly to gain favor with his father. But if he was angered by his older brother being the favorite, would that surprise us? Bedding his brother's widow is likely confirmation.

The Biden's have a history of portraying Hunter as a victim of addiction and unfair prosecution, but not holding him accountable for his criminal acts.

Some say this approach reflects the Liberal progressives' tendency to view criminals as victims, rather than recognizing the reality of evil and the need for accountability.

The Biden family is a particularly sad story. But the damage of decades of grifting, opportunism, and cynical politics is come to an end. We hope.

And Finally, a Heart-breaking, Horrifying Story of Self-Loathing

Lily Phillips. Few, not any, of my readers will have heard of her. This is a good thing, because she is the star of a very profitable *OnlyFans* channel in the UK. For the uninitiated, *OnlyFans* is a social

media platform and video hosting service where content creators can share exclusive content with subscribers who pay for access.

What kind of content? *OnlyFans* is primarily known for its adult content, but creators can also share content in other industries, such as fitness, music, and art. But make no mistake, it's really a porn site.

Phillips made the news recently In the **Josh Pieters** documentary titled, *I Slept With 100 Men in One Day*. To date, she reportedly has made millions of dollars with her channel.

Her story would have gone unnoticed save for a YouTube clip that went viral and was picked up by more than a few mainstream outlets. Phillips can be seen breaking down in tears, and walking away from the camera after she says she felt somewhat "robotic" sleeping with that many men in one day.

But what she also confessed is even more heart-breaking. Phillips told Pieters at one point during the 47-minute documentary—which has garnered nearly 3.5 million views in a week, "My parents knew straight from the start about what I was doing. I was very open with it." Mercy.

There are reasons for hope and enthusiasm with the political changes today, but we are far from breathing fresh air. Because these news stories are not-so-happy reminders we continue to live in a sick, sinful, and dying world.

In addition to writing your congressman, make this the advent season that our prayers might include redemption for the Biden and Phillips families, and certainly for the rescue and protection of the children and families who are targets of depravity, manipulation, and abuse.

I know this wasn't easy to read. It wasn't easy to write.

Photo by **Heather Zabriskie** on **Unsplash**

You Pick: The Dark Side of the Moon or the Light of Heaven

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

I was 20 years old, in the USN, when **Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon** was released. I played it over and over back then; it resonated with me as a young man full of so many tugs-of-war in both the physical and spiritual realms and the devil was winning; would continue dominating my life for some years. The laser show on October 3rd at the **Science Museum of Virginia** hit my radar and brought back that flood of memories. Their website:

> Rock out to the timeless music of ***Pink Floyd*** while being mesmerized by a unique light show. Enjoy the tunes you know and love from the artist's 1973 concept album that is among the most critically acclaimed of all time.

Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* resonates with many as a profound exploration of the human experience, touching on themes like mental health, materialism, time, and the inherent struggles of life. It portrays a world steeped in darkness, grappling with the transient nature of existence and the often unfulfilled pursuit of meaning.

However, when juxtaposed with the biblical promise of heaven, this album's view of life starkly contrasts with the hope, light, and eternal joy offered in Christ.

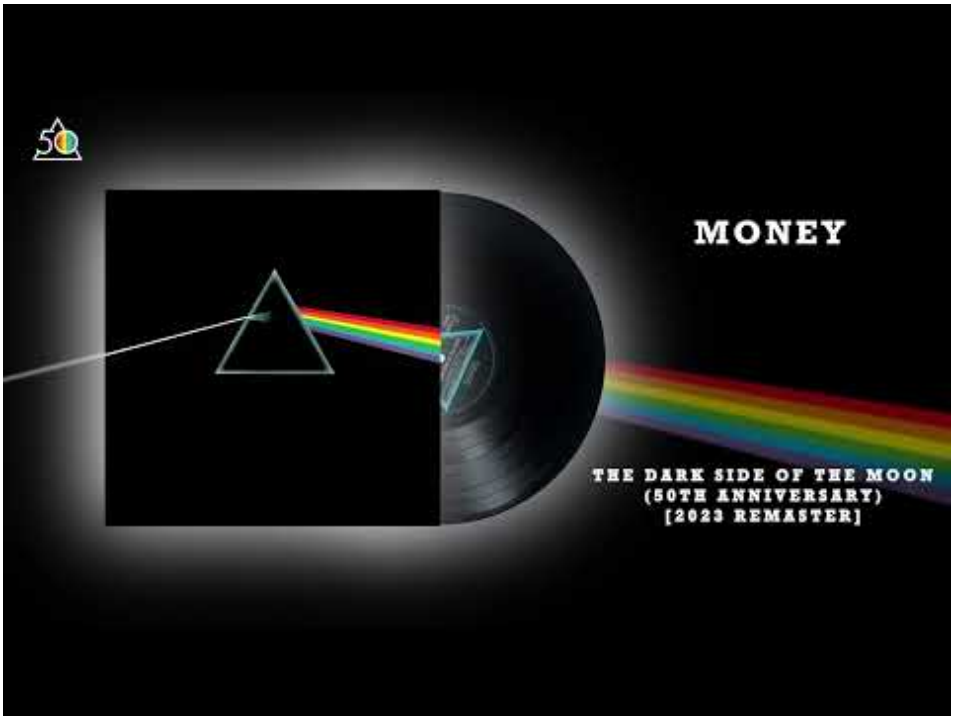
In *The Dark Side of the Moon*, we see a depiction of life bound by temporal realities and the inescapable shadows that loom over humanity. Yet, as believers, we are called to a different narrative—one not dominated by the darkness but by the light of God. As 1 John 1:5 declares, '*God is light; in him, there is no darkness at all*.' This truth draws a line between the worldly darkness the album explores and the divine light that awaits us in heaven.

The Darkness of Life on Earth

Throughout the album, songs like '*Time*' and '*Money*' explore the futility of human pursuits and the inevitable decay of life. 'Time' warns of how life slips away unnoticed, encapsulating the regret many feel as they realize the wasted years. Similarly, '*Money*' exposes the emptiness of materialism, highlighting how wealth cannot fill the void in our souls.

Pink Floyd - Time (2023 Remaster)
https://youtube.com/watch?v=yl-Ms_ek-kE

Pink Floyd - Money (2023 Remaster)
https://youtube.com/watch?v=2aW7HweAf3o

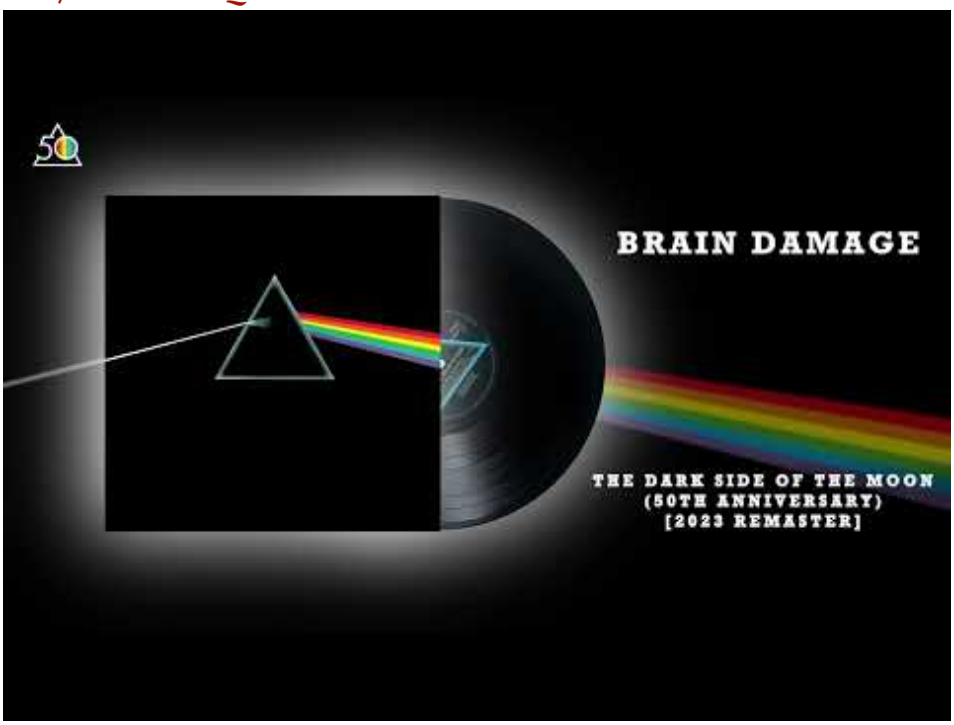


"Money" started as a satire on the capitalist lifestyle. Waters wrote it with a sense of irony, highlighting society's obsession with wealth.

These themes align with biblical teachings on the vanity of life without God. Ecclesiastes 1:2 says, 'Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher. Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.' Without the hope of Christ, life can feel like a cycle of endless striving, with darkness overshadowing our existence.

Moreover, the album's treatment of mental health and inner struggles, particularly in '*Brain Damage*,' reflects the human condition's brokenness. We live in a fallen world where sin, suffering, and sorrow are constant companions. Romans 8:22 tells us, 'We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.' The groaning of creation speaks to the darkness present in this world—a darkness that can be overwhelming and seemingly inescapable.

Pink Floyd - Brain Damage (2023 Remaster)
https://youtube.com/watch?v=QFdkM40KOhE



"Brain Damage" deals with mental illness and was inspired by the band's experiences with their former bandmate Syd Barrett, who suffered a mental breakdown due to his heavy drug use and the pressures of fame.

Heaven: The Inheritance of Light and Love

In stark contrast, the Bible presents heaven as a place of ultimate light, peace, and joy. For the believer, heaven is not just an abstract concept but a real and promised inheritance. As 1 Peter 1:4 describes, it is 'an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.' Heaven is not merely a place; it is the full, glorious presence of God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a relationship fulfilled, where we will experience perfect communion with God, free from the shadows of this world. While *The Dark Side of the Moon* paints a picture of life constrained by the passing of time and the darkness of human experience, heaven offers a reality that transcends our current understanding. Revelation 21:4 promises, 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' This is the inheritance of the believer—a life in the presence of God where the darkness of this world is replaced by the light of His glory.

The Light of God and the Hope of Heaven

Heaven is fundamentally a place of light because it is the dwelling place of God, who is light. In heaven, we will experience the fullness of God's presence, and there will be no need for the sun or moon because God's glory will illuminate it (Revelation 21:23). While the album reflects on the darkness of human experience, heaven is the manifestation of God's love and light in its purest form. 1 John 4:16 reminds us, 'God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.' Heaven is the culmination of God's love for us, a place where we will dwell in perfect relationship with Him forever.

Our Heavenly Inheritance

As believers, our hope is not anchored in the fleeting realities of this world. We anticipate the fulfillment of God's promise—a place where we will dwell in unbroken fellowship with the triune God. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prays that 'the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.' This inheritance is not bound by the darkness that pervades our earthly existence. Instead, it is characterized by the radiant presence of God, where we will experience a perfect relationship with Him. Our heavenly inheritance is beyond comprehension. 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Corinthians 2:9). While *The Dark Side of the Moon* captures the limits of human understanding and the futility of earthly pursuits, the Bible offers a glimpse of a future that transcends our current reality. This future is one of eternal joy, peace, and fulfillment, found only in the presence of God.

Heaven: A Relationship Fulfilled

Heaven is not just a place of beauty or activity; it is a place of perfect relationship with God. John 14:23 states, 'Jesus replied, Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.' This promise indicates that our ultimate inheritance is God Himself. In heaven, we will experience an intimate relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—a relationship untainted by sin, suffering, or the limitations of our earthly bodies. In heaven, the darkness of the 'dark side' will be no more. We will be transformed, fitted with new bodies to dwell in God's presence eternally. Philippians 3:21 assures us that Christ 'will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.' This transformation is necessary because our current bodies are not equipped for the glory of heaven. In heaven, we will enjoy perfect peace, joy, and fulfillment, all drawn from our relationship with the triune God.

Conclusion: From Darkness to Light

The Dark Side of the Moon resonates with many because it captures the struggles and darkness inherent in the human condition. Yet, as believers, we are not destined to dwell in this darkness. Through Christ, we are called into the marvelous light of God's presence. Our inheritance is not the fleeting shadows of this world but the eternal light and love of heaven. In heaven, the themes of struggle, darkness, and despair that pervade the human experience will be replaced with the joy of perfect communion with God.

We will live forever in a place of peace and joy, not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done for us. We will be in the full presence of the triune God, where His light will shine forever, dispelling all darkness.

As Revelation 22:5 proclaims, 'There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.' In contrast to the dark side of life portrayed by *Pink Floyd*, heaven is a place where God's love and light reign supreme. It is our inheritance as children of God—a promise that can never perish, spoil, or fade. In heaven, we will find the fulfillment of our deepest longings in the presence of the One who is Light and Love.

The Peace of Christ | Promises of God

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: PROMISES OF GOD, TRIBULATION, TRUSTING JESUS

The Promises of God

God's promises are irrevocable

Matthew 18:19 - **Answered Prayer**: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." **Matthew 11:28** - **Burdened People**: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." **John 14:27** - **Christ's Peace:** "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." **1 Corinthians 6:14** - **Death is not the End**: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." **Jeremiah 32:40** - **Everlasting Covenant:** "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." **Psalm 103:12** - **Forgiveness**: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."	**Joshua 1:9** - **God's Presence**: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." **Ezekiel 36:26** - **Heart and Spirit:** "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." **Psalm 32:8** - **Instruction**: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." **Mark 9:31** - **Jesus' Resurrection**: "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." **2 Peter 1** - **Knowledge of God**: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." **John 6:63** - **Life from the Spirit**: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The promises of God reveal his particular and eternal purposes to which he is unchangeably committed and upon which believers can totally depend. These promises are, however, conditional upon obedience on the part of believers.

John 14:27 – Christ's Peace

(John 14:27) "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Introduction:
In a world filled with anxiety and uncertainty, peace can seem out of reach. The world offers temporary solutions that often leave us feeling more restless. In John 14:27, Jesus promises a peace that transcends circumstances—a peace only He can provide. This promise is a cornerstone of our faith, reminding us that Christ's peace is different, deeper, and everlasting.

The Nature of Christ's Peace

Christ's peace is more than the absence of conflict. It is a profound sense of well-being that flows from a relationship with Him. In John 14:27, Jesus speaks directly to His disciples, knowing they will face trials and tribulations. Yet, He offers them His peace—a peace that remains steadfast regardless of their circumstances.

This peace comes from knowing that God is in control. It is the calm assurance that God's presence and promises are real. Unlike worldly peace, which often depends on favorable conditions, Christ's peace sustains us even in the storms of life. It guards our hearts and minds, enabling us to stand firm amidst turmoil.

A Peace Unlike the World's

Jesus distinguishes His peace from what the world offers. The world's version of peace often depends on external factors like success, wealth, or temporary escapes from reality. It's a fleeting sense of calm that quickly dissipates when challenges arise. This kind of peace is fragile, easily shattered by life's inevitable disruptions.

In contrast, Christ's peace is enduring and unshakeable. It is not contingent upon our circumstances but rooted in His unchanging character. When Jesus says, "Not as the world gives do I give to you," He assures us that His peace is independent of worldly conditions. It is a gift that comes from His very presence within us, giving us stability and courage.

How to Receive Christ's Peace

Receiving Christ's peace requires a conscious act of faith. It begins with trusting Him and surrendering our anxieties to Him. We must choose to believe that Jesus' promises are true and that His peace is available to us. This involves an ongoing process of turning our worries over to God in prayer and allowing His Word to fill our hearts.

Meditating on Scripture is a powerful way to experience His peace. Verses like Philippians 4:6-7 encourage us to bring our concerns to God, promising that His peace will guard our hearts. When we immerse ourselves in God's truth, we remind ourselves of His sovereignty and love, allowing His peace to take root in our lives.

Additionally, cultivating a close relationship with Christ through prayer and worship opens our hearts to His peace. As we draw near to Him, He imparts His peace to us, calming our troubled hearts and giving us the strength to face life's challenges with confidence.

A Note on the Promises of God

God's promises serve as an anchor for believers. In a world that often seems chaotic and unpredictable, His promises provide hope and assurance. Each promise, including the peace of Christ, points us back to His faithfulness and love. This series explores these promises to help you grow in your understanding of God's heart for you. Christ's peace is a promise that not only comforts but empowers us to live victoriously.

Conclusion:
The promise of Christ's peace in John 14:27 offers comfort and hope to all believers. It is a peace that surpasses understanding, calming our fears and steadying our hearts. While the world offers fleeting forms of peace, Jesus provides a peace that endures, rooted in His love and presence. As we trust in Him, we can experience this peace that transforms our lives and enables us to navigate life's storms with assurance and strength.

Inductive Bible Study Questions:

- **Observation:** What does John 14:27 reveal about the nature of the peace Jesus offers?
- **Interpretation:** Why does Jesus emphasize that His peace is different from the world's peace? How does this distinction affect our understanding of His promise?
- **Application:** In what areas of your life do you need to experience Christ's peace? How can you actively receive this peace today?
- **Reflection:** Reflect on a time when you felt Christ's peace amid a difficult situation. How did that peace impact your thoughts and actions?

Short Prayer for Personal Application:
Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise of peace that Jesus gives. Help me to trust in Your peace that surpasses all understanding, especially when life feels overwhelming. Guide me to rest in Your presence and allow Your peace to guard my heart. May I experience the calming assurance of Your love each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Attending Church Regularly Will Lengthen Your Life More Than Diet, Exercise, Longevity Expert Says

SEPTEMBER 14, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, SALVATION

Ben Johnson | The Washington Stand

Attending church services may open the door to eternal life — but it will also extend your life on Earth more than diet or exercise, according to the foremost expert on global longevity.

Don Buettner, who **won** three Emmy Awards for his groundbreaking 2023 documentary "**Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones**," revealed the deep benefits that faith in God renders to those who want to live a long and prosperous life. Although America faces an epidemic of chronic diseases, "only about 20% of how long you live is dictated by your genes," he **told** "Mornings with Maria" on Friday, August 30. A healthy lifestyle incorporating diet, exercise, and stress management means the average person can live "12 more years in good health."

But the statistics he shared proved that an active faith in God, including weekly church attendance, had potentially the biggest impact on extending earthly life.

Buettner's documentary investigated regions in the world known for having the longest average lifespan. Researchers interviewed 263 centenarians — people who had lived to the age of 100 — and

found **all but five** “belonged to some faith-based community.”

The healthiest elderly had a common characteristic: “having a faith. We know people who go to church — or temple, or even mosque — and show up four times per month are living four to 14 years longer than people who aren’t.” The figure may come from a study finding regular church attendance **lengthened the average American’s life** by seven years — and 14 years for African Americans.

That number dwarfed other, more intuitive lifehacks, including regular exercise and diet. “For a 20-year-old, if you move away from the standard American diet towards a Blue Zone diet — which is to say whole food, plant-based — it’s worth about 10 years of extra life expectancy, and for a 60-year-old, it’s still worth about six years,” he said.

One food, particularly, stood out above others: beans. “If you’re eating a cup of beans a day, it’s worth about four extra years of life expectancy over getting your protein from less healthy sources,” he said, as he raved about minestrone soup. “Every time that you mix a grain with a bean, they come together, they make a whole protein. … These are cheap foods, they’re shelf stable, and every American can afford them.”

Those in the healthiest lifestyle moved organically, about every 20 minutes, without sitting for long periods of time. But anyone can benefit from simple exercise, such as walking. “If you have zero physical activity in your life, you can raise your life expectancy three years if you just walk 20 minutes a day,” Buettner told Bartiromo.

Strong family relationships also put years in your life. Centenaries agree on “putting family first, keeping your aging parents nearby, investing in your partner, investing in your children,” he continued. “People who are in a committed relationship are living anywhere from two to six years longer than people who are alone in life.”

If you’re keeping track, you can add three years to your life with exercise, four years by eating beans, six years by being in a committed relationship, 6-10 years by eating a whole foods and plant-based diet, and 7-14 years by going to church every week.

Another aspect of church life that may lengthen your life is stress management. A key factor in living to 100 is “downshifting: either through prayer, meditation, simply expressing gratitude before a meal.” Regular prayer incorporates “making sure our day has certain times where we lower the stress of the human condition, lower inflammation,” said Buettner, a 2011 fellow at **National Geographic** and muti-time grant awardee.

Environmental factors — including the people and businesses around you — also play a role. “If you live in a neighborhood with more than five fast food restaurants within half a mile of your home, you’re about 35% more likely to be obese than if there are fewer than three,” Buttner added. “If your three best friends are obese and unhealthy, you are 150% more likely to be overweight yourself.”

The study is but one of many that have found physical, mental, and psychological benefits of faith, Bible reading, and church attendance:

- Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued a **report**in March 2023 stating that an epidemic of loneliness has produced health impacts "even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity." Americans "**health may be undermined**" by their declining participation in "eligious or faith-based groups."

- Regular "religious practice has significant effects" in reducing the faithful's odds of dying from suicides, drug poisonings, and alcoholic liver disease, according to a 2023 **study**.
- The Blue Zones commend cultures that promote a sense of purpose. "eligious Americans tend to believe their life is meaningful more often than do those who are not religious," found a 2023 **study**.

- Americans who believe in God and value marriage are **more likely to be "very happy"**than isolated secularists, according to a **Wall Street Journal-NORC poll** taken last March. While only a thin sliver of Americans (12%) consider themselves "very happy," 68% of the happiest people surveyed say they believe in God.

- An overwhelming 82% of **Christians describe their outlook as optimistic** and take pride in their church, according to a 2023 study.
- Christians who regularly read the Bible report a higher score on the Human Flourishing Index — which measures "happiness & life satisfaction," "mental & physical health," "meaning & purpose," "character & virtue," "close societal relationships" and "financial & material stability" — than non-practicing Christians or the Nones/religiously unaffiliated, a 2023 **study** found.

- "Young-adult Gen-Xers in the *strongly religious*class across the three measurements generally reported better mental health when they reached established adulthood than those in the *nonreligious* class," reported a **2022 Syracuse University study**.

- Women who attend church at least once a week had a **68% lower chance** of dying a death of despair than non-churchgoers; men who go to church frequently lower their risk by one-third, according to a 2020 Harvard study.
- Americans who attended religious services regularly were 44% more likely to say they were "very happy" than the religiously inactive, **concluded** a 2019 Pew Research Center survey.
- A 2019 study **found** "robust effects of religiosity on depression that are stronger for the most depressed."
- Even if they leave behind religious practices, "people who attended weekly religious services or practiced daily prayer or meditation in their youth reported greater life satisfaction and

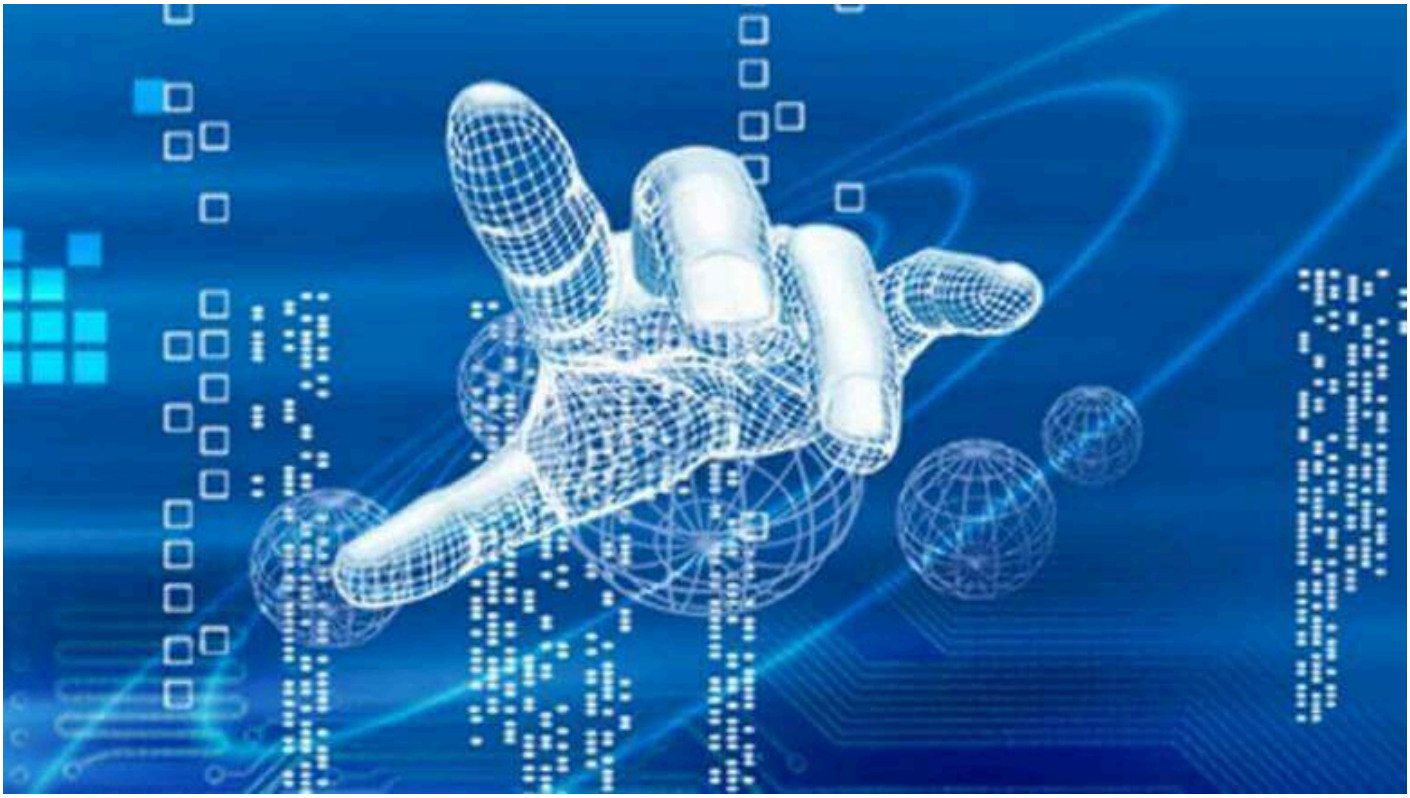
positivity in their 20s — and were less likely to subsequently have depressive symptoms, smoke, use illicit drugs, or have a sexually transmitted infection — than people raised with less regular spiritual habits," discovered a **2018 study** from Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

- A 2017 study found church attendance significantly lowers the body's reaction to stress and **cuts the worshiper's chance of dying in half**. "More frequent churchgoers (more than once a week) had a 55% reduction of all-cause mortality risk compared with non-churchgoers," reported the study.
- Attending church more than once a week reduced a woman's **likelihood of dying by 33%,** a 2016 Harvard study concluded.

SOURCE: **THE WASHINGTON STAND**

The Digital Distraction: How Smartphones Are Stealing Our Time from What is Healthy

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



In today's digital age, smartphones have become integral to our lives, offering unprecedented connectivity and convenience.

However, smartphones pose significant risks alongside their benefits, particularly in distracting us from essential aspects of life, including our spiritual well-being, relationships, and mental health. This post explores the harmful effects of smartphones on both young and old, backed by research and expert opinions, and lays the groundwork for considering a smartphone fast.

The Issue: Digital Distraction and Its Consequences
Smartphones have transformed how we communicate, work, and entertain ourselves, but their widespread use has resulted in numerous adverse effects. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, 85% of Americans own a smartphone, and many feel overly dependent on their devices (**Desiring God**). This continual connectivity can give rise to various problems, such as addiction, reduced attention spans, and hindered social interactions.
Impact on Mental Health

Excessive smartphone use has been linked to mental health problems, especially among young people. The American Psychological Association (APA) highlights that teenagers who spend more

than three hours a day on electronic devices are more likely to develop mental health issues such as anxiety and depression . This phenomenon, often termed “digital depression,” arises from the constant comparison to others on social media and the pressure to maintain an idealized online persona.

Impaired Attention and Productivity

Smartphones can severely impact our ability to focus and be productive. A study published in the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research found that the mere presence of a smartphone can reduce cognitive capacity, making it harder to concentrate on tasks. This is particularly concerning in academic and professional settings, where sustained attention is crucial for success.

Effects on Relationships

Smartphones can also undermine personal relationships. The term “phubbing” (phone snubbing) describes ignoring someone favoring a mobile device. Research shows that phubbing can lead to decreased relationship satisfaction and increased feelings of loneliness. In family settings, excessive smartphone use can create emotional distance between parents and children, eroding the quality of family interactions.

Spiritual Implications

For Christians, the overuse of smartphones can interfere with spiritual practices. The Bible emphasizes the importance of setting aside time for prayer, reflection, and communion with God (Matthew 6:6). However, constant notifications and the lure of digital content can make it difficult to find the quiet time needed for these spiritual disciplines.

Distraction from Spiritual Growth

Digital distractions can impede spiritual growth by diverting attention from activities that nurture one’s faith. Tony Reinke, author of “12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You,” argues that smartphones create a fragmented mind, making it difficult to meditate on Scripture and engage deeply with spiritual truths (**Desiring God**). This distraction can weaken one’s relationship with God and reduce the effectiveness of spiritual practices.

Erosion of Christian Community

Smartphones can also impact the sense of community within the church. While technology can facilitate communication and outreach, it can also lead to superficial interactions. Online connections, though beneficial, cannot fully replace the depth and accountability of face-to-face fellowship. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to meet regularly to encourage one another, a practice that can be diminished by overreliance on digital communication.

Harm Across Generations

The adverse effects of smartphones are not limited to young people; older adults are also at risk. A National Institutes of Health (NIH) study found that seniors who use smartphones excessively may experience cognitive decline and reduced social engagement. For older adults, the shift from in-person interactions to digital communication can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Cognitive Decline in Seniors

Excessive smartphone use can contribute to cognitive decline in older adults. The NIH study found that seniors who spend more time on their phones are at a higher risk of developing cognitive impairments, such as memory loss and reduced problem-solving skills. This decline can impact their ability to live independently and maintain a high quality of life.

Social Isolation

For seniors, the convenience of smartphones can lead to a decrease in face-to-face interactions. Social isolation is a significant risk factor for various health issues, including depression, anxiety, and even physical ailments. Encouraging older adults to balance digital communication with in-person interactions is crucial for their overall well-being.

Conclusion

Smartphones, while offering numerous benefits, pose significant risks to our mental, relational, and spiritual health. Both young and old are susceptible to the negative effects of excessive smartphone use, which can lead to addiction, impaired attention, and weakened relationships. For Christians, the distractions caused by smartphones can hinder spiritual growth and diminish the sense of community within the church. Recognizing these risks is the first step towards reclaiming our time and attention, and considering practices like a smartphone fast can help us reconnect with God and loved ones. As we explore this further in the next posts, let us be mindful of the impact of our digital habits and seek ways to prioritize what truly matters.

By understanding the harms of smartphones and taking proactive steps to mitigate their impact, we can foster healthier, more fulfilling lives that honor our commitments to God and each other.

Separation of The Church from Israel: Part 2 The Rise of Replacement Theology

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: TRUSTING JESUS

The Rise of Replacement Theology

The Rise of the Bishops

By the second century, there was evidence in Antioch and several Asian cities that congregations had moved toward governance by a single bishop assisted by several presbyters (elders) and deacons. Bishops became the chief ministers in worship, teaching, pastoral care, and all church administration. From A.D. 100 to 451, we see the period of the Church Fathers, called the Patristic era, combing forms of Latin and Greek patē´r (meaning father). Many of these men became sole proprietors over a growing disparate number of church affiliations, each with differing opinions about their connection to Israel. For example, the history of the papacy for the church in Rome spans from the time of Peter until today. However, many of these bishops were martyred during the first three centuries, so their identities remain obscure, and they held no temporal power until the time of Constantine.

The Ecclesiastical Province and the Council of Nicaea

It is unclear when these bishops became the sole governing leaders or how such "monarchical" bishops were connected to the original apostles by direct succession, localization of missionary founders, appointment, or elevation from the presbyterate. But increasing heresy and other problems, primarily motivated by Hellenistic, Gnostic, and other competing world views, drove the bishops to meet in councils, grouping according to the civil provinces. By the third century, there is clear evidence of the ecclesiastical province coinciding with the civil jurisdiction, accepting the bishop of the regional capital as its primate. This system received canonical status during the rule of Constantine at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325).

The Preeminence of Rome

Rome quickly became the preeminent see—the church of Peter and Paul, and the only apostolic see in the Latin West, the capital of the Roman Empire and soon to become the dominant center of Christianity. However, the sole proprietorship of the bishop, apostolic (papal) succession more akin to monarchial rule rather than theocratic priestly governance, and the joining with any civil, particularly Gentile jurisdiction would have been a departure from the congregational leadership model the early Jewish believers would have adopted from the Beit Din and the rabbinic judicial council of Jerusalem (Sanhedrin).

The Migration and Reimagining of Judaism

After the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, Judaism migrated away from its theocratic judicial center in Jerusalem to a decentralized synagogue model that became the place of Jewish learning and Torah observance. Without the Temple and its sacrificial atonement, Judaism necessitated a reimagining that kept Jewish education at the heart of its people. But the governance under Jewish Law was now relegated to Jewish scholars and rabbis, many of whom were not descendants of the priestly theocracy—the Levitical and Aaronic priesthoods.

Judaism Today

Judaism today is a beautiful spiritual yet complex mix of reform, reconstructionist, modern, and Orthodox observances, all of which, to varying degrees, revolve around following the Law of Moses and its rabbinic discourse written in the Talmud and other books. There is tremendous wisdom and prophetic insight within the writings of the sages, but it fundamentally rejects Christian Orthodoxy. To the Jewish people, Jesus is not God or God's anointed, and surely not the Savior of Israel. While many Jews hope for a Messiah and believe in an afterlife, Judaism's primary object is to live a good life here and now that glorifies God and tries to improve the world. But without Jesus, it is unfulfilled.

The Gospel and Greek Philosophy

As the Gospel turned more towards the Gentiles, Christian thought began to redefine scripture as the correlation and fulfillment of prevailing Greek and Roman philosophy. Christian theology in the second century was not systematic, and theologians such as Justin Martyr, Theophilus, and Athenagoros, attempted to conciliate Greek thought. Counterarguments against Montanism in Tertullian's early writings confirmed the church's nature as a continuous society originating in and tied to a divine revelation identical to the church of the Apostles. However, this perception brought with it the dangers of traditionalism and institutionalism.

The Growing Distance Between the Church and Its Jewish Roots

The expanding and predominantly Gentile church gradually became more distant from its early roots that initially saw Christianity as the fulfillment of Biblical Judaism, and leadership sought ways to reconcile this increasing chasm between the unbelieving Jewish people following rabbinic Judaism and the vastly expanding number of Gentile Christians who held little knowledge or interest in their Hebraic foundation. These leaders sought ways to understand the Kingdom of God apart from Israel, and understandably so.

The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Rise of Antisemitism

Between A.D. 130-135, Rome destroyed Jerusalem, killing, enslaving, and exiling the Jewish people. Rome fully paganized Jerusalem, and it was no longer the spiritual center of Judaism or Christianity, and Israel ceased to exist as God's chosen and covenant nation. Church leaders could not have foreseen a time when God would restore the Jewish people to the land He promised to Abraham. But their understanding of God's dealing with Israel was misguided, driven by an underlying hatred for the Jewish people—centuries-old antisemitism.

Justin Martyr and Early Christian Antisemitism

In his Dialogue with Trypho (A.D. 155-160), Justin Martyr argued that the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem were God's judgments on Israel for rejecting Christ. He stated that the Jews "justly suffer" and that the Jewish cities were rightly "burned with fire." He also described the Jews as "desolate" and forbidden to go to Jerusalem. He said, "Accordingly, these things have happened to you in fairness and justice, for you have slain the Just One… and now you reject those who hope in Him." Ironically, Christians such as Justin Martyr desperately cling to a God they can trust unequivocally but arrogantly assume the same God can callously reject His beloved covenant people, Israel.

Paul's Warning to the Gentiles

However, the expansive gap between the Jewish and Christian leaders started much earlier, in the first century, before the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans. His discourse could not be more precise as a warning to the Gentiles who sought to remove or marginalize God's redemptive plans for Israel and His Kingdom and the understanding of God's collective purpose in bringing the Gentiles into His Kingdom for an immediate dispensation apart from Israel. Most of the available writings from the period reflect a millenarianist perspective (called chiliasm).

Pre-Millennialism in Early Christianity

The Second Epistle of Peter urged Christians to wait patiently on the Lord for His return, reminding us, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). The First Epistle of Clement, written by Pope Clement I in A.D. 95, criticizes those who had doubts about the second coming because it had not yet occurred. Bishop Papias of Hierapolis (A.D. 70–155) favored a pre-millennial position in his five-volume work.

The Early Church's Expectation of Christ's Return

The clear implication from scripture and non-canonical writings of the early church is that Jesus' return was imminent. They expected Him to return at any moment to set up a physical, earthly Kingdom in Jerusalem for one thousand years. In other words, the early church was Pre-Millennial in its views about the Kingdom and primarily understood that God's Kingdom was intricately connected to Israel. As the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Even the sages in the Talmud taught that the creation would exist for six thousand years before the universal Sabbath and the one-thousand-year Messianic era. But all that was about to change.

Augustine and the Shift to Amillennialism

One of the most influential fathers of the early church is Augustine of Hippo (Latin name Aurelius Augustinus, A.D. 354-430), also known as Saint Augustine. He was a theologian and philosopher of Berber origin and became the bishop of Hippo Regius in Numidia, Roman North Africa. In his book, City of God, a massive volume of work that took Augustine about twelve years to complete, he redefined his understanding of the one-thousand-year Millennial Kingdom. Augustine had previously viewed the Millennium as a literal future of one thousand years but changed his beliefs, claiming the doctrine was carnal. In his writings, he wrongly presumed the Millennium began at the First Advent of Christ and incorrectly predicted that the binding of Satan would be complete by A.D. 650 and that Christ would return at that time—the Second Advent. Neither of these happened.

Augustine's Influence on Christian Thought

Augustine's false theology helped shape the practice of biblical exegesis, laying the foundation for Roman Catholicism and modern Christian thought. Extensively reading Platonic texts to understand their doctrine, Augustine redefined Christianity as a rival and replacement for these ancient Greek philosophers. He believed that the church saints presently reign with Christ on earth inferiorly. And one day in the future, in the fullness of Christ's coming Kingdom, those whom God the Father has blessed will reign in a superior way to this present age.

Augustine and the Church-State Relationship

Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic was distinct in creating the governing relationship between the church and state, arguing for a universal church against local particularism (independent self-governing states). Donatism was the primary form of Christianity in Africa, where Augustine spent most of his life. The outcome of this polemic was the formation and rise to power of the Roman Catholic Church and its subservient relationship with the Roman Empire. This newly restructured church hierarchy reflected the organization of the Roman Empire, and its ecclesiastical councils also functioned like parliaments that embodied its philosophical wisdom and civil laws.

The Dominance of Amillennialism

Augustinian Amillennialism became the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Church. Martin Luther also rejected the future Millennial Kingdom and interpreted Revelation chapter 20 as a description of the historical church rather than the end of history. Hence, after the reformation and for almost fifteen hundred years, Amillennialism remains the dominant theology for most Christians in the West. Variations of Amillennialism are Postmillennial and Preterist theologies that also incorrectly redefine the dispensational period of the Millennium.

Postmillennialism and Preterism

Postmillennialism is an interpretation of Revelation Chapter 20, which sees Christ's second coming after the Millennium, establishing a golden church age where Christians thrive and prosper until Jesus returns. And Preterism is an eschatological view that interprets some (partial Preterism) or all (full Preterism) prophecies of the Bible as events that have already occurred.

The Inaccuracies of Replacement Theology

None of these theologies have accurately reconciled Biblical prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel with Christ's Second Advent. Hence, these theologies have incorrectly led many Christians to believe that God's future Kingdom is exclusively spiritual and that all prophecy concerning Israel's return is allegorically only a picture of the church. Or they see Israel as a type or shadow of

the church, with the church being the complete fulfillment of God's promises initially given to Israel. They believe that God has made all things new. Hence, the church has become a "new Israel," replacing the old apostate people of God with a new one. And since God divorced Israel, He has taken all her covenant promises and given them to the church. This theology is called Supersessionism, commonly referred to as replacement theology.

Understanding Supersessionism

Supersessionism comes from the Latin words super, meaning on or upon, and sedere, meaning to sit. It conveys the idea of one person sitting upon another person's chair and displacing them. Some use the term "fulfillment theology," suggesting that Israel was merely a type or picture of the church, and the church is the fulfillment of all covenant promises from Abraham to Christ comprising the true people of God. Regardless of its title, the theological premise is the same, and it fails to demonstrate how God can make specific promises to a particular people group in a corporate or nationalistic sense, in this instance Israel, without fulfilling these promises to the same group.

The Forms of Replacement Theology

Diprose defines Replacement Theology as the view that "the church completely and permanently replaced ethnic Israel in the working out of God's plan and as the recipient of Old Testament promises to Israel." Soulen argues that Supersessionism is linked to the coming of Jesus: "According to this teaching, God chose the Jewish people after the fall of Adam in order to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Savior. After Christ came, however, the special role of the Jewish people came to an end, and its place was taken by the church, the new Israel."

The Impact of Supersessionism on God's Covenants

Walter C. Kaiser Jr. said, "Replacement Theology… declares that the church, Abraham's spiritual seed, had replaced national Israel in that it had transcended and fulfilled the terms of the covenant given to Israel, which covenant Israel had lost because of disobedience." The key word here is "covenant," which the Supersessionist claims Israel has lost or relinquished if that was even possible, or implies that God has somehow taken away Israel's covenants which stains God's unbending, unchanging, and unbreakable nature.

Varying Forms of Supersessionism

There are varying forms of Supersessionism based on one of two overarching beliefs. One is that the nation of Israel has somehow completed or fortified its status as the people of God and will never again possess a unique role or function apart from the church. And another is that the church is now the true and faithful Israel and has permanently replaced or superseded national Israel as

the people of God. Within these two streams of thought are variations, some predicated on Israel's disobedience and God's punishment as the basis for His rejection, called "punitive" or "retributive" Supersessionism.

Economic and Structural Supersessionism

Another is called economic Supersessionism, which is less harsh and focuses on God's plan for human history to transfer His covenant promises from an exclusive ethnic group (Israel) to a universal group not based on ethnicity (the church). And lastly, structural Supersessionism is more of a hermeneutic or perspective with a deep bias against the Old Testament Hebrew scriptures on the part of Christians.

Soulen on Supersessionism

According to Soulen, "The problem of Supersessionism in Christian theology goes beyond the explicit teaching that the church has displaced Israel as God's people in the economy of salvation. At a deeper level, the problem of Supersessionism coincides with the way in which Christians have traditionally understood the theological and narrative unity of the Christian canon as a whole." Where punitive and economic Supersessionism is an explicit doctrinal perspective, structural Supersessionism relates to how the standard canonical narrative has been perceived, rendering the Hebrew scriptures largely indecisive and completely ignoring them except for Genesis chapters one through three.

The Canonical Narrative and Israel's Role

Soulen argues that the church has accepted Justin Martyr and Irenaeus's standard canonical narrative that dismisses Israel as the central people through whom God would bring His redemptive plans to humanity. Israel is irrelevant, except for these four episodes of history: God's intention to create the first two parents, Adam and Eve, the fall of man into sin, Christ's incarnation and the church's inauguration, and the final consummation.

God's Unbreakable Covenants with Israel

However, as we meticulously studied, God's covenants with Abraham and the one made with Israel through the Mosaic Covenant are unbreakable. Paul said, "The law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect" (Galatians 3:17). Israel's failure to obey the Law of Moses and her overwhelming but not total rejection of Jesus as Messiah cannot change God's love for or break His covenants with the Jewish people. Nor will it alter His divine plans to redeem them nationally. Paul said, "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5).

God's Faithfulness to Israel

While the northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians (not the southern Kingdom of Judah), inferring that God somehow had divorced them, He also said, "Where is the certificate of your mother's divorce, Whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away" (Isaiah 50:1). God's word tells us that Israel sold itself into slavery and divorced God—a one-sided separation. Later, God exiled the southern Kingdom to Babylon. But the Lord remained faithful to Israel, bringing a remnant back to the land, later redeeming them through the blood of Christ, and erasing any perpetual severance from Him.

The Temporality of Israel's Separation from God

Israel's exile and separation from God were dispensationally temporary. And the Lord appeared to Jeremiah, saying "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you" (Jeremiah 31:3); If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them" (Jeremiah 33:25-26). And Paul said, "I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! Have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Romans 11:1, 11, 28).

Israel's Redemption Through Christ

Israel was never to be redeemed by fulfilling the Mosaic Law. Only Jesus could and has done that, as it says, "By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified" (Romans 3:20); "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). And Jesus never questioned Israel's observance of the Law. He challenged them on their faith, the foundation of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants.

The Abrahamic Covenant and Faith

The Abrahamic covenant predates both the giving of the Law and the Advent of Christ, as was God's election of Israel. All who lived in Israel before Christ, King David included, rested on this covenant of faith, trusting the Lord for his tender mercies. For those who believed, are they not part of Israel, and will they not enter God's Kingdom when Jesus returns? Israel's dispensation began with God's promise to Abraham and did not end with the Advent of Christ, nor could it. Israel's existence is part of one continual dispensation of God's grace and redemption for the whole world and is the foundation for all who believe—the church.

The Flawed Argument Against Israel

The argument against Israel, therefore, even fails along dispensational lines. God chose Israel before Jesus came and will continue to do so. For God to reject Israel entirely would require every person in Israel to reject Christ, which scripture says otherwise. Many Jews were saved on the Day of Pentecost and even more after it. However, personal salvation is separate from national redemption.

God's Faithfulness and Israel's National Redemption

If God rejects Israel as a nation, He is an unfaithful liar. But if He individually selects those He deems worthy to enter His Kingdom, He is a righteous judge and King, as Paul says, "For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11). Israel's redemption is not predicated on all the Jewish people having faith in God. Israel's national redemption rests solely on God's faithfulness. And as salvation is personal, all who call upon the name of the Lord, Jew, and Gentile, will enter His Kingdom.

Amen!

Ongoing series:

- **Israel's Covenants and the Kingdom**
  - **The Beginnings and Foundations of Israel's Covenant**
  - **The Establishment of Israel's Kingdom and the Messianic Promise**
- **Separation of the Church from Israel**
  - The Significance and the Early Church
- Reconnecting the Church to Israel
- God's Kingdom and the Restoration of Israel

The Promise of Answered Prayer | Promises of God

AUGUST 17, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMISES OF GOD, TRUSTING JESUS

The Promises of God

God's promises are irrevocable

Matthew 18:19 - **Answered Prayer**: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." **Matthew 11:28** - **Burdened People**: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." **John 14:27** - **Christ's Peace:** "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." **1 Corinthians 6:14** - **Death is not the End**: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." **Jeremiah 32:40** - **Everlasting Covenant:** "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." **Psalm 103:12** - **Forgiveness**: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."	**Joshua 1:9** - **God's Presence**: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." **Ezekiel 36:26** - **Heart and Spirit:** "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." **Psalm 32:8** - **Instruction**: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." **Mark 9:31** - **Jesus' Resurrection**: "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." **2 Peter 1** - **Knowledge of God**: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." **John 6:63** - **Life from the Spirit**: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The promises of God reveal his particular and eternal purposes to which he is unchangeably committed and upon which believers can totally depend. These promises are, however, conditional upon obedience on the part of believers.

The Bible contains thousands of promises from God, each offering hope and assurance to Christians. Among these, the 12 promises in this series are especially significant because they strengthen the faith of believers and serve as powerful tools for evangelism. By understanding and sharing these promises, believers can effectively communicate the depth of God's love, His offer of salvation, and the hope of eternal life to those who do not yet know Him. These promises are foundational truths that every believer can use to guide others toward faith in Christ.

Matthew 18:19 – Answered Prayer

> (Mat 18:19) Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Introduction: Prayer is a powerful tool in the life of a believer. It is our direct line of communication with God; through it, we present our needs, desires, and concerns to Him. Matthew 18:19 contains a remarkable promise from Jesus about the power of united prayer. This verse

reminds us that when we come together in agreement, our prayers can move the heart of God in ways we might never imagine.

What Does Matthew 18:19 Promise?

In Matthew 18:19, Jesus says, “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” This promise is astounding. It implies that when two or more believers come together in unity, agreeing on a specific request, God listens and acts. The emphasis here is on unity and agreement in prayer. It is not merely about asking but about agreeing together in faith, trusting that God hears and will respond according to His will.

The Power of Agreement in Prayer

An agreement is when more than two people say the same words. It involves a deep, mutual understanding and a shared faith in God’s ability to answer. When believers agree in prayer, they align their hearts with God’s will, and their prayers reflect that alignment. This unity is powerful because it is rooted in the assurance that God’s will is good, pleasing, and perfect (Romans 12:2).

Unity in prayer also strengthens the faith of those involved. When we pray together, we remind each other of God’s promises, encourage one another, and build each other’s faith. This collective faith is a powerful force capable of bringing about what we are praying for. It’s no wonder Jesus emphasized the importance of agreement in prayer.

Trusting God for the Answer

While Matthew 18:19 assures us that God will answer, it’s important to remember that His answers are always in accordance with His will. Sometimes, God’s answer might be immediate and clear; other times, it might be delayed or come in a way we did not expect. This is where trust comes in. We must trust that God’s timing and methods are perfect, even when they don’t align with our expectations.

Trusting God in prayer means relinquishing control and allowing Him to work in His way and time. It means believing that He knows what is best for us and that His answers, whether yes, no, or wait, are ultimately for our good. The promise of Matthew 18:19 should encourage us to pray with confidence, knowing that God hears and that His response is always rooted in His love for us.

A Note on the Promises of God

It’s important to note that the Bible contains thousands of promises from God—over 7,000 by some estimates. These promises cover every aspect of life and are essential to the faith of believers. This series will focus on just 12 promises, each representing a different aspect of God’s covenant with

His people. These are not the only promises in Scripture but are chosen to inspire and encourage you in your walk with God.

Conclusion: The promise of answered prayer in Matthew 18:19 powerfully reminds us of the importance of unity and agreement in our spiritual lives. When we come together in faith, our prayers can move mountains because they align with God's will. Let this promise inspire you to pray with others, trusting that God will answer in His perfect way and time.

Reflections/Discovery Questions:

1. **Observation:** What does Matthew 18:19 say about the conditions for answered prayer?
2. **Interpretation:** Why do you think Jesus emphasized the importance of agreement in prayer? How does this agreement affect the outcome of our prayers?
3. **Application:** How can you apply the principle of agreement in prayer in your own life? Who can you partner with in prayer this week to seek God's will together?
4. **Reflection:** Think of a time when you prayed in agreement with others. How did that experience affect your faith and the outcome of your prayer?

Short Prayer for Personal Application:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise that when we agree, You hear and answer our prayers. Help me to seek out others with whom I can unite in prayer, trusting in Your will and timing. Strengthen my faith as I rely on Your promises, and guide me to align my desires with Your perfect plan. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Potential of Prayer - Matthew 18:19
https://youtube.com/watch?v=IWW_n0N5jno

Occult “Spirituality” & Values Manipulation Injected In Schools by UN

AUGUST 13, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The United Nations is injecting occult “spirituality” and leftwing extremism into classrooms and the minds of captive children around the world under the guise of “Social-Emotional Learning” (SEL), explains The New American magazine Senior Editor Alex Newman in this episode of Behind The Deep State. Indeed, many of the ringleaders of this movement openly claim to be speaking with the dead or “Ascended Master” spirits. And many are actual Communist Party leaders and population-control zealots. In this episode, Alex exposes it all and gives ideas on how humanity can and must resist.

Godly Relationships: Reclaiming Our Time from Digital Distractions

AUGUST 5, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

How to Disconnect from Screens and Reconnect with Faith, Family, and Fellowship

In today's fast-paced world, how we interact with others has drastically changed, especially with the constant bombardment of information and digital distractions such as the invasion of smartphones. As Christians, it's crucial to maintain godly relationships amidst the digital distractions and the chaos of today's news cycles. In fact, Americans spend an average of four hours watching TV and about seven-and-a-half hours on **digital devices**. Unsurprisingly, so much screen time is stressing many of us out. The Bible offers profound insights into how we should conduct ourselves among fellow believers, emphasizing the importance of unity, love, and mutual support, which binds us together as a community.

The Book of Acts vividly describes the early Church's fellowship. Acts 4:32 states:

> Now the full number of those who believed were of kone heart and lsoul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but mthey had everything in common.

This scripture highlights the deep bond that united the early Christians, a bond that transcended material possessions and was rooted in their shared faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul's ministry further exemplifies the importance of godly relationships. Despite facing numerous hardships, Paul traveled extensively, spreading the Gospel and encouraging believers in various regions. Acts 20:1-2 describes how Paul traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece.

> After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and qdeparted for Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

Paul and the early Christians developed solid and godly relationships that fostered a sense of community and spiritual growth, providing a support system by praying together, sharing struggles, and supporting one another.

Practical Tips for Maintaining Godly Relationships

1. **Limit Digital Distractions:** Remember to limit digital distractions in today's screen-heavy world. It's important to make time for face-to-face interactions and meaningful conversations. Set aside specific times each day to disconnect from digital devices and focus on building Godly relationships with those around you. You can even try fasting by turning off your cell phones for a day.
2. **Share and Support:** Just as the early Christians shared their possessions, we can share our resources and support one another in need. Whether through financial help, providing meals, or offering a listening ear, acts of kindness can strengthen relationships and demonstrate God's love. Be involved and proactive in your church and neighborhood, or volunteer for a worthy cause where you can bring a smile to someone's heart.
3. **Encouragement and Accountability:** Follow Paul's example by encouraging your fellow believers. Use the digital for good: Send a text message, make a phone call, or write an email to uplift someone's spirit. Also, establish accountability partnerships to help each other grow in faith and resist temptations.

Reflecting Christ in Our Relationships

Colossians 3:12-14 provides a beautiful blueprint for godly relationships:

> "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

In a world where information overload and global anxieties are common, the Christian community has the opportunity to shine brightly. By embodying these virtues, we can reflect Christ's love and build relationships that honor God and uplift each other. Let us strive to treat one another with kindness, show patience with each other's shortcomings, and forgive just as Jesus forgave us.

Conclusion

As we navigate the challenges of information overload, digital distractions, and global anxieties, let us remember the example set by the early Church and Paul's ministry. By limiting digital distractions, sharing our resources, and encouraging one another, we can strengthen our bonds and grow together in faith. Let's be inspired to commit to building relationships that reflect Christ's love and bring glory to God, no matter the circumstances.

Commit to building relationships that reflect Christ's love and bring glory to God, no matter the circumstances.

Further reading:

- 4 Reasons to Do a Digital Detox: **Cleveland Clinic**
- Conversations That Matter | UN Seeks "Digital World Brain" & Digitalization of Everything (Alex Newman) (**VCA**)

Jeff Bayard drafted this post with assistance from ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, and further edited and refined.

Unlock the Power of Redemption and Salvation

JULY 21, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, SALVATION

The concepts of redemption and salvation are at the heart of the Christian faith, offering hope, renewal, and eternal life. I invite you to explore the Virginia Christian Alliance's **6-part series on "Redemption and Salvation**," where we explore the profound truths of God's saving grace.

Each post in this series examines a different aspect of redemption and salvation, from understanding the depth of our need for a Savior to experiencing the transformative power of God's grace. By exploring key biblical passages, we uncover the essence of what it means to be redeemed and saved.

Join us as we journey through these critical aspects of our faith:

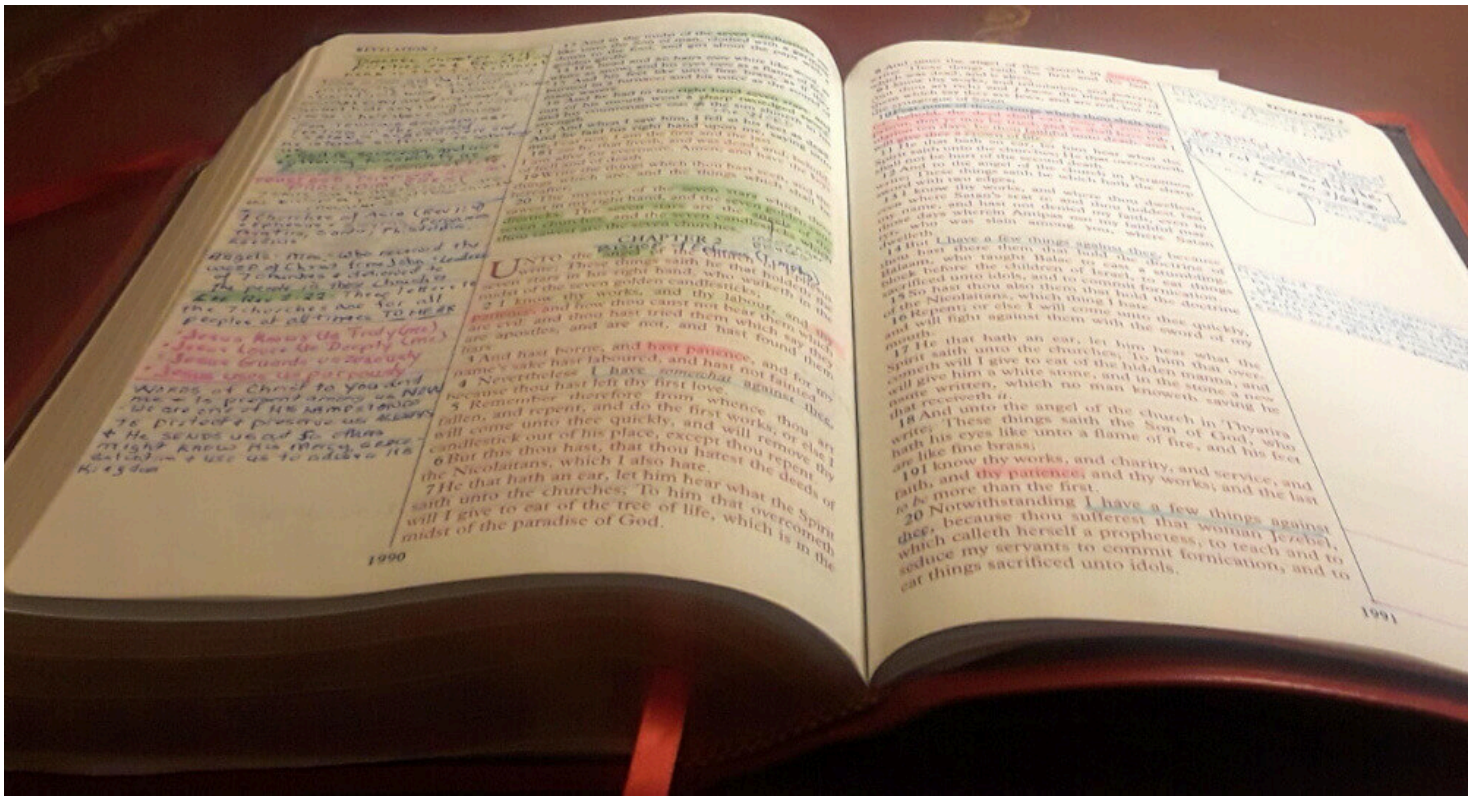
- **Understanding Our Need for Redemption**
- **The Sacrifice of Christ: Our Redeemer**
- **Grace and Faith: The Path to Salvation**
- **Living a Redeemed Life**
- **The Assurance of Salvation**
- **Spreading the Message of Salvation**

Whether you're seeking to deepen your understanding of these foundational truths, strengthen your faith, or find inspiration for your spiritual journey, this series is for you. Each post offers insights and reflections to help you grow in your relationship with God and fully embrace the gift of salvation.

Read the **Redemption and Salvation** series today and be inspired by the life-changing power of God's grace and love.

Discover the Six Foundational Keys to the Christian Life

JULY 20, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE



The Bible reveals fundamental principles for living a Christian life rooted in God's love and truth. I encourage you to take a look at the Virginia Christian Alliance's 6-part series, "**Six Foundational Keys to the Christian Life**." This series delves into the essential aspects of divine love from the Father and its all-encompassing power.

Each post in this series explores a different foundational key, from understanding God's sacrificial love to experiencing His abiding presence. By examining key biblical verses, we gain insight into the depth and richness of God's love and how it shapes our Christian journey.

Join us as we explore the six foundational keys to living the Christian life, all rooted in God's eternal and unbreakable love for those who follow Christ:

-
- **1. John 15:9** – Abiding in God's Love
- **2. John 3:16** – The Ultimate Sacrifice
- **3. Romans 5:5** – Overflowing Love from God

- **4. John 15:13** – Greatest Love Shown
- **5. 1 John 4:16** – God is Love
- **6. Romans 8:39** – Unshakeable Love

This series is designed for anyone seeking to deepen their comprehension of God's love, fortify their faith, or draw inspiration for their daily journey with Christ. Each post provides insights and reflections to assist you in nurturing your relationship with God and exemplifying His love. Explore the **Six Foundational Keys to the Christian Life** series today and be encouraged by the profound and transformative power of godly love as revealed in the Scriptures.

We recommend the free **E-Sword Bible Software** for further study.

> **Discover the Foundations of Traditional Values and Family Principles**

Discover the Foundations of Traditional Values and Family Principles

JULY 19, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: 12 PART TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

Revisit Timeless Family Principles

In a world where the definition of family constantly changes, it's essential to revisit timeless principles. These principles form the foundation of strong, enduring families. The Virginia Christian Alliance invites you to explore its 12-part series on **Traditional Family Values**. This series delves into the biblical truths and spiritual connections that bind a family together.

Explore Different Aspects of Family Life

Each post in this series examines different aspects of family life, reflecting the divine design and purpose outlined in the Scriptures. From the spiritual bond between a husband and wife to the nurturing roles of parents, this series offers valuable insights. It also highlights the importance of intergenerational faith and Christian family values. Understanding these roles and relationships helps build a stronger family unit.

Strengthen Your Family with Biblical Insights

Whether you're seeking to strengthen your own family or gain insights into biblical family principles, this series is for you. Join us as we explore the beauty of God's design for families. We journey through the foundational truths that uphold the family as the cornerstone of society. The series covers various topics that are crucial for fostering a loving and faith-filled home environment.

Be Inspired to Build a Faithful Family

Read the **Traditional Family Values** series today. Be inspired to build a family grounded in faith, love, and biblical principles. Each article provides practical advice and spiritual guidance to help you apply these timeless principles in your daily life. Embrace the journey of nurturing a family that reflects God's love and wisdom.

Resources

The Virginia Christian Alliance offers additional resources to support you in your journey. These include articles, workshops, and counseling services aimed at promoting traditional family values. Explore these resources to further strengthen your understanding and commitment to building a godly family. Together, we can uphold the family as the cornerstone of society.

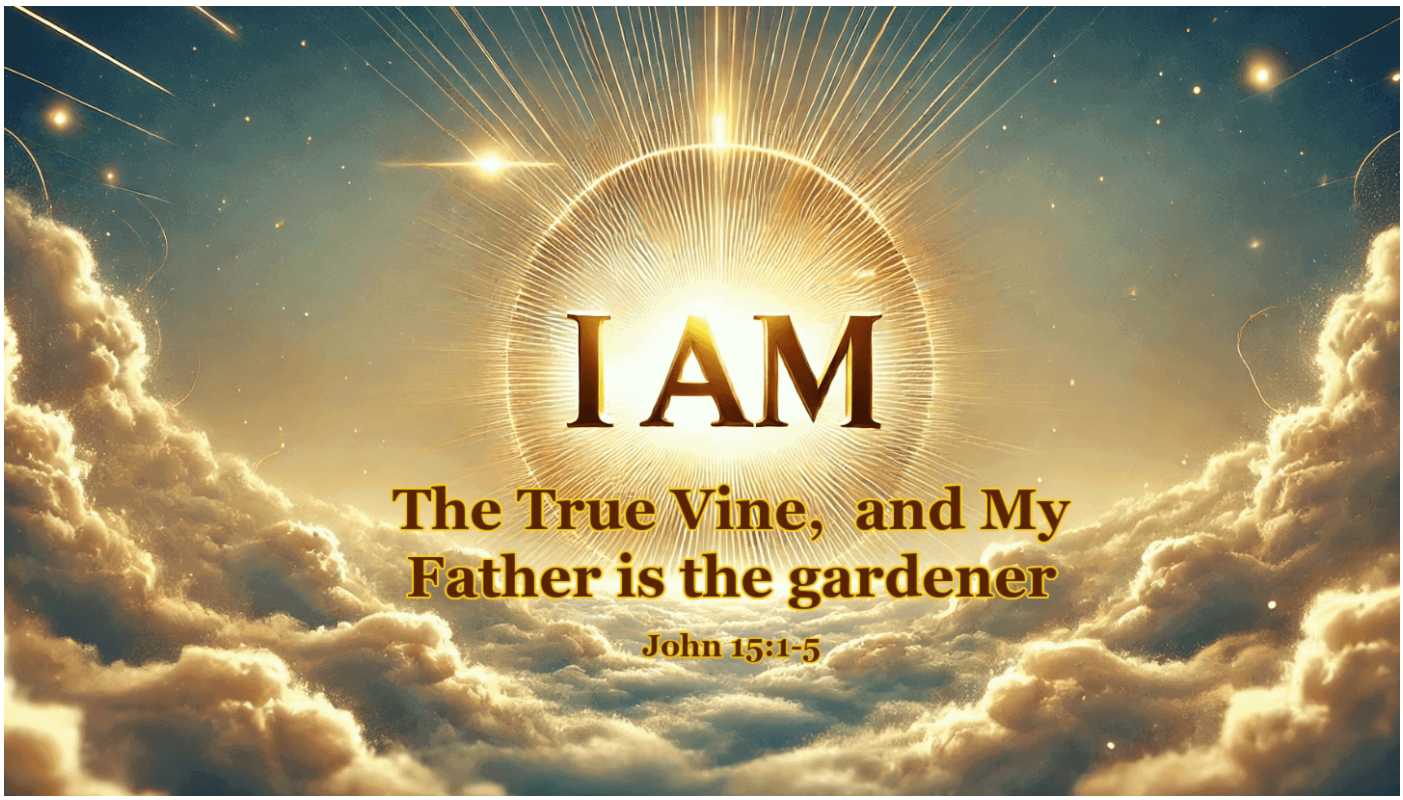
Resources:

Christian Family Values

What Does the Bible Say About Family

I am the True Vine: Abiding in Him for a Fruitful Life

JULY 19, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM, TRUSTING JESUS



Welcome to the seventh installment of our enlightening "I AM" series, where we explore the profound declarations of Jesus. Be encouraged as you discover these powerful insights, and feel free to read the entire series **here**.

Introduction

In the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaims, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener" (John 15:1). This statement, part of the last of His seven "I AM" declarations, offers profound insights into the relationship between Christ, His followers, and God the Father. By depicting Himself as the true vine, Jesus emphasizes the importance of remaining connected to Him to live a fruitful and fulfilling life. In this blog post, we will explore the meaning and implications of Jesus' metaphor of the vine and the branches.

The True Vine: A Source of Life and Growth

Vines were a common sight in the agricultural society of ancient Israel, often symbolizing the nation itself in the Old Testament. However, unlike the often rebellious Israel, Jesus presents Himself as the "**true vine**," the perfect and ultimate source of spiritual life and vitality. The vine provides nourishment to the branches, allowing them to grow and produce fruit. Similarly, Jesus

offers spiritual sustenance, enabling His followers to grow in faith and bear the fruits of righteousness.

The Father as the Gardener

Jesus introduces His Father as the gardener, emphasizing God's active role in nurturing and tending to the vine. The gardener's work involves both cutting off branches that bear no fruit and pruning the fruitful ones to enhance their productivity. This process of pruning may involve discipline, challenges, and trials, but it is ultimately for the believer's growth and greater fruitfulness. God's careful and intentional gardening ensures that each branch reaches its full potential.

Abiding in Christ

Jesus' command to "remain in me" is central to this metaphor. Just as branches cannot survive or bear fruit apart from the vine, believers cannot flourish spiritually without a continuous, abiding relationship with Christ. To remain in Jesus means to maintain a close, personal connection with Him through prayer, reading and meditating on His Word, and living in obedience to His teachings. This abiding relationship is the key to spiritual vitality and fruitfulness.

The Consequences of Disconnection

Jesus makes it clear that apart from Him, His followers can do nothing. A branch that is disconnected from the vine withers and is ultimately discarded. This stark imagery serves as a warning of the spiritual barrenness that results from a life lived apart from Christ. It is a call to self-examination, urging believers to assess their relationship with Jesus and ensure that they remain firmly connected to Him.

Bearing Much Fruit

When believers remain in Christ and He in them, they will bear much fruit. This fruit includes the characteristics of a Christ-like life, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). It also encompasses the impact of a believer's life on others, through acts of service, sharing the gospel, and living out one's faith in tangible ways. The fruit borne through this abiding relationship brings glory to God and serves as a testimony of His transformative power.

The Promise of Pruning

While the process of pruning can be painful, it is a necessary part of spiritual growth. Pruning removes what is dead or unproductive, allowing the branch to focus its energy on producing healthy fruit. In the same way, God may remove certain habits, relationships, or circumstances from

our lives that hinder our spiritual growth. Though challenging, this process is a testament to God's love and His desire for us to live abundant, fruitful lives.

Jesus Declaration

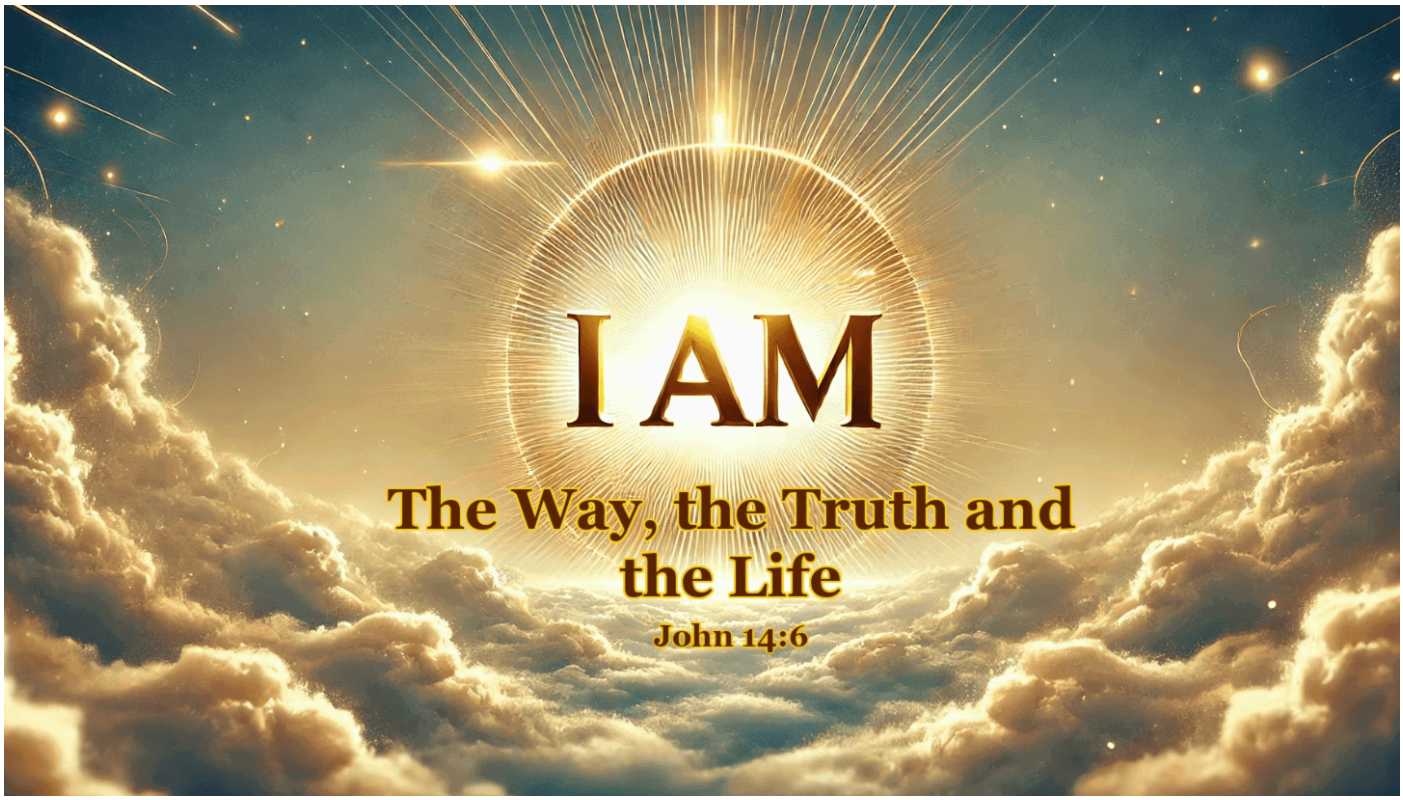
Jesus' declaration, "I am the true vine," invites believers to a life of deep, abiding relationship with Him. By remaining connected to Christ, we receive the spiritual nourishment and support needed to grow and bear much fruit. This fruitful life not only brings glory to God but also fulfills our purpose as His followers. Let us commit to abiding in Jesus, trusting in the Father's careful pruning, and embracing the abundant, fruitful life He offers.

Related:

Journey to Redemption: Discovering the Path to True Freedom and Peace

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Guiding Us to the Father

JULY 18, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM



Discover the profound insights and transformative truths about Jesus, the great "I AM," in our series designed to inspire and uplift your spiritual journey. Dive into the complete collection here: **I AM Series**.

The Night Before

On the night before His betrayal and death, Jesus made a profound declaration to His disciples: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). This statement, made during a time of great anticipation and fear, provides a powerful assurance and a clear path for His followers. In this blog post, we will explore the significance of Jesus' declaration and what it means for believers today.

Jesus is The Way and Only Path to the Father

Jesus' claim to be "the way" underscores His unique role as the mediator between God and humanity. In a world filled with various philosophies and religious paths, Jesus offers Himself as

the only true way to God. This exclusivity is not meant to be divisive but rather to provide clarity and certainty in a world of spiritual confusion. By following Jesus, believers are assured of a direct and personal relationship with the Father.

Preparing His Disciples

Jesus made this declaration during the Last Supper, a time of intimate fellowship with His disciples. Knowing that His death was imminent, He sought to prepare them for the trials ahead. His words were meant to comfort and strengthen them, assuring them that His departure was not the end but the beginning of a new, deeper relationship with God. He promised that He would go ahead to prepare a place for them, and that they would one day be reunited with Him in the Father's house (John 14:2-3).

The Truth: Revealing God's Nature

By declaring Himself as "the truth," Jesus emphasizes that He is the ultimate revelation of God's character and will. In a world where truth is often relative and subjective, Jesus stands as the absolute and unchanging truth. His teachings, life, and sacrificial death reveal the true nature of God—His love, holiness, justice, and mercy. To know Jesus is to know the Father, as He perfectly embodies and communicates God's truth.

The Life: Eternal and Abundant

Jesus' claim to be "the life" speaks to His power over death and His ability to give eternal life to those who believe in Him. This life is not merely an extension of physical existence but a new quality of life that begins now and continues forever. It is a life characterized by a restored relationship with God, filled with His peace, joy, and purpose. Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate proof of His power to grant this life, offering hope to all who trust in Him.

No One Comes to the Father Except Through Me

This exclusive claim underscores the necessity of faith in Jesus for salvation. In a pluralistic society, this can be a challenging concept, but it is central to the Christian faith. Jesus is the only bridge between a holy God and sinful humanity. Through His death and resurrection, He has made a way for us to be reconciled with God. This exclusivity is not about exclusion but about the profound love and sacrifice of Jesus, who made the ultimate way for all to come to the Father.

Implications for Believers Today

For modern believers, Jesus' declaration offers profound assurance and direction. In times of uncertainty and fear, we can find comfort in knowing that Jesus is our way, our truth, and our life.

His path leads us to a secure relationship with God, His truth guides us in a world of confusion. Allow His life to empowers you to live with hope and purpose. As followers of Christ, we embrace these truths and live in the light of His promises.

Declaration

Jesus' declaration, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," is a cornerstone of Christian faith. This statement provides a clear path to a relationship with God. It reveals the true nature of God and offers the promise of eternal life. As we navigate life's challenges, let us hold fast to this powerful truth. Find comfort, guidance, and hope in Jesus, our way, our truth, and our life.

Related:

> **Jesus, the Light of the World: Illuminating Our Path**

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life: Conquering Death and Offering Eternal Life

JULY 17, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM

Discover the profound insights and transformative truths about Jesus, the great "I AM," and Jesus is the resurrection and see our series designed to inspire and uplift your spiritual journey. Dive into the complete collection here: **I AM Series**.

Jesus the Resurrection

In John 11:25-26, amidst one of the most profound moments of His earthly ministry, Jesus makes a declaration that transcends time and death: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." This statement, made in the context of raising Lazarus from the dead, offers profound hope and assurance of eternal life to all who believe in Him.

The Resurrection and the Life: A Declaration of Power

Jesus' claim to be **the resurrection** and the life is both a statement of His divine authority and a promise of eternal life to His followers. In the context of first-century Judaism, the concept of

resurrection was not entirely foreign, but Jesus expands it from a future hope to a present reality. By identifying Himself as the source of resurrection and life, Jesus asserts His power over death and His role as the giver of eternal life.

Contextualizing the Declaration

This declaration occurs during the dramatic scene of Lazarus's death and resurrection. Martha, grieving the loss of her brother, expresses faith in Jesus' power to heal but is confronted with an even greater revelation. Jesus tells her, "Your brother will rise again," to which she responds with a conventional belief in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus then shifts the focus from a future event to His present identity, proclaiming, "I am the resurrection and the life." This shift emphasizes that eternal life is not merely a future hope but a present reality in Him.

Conquering Death

Jesus' statement "though he die, yet shall he live" directly addresses the human condition of mortality. Death is the ultimate fear and the final enemy, but Jesus declares His victory over it. His resurrection power is not limited to a future event but is active in the present, offering believers the assurance that physical death is not the end. This promise transforms the Christian understanding of death, providing a foundation of hope and courage.

Eternal Life

The promise "everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die" speaks to the eternal life that begins the moment one believes in Jesus. This eternal life is not merely endless existence but a quality of life that begins now and extends beyond physical death. It is a life characterized by a relationship with God, imbued with His peace, joy, and purpose. Believers are invited to live in the reality of this eternal life, experiencing its transformative power daily.

Invitation to Believe

Jesus concludes His declaration with a direct question to Martha: "Do you believe this?" This question is crucial, as it calls for a personal response. Belief in Jesus as the resurrection and the life is not merely intellectual assent but involves trust and reliance on Him. It is an invitation to place one's faith in His power over death and His promise of eternal life. This belief transforms how we live, giving us hope, purpose, and confidence in the face of life's challenges.

The Impact of Resurrection Power

The resurrection of Lazarus serves as a powerful demonstration of Jesus' authority over death. It foreshadows His own resurrection, which is the cornerstone of Christian faith. The resurrection

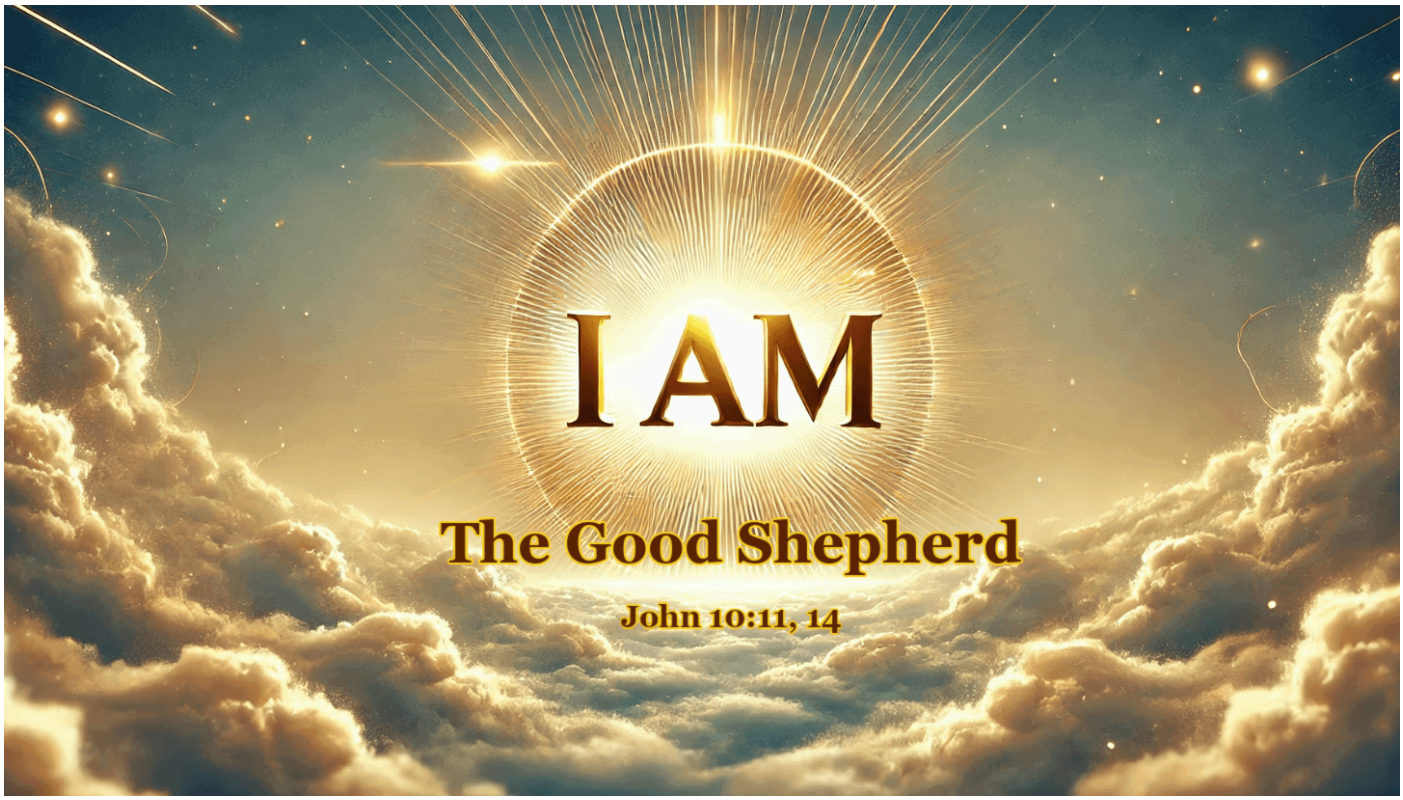
power that raised Lazarus and Jesus from the dead is the same power available to believers today. It assures us that no situation is beyond God's power to redeem and that our ultimate destiny is secure in Him.

Conclusion

Jesus' declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life," offers profound hope and assurance to all who believe in Him. In a world where death seems final and fears abound, Jesus provides the ultimate solution and comfort. His promise of eternal life transforms our perspective on mortality, giving us hope and courage to face the future. Let us respond to His invitation, place our trust in His resurrection power, and live in the reality of the eternal life He offers.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd: Guiding and Protecting His Flock

JULY 17, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM



Discover the profound insights and transformative truths about Jesus, the great "I AM," in our series designed to inspire and uplift your spiritual journey. Dive into the complete collection here: **I AM Series**.

In an era where leadership often feels distant and impersonal, Jesus Christ's declaration in John 10:11 and 14, "I am the good shepherd," offers a refreshing and comforting image of care, guidance, and protection. This metaphor is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical context of shepherding, presenting Jesus as the ultimate guardian and nurturer of our souls.

The Good Shepherd: A Metaphor of Care and Protection

Shepherding in ancient times was a demanding and intimate occupation. Shepherds lived with their sheep, leading them to pastures, protecting them from predators, and tending to their wounds. When Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, He is emphasizing His commitment to His followers' well-being. He contrasts Himself with hired hands who flee at the first sign of danger, underscoring His willingness to lay down His life for His sheep.

Contextualizing the Declaration

Jesus' declaration comes within a discourse where He contrasts His role as the Good Shepherd with false shepherds, or religious leaders, who have failed their people. In John 10:11, He states, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." This statement not only highlights His sacrificial love but also His intimate knowledge of His followers. In verse 14, He reiterates, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." This mutual recognition reflects a deep, personal relationship between Jesus and His followers.

Essential for Spiritual Life

The imagery of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is essential for understanding His role in our spiritual lives. Just as a shepherd ensures the safety and sustenance of his flock, Jesus provides spiritual nourishment and protection. He leads us to "green pastures" and "still waters," restoring our souls and guiding us along the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23). His presence assures us that even in the darkest valleys, we need not fear, for He is with us.

Invitation to Follow

Jesus' declaration is also an invitation to trust and follow Him. He calls His sheep by name, and they recognize His voice (John 10:3-4). This imagery invites us to cultivate a close relationship with Him, listening for His guidance and following His lead. It's a call to leave behind the distractions and dangers of the world and enter into the safety and peace of His fold.

Sacrificial Love and Protection

A defining characteristic of the Good Shepherd is His willingness to sacrifice Himself for His sheep. Unlike a hired hand who abandons the sheep at the sight of a wolf, Jesus lays down His life to protect His flock. This sacrificial love was ultimately demonstrated on the cross, where He bore the sins of humanity to reconcile us with God. His resurrection ensures that He continues to watch over and protect His flock eternally.

The Divine Shepherd

Jesus' claim to be the Good Shepherd also affirms His divine nature. In the Old Testament, God is often depicted as the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34). By identifying Himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus is aligning Himself with this divine role, asserting His identity as God incarnate. His knowledge of His sheep and His intimate relationship with them further highlight His divine omniscience and love.

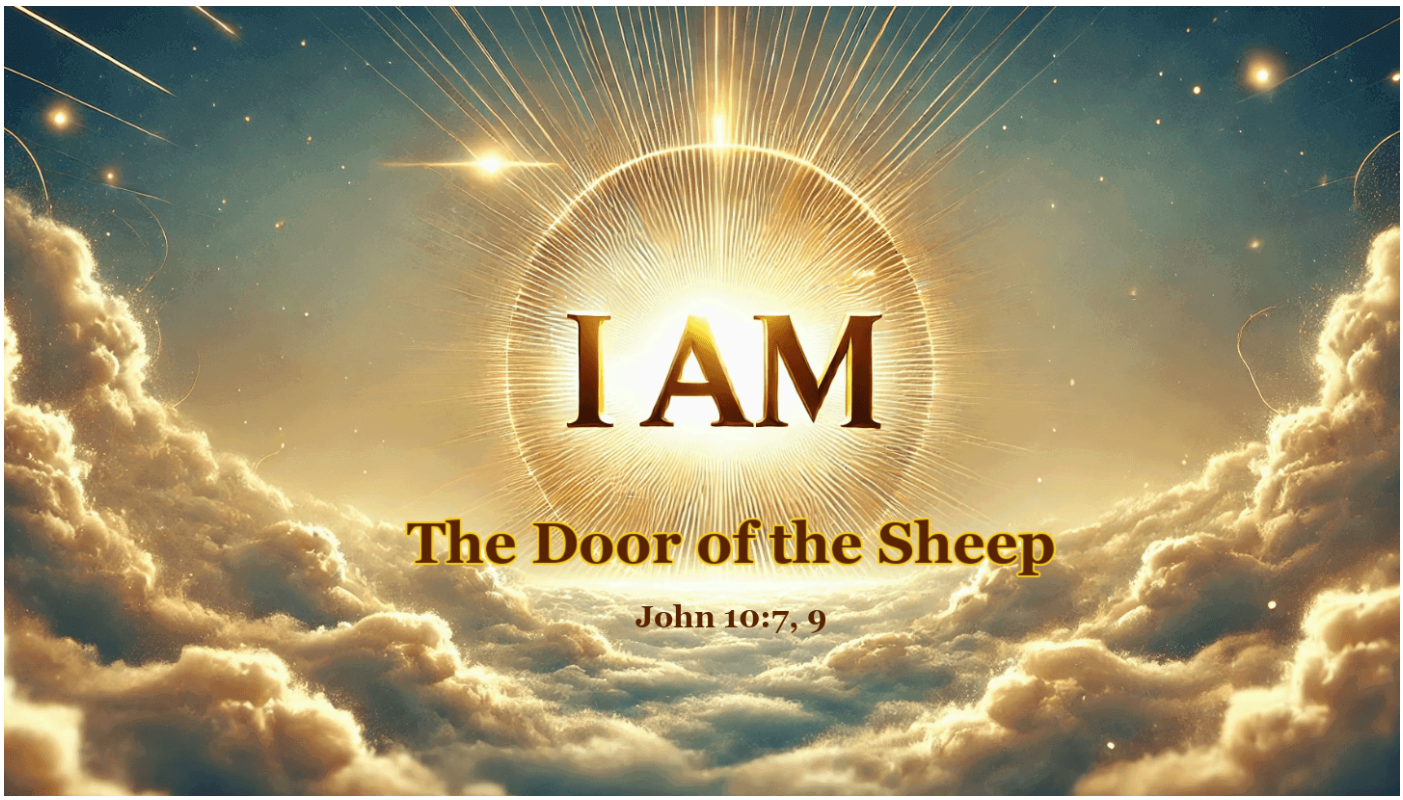
Conclusion

Jesus' declaration, "I am the good shepherd," is a profound invitation to experience His care, guidance, and protection.

In a world where leaders often fail and dangers abound, He offers the assurance of His constant presence and sacrificial love. Just as a shepherd knows his sheep and lays down his life for them. Jesus knows us intimately and has given His life to secure our eternal well-being. Let us trust in Him, follow His lead, and find comfort in the knowledge that we are always under the watchful care of the Good Shepherd.

I AM the Door: The Path to Salvation and Abundant Life

JULY 15, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM



The Great **I AM** Series

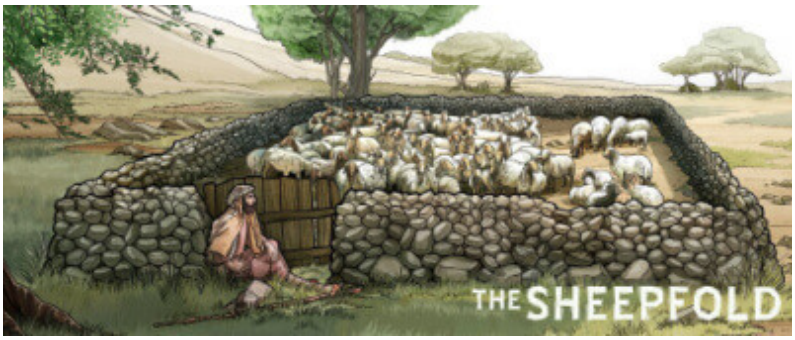
Jesus is the Door and He Proclaims It

In John 10:7-10

> Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep**. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

This metaphor of Jesus as the door illustrates the exclusive way to salvation and the promise of abundant life.

The Door: A Metaphor of Access and Protection



In ancient shepherding, sheepfolds were enclosures with a single entry point. The shepherd would physically act as the gate. By lying down in the gap, the shepherd became the door, protecting the sheep from predators and thieves. Jesus uses this imagery to illustrate His role. He declares: **I AM THE DOOR**, the sole gateway to salvation and security. Entering through Jesus, the door, ensures safety and the provision of all necessary spiritual sustenance.

Contextualizing the Declaration

Jesus' declaration follows His discourse on the **Good Shepherd**, contrasting Himself with false leaders who exploit the flock. In John 10:9, He emphasizes that He is the only legitimate entry point to spiritual security and sustenance: "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." This statement underscores the exclusivity of salvation through Christ and the ongoing spiritual nourishment and freedom found in Him.

Salvation and Freedom

Entering through Jesus, the door, leads to salvation. This salvation is not just a one-time event but a continual experience of God's provision and care. The phrase "go in and out and find pasture" implies freedom and abundance, reflecting the Hebrew understanding of peace (shalom) — a state of wholeness and well-being. Jesus offers not only protection from spiritual harm but also the freedom to live a fulfilled life under His care.

The Thief: A Warning

In stark contrast to Jesus' offer of abundant life, He warns of the thief who comes "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." This represents all false leaders, ideologies, and spiritual forces that lead people away from the truth and into harm. Jesus identifies Himself as the true shepherd and door who genuinely cares for the sheep, unlike the thief who seeks to exploit and harm them.

Abundant Life

Jesus promises not just life, but life "more abundantly." This abundance is not measured by material wealth or external success but by the richness of a life lived in relationship with God. It encompasses spiritual peace, joy, purpose, and the assurance of eternal life. In a world filled with uncertainty and superficial pursuits of happiness, Jesus offers a profound and lasting fulfillment.

Invitation to Enter

Jesus' declaration is an open invitation to all who seek true life and salvation. To enter through Him means to acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior, to trust in His sacrificial death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins, and to follow His teachings. This entry leads to a transformative relationship with God, characterized by ongoing spiritual growth and discovery of God's purpose for our lives.

Conclusion

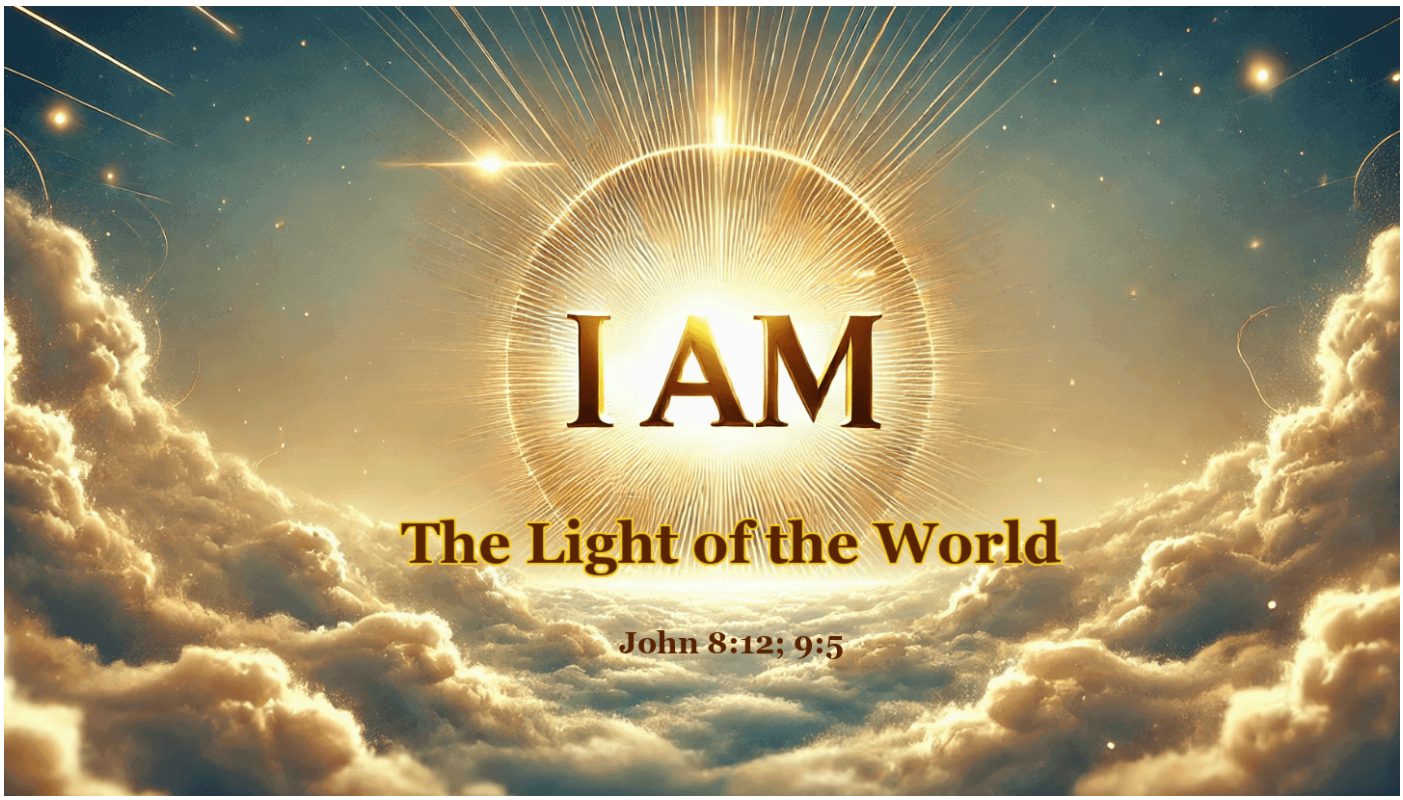
Jesus' declaration, "I am the door," is a powerful invitation to experience true salvation and abundant life. In a world where many voices promise fulfillment and security, Jesus stands as the only true gateway to spiritual safety and abundance. By entering through Him, we find not only protection from spiritual harm but also the freedom and provision to live a life full of meaning and purpose. Let us respond to His invitation, trust in His promise, and walk in the abundant life He offers.

Related:

The **GREAT I AM SERIES**

Jesus, the Light of the World: Illuminating Our Path

JULY 15, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM, TRUSTING JESUS



Discover the profound insights and transformative truths about Jesus, the great "I AM," in our series designed to inspire and uplift your spiritual journey. Dive into the complete collection here: **I AM Series**.

In a world filled with darkness and uncertainty, light symbolizes hope, clarity, and direction. Jesus Christ, through His profound declaration in John 8:12, states, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This powerful statement unveils the essence of His mission and the guidance He offers to humanity.

The Light of the World: A Powerful Metaphor

Light is universally recognized as essential for life. It enables growth, provides warmth, and reveals the path ahead. Jesus' metaphor of being the "**Light of the World**" is deeply significant. Just as physical light is crucial for survival and clarity, Jesus is indispensable for spiritual enlightenment and guidance. In Jewish tradition, light is also a symbol of God's presence and salvation, making Jesus' claim particularly profound.

Contextualizing the Declaration

Jesus makes this declaration during the Feast of Tabernacles, a Jewish festival commemorating God's provision during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert. Part of the celebration included lighting large lamps in the temple courts, symbolizing God's guidance. In this context, Jesus proclaims Himself as the true light, surpassing the physical light of the lamps and the temporary guidance they symbolized. He offers eternal illumination that leads to spiritual life and truth.

Essential for Spiritual Life

By declaring Himself as the light, Jesus emphasizes His essential role in dispelling spiritual darkness. Darkness in the Bible often represents sin, ignorance, and separation from God. Jesus, as the light, reveals the truth about God, exposes sin, and guides believers on the path of righteousness. His light is not just for the moment but promises eternal guidance and life.

Invitation to Follow

Jesus' statement comes with an invitation: "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This call to follow is an open invitation to all who seek truth and life. Following Jesus means committing to His teachings, living according to His example, and trusting in His guidance. It is a call to leave behind the darkness of the world and walk in the light of His presence.

Illumination and Revelation

The promise of "the light of life" implies that Jesus not only illuminates the path to God but also reveals the true nature of life. In John 9:5, Jesus reiterates, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." This statement precedes the healing of a man born blind, a miracle that physically demonstrates Jesus' power to bring light to the darkness. Just as He gave sight to the blind man, He offers spiritual sight to all who believe in Him.

The Divine Presence

Jesus' claim to be the light also underscores His divine nature. Light is often associated with God's presence. In the Old Testament, God's presence was manifested as a pillar of fire to lead the Israelites by night (Exodus 13:21). By identifying Himself as the light, Jesus is not only aligning Himself with this divine imagery but also asserting His identity as God incarnate.

The Declaration

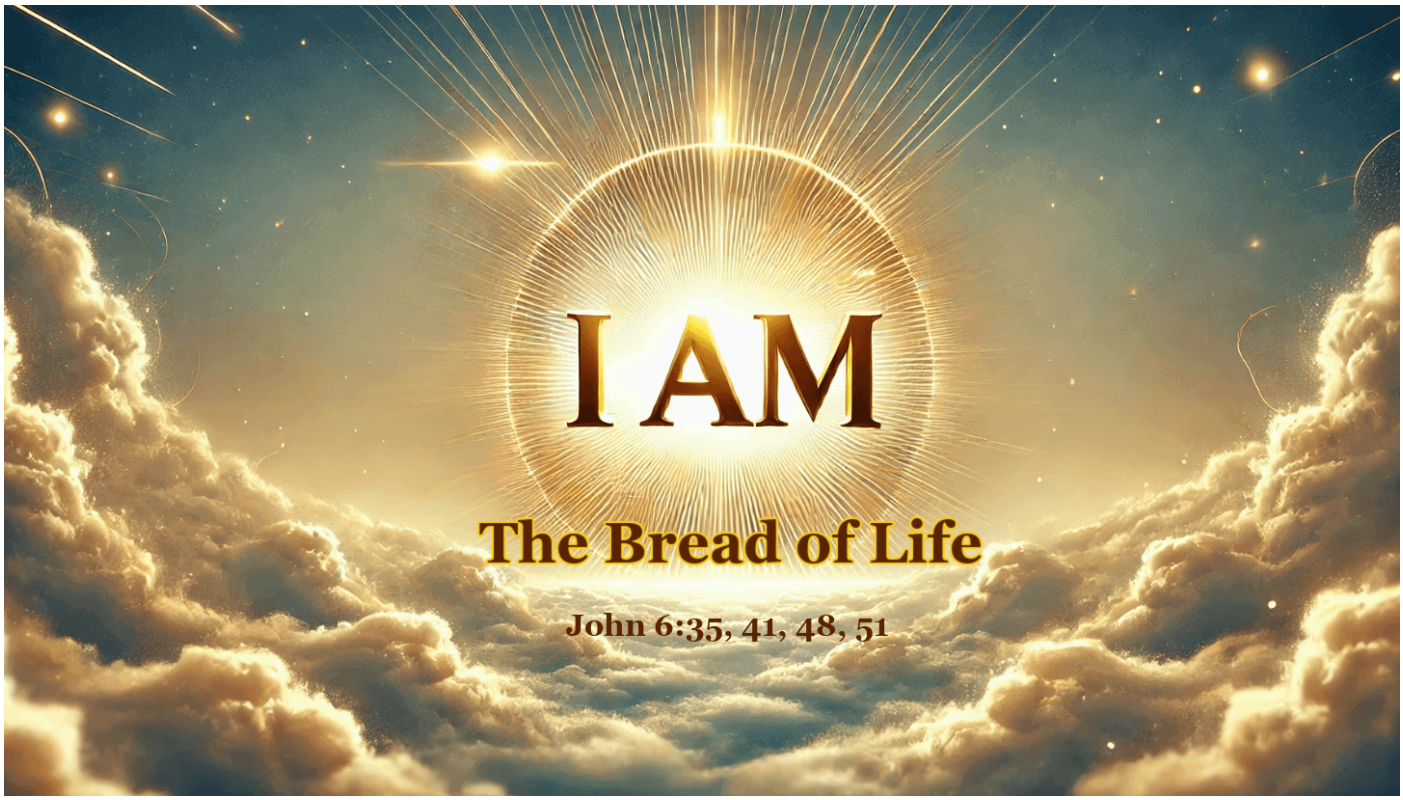
Jesus' declaration, "I am the light of the world," is a profound invitation to experience spiritual illumination and eternal life. In a world overshadowed by darkness, He offers hope, clarity, and guidance. Just as light is essential for physical survival, Jesus is essential for spiritual survival. He invites us to follow Him, walk in His light, and embrace the truth He reveals. In the light of Jesus, we find our true path and the assurance of eternal life. Let us step out of the darkness and walk in the brilliant light of Christ, our Savior.

Related:

> **Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Guiding Us to the Father**

Jesus, the Bread of Life: Satisfying Our Deepest Hunger

JULY 14, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DEEP STATE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, I AM, TRUSTING JESUS



Discover the profound insights and transformative truths about Jesus, the great "I AM," in our series designed to inspire and uplift your spiritual journey. Dive into the complete collection here: **I AM Series**.

The Bread of Life

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the quest for sustenance is a universal experience. Just as bread provides physical nourishment, Jesus Christ offers spiritual sustenance that satisfies our deepest yearnings. In John 6:35, Jesus declares, "**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst**." This profound statement reveals the essence of His mission and the spiritual nourishment He offers to all of humanity.

The Bread of Life: A Metaphor with Deep Roots

Bread is a staple food across cultures, symbolizing life and sustenance. In ancient times, bread was synonymous with food in general, essential for survival. This makes Jesus' metaphor particularly

powerful. He is the essential sustenance for our souls, just as bread is for our bodies. The significance of bread in Jewish culture further amplifies this metaphor. During the Passover, unleavened bread symbolizes the Israelites' hurried escape from Egypt. Additionally, God provided manna, "bread from heaven," to sustain the Israelites during their 40 years in the desert (Exodus 16:4).

Contextualizing the Declaration

Jesus' declaration comes shortly after He miraculously feeds 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. This miracle sets the stage for His teaching about the true bread from heaven. Unlike the manna that temporarily satisfied the Israelites, Jesus offers sustenance that leads to eternal life. He emphasizes this by saying, "Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die" (John 6:49-50).

Essential for Life

By equating Himself with bread, Jesus is asserting His essential role in spiritual life. Just as physical bread sustains physical life, Jesus sustains spiritual life. This life He offers is not limited to our time on earth but extends into eternity. He shifts the focus from temporary, physical sustenance to everlasting, spiritual nourishment.

Invitation to Believe

In His declaration, Jesus uses the words "come" and "believe." This is an open invitation for everyone to place their faith in Him. Believing in Jesus means trusting in His identity as the Messiah and the Son of God, recognizing His divine nature, and accepting Him as the source of eternal life. This belief is not merely intellectual assent but involves a deep, personal commitment to follow Him.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Jesus promises that those who come to Him will never hunger or thirst again. This promise speaks to the spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness that exists in every human heart. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). This hunger and thirst are not for physical sustenance but for a right relationship with God.

The Divine Transaction

Humanity's dilemma is the inherent sin that separates us from God. The Bible tells us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). However, Jesus offers a solution through His sacrificial death and resurrection. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 states, "For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." This divine transaction means that when we place our faith in Jesus, our sins are imputed to Him, and His righteousness is imputed to us.

Conclusion

Jesus' declaration, "I am the bread of life," is a profound invitation to experience spiritual fulfillment and eternal life. Just as bread is essential for physical survival, Jesus is essential for spiritual survival. He invites us to come to Him, believe in Him, and find true satisfaction for our deepest spiritual needs. In a world where physical sustenance is vital, let us not forget the eternal sustenance that Jesus, the Bread of Life, offers to all who come to Him in faith.

Related:

The Great I AM Series

The Beginnings and Foundations of Israel's Covenant

JULY 13, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: COVENANT, ISRAEL

Ongoing series:

- **Israel's Covenants and the Kingdom**
  - **The Beginnings and Foundations of Israel's Covenant**
  - **The Establishment of Israel's Kingdom and the Messianic Promise**
- **Separation of the Church from Israel**
- Reconnecting the Church to Israel
- God's Kingdom and the Restoration of Israel

Part 1: Tracing Israel's Journey: From Abraham to Christ, a Story of Faith, Promise, and Redemption

The Father of Faith

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua,

It can be said that Israel's origins begin with Abraham, the father of faith, as Paul states, "It is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16, NKJV). God desired that Abram become a source of blessing to the whole world, setting before him a moral imperative to obey His commandment to leave everything of this world behind.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Nearly two thousand years before the advent of Christ, the Lord God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to make of him a great nation and a company of nations: "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).

This great nation, yet to be named, was then promised a sizeable piece of land as an eternal inheritance. The Lord said to Abraham, "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered" (Genesis 13:14-16).

These first two promises laid the foundation for God's Kingdom, a great nation that would lead a company of nations to inherit God's creation. But who was to govern these earthly kings? Presumably, Abraham understood that God alone would be crowned the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It says, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10). However, the progressive fulfillment of Israel becoming that nation that would serve as the foundation for God's Kingdom would not happen for another four hundred years.

The Covenant Reaffirmed with Isaac and Jacob

God reaffirmed His covenant with Isaac and later Jacob, whom He renamed Israel. The Lord spoke to Jacob, saying, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed" (Genesis 32:28). Here in Genesis, for the first time, we hear the name "Israel" given by God Himself to Jacob, the patriarch of twelve sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel.

The meaning of the name "Israel" is complex and multifaceted. It is derived from two verbs, sara (שרה), meaning "to become rigid from the retention of liquidity," and yashar (ישר), meaning "to be upright," straight," or "level." These two verbs are combined with the noun ʻel (אל), as in ʻelohim (אלהים), also known as ʻeloah (אלה), and the name for God. If we understand the deeper meaning, the Lord declared that He would make through Israel a straight path for all the nations to walk in.

As promised to Abraham, God remembered His covenant with the children of Israel, and four hundred years later, delivered them from their bondage and slavery in Egypt. We read, "Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ʻThis month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you'" (Exodus 12:1-2). "So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance" (Exodus 12:14).

On that glorious day, Israel became a mighty nation, and God initiated the fulfillment of His promises given to Abraham. As we read, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2); "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions" (Genesis 15:14). I say "initiated" because Israel would not realize the fullness of her inheritance until the very end of the age. Even during the reign of King Solomon (the man of peace), Israel would not see the entirety of her land and more. Israel was not yet a kingdom of priests as the Lord had promised, saying, "'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:6). Not until Christ would come (the prince of peace) and take His rightful throne over Israel would she see the fullness of every promise and inheritance of God.

From Moses to the Kings

As foretold, God delivered Israel's descendants from the bondage of slavery in Egypt into the land He promised to Abraham. The promise of land for a select group of people to receive this land as an eternal inheritance tells us that God's Kingdom is as much material as spiritual. But Paul said that the spiritual is not first, but the natural, so there is an order to God's redemptive plans for Israel and the establishment of His Kingdom.

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

1. Israel's Covenants and the Kingdom (July) 2 Parts
2. Separation of the Church from Israel (August)
3. Reconnecting the Church to Israel (September)
4. God's Kingdom and the Restoration of Israel (October)

What is the peace of God, and how can I experience it?

JULY 13, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, HYMN

Peace of God | **GotQuestions.org**

Philippians 4:7 refers to "the peace of God which transcends all understanding." Most of Paul's letters began with the words "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Peace is a state of tranquility or quietness of spirit that transcends circumstances. The term *peace* is described in Scripture as a gift from God and congruent with His character (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**; **Galatians 6:16**; **1 Peter 1:2**; **Hebrews 13:20**).

If God is peace, then to know God is to bask in His peace. The closer we draw to Him, the more of His peace we can enjoy (**James 4:8**). God gives us clear instructions about how to draw near to Him. **Psalm 24:3–4** says, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god." But Scripture is also clear that we cannot make ourselves clean enough or pure enough to earn the presence of the Lord (**Romans 3:10**, **23**). So how do we draw near enough to experience His peace? Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (**John 14:27**). We come into the presence of the Lord through His Son (**John 14:6**). When we allow Jesus' death and resurrection

to purchase our forgiveness from God, we are counted as righteous (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Our sins are forgiven because Jesus already paid the price for them. Only then can we have peace with God (**Romans 4:5**; **5:1**; **1 John 4:10**).

What is the peace of God, and how can I experience it?
https://youtube.com/watch?v=0gkW2d50i0M

The initial peace that comes from having our consciences wiped clean grows as we get to know God better (**Hebrews 10:22**). **Second Peter 1:2** says, "May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord" (NLT). When we grow in understanding of the depths and riches of God's love toward us (**Ephesians 3:18–19**; **Romans 8:38–39**), our minds and spirits begin to rest in His power and wisdom. We begin to understand that He really will make all things work together for our good (**Romans 8:28**). We learn that His purposes will be accomplished (**Psalm 33:11**; **Proverbs 19:21**; **Isaiah 45:9**; **46:9–11**).

Certain attitudes can destroy the peace of God. When we equate trust with the assumption that God will give us whatever we want, we set ourselves up for disappointment. The Bible is filled with examples of the opposite happening to God's people (**2 Corinthians 12:7–9**; **Hebrews 11:13**; **Psalm 10:1**). Trust means we have set our hearts to believe God, whatever may happen. When we insist on being in control, we sabotage God's desire to let us live in peace. When we choose worry rather than faith, we cannot live in peace. Jesus warned us often about fear and worry (**Matthew 6:34**; **Luke 12:29**; **Philippians 4:6**). Worry is the enemy of peace. God invites us to cast our cares upon Him and then let go of them (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Living in peace can be compared to the petals of a flower unfolding in the morning sunlight. The petals of peace in our lives unfold as we learn more about God. We discover that His character is always faithful. We experience His continual goodness. We read more of His promises (**Psalm 100:5**; **115:11**; **Isaiah 26:4**). We learn to bask in His overwhelming love for us (**Romans 8:38–39**). We refuse to allow ever-changing circumstances to determine our level of contentment, relying instead upon the character of God that never changes (**James 1:17**; **Malachi 3:6**).

When we develop a lifestyle of making the Lord our refuge, we begin to live in the peace of God (**Psalm 46:1**; **62:8**). **Psalm 91:1** holds the secret to living in the peace of God: "He that dwells in

the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." That secret place in our hearts is where we go to meet with God. When we choose to live there and hide away under His shadow, staying in constant communion with Him, we can remain peaceful, even when circumstances may not be. When we learn to cry out to Him in times of trouble, we find that His peace really does pass all human understanding (**Philippians 4:7**).

SOURCE OF ABOVE CONTENT IS GOT QUESTIONS

Related:

God's Word set to beautiful orchestra music will help bring peace to your home — deep and relaxing sleep, calm babies, and release from anxiety. The first in the Scripture Lullabies series, **"Hidden in My Heart" Volume I** presents a moving musical experience that sounds more like a movie score than a nursery rhyme song. "The Peace of God" reassures listeners that "the Peace of God … will guard hearts and minds." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Hidden In My Heart Volume I - "The Peace of God" by Scripture Lullabies
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Journey to Redemption: Discovering the Path to True Freedom and Peace

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

Welcome to our 6-part series on **Journey to Redemption**, a journey through the profound truths of God's redemptive plan for humanity as revealed in God's Word.

Salvation is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, embodying the transformative power of God's grace and love. This series aims to explore key aspects of salvation, offering clarity and encouragement to deepen your understanding of this divine gift. Please share this series with others.e the following themes:

All Are Lost

(Isaiah 53:6) We will begin by acknowledging our spiritual lostness and the divine provision of salvation through Christ, who bore our iniquities. This foundational truth sets the stage for understanding our need for a Savior. We all thirst for **redemption** and restoration to our Father, our creator.

All Have Sinned

(Romans 3:23) Next, we will recognize the universal nature of sin and our inability to meet God's perfect standard on our own. This realization underscores the necessity of divine grace and redemption through Jesus Christ.

Sin Ends in Death

(Romans 6:23): We will confront the grave consequences of sin, contrasting it with the hope of eternal life that God offers through Jesus Christ. This part emphasizes the severity of sin and the boundless mercy of God.

Jesus Died to Bring You to God

(1 Peter 3:18): We will delve into the sacrificial and redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who suffered to reconcile us to God. His death and resurrection provide the bridge for our restored relationship with the Father.

Jesus Took Your Sins

(1 Peter 2:24) We will explore the transformative power of Christ's atonement, which enables us to die to sin and live unto righteousness. His sacrifice brings spiritual healing and renewal.

Come in Lord Jesus

(Revelation 3:20)**:** Finally, we will focus on the personal invitation of Jesus Christ to enter into a relationship with each of us. His call is one of intimate fellowship and eternal hope.

Throughout this series, we will remember that salvation is a gift. It is not something we can earn. Instead, grace is continuosly given through faith in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Bible clearly outlines the steps to receive this gift. First, we must acknowledge our sin. Next, we believe in Jesus Christ. Finally, we confess Him as Lord. Romans 10:9 assures us. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Our goal in this series is to provide a comprehensive understanding of salvation. Salvation is proved in Scripture and enriched by insights from respected Biblical commentaries. Whether you are new to the Christian faith or seeking to deepen your understanding, this series offers valuable perspectives. Specifically, it covers the journey from lostness to redemption.

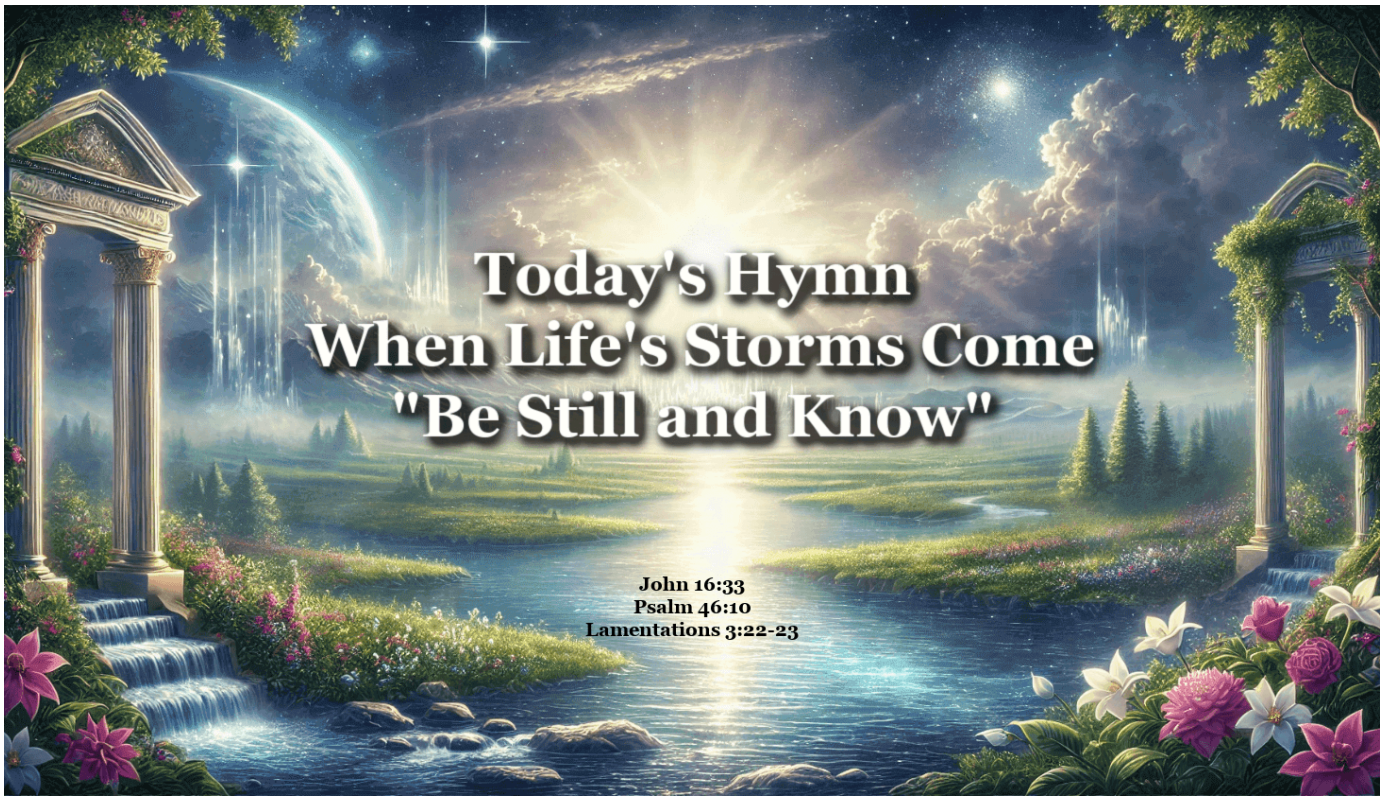
So, join us as we explore salvation, discovering the depth of God's love. We will find hope in Jesus Christ. Ultimately, may this series inspire you to embrace the fullness of His grace and live in the

light of His salvation.

SERIES

Finding Peace in the Storm: Embracing Stillness and Trusting in God's Presence

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: HYMN, TRUSTING JESUS



Introduction

In a world fraught with turmoil, trauma, and unending storms, finding peace and calm can seem like an insurmountable challenge. However, as Christians, we are blessed with the assurance that God is ever-present, offering us His peace, strength, and guidance. The Bible teaches us that in the midst of chaos, we can find tranquility and solace by resting in the presence of God. This spiritual truth is beautifully encapsulated in the words of the song "Be Still My Soul", by **Scripture Lullabies**, reminding us to be still, rest in His love, and trust in His goodness.

Finding Peace in the Storms of Life

"Be Still and Know" from Scripture Lullabies
https://youtube.com/watch?v=FKWGSzxtcZA

“Be Still My Soul”, by **Scripture Lullabies**

The Reality of a Fallen World

We live in a fallen world where evil and suffering are pervasive. From natural disasters to personal traumas, the storms of life can often leave us feeling overwhelmed and despondent. The Bible acknowledges these hardships, reminding us that “in this world, you will have trouble” (John 16:33). Yet, it also provides us with the hope and assurance that we are not alone in our struggles.

The Call to Be Still

Psalm 46:10 commands us, “Be still, and know that I am God.” This powerful verse invites us to pause amidst our trials and recognize the sovereignty and goodness of God. Being still is not merely about physical rest but about spiritual surrender—trusting that God is in control and His plans for us are good. In moments of stillness, we can hear His voice, feel His presence, and experience His peace.

Resting in God’s Loving Arms

The lyrics of “Be Still My Soul” echo the biblical call to rest in God’s love. The song reminds us that God is watching over us, ever faithful and ever true. By resting quietly in His loving arms, we find comfort and assurance that He is with us through every storm. As Psalm 91:4 assures us, “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

Strength and Peace of Mind and Soul

Living in the moment with God provides us with unparalleled strength and peace of mind and soul. Isaiah 26:3 promises, “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.” This peace is not dependent on our circumstances but on our relationship with God. When we focus on Him, our fears and anxieties diminish, replaced by a profound sense of calm and security.

The Ever-Faithful God

God’s faithfulness is a recurring theme throughout the Bible. In Lamentations 3:22-23, we read, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” This truth reassures us that no matter what we face, God’s love and faithfulness remain steadfast. By clinging to this promise, we can navigate life’s storms with confidence and hope.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the song "Be Still My Soul", by **Scripture Lullabies** and the biblical truths it reflects offer us a powerful reminder of the peace and strength we have in Christ. In a world filled with chaos and uncertainty, we can find rest and solace in God's loving arms. By being still and trusting in His goodness, we experience the tranquility and assurance that only He can provide. Let us, therefore, embrace the call to be still, rest in His peace, and live in the moment with God, knowing that He is ever faithful and ever true.

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect on the lyrics of "Be Still My Soul" and the promises of Scripture. How can you incorporate moments of stillness into your daily life? In what areas do you need to surrender control and trust in God's sovereignty? Remember, in the stillness, you will find His peace and strength.

For more Scripture Lullabies, they have 4 CD or visit their YouTube page and play now

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A Prayer for Peace in the Storm

Heavenly Father,

In the midst of the storms that rage around me, I come before You, seeking Your peace and presence. I acknowledge that life in this fallen world is filled with trials and challenges, but I trust in Your promise that You are always with me.

Lord, I pray that You would still the stormy seas of my life. When my heart is overwhelmed and my mind is troubled, help me to be still and know that You are God. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, who brings comfort, guidance, and peace.

Thank You for Your ever-present love and faithfulness. I rest in the assurance that You are watching over me, protecting me, and working all things for my good. Remind me of Your promises, and help me to trust in Your perfect plan for my life.

Grant me the strength to face each day with courage and hope, knowing that Your grace is sufficient for me. As I draw near to You in prayer and stillness, may Your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Father, I surrender my fears, anxieties, and burdens to You. Fill me with Your peace and calm, and help me to live each moment in the fullness of Your love and grace. Thank You for being my refuge and strength, my ever-present help in times of trouble.

In Jesus' name, I pray.

Amen

Reflection:

May this prayer bring you comfort and remind you of the peace and strength that come from trusting in God. Remember, He is with you in every storm, and His love and faithfulness will never fail you. Be still, rest in His presence, and let His peace calm your heart and mind.

Scripture References

- **Philippians 4:6-7**
  - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
  - **Prayer**: Heavenly Father, I bring my worries and anxieties before You. Thank You for Your promise of peace that transcends all understanding. Guard my heart and mind as I rest in Your presence tonight. Amen.
- **Psalm 4:8**
  - "In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety."
  - **Prayer**: Lord, as I lie down to sleep, I trust in Your protection and care. Fill my heart with Your peace and help me to rest securely in Your loving arms. Amen.
- **Matthew 11:28-30**
  - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
  - **Prayer**: Jesus, I come to You with my weariness and burdens. Thank You for inviting me to find rest in You. Teach me to trust in Your gentle and humble heart, and grant me rest for my soul tonight. Amen.

Documentary Report Exposes John Deere's 'Woke' Internal Agenda

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

S.A. McCarthy |The Washington Stand

One of America's best-loved farming brands has "gone woke," embracing everything from diversity standards to Pride initiatives to anti-Christian bias, according to a **new report**.

Conservative documentary filmmaker and former music video director Robby Starbuck released an eight-minute video on Tuesday exposing John Deere for having "gone woke." According to Starbuck's report, the farming and machinery company has sponsored LGBT Pride events for children as young as three years of age, insists that employees use "preferred pronouns" in all formal communications, enforces diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) standards, and offers training against "whiteness" and "Christian privilege."

"It's time to expose John Deere," Starbuck said in his social media post. He said that John Deere "has been one of the most beloved brands by conservative farmers but recently on CEO John May's watch, they've gone woke." Starbuck said that his investigation into the company best known for its green tractors has been extensive and he plans to follow his eight-minute exposé with "weeks, maybe even months" of more in-depth reporting.

Starbuck's report began by covering John Deere's "personal pronoun policy." A screenshot from the company's career website reads, "We encourage employees to use their personal pronouns (such as he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs) in internal and external communications, including email correspondence and email signatures." The website says the pronoun is not only "a sign of mutual respect, it's practical for our global company."

Next, Starbuck reported that John Deere sponsored an event in Des Moines, Iowa, called "Capital City Pride's Little Rainbow Run," which was aimed at children aged three to 10. "I don't care if you're gay or straight, kids should not be celebrating what type of sex you like," Starbuck commented. He continued, "It's weird. It's creepy."

Another screenshot featured in the report shows a John Deere training session for adult employees on the "genderbread man." Starbuck explained, "If you're not familiar with that, it's the whole concept that basically gender's completely fluid, there's no such thing as your biological sex, you just are whatever you think you are." Starbuck also reported that John Deere sponsors a number of internal employee resource groups (ERGs) dedicated to different "identities," including LGBT. Employees were encouraged to design rainbow-themed logos for their varying ERGs.

John Deere has also heavily embraced DEI policies and initiatives, Starbuck found. He explained, "One of many ways they upped the game on DEI was for the financing team leaders to do something called a 21-day 'United for Equity' challenge through United Way," an international non-profit network. Starbuck himself took the 21-day challenge and recounted that "it was recommended to me that I read Ibram Kendi's 'How to Be an Antiracist.' … It says that 'racism is something that we all carry within ourselves. As a result, we must unlearn biased and racist ideas to replace them with tools and actions that are centered around equity, empathy, and solidarity.'" Kendi is known as a Marxist and has focused much of his career on "antiracism."

Starbuck said that the 21-day challenge also included reading a book called "Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture." Other challenges included reviewing a "Glossary of Racial Equity Terms," listening to a podcast episode entitled "Bias Isn't Just a Police Problem, It's a Preschool Problem," reading another of Kendi's books called "Antiracist Baby," and reading a book about black people who identify as transgender. Starbuck joked, "When I was recommended a book about black transgenders, the first thing that popped in my mind by the way: tractors. I mean, it immediately links together for me."

Yet another challenge was listening to a podcast called "Seeing White," which Starbuck explained is about "the history of how whiteness came to be, and yes, it is completely derogatory against white people." Another part of the 21-day challenge revolved around a video course from far-left activist Robin DiAngelo, called "Deconstructing White Privilege." Starbuck asked, tongue in cheek, "Are you guys wanting to buy a John Deere tractor yet?" The training program also listed "White Privilege," "Christian Privilege," and "Heterosexual Privilege" as among the most "types of privilege." The documentary filmmaker quipped, "No, they don't mean that in a nice way."

“That was promoted on the John Deere website, that the finance team did that,” Starbuck summarized. “Apparently they love it when employees do things like that, because they’ve given millions to United Way since then.”

Starbuck also shared videos of John Deere employees (accompanied by their “personal pronouns”) discussing the company’s DEI policies. “DEI is no longer an option, it’s a business imperative,” said Viji George, a division leader for John Deere’s digital solutions wing. Of note, Starbuck found that John Deere posts more openly about its LGBT and DEI agendas on LinkedIn than other social media sites.

“To put it mildly, John Deere seems to have forgotten who their customers are. Having a farm myself, I’m disgusted that a once great American brand is now taking this turn to seemingly embrace leftist policies that are diametrically opposed to the values of most farmers,” Starbuck wrote in a social media post accompanying the video. “When we use our voices and wallets to vote our values, we can change the world and we can restore great American companies to a culture of sanity, meritocracy and culture war neutrality OR we can inspire competitors to step up to the plate to fight for our business.”

Starbuck contrasted John Deere against Tractor Supply Co., which **opted** last month to permanently retire its DEI and Pride initiatives. “We work hard to live up to our Mission and Values every day and represent the values of the communities and customers we serve. We have heard from customers that we have disappointed them. We have taken this feedback to heart,” the company said in a statement, announcing the elimination of its DEI departments and a renewed commitment to “ensure our activities and giving tie directly to our business.”

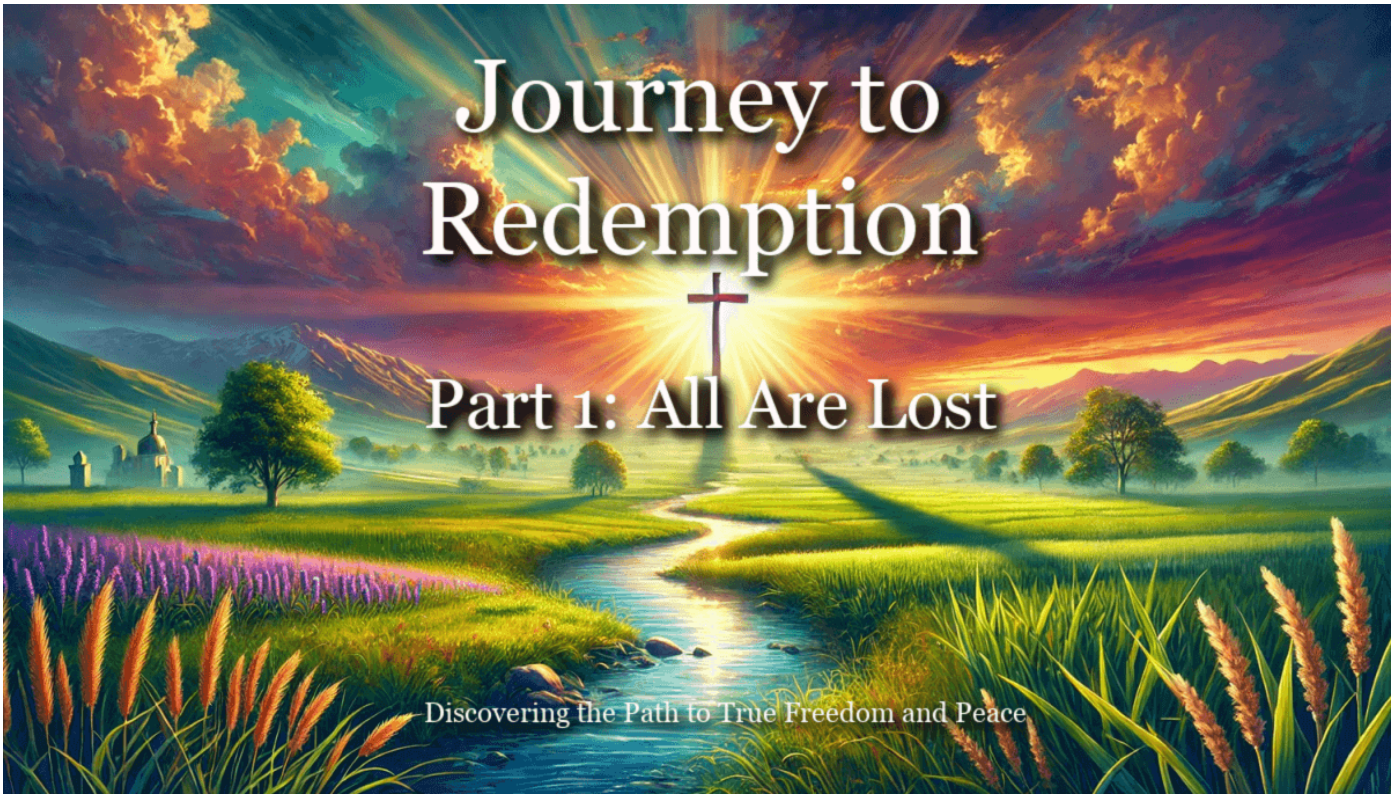
“We will continue to listen to our customers and Team Members. Your trust and confidence in us are of the utmost importance, and we don’t take that lightly,” Tractor Supply Co. wrote. “Rural communities are the backbone of our nation and what make America great. We are honored to be a part of them. We are always here and ready to serve you and your family with our legendary service for the life you love. See you in the stores.”

Tractor Supply Co.’s decision was spurred, at least in part, by reactions to Starbuck’s prior reporting on the company. “As we saw with my Tractor Supply stories, millions of people spoke out against these types of woke policies and ultimately Tractor Supply did the right thing by eliminating woke policies, donations, trainings and positions because of your voices,” he wrote on Tuesday. “The customer is king and most of us just want companies we shop at to stop virtue signaling about divisive social, cultural and political issues.”

SOURCE: **THE WASHINGTON STAND**

Salvation Part 1: All Are Lost

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES



We began by acknowledging our spiritual lostness and the divine provision of salvation through Christ, who bore our iniquities. Scripture: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6, ESV)

In this first part of our '**Journey to Redemption**' series, we explore the biblical truth that all humanity is lost without salvation.

Journey to Redemption: All Are Lost (Isaiah 53:6)

Welcome to part 1 of our 6-part series on Salvation, and the journey to redemption. In this series, we delve into the profound truths of **God's redemptive plan** for humanity as revealed in God's Word.

Each part of this series will explore a key aspect of salvation. We aim to illuminate the path from our lost state to the glorious hope we have in Christ. The Bible, God's infallible Word, clearly outlines the journey of salvation. It emphasizes the universal need for redemption and the incredible love of God in providing a Savior. Whether you are seeking a deeper understanding of your faith or exploring the foundations of Christianity, this series aims to provide clarity and encouragement.

Bible Verse: Isaiah 53:6

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Our Tendency to Wander on our Journey to Redemption

Isaiah 53:6 paints a vivid picture of humanity's spiritual condition: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This verse highlights our propensity to stray from God's path. It also points to the sacrificial work of Christ, who bore our sins.

Isaiah uses the metaphor of sheep to describe our tendency to wander. Just as sheep are prone to stray from their shepherd, we too have turned away from God. The Bible consistently portrays this theme of wandering and disobedience. For example, in Psalm 119:176, the psalmist writes, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." This acknowledgment of straying emphasizes our need for divine guidance and intervention.

The Universality of Sin

Matthew Henry's Commentary elaborates on this imagery. He states, "We have all turned to our own devices and desires, following our own ways rather than God's." This turning away is not just a passive drifting but an active choice to pursue our own paths. This choice leads us further from God's righteousness.

The New Testament echoes this theme of universal lostness. Romans 3:10-12 declares, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Paul emphasizes the comprehensive nature of sin, affecting every individual without exception. Our natural inclination is to deviate from God's standards.

The Divine Solution

Despite our waywardness, there is hope. The latter part of Isaiah 53:6 reveals the divine solution: "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This prophetic statement points to Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant, who would bear the sins of humanity. In the New Testament, this is fulfilled in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. 1 Peter 2:24 affirms, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible provides insight into this profound act of atonement. Gill explains that Christ's bearing of our iniquities was a voluntary and redemptive act. He bore the

punishment we deserved, satisfying divine justice and offering us reconciliation with God. This underscores the magnitude of Christ's love and the depth of our need for His redemptive work.

A Call to Return

Furthermore, Isaiah 53:6 urges us to recognize our own lostness and turn back to God. Additionally, the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-7 illustrates God's relentless pursuit of the lost. Jesus asks,

> "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

This parable highlights God's compassionate heart and His desire to restore those who have strayed.

Moreover, the hope of salvation extends to all who ask God for it in the Biblical manner. Romans 10:9 assures us,

> "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

This promise testifies to God's readiness to forgive and restore anyone who seeks Him with a sincere heart. As we journey through this series, let us remember that salvation is not earned. Instead, it is given freely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Isaiah 53:6 encapsulates the human condition of spiritual lostness and the divine provision of salvation through Christ. We, like sheep, have gone astray, but God in His infinite mercy laid our iniquities on Jesus. This sacrificial act offers us the opportunity to return to the Shepherd and experience the fullness of His grace and forgiveness. Let us acknowledge our need for Him, embrace His redemptive work, and walk in the righteousness He provides.

For further reading:
1. GotQuestions.org – What does it mean that all have sinned? 2. Desiring God – Why We All Need Salvation

Salvation Part 2: All Have Sinned

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

The Promise of Redemption "Continuing our '**Journey to Redemption**,' we enter into the promise of redemption through Jesus Christ, offering hope to a sinful world."

Bible Verse: Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*

The Universality of Sin

As we continue our exploration of salvation and part 2 of our **6-part series**, we turn to Romans 3:23, which states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This verse emphasizes the universal nature of sin and the fact that every person has fallen short of God's perfect standard. This truth underscores the need for salvation and sets the stage for understanding why Christ's redemptive work is essential.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words to the believers in Rome, highlighting the pervasive impact of sin. The phrase "all have sinned" leaves no room for exceptions. Sin is a condition that affects every individual, regardless of background, culture, or personal achievements. This universality of sin is echoed in other scriptures, such as Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

Falling Short of God's Glory

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible explains that "the glory of God" refers to His perfection and holiness. Humanity's failure to meet this standard demonstrates our need for divine grace and redemption through Christ. The gap between God's holiness and our sinfulness is insurmountable by human effort alone.

Matthew Henry's Commentary further elucidates this point, stating,

> "The best of men have come short of glorifying God; all have sinned, and come short of doing their duty."

This falling short signifies not just a minor error but a fundamental flaw in our nature that separates us from God.

The Comprehensive Nature of Sin

The New Testament reinforces this concept of universal sinfulness. Romans 3:10-12 declares, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Paul emphasizes the comprehensive nature of sin, affecting every individual without exception. Our natural inclination is to deviate from God's standards.

The Promise of Redemption

Despite our sinful condition, the gospel offers hope. Romans 3:24 promises redemption:

> "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

This verse reveals justification—being declared righteous before God—through faith in Jesus Christ.

The hope of salvation is available to all who seek it in the Biblical manner. Acts 2:38 assures us,

> “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

This promise extends to all who genuinely repent and turn to God, embracing His gift of grace.

Conclusion

Romans 3:23 underscores our universal need for salvation due to humanity’s sinfulness. Every person falls short of God’s glory, highlighting the necessity of Christ’s redemptive work. Recognizing our shortcomings invites us to receive God’s grace and accept the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. Let us acknowledge our need for Him, trust in His redemptive work, and walk in the newness of life He provides.

SERIES

For further reading:
Romans 3-23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (**Bible Study Tools**)

Salvation Part 3: Consequences of Sin Ends in Death

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

The Path to Repentance "In part three of our series, we examine the consequences of sine and the essential steps of repentance, and turning back to God as we move forward on our '**Journey to Redemption**.'"

Bible Verse: Romans 6:23

> "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Consequence of Sin

Continuing our journey through salvation truths, we come to Romans 6:23. It contrasts sin's consequences with hope through Christ. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This verse shows the gravity of sin and the promise of eternal life.

Paul's letter to the Romans highlights sin's seriousness and its result: death. The term "wages" means something earned, showing death is the rightful result of sin. This death is not only physical

but also spiritual, signifying eternal separation from God. James 1:15 says, “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This shows sin’s deadly nature, progressing from temptation to sin to death.

The Gift of Eternal Life

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible clarifies that “wages” implies what is earned or deserved, while “gift” highlights God’s grace in offering salvation freely, not based on our merit but on Christ’s sacrifice. This contrast between what we deserve and what God offers is a powerful reminder of His mercy and love.

Matthew Henry’s Commentary elaborates on the significance of eternal life as God’s gift. It is a gift that cannot be earned but is given freely through faith in Jesus Christ. This gift of eternal life stands in stark contrast to the death earned by sin, emphasizing the generosity and grace of God.

The Path to Eternal Life

The New Testament consistently reinforces this theme. John 3:16, one of the most well-known verses, states, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This verse underscores God’s love and the provision of eternal life through faith in Jesus.

The hope of salvation is available to all who seek it in the Biblical manner. Ephesians 2:8-9 assures us, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This passage highlights that salvation is a gift, received by faith, and not something we can earn through our efforts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Romans 6:23 presents a stark contrast between the consequences of sin and the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The wages of sin is death. God offers the gift of eternal life to all who believe in His Son. This profound truth calls us to recognize the seriousness of sin and the incredible grace of God. Let us embrace this gift of eternal life, offered freely through faith in Jesus Christ, and walk in the assurance of His salvation.

SERIES

For further reading:

What is “sin that leads to death” in 1 John 5:16? (**Link**)

Salvation Part 4: Jesus Died to Bring You to God

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

The Gift of Grace:

This fourth installment of our '**Journey to Redemption**' series focuses on the incredible gift of grace offered to us as Jesus died for you.

Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18 *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."*

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Jesus Died as the Suffering Servant

As we continue exploring salvation, we turn to 1 Peter 3:18. This verse highlights the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." This verse emphasizes the once-for-all nature of Christ's sacrifice and its purpose—to bring us to God.

Peter underscores that Jesus, the righteous one, suffered for the unrighteous. This substitutionary atonement is central to the Christian faith. Isaiah 53:5 prophesies about this suffering servant: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” This prophecy, fulfilled in Jesus, highlights the immense suffering He endured for our sake.

The Just for the Unjust

John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible explains that Christ’s suffering and His death was a voluntary and redemptive act. He bore the punishment we deserved, satisfying divine justice and offering us reconciliation with God. This underscores the magnitude of Christ’s love and the depth of our need for His redemptive work.

Matthew Henry’s Commentary further emphasizes the purpose of Christ’s suffering: to bring us to God. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus made it possible for us to be reconciled to God, restoring the relationship broken by sin. This reconciliation is a central theme of the New Testament. Colossians 1:20 states, “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Quickened by the Spirit

Peter also highlights that the Spirit quickened Jesus. This refers to His resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:11 affirms this, saying, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” The resurrection of Christ assures us of the victory over sin and death.

Jesus Died and our only Hope of Reconciliation

The hope of salvation is available to all who seek it in the Biblical manner. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 provides the assurance, “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” This passage highlights God’s initiative in reconciling us to Himself through Christ.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 1 Peter 3:18 emphasizes the sacrificial and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. He, the just, suffered for the unjust to bring us to God, providing a way for reconciliation and restoration.

His resurrection by the Spirit assures us of the victory over sin and death. Let us embrace this profound truth, acknowledge our need for reconciliation with God. Walk daily in the newness of life provided through Jesus Christ.

For further reading:

1. Blue Letter Bible (**Link**)

2. Biblia (**Link**)

Salvation Part 5: Jesus Died for Our Sins

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

As we progress through our '**Journey to Redemption**,' part five highlights how accepting salvation leads to a transformed and renewed life in Christ.

Healing Through His Stripes

The phrase "by whose stripes ye were healed" signifies the spiritual healing from Christ's suffering. Additionally, this healing is not just physical but restores our relationship with God. Psalm 103:3 declares, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Thus, this healing addresses both spiritual and physical needs.

Embracing Righteousness

Furthermore, salvation is available to all who seek it biblically. 1 John 1:9 assures us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Therefore, this promise highlights God's faithfulness in forgiving and cleansing us when we repent.

Living a Transformed Life

As we progress through our 'Journey to Redemption,' part five highlights how accepting salvation leads to a transformed and renewed life in Christ.

Bible Verse: 1 Peter 2:24

> "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

The Sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Died for Our Sins

As we go deeper into the theme of salvation, we focus on 1 Peter 2:24. It states, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." This verse highlights the substitutionary atonement of Christ and its transformative power in believers' lives.

Peter emphasizes that Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross. This act of bearing our sins signifies that the weight and penalty of sin were placed on Jesus. Isaiah 53:4-5 prophesies,

> "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

This prophecy underscores the suffering and sacrifice Jesus endured for our sins.

Dead to Sins, Alive to Righteousness

John Calvin's Commentary highlights the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice, which enables believers to live a new life of righteousness. Through His death, Christ calls us to die to sin and live unto righteousness. Romans 6:6 echoes this concept,

> "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The death of our sinful nature allows us to walk in the newness of life.

Conclusion

1 Peter 2:24 highlights Jesus Christ's profound sacrifice. He bore our sins on the cross, allowing us to die to sin and live righteously. His suffering brings spiritual healing and restoration, transforming our lives. Let us embrace this truth, acknowledge our need for His sacrifice, and walk in the righteousness He provides.

What does it mean that Jesus died for our sins? (Got Questions: **Link**)

Salvation Part 6 and Conclusion: Christian Fellowship with Christ

JULY 11, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: SALVATION SERIES

"In the final part of our '**Journey to Redemption**' series, we reflect on our personal and Christian fellowship with eternal assurance that comes with salvation in Jesus Christ

Bible Verse: Revelation 3:20.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

The Invitation of Christ

As we conclude our series on salvation, we focus on Revelation 3:20, where Jesus extends a personal invitation and Christian fellowship.

> “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

This verse illustrates the desire of Christ to enter into a personal relationship with each individual.

The imagery of Jesus standing at the door and knocking signifies His readiness and willingness to enter our lives. This invitation is extended to all, regardless of their past or present circumstances. Matthew Henry’s Commentary explains that this verse portrays the willingness of Christ to enter and dwell within those who respond to His call. It emphasizes the personal and relational aspect of salvation.

Hearing and Responding

Jesus’ invitation requires a response. Hearing His voice and opening the door signifies a willingness to receive Him. John 1:12 assures us, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” This response of receiving and believing in Jesus grants us the privilege of becoming children of God and Christian fellowship.

The Promise of Fellowship

The promise of Jesus’ presence is not merely a formal relationship but an intimate fellowship. The phrase “I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” signifies a deep and personal communion. This fellowship is characterized by mutual sharing and intimacy. John 14:23 affirms this promise, “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

The Assurance of Salvation

The hope of salvation is available to all who seek it in the Biblical manner. Romans 10:13 provides the assurance, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” This promise extends to all who genuinely call upon Jesus, embracing His invitation and receiving His gift of salvation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Revelation 3:20 highlights the personal invitation of Jesus Christ to each individual and our Christian fellowship. His desire is to enter into a personal and intimate relationship with us, offering fellowship and communion. Let us respond to His call, open the door of our hearts, and embrace the salvation and fellowship He offers. May we walk in the assurance of His presence and live in the fullness of His grace and love.

Conclusion and Recap of the 6-Part Series on Salvation

In this 6-part series on Salvation, we have explored the profound truths of God's redemptive plan for humanity as revealed in the Bible. Each part has illuminated a key aspect of salvation, from our lost state to the glorious hope we have in Christ.

- **All Are Lost** (Isaiah 53:6). We began by acknowledging our spiritual lostness and the divine provision of salvation through Christ, who bore our iniquities. **Scripture:** "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6, ESV)
- **All Have Sinned** (Romans 3:23). We recognized the universal nature of sin and our need for divine grace and redemption through Christ. **Scripture:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23, ESV)
- **Sin Ends in Death** (Romans 6:23). We confronted the gravity of sin and the contrasting hope of eternal life offered through Jesus Christ. **Scripture:** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23, ESV)

Jesus Died and Took Your Sins

- **Jesus Died to Bring You to God** (1 Peter 3:18). We explored the sacrificial and redemptive work of Jesus, who suffered to bring us to God.
  Scripture: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."

- **Jesus Took Your Sins** (1 Peter 2:24). We delved into the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice, enabling us to die to sin and live unto righteousness. Scripture: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."
- **Come in Lord Jesus** (Revelation 3:20).
  We concluded with the personal invitation of Jesus, emphasizing the intimate fellowship. He offers to those who respond to His call.
  Scripture: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

Throughout this series, we remember that grace through faith in Jesus Christ gives us salvation freely, not by our own efforts.

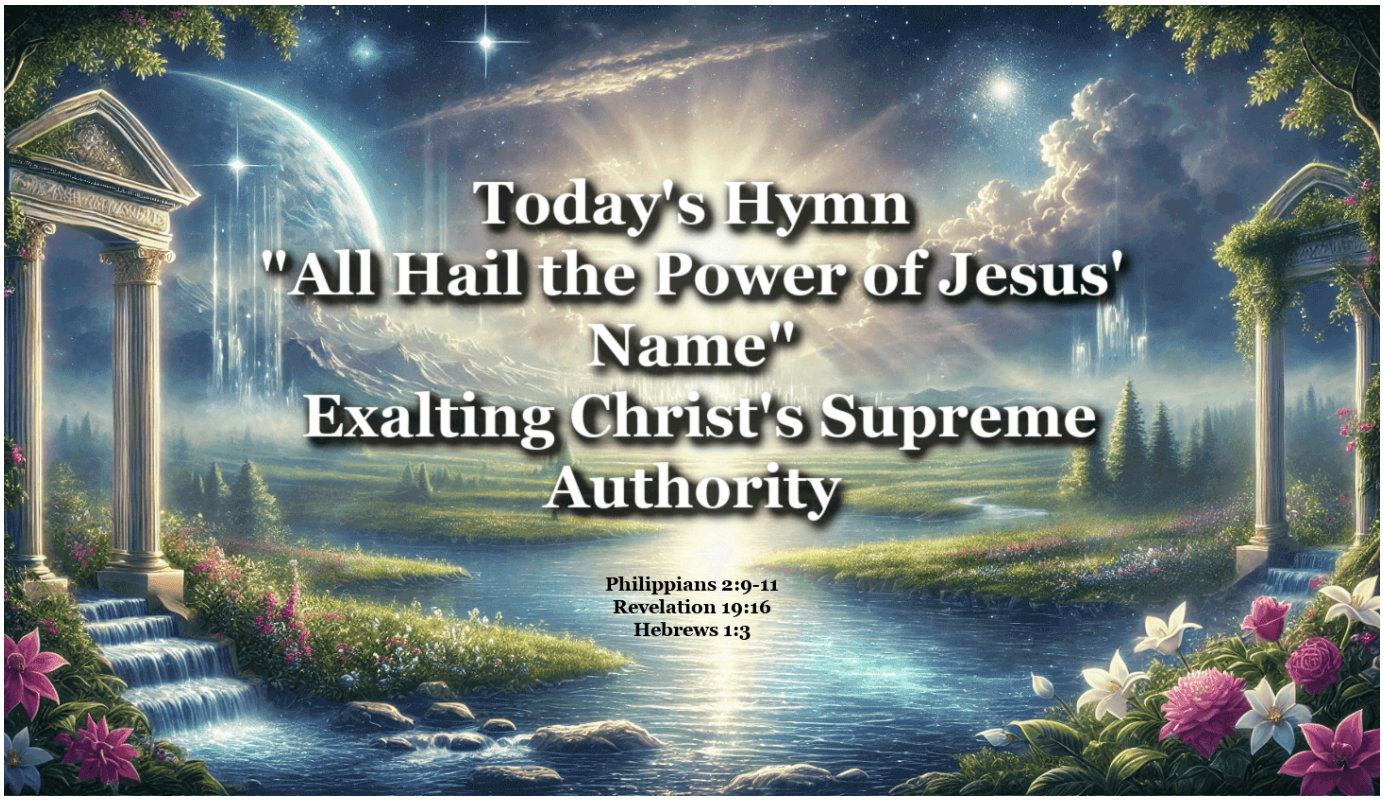
God extends the hope of salvation to all who seek Him in the Biblical manner, confessing and believing in Jesus Christ.

Let us embrace these truths, acknowledge our need for Him, and walk in the assurance of His salvation. May we live in the fullness of His grace and love. Help us share the message of salvation with others and glorifying God in our lives.

For further reading:
Got Questions: I Stand at the Door and Knock (**article**)

Hymn: Exalting Christ’s Supreme Authority: All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name

JULY 10, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: HYMN



Introduction

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” is a classic Christian hymn often referred to as the “National Anthem of Christendom.” Written by Edward Perronet in 1779, this hymn celebrates the supreme authority and glory of Jesus Christ. It has been sung by believers for centuries, proclaiming Jesus as King and Lord over all.

Context

Edward Perronet, an English clergyman and a contemporary of John and Charles Wesley, penned this hymn during a period of great evangelical awakening. The hymn was intended to inspire Christians to acknowledge and worship the mighty power and authority of Jesus Christ. Its stirring lyrics call believers to honor Jesus, who, by His sacrifice and resurrection, is exalted as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Outline

1. **Verse 1: Proclamation of Jesus' Name**
   - Exalts Jesus' name and invites all to crown Him as Lord.

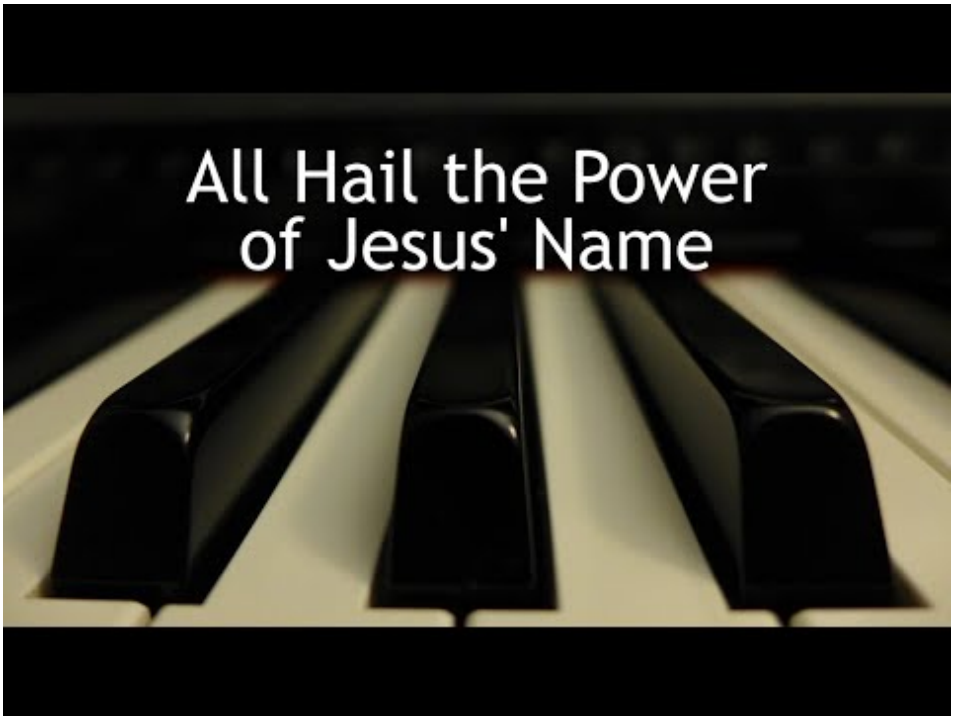
2. **Verse 2: Recognition by Angels**
   - Imagines angels prostrating before Jesus, acknowledging His majesty.

3. **Verse 3: Testimony of the Redeemed**
   - Calls those who have experienced Jesus' redemption to declare His greatness.

4. **Verse 4: Universal Worship**
   - Envisions all creation joining in worship, proclaiming Jesus' eternal reign.

5. **Verse 5: Closing Benediction**
   - Ends with a doxology, giving glory and honor to Jesus forever.

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name - piano instrumental hymn with lyrics
https://youtube.com/watch?v=bQSh7QsKcSs



Summary

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” is a hymn that captures the essence of Christian worship by focusing on the exaltation of Jesus Christ. It begins with a call for all creation to honor and crown Jesus as Lord, recognizing His divine authority. The hymn progresses to envision angels and redeemed believers alike bowing in worship. It culminates in a powerful image of universal adoration, where every creature acknowledges Jesus’ sovereignty. The closing doxology underscores the eternal glory due to Jesus, making the hymn a timeless anthem of praise and adoration.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of praise for Your Son, Jesus Christ. We join with the angels and the redeemed in exalting His holy name. May our lives reflect His lordship and may our voices always proclaim His glory. Help us to live in constant acknowledgment of His sovereignty and grace. As we sing “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name,” let it be more than just words; let it be the anthem of our hearts. We ask this in the precious name of Jesus, our King and Savior. Amen.

Scripture Verses Supporting the Lyrics:

1. **Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)**

- “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- This verse emphasizes the exaltation and supreme authority of Jesus, aligning with the hymn’s call to crown Him as Lord.

2. **Revelation 19:16 (NIV)**

- “On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”
- This verse supports the declaration of Jesus’ ultimate kingship, which the hymn celebrates.

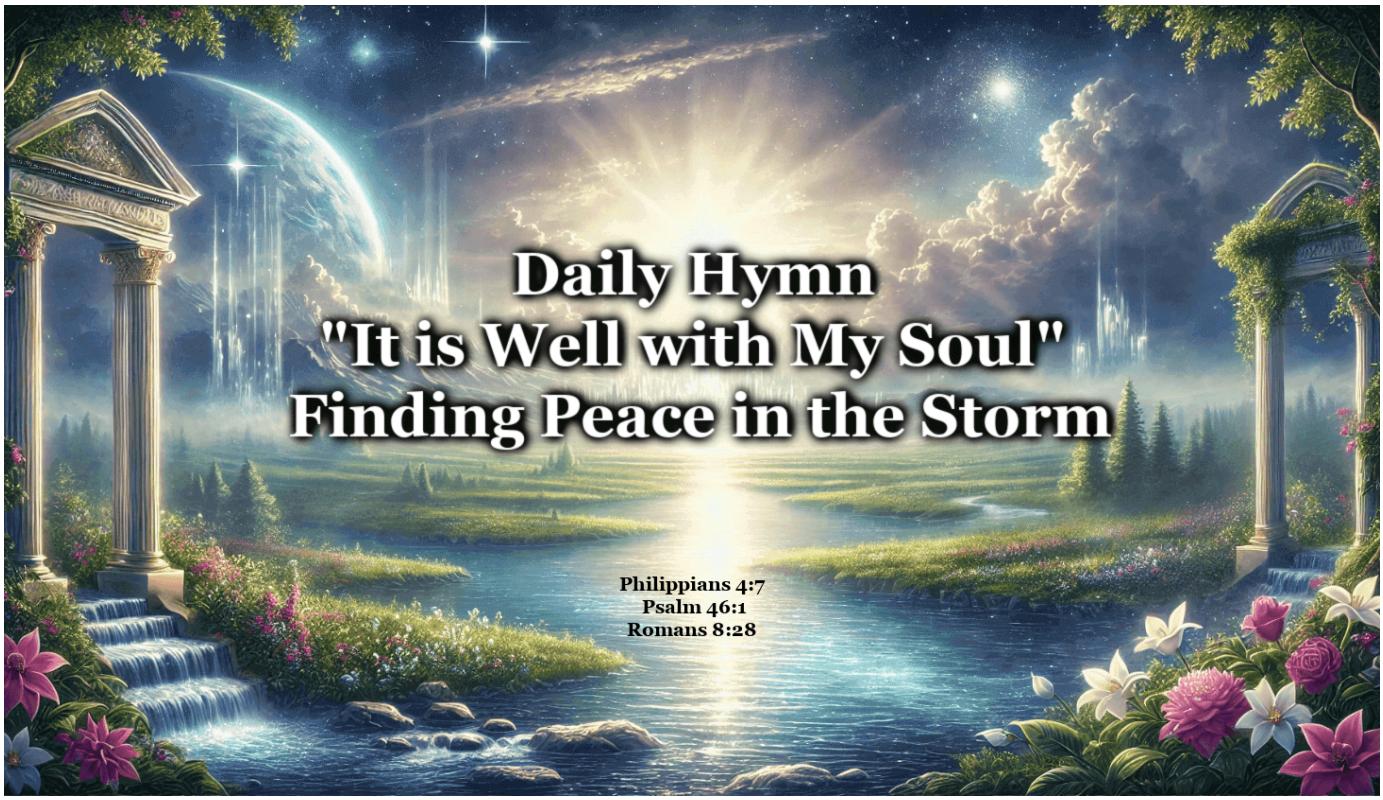
3. **Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)**

- “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”
- This verse highlights Jesus’ divine nature and His position at the right hand of God, reinforcing the hymn’s message of Jesus’ majesty and power.

These verses collectively underscore the themes of Jesus’ exaltation, kingship, and divine authority, which are central to the hymn “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.”

Today's Hymn: Finding Peace in the Storm: "It Is Well with My Soul"

JULY 9, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: HYMN



Life often brings us storms—unexpected trials, heartbreaks, and sorrows that can leave us feeling overwhelmed and lost. In these moments, it can be challenging to find peace and trust in God's plan. However, the timeless hymn "It Is Well with My Soul," written by Horatio Spafford, reminds us that true peace comes from our faith in Christ, even in the midst of life's most difficult circumstances.

Spafford penned these words after experiencing profound personal tragedy, including the loss of his four daughters in a shipwreck. Despite his immense grief, he found solace in God's unchanging love and sovereignty. The hymn's lyrics reflect a deep, abiding trust in God's goodness and a serene acceptance of His will:

> When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot,
> Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

This hymn encourages us to anchor our souls in Christ, who is our ultimate source of peace and hope. In Philippians 4:7, the Apostle Paul writes, “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This divine peace is not dependent on our circumstances but is a gift from God that sustains us through every storm.

As we navigate life’s challenges, let us remember that we can find comfort and strength in our relationship with God. When we surrender our fears and anxieties to Him, we can experience the profound peace that Spafford so beautifully expressed in his hymn.

Words of Encouragement

Christian, if you are facing a difficult season, take heart in knowing that you are not alone. God is with you, and He understands your pain. He promises to be your refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). Lean on His promises, and let the words of “It Is Well with My Soul” be a source of comfort and encouragement. Trust that God is in control and that He is working all things for your good (Romans 8:28).

It Is Well With My Soul
https://youtube.com/watch?v=AHe_qmo3gX4

A Short Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with hearts that are burdened by life's trials and uncertainties. We thank You for the peace that surpasses all understanding, a peace that only You can provide. Help us to trust in Your unfailing love and to find rest in Your sovereign will. Just as Horatio Spafford found solace in You, may we also declare with confidence, "It is well with my soul." Strengthen our faith, comfort our hearts, and guide us through every storm we face. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

May these words bring you comfort and remind you of the unwavering hope we have in Christ. No matter what you are going through, remember that with God, it can indeed be well with your soul.

Today’s Hymn: “Now Thank We All Our God” – A Hymn of Thanksgiving

JULY 8, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: HYMN

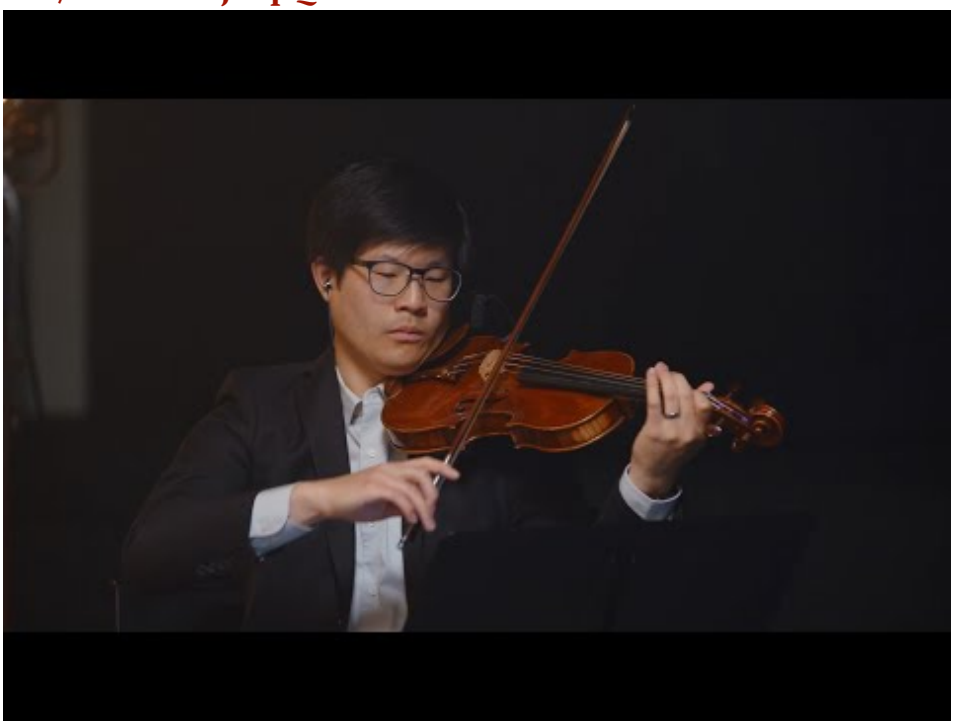
These posts on Christian Hymns wil be from choral symphony to the simple kalimba 17 key hand held instrument.

Introduction:

- Introduce the hymn “Now Thank We All Our God,” written by Martin Rinkart in the 17th century.
- Briefly mention the context in which it was written, during the Thirty Years’ War, highlighting its enduring message of gratitude.

Hymn Lyrics: Now thank we all our God, With hearts and hands and voices, Who wondrous things hath done, In whom His world rejoices; Who from our mothers’ arms Hath blessed us on our way With countless gifts of love, And still is ours today.

Now Thank We All Our God (Hymn 433)
https://youtube.com/watch?v=jXrpQz2YYzs



O may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us, With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us; And keep us in His grace, And guide us when perplexed, And free us from all ills, In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God The Father now be given, The Son, and Him who reigns With them in highest heaven, The one eternal God, Whom earth and heaven adore; For thus it was, is now, And shall be evermore.

Scriptural Basis:

- **Psalm 100:4**: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18**: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Reflection:

- Reflect on the importance of gratitude in the Christian life.
- Share a personal story or testimony of a time when expressing gratitude made a difference in your life or someone else's.
- Highlight how thanking God can change our perspective and bring peace.

Short Poem:

Gratitude, a song of praise,

In every moment, through all days,

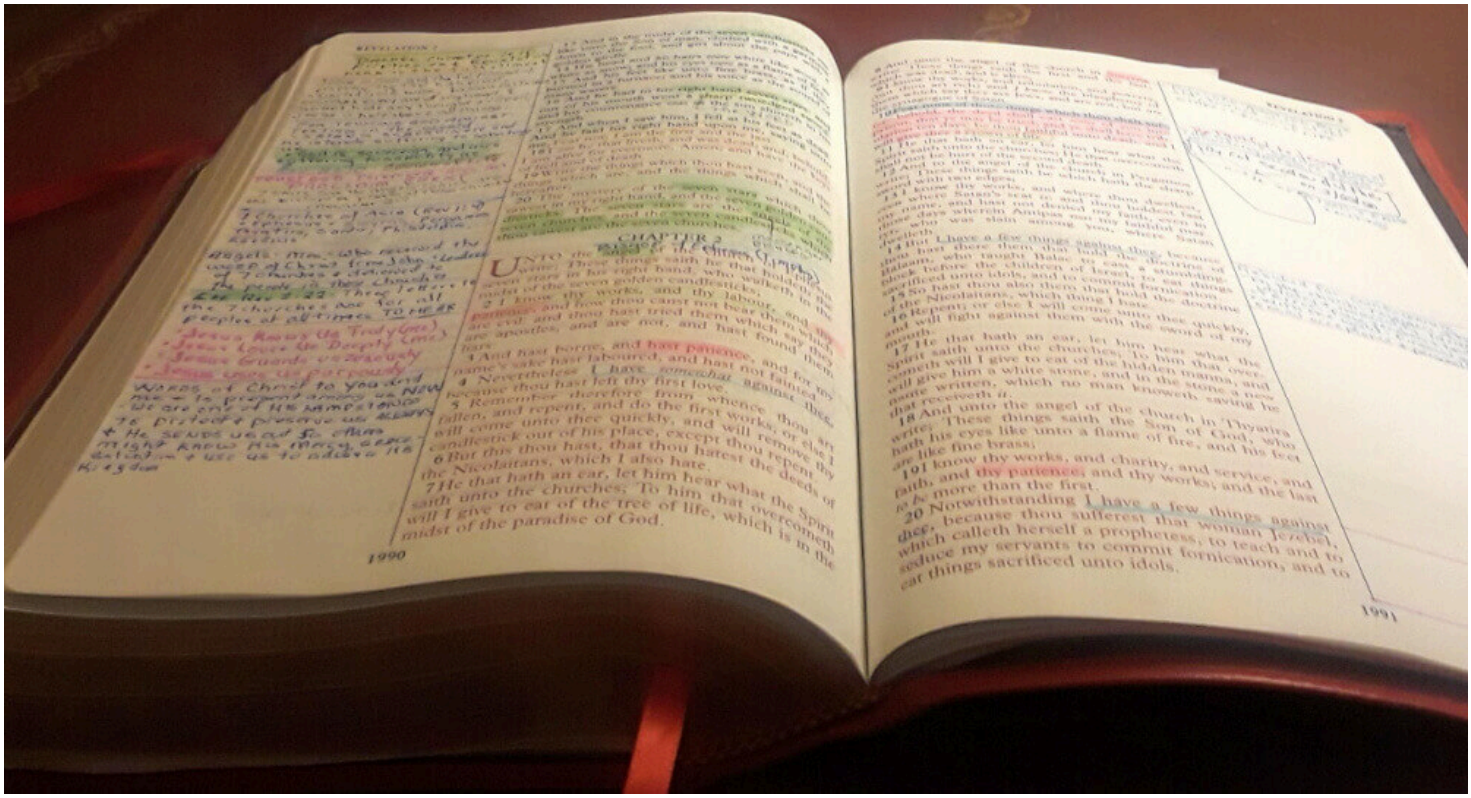
With thankful hearts, we lift our voice,

In God's great love, we all rejoice.

Closing Prayer: "Dear Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of gratitude. We thank You for Your countless blessings and Your steadfast love. Help us to always remember to give thanks in every situation, knowing that You are with us and for us. May our lives be a continuous hymn of thanksgiving to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Christian Love | Part 1: You are Loved by Jesus

JULY 1, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



In a world that often feels fragmented and uncertain, the constancy and depth of divine love remain a steadfast anchor for believers. This 6-part series on Christian love explores the profound and multifaceted nature of God's love as revealed through Scripture. It offers a deeper understanding and appreciation of how Jesus loves you, how the Father loves you, and how you are loved through the Holy Spirit. Each part of this series delves into a different aspect of this divine love, reminding us of the unbreakable bond we have with our Creator.

For part one of this **six-part series** on Christian love that comes from God our Father, we will be examining the following verses. These verses form the Christian foundation of divine love upon which the Christian life stands.

You Are!

1. **Loved by Jesus: As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. John 15:9**
2. **Loved by the Father:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

3. **Loved through the Spirit:** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5
4. **No Greater Love:** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13
5. **God is Love:** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16
6. **No Separation from love:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:39

You are Loved by Jesus:

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. John 15:9

Commentary by Albert Barnes as found in the free Bible Software E-SWORD

As the Father hath loved me –

The love of the Father toward his only-begotten Son is the highest affection of which we can conceive. Compare Mt 3:17, and Mt 17:5. It is the love of God toward his coequal Son. who is like him in all things, who always pleased him, and who was willing to endure the greatest sacrifices and toils to accomplish his purpose of mercy. Yet this love is adduced to illustrate the tender affection which the Lord Jesus has for all his friends.

So have I loved you –

Not to the same degree, for this was impossible, but with the same kind of love – deep, tender. unchanging; love prompting to self-denials, toils, and sacrifices to secure their welfare.

Continue ye –

The reason which he gives for their doing this is the strength of the love which he had shown for them. His love was so great for them that he was about to lay down his life. This constitutes a strong reason why we should continue in his love:

1. Because the love which he shows for us is unchanging.
2. It is the love of our best friend – love whose strength was expressed by toils, and groans, and blood.
3. As he is unchanging in the character and strength of his affection, so should we be. Thus only can we properly express our gratitude; thus only show that we are his true friends.
4. Our happiness here and forever depends altogether on our continuing in the love of Christ. We have no source of permanent joy but in that love.

In my love –

In love to me. Thus it is expressed in the Greek in the next verse. The connection also demands that we understand it of our love to him, and not of his love to us. The latter cannot be the subject of a command; the former may. See also Luke 11:42, 1 John 2:5; Jude 1:21.

the Father: John 15:13, John 17:23, John 17:26; Eph 3:18; Rev 1:5
continue: Jn 15:11; 1Jn 2:28; Jude 1:20

- Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
- Part Three: **Loved through the Spirit**
- Part Four: **No Greater Love**
- Part Five: **God is Love**
- Part Six: **No Separation from God**

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Christian Love | Part 2: Loved by the Father

JULY 1, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
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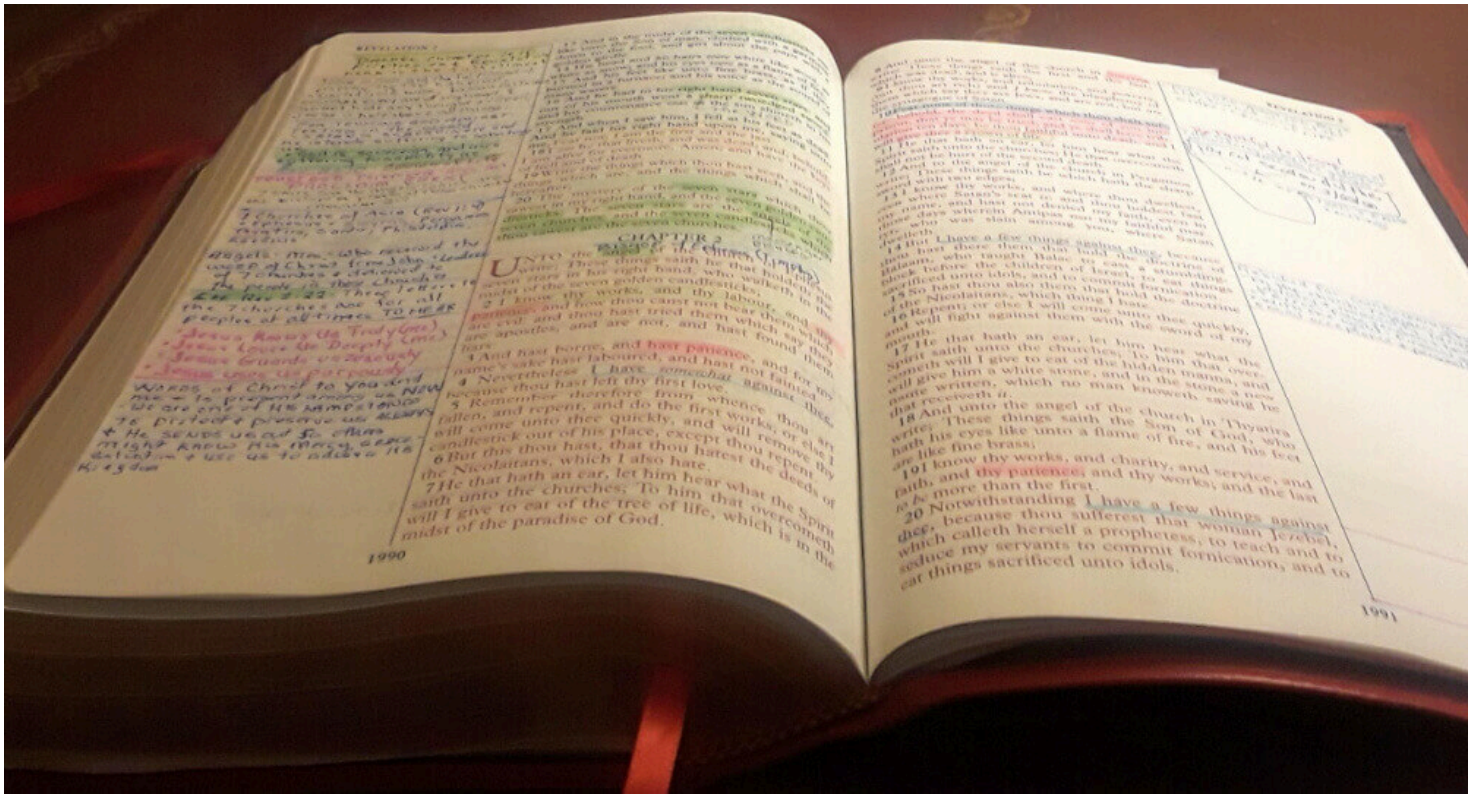

For part two of this **six-part series** on the love that comes from God our Father, we will look at the following verses. These form the Christian foundation of divine love upon which the Christian life stands.

You Are!

1. **Loved by Jesus:** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. John 15:9
2. **Loved by the Father: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16**
3. **Loved through the Spirit:** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. **Romans 5:5**
4. **No Greater Love:** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **John 15:13**
5. **God is Love:** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **1 John 4:16**
6. **No Separation from love:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:39**

Loved by the Father

The following Commentary by Albert Barnes also found in e-SWORD

Loved by the Father: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **John 3:16**

For God so loved – This does not mean that God approved the conduct of men, but that he had benevolent feelings toward them or was "earnestly desirous" of their happiness. God hates wickedness, but he still desires the Happiness of those who are sinful. "He hates the sin but loves the sinner." A parent may love his child and desire his welfare yet be strongly opposed to the conduct of that child. When we approve the conduct of another, this is the love of complacency; when we desire simply their happiness, this is the love of benevolence. **The world –** All mankind. It does not mean any particular part of the world, but man as man – the race that had rebelled and deserved to die. See John 6:33; John 17:21. His love for the world, or all mankind, in giving his Son, was shown by these circumstances:

1. All the world was in ruin and exposed to the wrath of God.
2. All people were in a hopeless condition.
3. God gave his Son. Man had no claim on him; it was a gift – an undeserved gift.
4. He gave him up to extreme suffering, even the bitter pains of death on the cross.
5. It was for all the world. He tasted "death for every man," Heb 2:9. He "died for all," 2 Cor 5:15. "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 Jn 2:2.

That he gave – It was a free and unmerited gift. Man had no claim: and when there was no eye to pity or arm to save, it pleased God to give his Son into the hands of men to die in their stead, Gal 1:4; Rom 8:32; Luk 22:19. It was the mere movement of love; the expression of eternal compassion, and of a desire, that sinners should not perish forever. **His only-begotten Son –** This is the highest expression of love of which we can conceive. A parent who should give up his only son to die for others who are guilty if this could or might be done – would show higher love than could be manifested in any other way. So it shows the depth of the love of God, that he was willing. to give his only Son into the hands of sinful men that he might be slain and thus redeem them from eternal sorrow.

Notes at John 1:14 from Albert Barnes in ESWORD:

John 1:14
And the Word was made flesh –

The word "flesh" here is evidently used to denote "human nature" or "man." See Mt 16:17; Mt 19:5; Mt 24:22; Luke 3:6; Rom 1:3; Rom 9:5. The "Word" was made "man." This is commonly expressed by saying that he became "incarnate." When we say that a being becomes "incarnate," we mean that

one of a higher order than man and of a different nature assumes the appearance of man or becomes a man. Here it is meant that "the Word," or the second person of the Trinity, whom John had just proved to be equal with God, became a man or was united with the man Jesus of Nazareth so that it might be said that he "was made flesh."

Was made – This is the same word that is used in John 1:3; "All things were made by him." It is not simply affirmed that he was flesh, but that he was made flesh, implying that he had pre-existence, agreeably to John 1:1. This is in accordance with the doctrine of the Scriptures elsewhere. Heb 10:5; "a 'body' hast thou prepared me." Heb 2:14; "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." 1 Jn 4:2; "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."

See also 1 Ti 3:16; Phi 2:6; 2 Cor 8:9; Luke 1:35. The expression, then, means that he became a man and that he became such by the power of God providing for him a body. It cannot mean that the divine nature was "changed" into the human, for that could not be; but it means that the λόγος Logos, or "Word," became so intimately united to Jesus that it might be said that the Logos, or "Word" "became" or "was" a man, as the soul becomes so united to the body that we may say that it is one person or a man.

And dwell among us – The word in the original denotes "dwelt as in a tabernacle or tent;" and some have supposed that John means to say that the human body was a tabernacle or tent for the λόγος Logos to abide in, in allusion to the tabernacle among the Jews, in which the Shechinah, or visible symbol of God, dwelt; but it is not necessary to suppose this. The object of John was to prove that "the Word" became "incarnate." To do this, he appeals to various evidences. One was that he "dwelt" among them; sojourned with them; ate, drank, slept, and was with them for years so that they "saw him with their eyes, they looked upon him, and their hands handled him" 1 Jn 1:1. To "dwell in a tent with one" is the same as to be in his family; and when John says he "tabernacled" with them, he means that he was with them as a friend and as one of a family, so that they had full opportunity of becoming familiarly acquainted with him, and could not be mistaken in supposing that "he was really a man."

We beheld his glory

– This is a new proof of what he was affirming – "that the word of God became man." The first was, that they had seen him as a man. He now adds that they had seen him in his proper glory "as God and man united in one person," constituting him the unequaled Son of the Father. There is no doubt that there is a reference here to the transfiguration on the holy mount. See Mat 17:1-9. To this same evidence, Peter also appeals, 2 Pe 1:16-18. John was one of the witnesses of that scene, and hence he says, "We beheld his glory," Mark 9:2. The word "glory" here means majesty, dignity, and splendor.

The glory as of the only-begotten of the Father – The dignity which was appropriate to the only-begotten Son of God; such glory or splendor as could belong to no other. and as properly expressed

his rank and character. This glory was seen eminently on the mount of transfiguration. It was also seen in his miracles, his doctrine, his resurrection, and his ascension, all of which were such to illustrate the perfections and manifest the glory that belongs only to the Son of God.

Only-begotten—John never applies this term to anyone but Jesus Christ. He applies it five times to the Saviour: John 1:14, John 1:18, John 3:16, John 3:18, and 1 Jn 4:9. It means literally an only child. As an only child is especially dear to a parent, it means one who is especially beloved. Compare Gen 22:2, Gen 22:12, Gen 22:16, Jer 6:26, and Zec 12:10. On both these accounts, it is bestowed on the Saviour.

1. He was eminently the Son of God, sustaining a special relation to Him in His divine nature, exalted above all human beings and angels, and thus worthy to be called, by way of eminence, His only Son. Saints are called His "sons" or children because they are born of His Spirit or are like Him, but the Lord Jesus is exalted far above all and deserves eminently to be called His only-begotten Son.

2. He was especially dear to God, and therefore this appellation, implying tender affection, is bestowed upon him.
Full of grace and truth – The word "full" here refers to the "Word made flesh," which is declared to be full of grace and truth. The word "grace" means "favors," gifts, and acts of beneficence. He was kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man's welfare by great sacrifices and love, so much so that it might be said to be characteristic of him, or he "abounded" in favor to mankind. He was also "full of truth." He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood. He was not like the false prophets and false Messiahs, who were wholly impostors, nor was he like the emblems and shadows of the old dispensation, which were only types of the true, but he was truth itself. He represented things as they are and thus became the "truth" and "the way and the life."

1. Part One: **Loved by Jesus**
2. Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
3. Part Three: **Loved through the Spirit**
4. Part Four: **No Greater Love**
5. Part Five: **God is Love**
6. Part Six: **No Separation from God**

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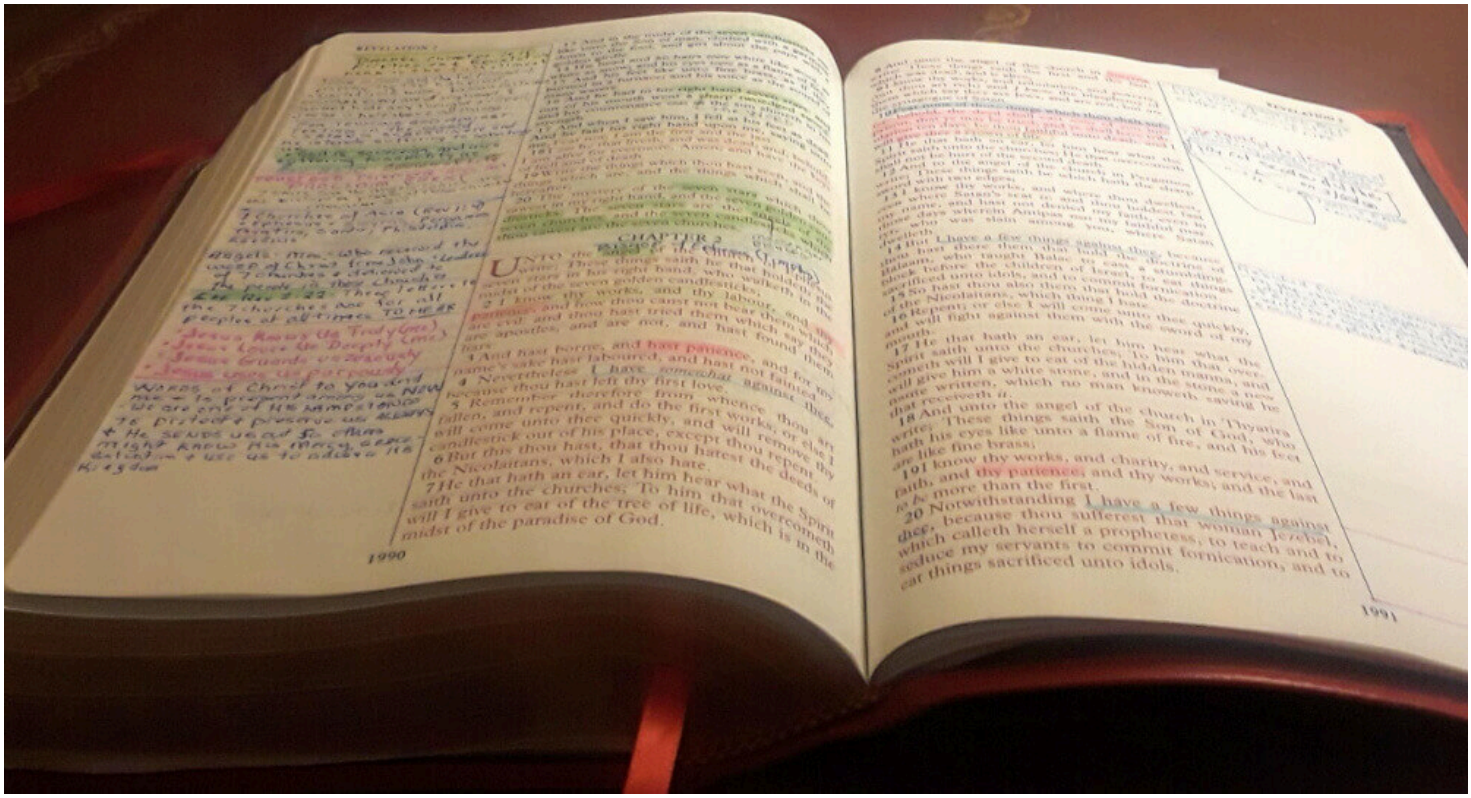
Christian Love | Part 3: Loved Through the Spirit

JULY 1, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



For part three of this **six-part series** on the love that comes from God our Father. We will be looking at the following verses. These form the Christian foundation of divine love upon which the Christian life stands.

You Are!

1. **Loved by Jesus:** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **John 15:9.**
2. **Loved by the Father:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **John 3:16.**
3. **Loved through the Spirit: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5.**
4. **No Greater Love:** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **John 15:13.**
5. **God is Love:** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **1 John 4:16.**
6. **No Separation from love:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:39.**

Loved through the Spirit: Commentary by Albert Barnes found in eSword Bible software.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. **Romans 5:5**

And hope maketh not ashamed – That is, this hope will not disappoint, or deceive. When we hope for an object which we do not obtain, we are conscious of disappointment; perhaps sometimes of a feeling of shame. But the apostle says that the Christian hope is such that it will be fulfilled; it will not disappoint; what we hope for we shall certainly obtain; see Php 1:20. The expression used here is probably taken from Psalm 22:4-5;

> Our fathers trusted in thee;
> They trusted; and thou didst deliver them.
> They cried unto thee,
> And were delivered;
> They trusted in thee,
> And were not confounded (ashamed).

Because the love of God – Love toward God. There is produced an abundant, an overflowing love to God.

Is shed abroad – Is diffused; is poured out; is abundantly produced ἐκκέχυται ekkechutai. This word is properly applied to water, or to any other liquid that is poured out, or diffused. It is used also to denote imparting, or communicating freely or abundantly, and is thus expressive of the influence of the Holy Spirit poured down, or abundantly imparted to people; Act 10:45. Here it means that love toward God is copiously or abundantly given to a Christian; his heart is conscious of high and abundant love to God, and by this he is sustained in his afflictions.

By the Holy Ghost – It is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit. All Christian graces are traced to his influence; Gal 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," etc.

Which is given unto us – Which Spirit is given or imparted to us. The Holy Spirit is thus represented as dwelling in the hearts of believers; 1 Cor 6:19; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16. In all these places it is meant that Christians are under his sanctifying influence; that he produces in their hearts the Christian graces; and fills their minds with peace, and love, and joy.

1. Part One: **Loved by Jesus**
2. Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
3. Part Three: **Loved through the Spirit**

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Christian Love | Part 4: No Greater Love

JULY 1, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

For part four of this **six-part series** on the love that comes from God our Father. We will be looking at the following verses. These form the Christian foundation of divine love upon which the Christian life stands.

The Christian is:

1. **Loved by Jesus:** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **John 15:9.**
2. **Loved by the Father:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **John 3:16.**
3. **Loved through the Spirit:** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. **Romans 5:5.**
4. **No Greater Love: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13.**
5. **God is Love:** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **1 John 4:16.**
6. **No Separation from God's Love:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:39.**

Biblical Worldview

> John 15:13 (KJV): "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

From a Biblical worldview, this verse speaks to the ultimate expression of love and sacrifice. Jesus Christ, speaking to His disciples, is foreshadowing His own sacrifice on the cross. By laying down His life, Jesus demonstrates the highest form of love, one that puts others' needs and well-being above one's own life. This act of self-sacrifice is central to Christian belief, reflecting the nature of God's love for humanity.

Key Points:

1. **Self-Sacrificial Love:** This verse underscores the Christian principle of agape love, a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. As 1 John 3:16 (KJV) states, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

2. **Jesus' Example:** Jesus' willingness to die for humanity's sins is the ultimate example of this love, serving as a model for believers to follow in their relationships with others. In Philippians 2:7-8 (KJV), it says, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

3. **Christian Duty:** Christians are called to emulate this sacrificial love in their own lives, putting others before themselves and demonstrating Christ-like love through their actions. As John 13:34 (KJV) commands, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

4. **Unity in Christ:** This sacrificial love fosters unity among believers, as they are called to be of one heart and mind. In Ephesians 4:2-3 (KJV), it is written, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

5. **Love as Witness:** Demonstrating this type of love serves as a powerful witness to the world of God's love. In John 13:35 (KJV), Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

6. **Obedience to God's Word:** Obedience to God's commandments is integral to expressing true love. Jesus links love and obedience in John 14:15 (KJV), "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This obedience involves loving others as Jesus loved us, which includes self-sacrifice.

7. **Ultimate Sacrifice:** The sacrificial love of Jesus is the foundation of Christian faith and salvation. Romans 5:8 (KJV) states, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Conclusion

John 15:13 highlights the highest form of love—self-sacrifice. It calls believers to follow Christ's example, embodying agape love in their lives. This sacrificial love not only unites Christians but also serves as a testimony of God's profound love for humanity. As believers live out this command, they reflect the heart of the Gospel and the transformative power of Christ's love, through their obedience to God's word and commandments.

Commentaries:

Albert Barnes:

Greater love hath … – No higher expression of love could be given. Life is the most valuable object we possess; and when a man is willing to lay that down for his friends or his country, it shows the utmost extent of love. Even this love for friends has been rarely witnessed. A very few cases like that of Damon and Pythias have occurred where a man was willing to save the life of his friend by giving his own.

It greatly enhances the love of Christ, that while the instances of those who have been willing to die for friends have been so rare, he was willing to die for enemies – bitter foes, who rejected his reign, persecuted him, reviled him, scorned him, and sought his life, 1 Jn 4:10; Rom 5:6, Rom 5:10. It also shows us the extent of his love that he gave himself up, not to common sufferings, but to the most bitter, painful, and protracted sorrows, not for himself, not for friends, but for a thoughtless and unbelieving world. "O Lamb of God, was ever pain was ever love like thine!"

Adam Clarke

John 15:13
That a man lay down his life for his friends –

John 15:13

That a man lay down his life for his friends – No man can carry his love for his friend farther than this: for, when he gives up his life, he gives up all that he has. This proof of my love for you I shall give in a few hours; and the doctrine which I recommend to you I am just going to exemplify myself. There are several remarkable cases, in heathen antiquity, where one friend offered his life for another. The two following will not stand dishonorably even in the book of God; became every thing loving and pure, in heathen, Jew, or Christian, must come from the God of love and purity.

When Cyrus had made war on the king of Armenia, and had taken him, his wife, and children, with Tigranes his son, and his wife, prisoners; treating with the old king concerning his ransom, he said, How much money wilt thou give me to have thy wife again? All that I have, replied the king. And how much wilt thou advance to enjoy thy children again? All that I can produce, answered the king. By reckoning thus, said Cyrus, you prize these at twice as much as you possess. Then, turning to Tigranes, he said, How much wilt thou give as a ransom, that thou mayest have thy wife? (Now Tigranes had been but lately married, και ὑπερφιλων την γυναικα, and loved his wife exceedingly.) He answered, I will indeed, O Cyrus, και της ψυχης πριαιμην, ransom her even with My Life, that she may be no longer in thraldom. See Xenoph. Cyrop. lib. iii. c.

The second example, which is too long to be inserted, is that affecting account of the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus, given by Virgil, in the ninth book of the Aeneis. These two friends, leagued together, had slain many of the Rutulians in a night attack: at last Euryalus was taken prisoner. Nisus, concealed in a thicket, slew several of the enemy's chiefs with his javelins: Volscens, their general, not seeing the hand by which his officers were slain, determines to wreak his vengeance upon his prisoner. Nisus, seeing his friend about to be transfixed with the sword, rushing out of the wood where he lay hidden, suddenly cries: –

> *Me! Me! adsum qui Feci! in Me convertite ferrum,*
> *O Rutuli! MeA fraus omnis: – nihil Iste – nec ausus,*
> *Nec potuit – Caelum hoc, et conscia sidera testor!*
> *Tantum infelicem Nimium Dilexit Amicum.*
> *Aen. lib. ix. l. 427, etc.*
> *"Me! Me! he cried, turn all your swords alone*
> *On Me! – the fact confess'd, the fault my own.*
> *He neither could, nor durst, the guiltless youth;*
> *Ye moon and stars, bear witness to the truth!*
>
> *His only crime (if friendship can offend)*
> *Is too much love to his unhappy friend."*

Explanation: Nisus, seeing that his friend Euryalus is about to be killed, reveals himself from hiding and desperately tries to save Euryalus by taking the blame for their actions. He urges the Rutulians to kill him instead, declaring that he alone is responsible for their deeds and that Euryalus is innocent. Nisus appeals to the heavens (the moon and stars) to bear witness to his truth, emphasizing that Euryalus's only "crime" is his deep friendship and loyalty.

In summary, Nisus's speech is a self-sacrificial declaration to save his friend by claiming full responsibility for their actions. He expresses profound friendship and loyalty, willing to sacrifice himself to protect Euryalus.

1. Part One: **Loved by Jesus**

2. Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
3. Part Three: **Loved through the Spirit**
4. Part Four: **No Greater Love**
5. Part Five: **God is Love**
6. Part Six: **No Separation from God**

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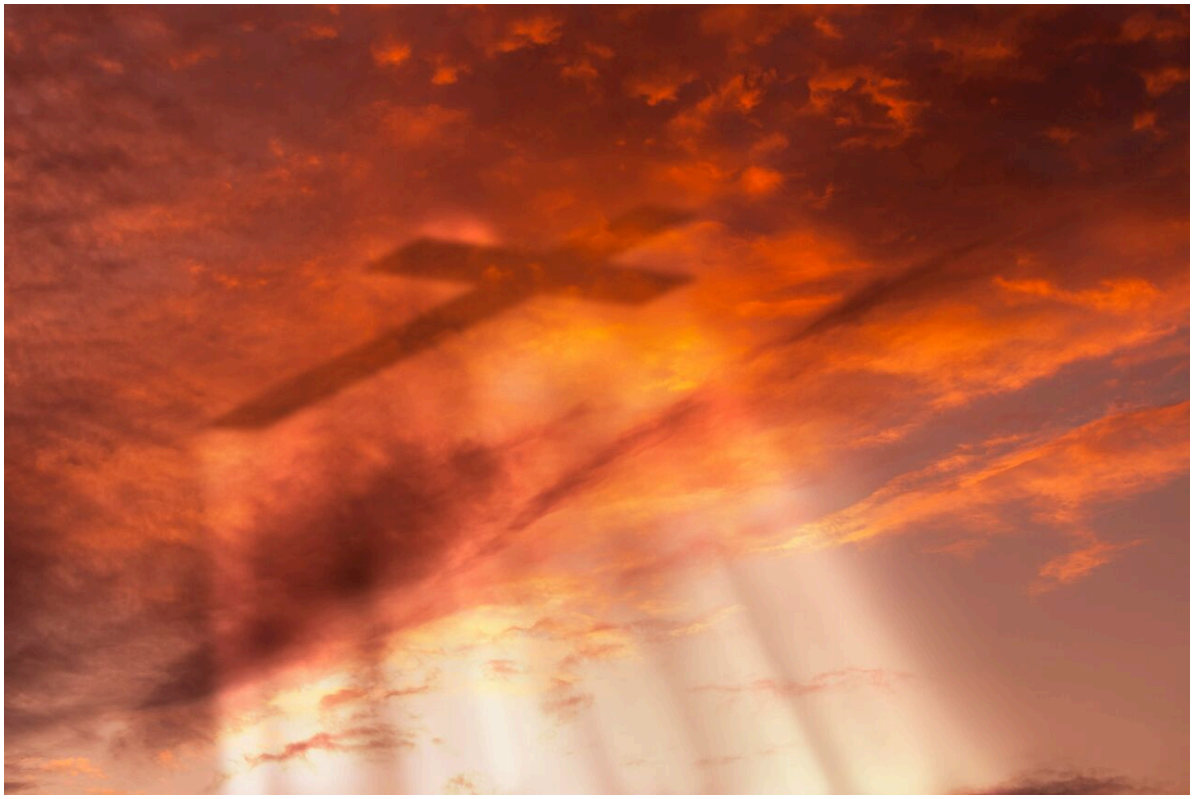
The Father's Unfathomable Love and a Poem and Hymn

JUNE 23, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



In the grand tapestry of creation, one truth stands out with unparalleled clarity: God the Father loves those who have put their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. This foundational belief is not merely a theological abstraction but a living reality that shapes the lives of believers. As we delve into the Scriptures, we uncover the depth and breadth of the Father's love, a love that is both eternal and personal.

The Bible, God's infallible Word, is replete with affirmations of His love. John 3:16 is perhaps the most well-known and beloved verse that encapsulates this truth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This verse succinctly reveals the magnitude of God's love—a love so great that He did not withhold His only Son but offered Him as a sacrifice for our sins.

The Apostle Paul further elaborates on this love in Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Here, Paul emphasizes that God's love is proactive and unconditional. It is not based on our merit or righteousness but on His grace and mercy. Even when we were steeped in sin, God extended His love by sending Christ to die for us, thereby reconciling us to Himself.

Ephesians 2:4-5 underscores the transformative power of this divine love: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us

together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).” The Father’s love brings spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead. It is through this love that we are “quickened,” or made alive, together with Christ. This act of divine love and grace results in our salvation, not through our works, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

In addition to being sacrificial and transformative, the Father’s love is also eternal. Jeremiah 31:3 declares, “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” God’s love is not fleeting or temporary; it is everlasting. From eternity past to eternity future, His love remains steadfast and unchanging. This eternal love draws us to Him and sustains us throughout our lives.

Furthermore, God’s love is personal and intimate. In 1 John 3:1, we read, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” The Father’s love bestows upon us the privilege of being called His children. This adoption into God’s family is a profound expression of His personal care and affection for each believer. As His children, we are invited to experience a close and abiding relationship with Him.

This intimate relationship with the Father is nurtured through the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us. Romans 8:15-16 explains, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” The indwelling Holy Spirit assures us of our adoption and enables us to address God with the endearing term “Abba, Father,” reflecting the closeness and intimacy of our relationship with Him.

The Father’s love also provides comfort and assurance in times of trial and hardship. Romans 8:38-39 offers a powerful declaration of this unbreakable love: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” No external force or circumstance can sever the bond of love between the Father and His children. This assurance provides profound peace and confidence as we navigate the challenges of life.

In conclusion, the Father’s love for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ is a central tenet of the Christian faith. It is a love that is sacrificial, transformative, eternal, personal, and unbreakable. As believers, we are called to rest in this love, allowing it to shape our lives and our relationship with God. May we continually rejoice in the unfathomable love of the Father, who has graciously bestowed upon us the gift of eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Father’s Love

In the quiet of the morning,
In the stillness of the night,
The Father’s love surrounds us,
With a grace so pure and bright.

From the dawn of all creation,
To the setting of the sun,
His love remains unchanging,
In the gift of Christ, His Son.

Though we falter, though we wander,
In our weakness, in our strife,
The Father’s love will find us,
And bring us back to life.

Eternal and enduring,
A love that knows no end,
In Christ we are forgiven,
Our Savior and our Friend.

So rest, dear soul, in knowing,
His love is always near,
In joy and in sorrow,
The Father’s love is here.

Chorus:

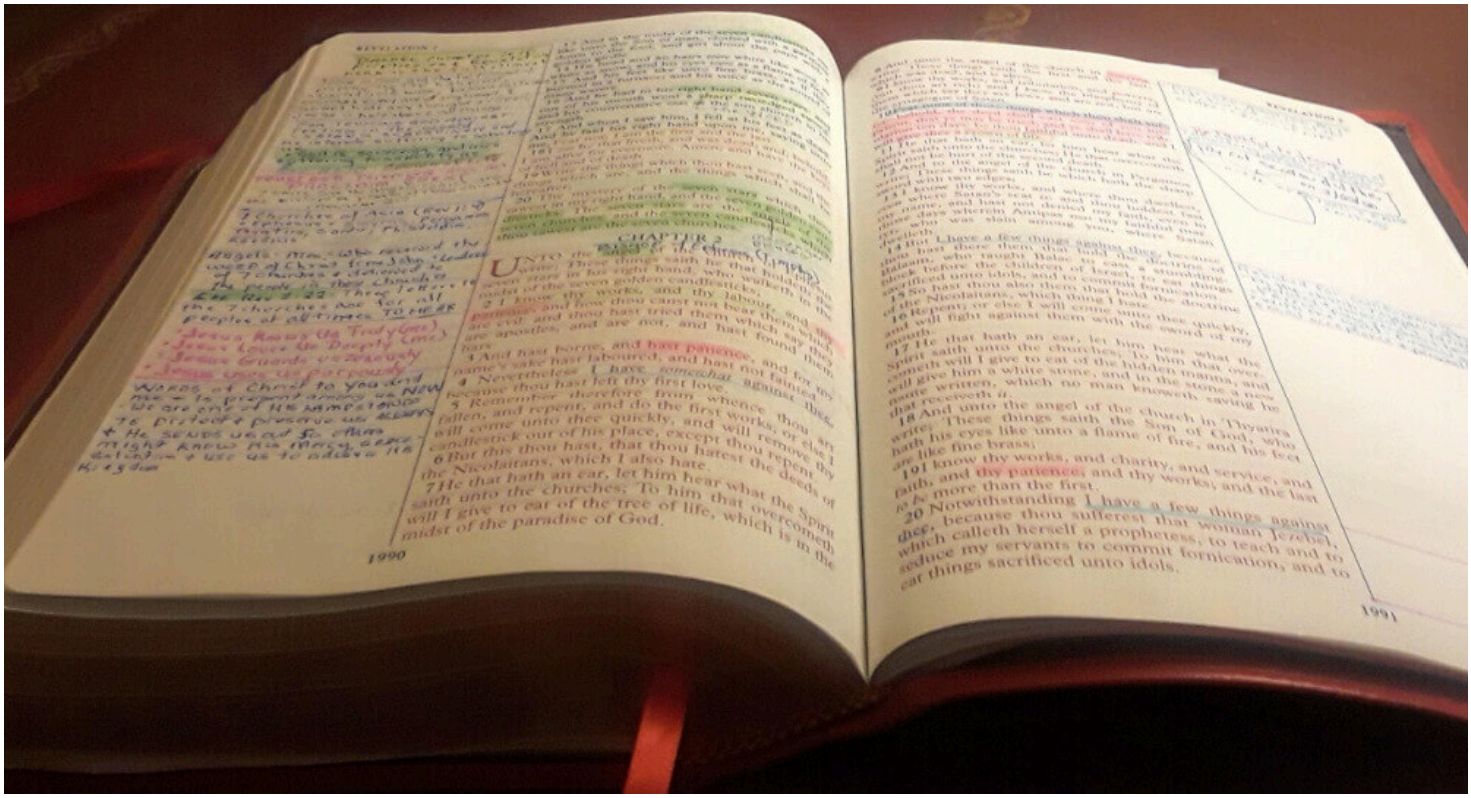
The Father’s love, so deep, so wide,
Forever by our side.
In Christ, our hope, our guide,
The Father’s love, in Him abide.

The Love of God (#selah #worship #hymn)
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Fqp27IvdbSo

The author generated this text in part with ChatGPT-4, OpenAI's large-scale language-generation model. Upon generating draft language, the author reviewed, edited, and revised the content to their own liking and takes ultimate responsibility for the content of this publication.

Christian Love | Part 5: God is Love

JUNE 10, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



For this **six-part series** on the love that comes from God our Father. We will be looking at the following verses. These form the Christian foundation of divine love upon which the Christian life stands.

You Are!

1. **Loved by Jesus:** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **John 15:9.**
2. **Loved by the Father:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **John 3:16.**
3. **Loved through the Spirit:** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. **Romans 5:5.**
4. **No Greater Love:** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **John 15:13.**
5. **God is Love: And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16.**
6. **No Separation from love:** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:39.**

God is Love

Scripture:
"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16)

Reflection:
We all have assurance that God has loved us, and we fully believe in the great fact of redemption by which He has manifested His love to us.

God is love:
John often repeats this profound truth because it is central to our faith. It is a truth that brings immense pleasure to the mind, encourages us towards holiness, and sustains our souls in times of sorrow and trial. In our darkest moments and perplexities, we can find comfort in the simple, powerful declaration: "God is love." This assurance helps us bear any trial and brightens even the gloomiest clouds that hang over our lives.

Dwelling in Love:
Religion is fundamentally about love. God is love; He has loved us, and we are called to love Him, one another, and the entire world. Heaven is a realm of pure love, and earth can reflect this heavenly bliss as far as love and religion prevail. Love eradicates corrupt passions, crimes, jealousies, and wars, spreading the joy of heaven across the globe. If a person is motivated by love, they embody the spirit of the heavenly world and live in an atmosphere of love.

The Way to Dwell in God's Love:
The only way to truly dwell in God's love is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As Jesus Himself declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). By accepting Jesus as our Savior and following Him, we enter into this loving relationship with God and abide in His love.

1. Part One: **Loved by Jesus**
2. Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
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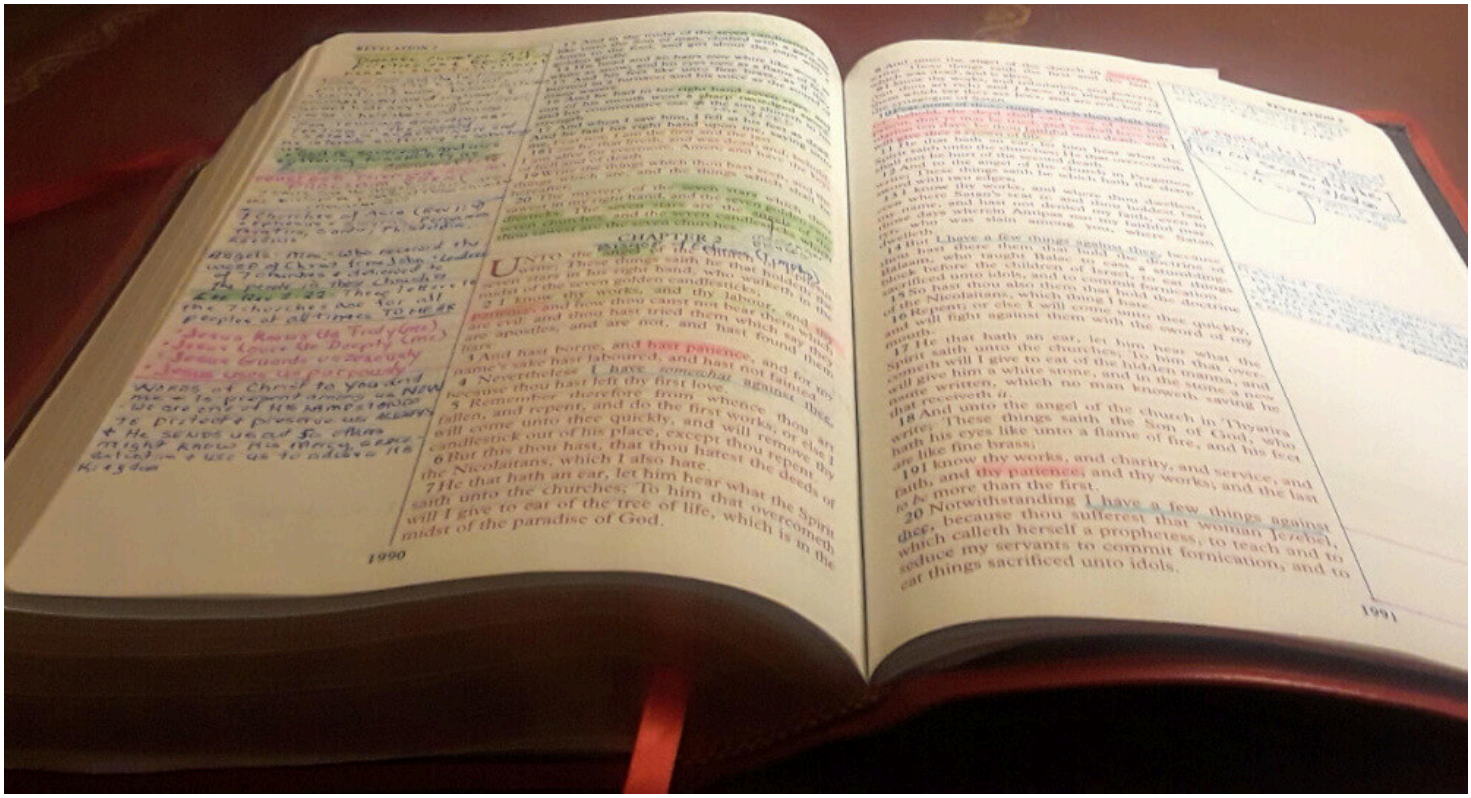
Christian Love | Part 6: No Separation from God's Love

JUNE 5, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN LOVE, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



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Scripture:
"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

Sermon Excerpt from Charles Spurgeon, Paul's Persuasion (full sermon here):

Paul's Persuasion

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans viii. 38, 39.

A Christian brother was asked, "To what persuasion do you belong?" He replied, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul was fully persuaded of this great truth. Did he not learn it by revelation? It may have seemed almost too good to be true, but the Holy Spirit so shed abroad this truth in the apostle's mind that he yielded to it and said, "I am persuaded." He argued that if the death of Christ reconciled God's enemies to Himself, the life of Christ will certainly preserve safely those who are the friends of God. Paul was convinced through reasoning and personal experience that nothing could separate him from the love of God.

Paul's persuasion was strengthened through his sufferings and trials. He endured persecution, imprisonment, famine, shipwreck, and scorn. Yet, through all his sufferings, he could testify to the faithfulness of his God and say, "I am persuaded that nothing in creation is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul lists various forces and concludes they cannot separate us from God's love:

- **Death:** The believer's peace is not broken by death, but rather strengthened.
- **Life:** The trials and temptations of life cannot separate us from Christ's love.
- **Angels, principalities, powers:** Whether good or evil spiritual beings, they cannot sever our bond with Christ.
- **Things present:** Current hardships and trials cannot drive us away from God's love.
- **Things to come:** Future uncertainties and fears cannot separate us from God's love.
- **Height nor depth:** Neither spiritual ecstasies nor deep trials can break our union with Christ.
- **Any other creature: Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God.**

Spurgeon emphasizes that Paul's persuasion helped him achieve victory and encouraged him to fight against evil. This doctrine incites believers to action, knowing that Christ's love and presence

ensure ultimate victory.

Application:

Reflect on Paul's persuasion and find confidence in the unbreakable bond of God's love. No matter what you face—be it trials, temptations, or even death—nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This assurance should encourage you to live boldly for Christ, knowing His love is steadfast and eternal.

Conclusion:

Embrace the truth that nothing can separate you from God's love. Allow this assurance to guide and strengthen you in all circumstances, knowing that in Christ, you are secure and deeply loved.

As we conclude this series, let us hold fast to the truth that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This love, embodied by Jesus, given by the Father, and experienced through the Holy Spirit, is the foundation of our faith and the source of our hope. May these reflections on God's love inspire us to live out this love in our daily lives, continuing in His love and sharing it with a world in need.

Conclusion

As we conclude our exploration of the different aspects of God's love, let us reflect on the profound truths we have uncovered:

1. **Loved by Jesus**: In John 15:9, we learned about the immeasurable love Jesus has for us, mirroring the love the Father has for Him. This love calls us to remain in His love, living in the light of His grace and truth.

2. **Loved by the Father**: John 3:16 reveals the Father's sacrificial love for the world, giving His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. This verse encapsulates the heart of the Gospel and the depth of God's love for humanity.

3. **Loved through the Spirit**: Romans 5:5 teaches us that the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This divine presence within us assures us of God's unwavering love and empowers us to share this love with others.

4. **No Greater Love**: In John 15:13, we are reminded of the ultimate expression of love – laying down one's life for friends. Jesus exemplified this greatest love through His sacrifice on the cross, setting the highest standard for selfless love.

5. **God is Love**: 1 John 4:16 declares that God is love, and those who live in love live in God. This profound truth underscores that our relationship with God is rooted in love, and it calls us to

reflect His love in our interactions with others.

6. **No Separation from Love**: Romans 8:39 reassures us that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This powerful promise gives us confidence and hope, knowing that God's love is eternal and unchanging.

Through these reflections, we have seen how God's love is a constant and transformative force in our lives. May these insights deepen our faith, strengthen our relationship with God, and inspire us to live out His love each day.

1. Part One: **Loved by Jesus**
2. Part Two: **Loved by the Father**
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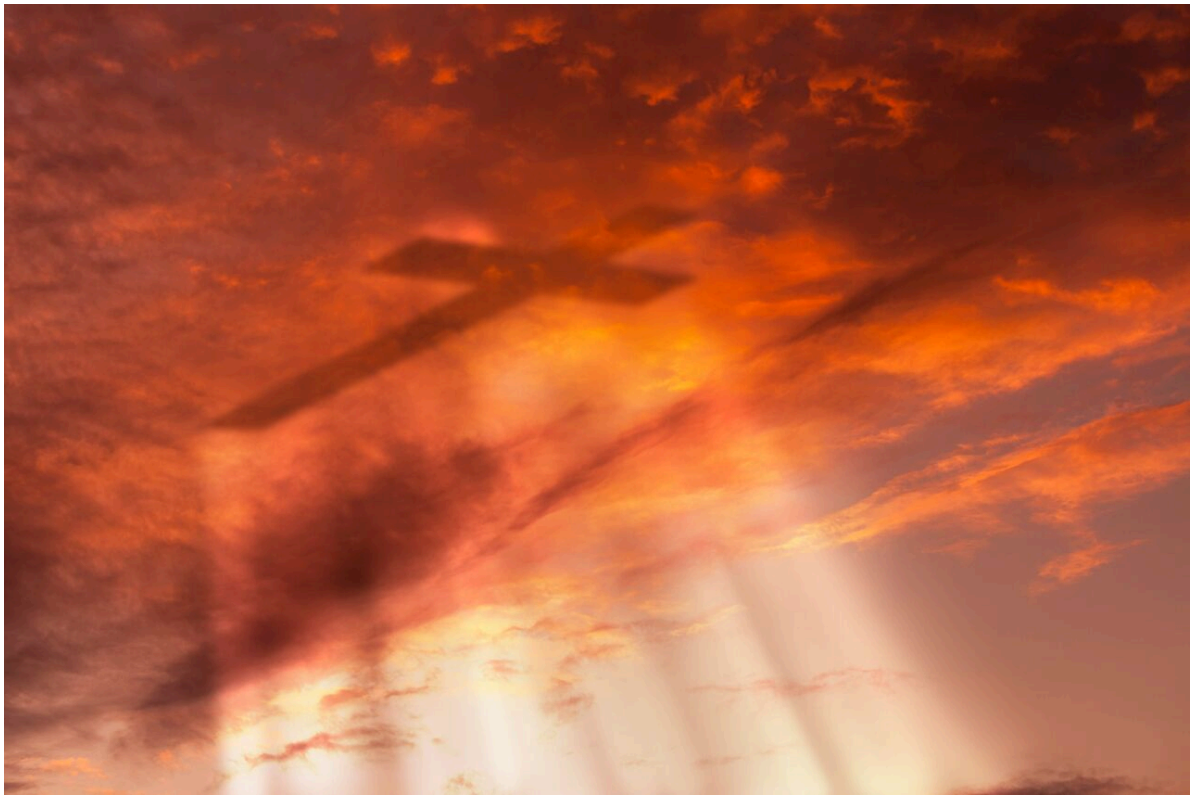
Double Feature: Easter

APRIL 1, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



During the past 27 years, we've been blessed with several opportunities to produce films that have explored and celebrated Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for our sins and His victory over death. On this Easter Sunday, we'd like to share two of them with you. Thank you so much for all you've done to help make their production and worldwide distribution possible.

THE JOHN 10:10 PROJECT
WILDFLOWERS & RESURRECTION

THE EMPTY TOMB

May the unconditional love of God and the glory of His forgiveness fill your heart with hope and joy. He is risen, indeed!

Canada: Nearly 100 Churches Torched, Four during Christmas, 2023

JANUARY 26, 2024
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAIN PERSECUTION

About 100 churches have been vandalized, torched, or desecrated over the last two-and-a-half years—not in Egypt or Nigeria, but in Canada (mapped and listed **here**). While this phenomenon received a bit of media attention, after some 30 churches were initially torched in the summer of 2021, that number has significantly grown to 96, with the authorities doing little, aside from offering implicit approval for these anti-Christian terror attacks.

Background: According to Canadian "mainstream" media—all of which are left of Left—unmarked graves of natives were recently discovered in residential boarding schools, and the Catholic Church is being accused of sadistically killing its young scholars and trying to cover it up.

The problem, however, is that this widely shared narrative is inherently false (see **here** and **here**): these graves were once marked and therefore known, and most of those presumably buried in them died of natural causes.

The deaths, moreover, took place primarily in the early 1800s. Apparently some plague—epidemics were especially common back then—broke out in these church-sponsored boarding schools for natives, in part due to the lack of hygiene and proper medical treatment (in comparison to modern

standards and technology). As Jeff Fynn-Paul, author of the enlightening new book, ***Not Stolen: The Truth About European Colonialism in the New World***, writes,

> Recent claims of 'hundreds' of graves found at Indigenous schools in Canada—claims that were propagated by the board of the Canadian Historical Association no less—have proven to be almost entirely unfounded… he notion that these schools were set up for maleficent ends has been debunked roundly for anyone who cares to look into it.

But since when did those who hate Christianity care to look into facts when a good pretext is handy? They much prefer to run with claims of innocent young natives being tortured, murdered, and secretly buried by dastardly clerics. As the recent **report** states, "In response to these announcements , far-left radicals have used this opportunity as an excuse to terrorize Catholic and other Christian communities by targeting churches."

If "far-left radicals" have been the foot soldiers, far-left politicians—that is, the Canadian ruling elite—have provided them with cover.

On June 30, 2021, after the first two dozen churches were torched, Harsha Walia, the then head of British Colombia's Civil Liberties Association—which claims to "promote, defend, sustain, and extend civil liberties and human rights"—tweeted in regards to the churches: "Burn it all down." (So much for her championing the "civil liberties and human rights" of Canadians; apparently they only apply to some people, not others.)

A Punjabi born and raised in Bahrain, it made sense for Walia to respond in this manner. Not only is the Islamic world the epicenter of church burnings, but Pakistan and India are so anti-Christian that they are currently ranked as the seventh and eleventh worst persecutors of Christians in the entire world. In **India** alone, 2,228 churches were attacked or torched in 2023 (and 160 Christians slaughtered).

But what explains the **similar response** from many white Canadian leaders? Prominent Newfoundland lawyer, Caitlin Urquhart, merely parroted Walia—"**Burn it all down**." Heidi Mathews of Harvard Law School described the vandalization and torching of churches as "the right of resistance to extreme and systemic injustice." Gerald Butts, a close confidant of the Canadian prime minister, said the attacks were "understandable."

As for the fearless leader of Canada himself, after offering the usual lip service and saying that ongoing church attacks are "unacceptable," Justin Trudeau **said**:

> I understand the anger that's out there … against institutions like the Catholic Church. It is real, and it is fully understandable given the shameful history that we're all becoming more and more aware of.

So, attacks on Christian churches are "unacceptable"—but they're also "understandable." Considering that these two words cancel each other out, Trudeau's was a call for no action—hence why some 60 more churches have been attacked since he spoke. As Ezra Levant said on July 7, 2021,

> He introduced an anti-hate crime bill in parliament that's targeting mean tweets and Facebook posts, but literally you have church after church being torched by Antifa-style terrorists and he's almost silent on the matter, and his right hand man finds it understandable.

The denial continues. After stating that four churches were torched in the days leading up to this last Christmas, 2023—a recent **report** states that, "as it turns out, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have — so far — zero evidence that any of the church arsons have any link to anti-Christian animus." "None of the, of the files we've solved, showed any particular affinity against the churches whatsoever," Cpl. Troy Savinkoff, a RCMP spokesman, was quoted as saying, before emphasizing that there's no evidence that the fires are linked or part of any "concerted effort" against churches.

That all of these ongoing attacks on churches in Canada are motivated first and foremost by a hate for Christianity is amply demonstrated by the fact that a Coptic church was also torched to the ground in Canada—with the authorities, once again, **failing to do their duty properly**.

The question begs itself: What on earth do the non-European Copts, Egypt's native Christians—who began migrating to Canada over a century *after* these graves were first dug, primarily to escape religious persecution—have to do with this issue? Nothing, they just happen to be Christian—their church boasted a crucifix atop its steeple—and that's all that matters, all that warrants hate crimes and indifference for them in Leftist Canada. Evil, after all, never needs an excuse to manifest itself, though a pretext always offers good cover.

And so, what was once the preserve of the Islamic world—hostility for and attacks on churches—is now a regular and acceptable feature of Canada. Considering that radical Leftists and radical Muslims believe in the exact opposite things, when it comes to torching churches, they are, rather tellingly, close allies. This speaks volumes about what truly animates them both, and what is at the core of their belief systems.

SOURCE: RAYMOND IBRAHIM

After School Satan Clubs — This Godless Movement Shouldn't Be Ignored

NOVEMBER 20, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Harbinger's Daily

Their goals are simple: Tell children there is no God, there is no such thing as hell, and the devil is not real. After-School Satan Clubs are trying to expand their reach and demanding their rights. But what if they're wrong?

Read article

Hundreds of Thousands Flood DC to March for Israel

NOVEMBER 15, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

WASHINGTON—Hundreds of thousands of men and women flooded the nation's capital on Tuesday for the **March for Israel** and demanded the return of hostages captured by Hamas.

According to estimates from the rally's organizers, the **Jewish Federations of North America** and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an estimated 290,000 people attended the **march** in person and 250,000 more watched online.

Some of those attending the rally traveled from **Israel** to spread awareness about the deadly Hamas terrorist attack on Israel that took place on Oct. 7. The Daily Signal spoke with Anat Shoshany, a young woman who said that Hamas brutally killed her grandfather and kidnapped her grandmother.

Shoshany, who says she was in Tel Aviv at the time of the terrorist attack, emphasized the importance of storming heaven with prayers for the safe return of her grandmother.

"I don't get to be sad," she said. "I don't get to cry. I need to fight."

A young man who spoke with The Daily Signal said that he is a survivor of the Nova music festival attack, at which Hamas terrorists used hang gliders to enter the festival and slaughter concertgoers.

“You can’t imagine what actually happened there,” he said.

“Only God helped me there.”

Many young people attended the March for Israel. The Daily Signal observed many groups of students and families. One young man attending with his high school said that there were 500 students from his school alone attending Tuesday’s march.

Though pro-Palestinian protesters appeared to have marked up the portable restrooms with graffiti saying “Gaza” and “free Palestine,” few anti-Israel demonstrators were at the march.

One anti-Israel protester could be heard shouting “Heil Hitler” at apparently Jewish attendees. His gesture caused those around him to gasp in horror and to strongly condemn such language.

Unlike most of the pro-Palestinian or anti-Israel gatherings in Washington, New York, and other cities around the U.S., most of the March for Israel attendees did not cover their faces.

Anti-Israel demonstrators at campus protests have said that they cover their faces fearing detection by federal agencies and authorities. At one candlelight “Vigil for the Martyrs” that The Daily Signal attended at George Washington University, organizers encouraged reporters for The Daily Signal to hide their faces to avoid detection.

Hundreds of thousands of people attend the March for Israel on the National Mall on Tuesday in Washington. The large pro-Israel gathering comes as the Israel-Hamas war enters its sixth week since the Oct. 7 terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas. (Photo: Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

*Have an opinion about this article? To sound off, please email **letters@DailySignal.com**, and we'll consider publishing your edited remarks in our regular "We Hear You" feature. Remember to include the URL or headline of the article plus your name and town and/or state.*

'Heil Hitler': Watch What Happened at March for Israel

A video captured by Dominick Buehler, a member of the Young Leaders Program in the Oversight Project at The Heritage Foundation, shows a horrific scene from Tuesday's March for Israel:

> Anti-Israel protester shouts "Heil Hitler" and performs a Nazi salute at today's March for Israel **pic.twitter.com/nCGLeZ6qYa**
>
> — Oversight Project (@OversightPR) **November 14, 2023**

Buehler says the man repeatedly shouted, "F— Jews" and "F— white people" and also referred to the Jewish people "occupying" Palestine.

“People were shocked,” Buehler says of how people responded after the man’s Nazi salute. “I looked at a group of high school-age Jewish demonstrators who were visibly taken aback and upset.”

“Some of the Jewish demonstrators tried reasoning with him but were usually met with shouting or insults,” he adds.

Tens of thousands gathered in Washington, D.C., Tuesday for the March for Israel.

Have an opinion about this article? To sound off, please email ***letters@DailySignal.com****, and we’ll consider publishing your edited remarks in our regular “We Hear You” feature. Remember to include the URL or headline of the article plus your name and town and/or state.*

A Note for Our Readers:

This is a critical year in the history of our country. Americans are polarized and divided. Roughly half of the country is clamoring for socialist policies like more government control over health care, increased regulations, and open borders. We must turn to America’s founding for the answers.

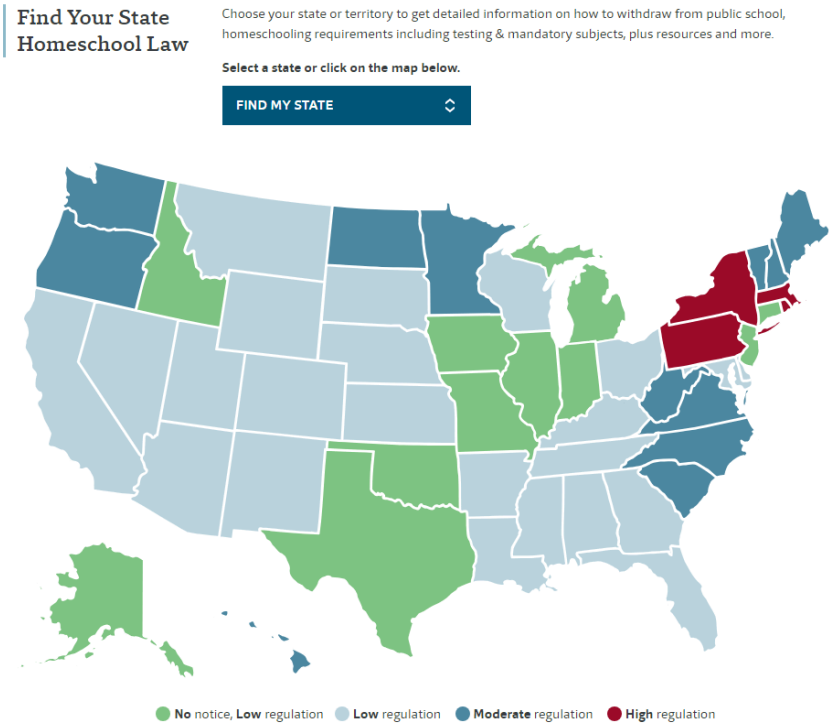
The Heritage Foundation has compiled input from more than 100 constitutional scholars and legal experts into the country’s most thorough and compelling review of the freedoms promised to us within the United States Constitution, now available as a free digital guide called **Heritage’s Guide to the Constitution**.

This guide is available to all readers of The Daily Signal for free today!

GET YOUR ACCESS NOW

FED-Up with Woke? How to Homeschool in Virginia

NOVEMBER 9, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The Virginia Christian Alliance urges parents who send their children to public schools to visit the Homeschool Legal Defense Association's (HSLDA) website and resources to examine the option of homeschooling their children. It's easier than you think!

- **What is Homeschooling?** ***Read more***
- **Homeschool Laws By State** ***Read more***
- **Starting Strong** ***Read more***
- **Special Needs** ***Read more***
- **High School & Beyond** ***Read more***

Virginia Homeschool Law At a Glance

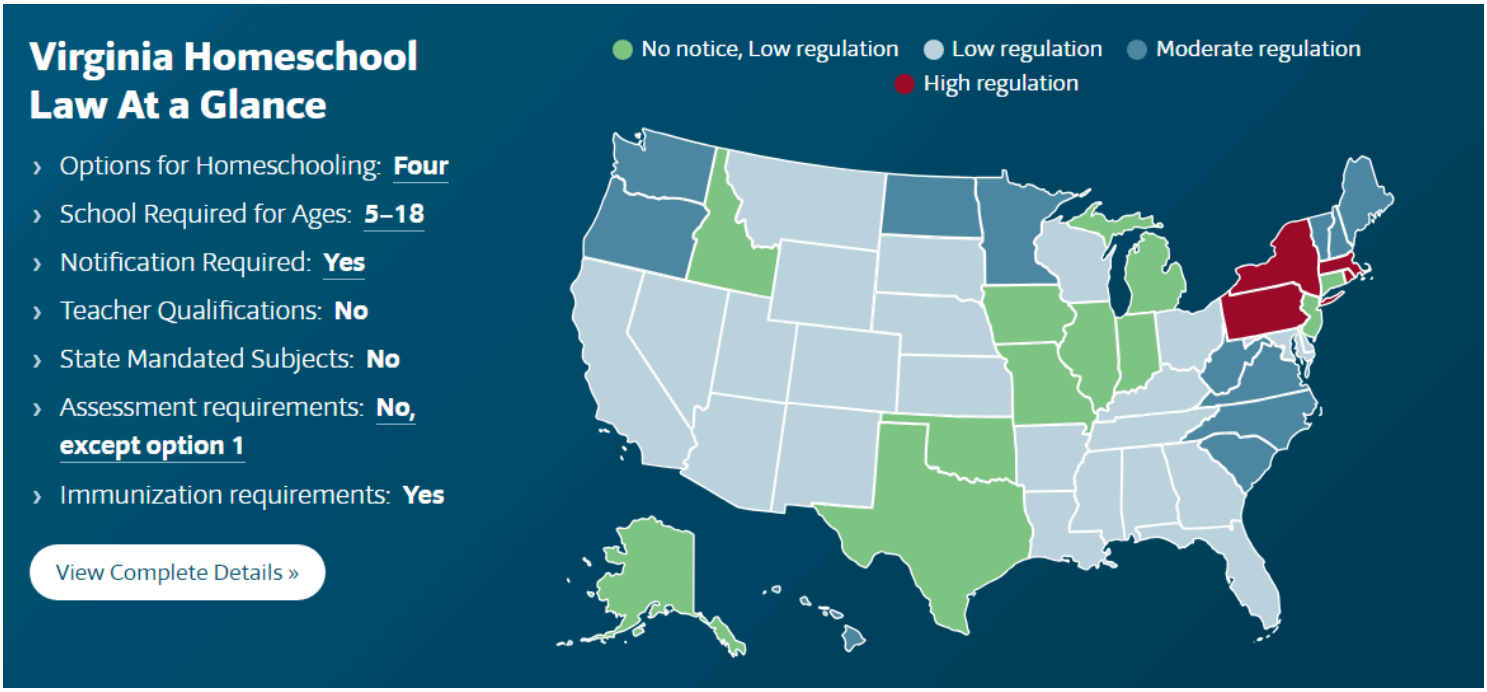
How to Homeschool in Virginia

Are you considering homeschooling your child? You can do it! As you get started, it's important to make sure you comply with the education laws where you live. This page helps you understand **how to homeschool legally in Virginia**—step-by-step.

Continue to the **HSLDA home page** and scroll down to begin learning today!

About the HSLDA: Every child is different and should have the freedom to learn in a safe, loving environment at their own pace.

- We partner with our 100,000 member families, donors, homeschool leaders, legislators, and others who want to protect this freedom.
- We've been trusted for over 40 years to advance and protect homeschool freedom in the courts, legislatures, and in the court of public opinion.
- We equip parents with resources, educational consultants, and Compassion grants because we love homeschooling and want more families to experience it.
- We know the benefits and challenges of homeschooling personally—most of our staff are homeschool parents and grads.



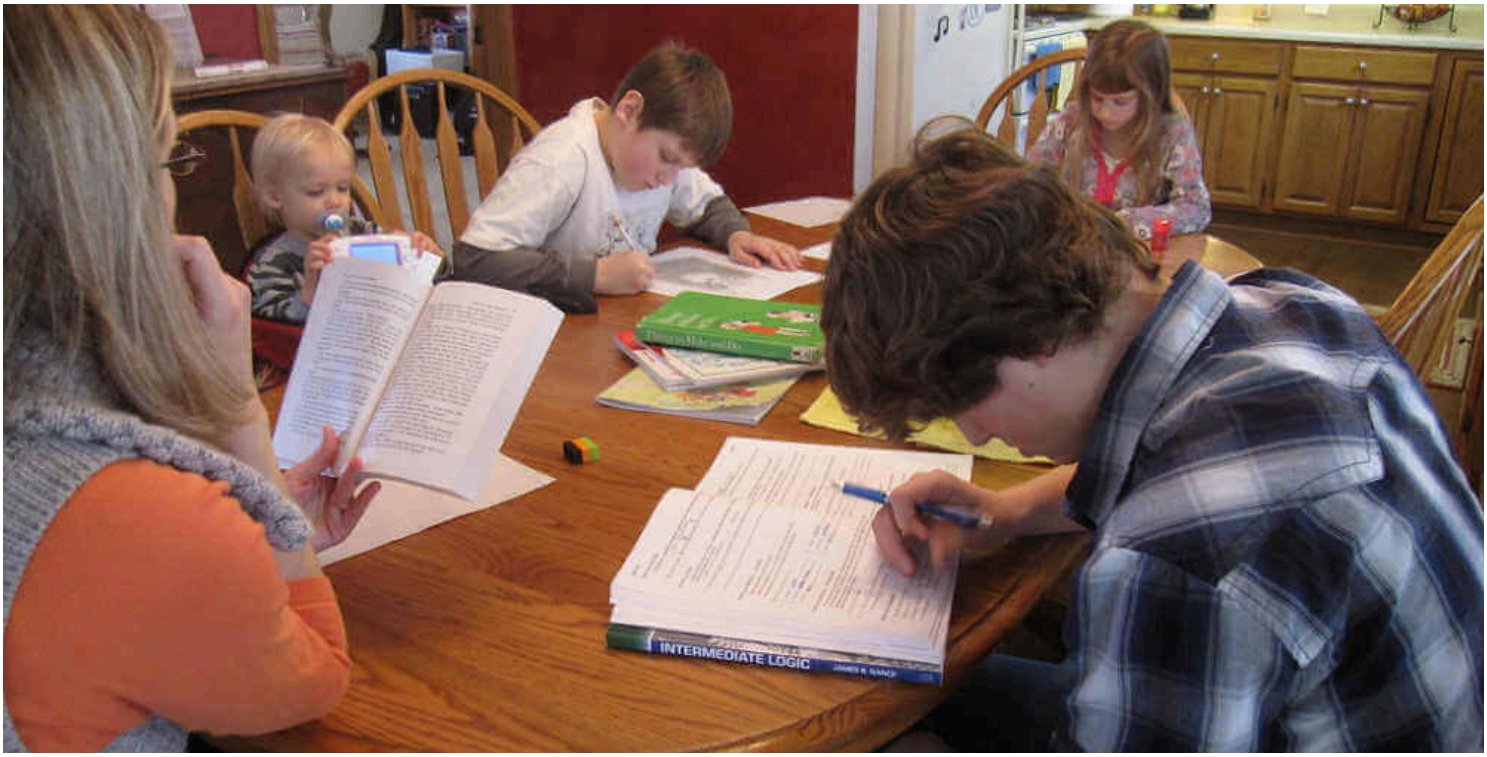
How to Homeschool in Virginia

1. **How to Comply with Virginia's Homeschool Law**
2. **Compulsory School Age in Virginia**
3. **How to Withdraw Your Child from School in Virginia**
4. **Public School Access for Homeschoolers in Virginia**
5. **Special Education Provisions in Virginia**
6. **The Importance of Recordkeeping in Virginia**
7. **Child Labor and Work Permit Laws in Virginia**
8. **Jury Duty Laws in Virginia**

9. **Virginia Legal Analysis**

Homeschooling Explodes Across the U.S.

NOVEMBER 9, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



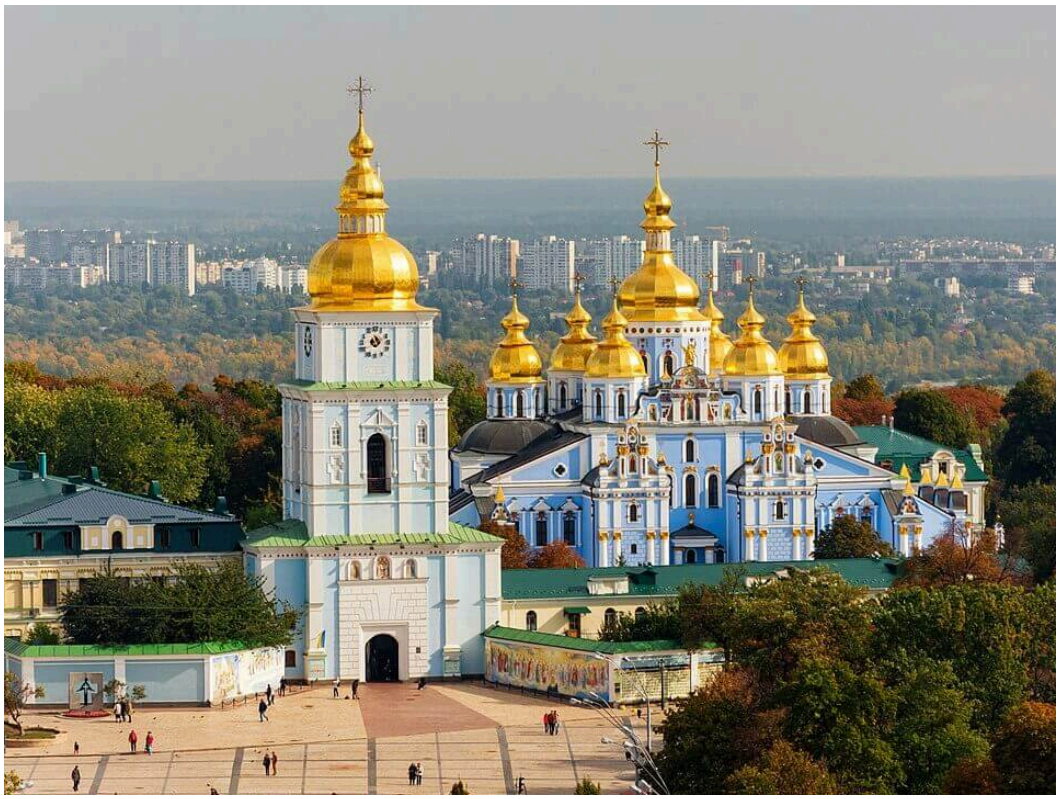
Tim Wildmon and Walker Wildmon discuss the boom in homeschooling here in America. What are the reasons? Which states are experiencing the greatest boon in homeschooling? Click on the graphic below to watch the latest episode (303) of Reason & Company on AFA's streaming platform.

Click Image

(Click **HERE** for the AFN news article Walker references in the video.)

Tucker Carlson: Of all of Biden's crimes, backing the Ukrainian government as it throws priests in jail may be the most revealing.

OCTOBER 28, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Ep. 34 Of all of Biden's crimes, backing the Ukrainian government as it throws priests in jail may be the most revealing.

> Ep. 34 Of all of Biden's crimes, backing the Ukrainian government as it throws priests in jail may be the most revealing. **pic.twitter.com/ZCVV4uPzs9**
>
> — Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson) **October 26, 2023**

Hatred of Biblical Christianity at Parliament of World's Religions

OCTOBER 11, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The hatred and demonization against biblical Christianity and faithful Christians as "authoritarian" was on full display at the recent Parliament of the World's Religions as religious leaders from around the world join forces in a global alliance, filmmaker Mark Sutherland and author Carl Teichrib explained on Conversations That Matter with The New American magazine's Alex Newman.

Sutherland and Teichrib, who attended this year's gathering in Chicago, explained that the hostility against the Christian view that Jesus Christ is THE way is becoming more and more vicious. While "diversity" of religion is celebrated, that is only if the religion can make room for collaboration with all the others on a global perspective.

"Exclusive truth claims such as Jesus is the way are anathema," said Techrib, author of Game of Gods and one of the top Christian experts exposing the occultism that is enveloping the world.

Targeting Children: Walker Art Center Holds ‘Ceremony To Summon And Befriend’ Demons

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Our times are not just strange, they are dangerous, and offer eternal consequences on an hourly basis. And if you live in my liberal home state of Minnesota, there are constant challenges.

Many think our Walker Art Center is a cultural icon to be proud of, so hold on! They are now holding pagan rituals for families that summon up the demons. You read that right. I could never make this up.

Families are invited to create a vessel to trap the demon that knows them best and then participate in a playful ceremony to summon and befriend their demon. Yes, I said families, so that means children are targeted here.

“Demons have a bad reputation, but maybe we’re just not very good at getting to know them,” an event description reads. “After designing your trap, Lilit the Empathic Demon will come from the dark side of the moon to lead you in locating your feelings using ancient Babylonian techniques,” the website explains.

> "This collective and playful demon summoning session will conclude with a somatic movement meditation, designed to help you befriend your shadows."

Pictured in the promotion of this outrageous occult extravaganza are children ages 2-3-4. This is outright indoctrination into the dark arts. The young are already blitzed by Hollywood and the music industry, but now an art center has tapped into their inner demons, trying to market them to unsuspecting parents and children.
Hundreds of parents will naively participate! They let their kids participate in Halloween, so now, we've moved one step higher to teach them how to summon demons.

The Bible says in **II Timothy 3:13** that "evil will wax worse and worse", and this is just one manifestation of this in these last days.

The Walker Art Center has received millions of dollars in taxpayer funds through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, which routinely funds projects with a left-wing agenda, and obviously, a Godless agenda.

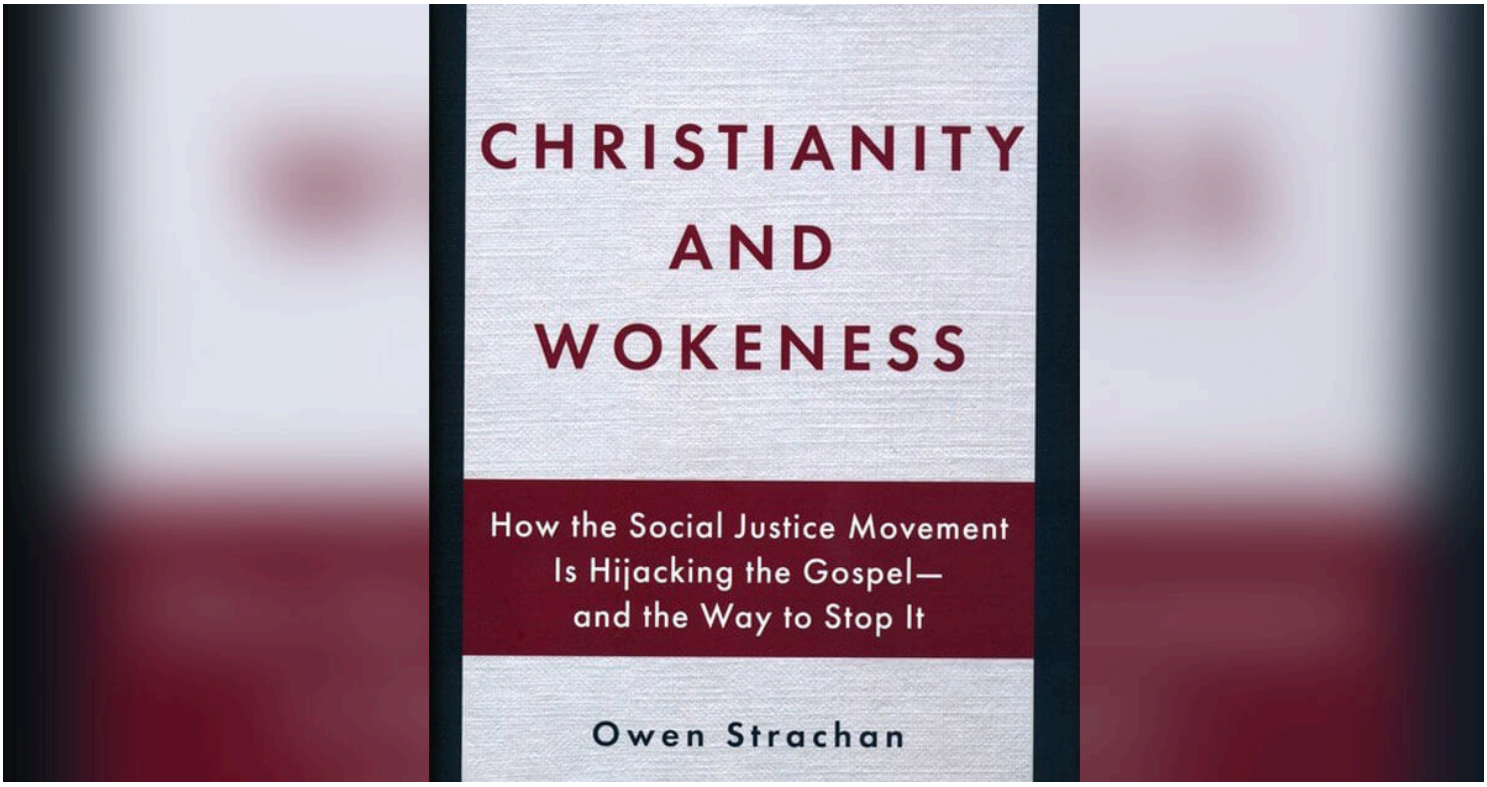
If we aren't constantly on guard for the wiles of the devil, he will find a way to move into your life and those you love.

Ephesians 6:11-12 KJV – *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

SOURCE: **HARBINGER'S DAILY**

How Should Christians Think About “Wokeness”?

JUNE 1, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW, CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, WOKE, WOKENESS



Molly Carmon | Family Research Council’s **Center for Biblical Worldview**

Since its beginnings in the first century, the church has faced varied resistance from the surrounding culture and challenges to the gospel. Recently, a new challenge has emerged: “wokeness,” or the state of being “woke.” Merriam-Webster identifies “**woke**” as a slang term meaning being “aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice).” On the surface, wokeness might sound like seeking justice and showing concern for the weak and oppressed–things the Bible urges us to do (Isa. 1:17, Micah 6:8). However, wokeness often embraces theories and ideologies inconsistent with or even hostile to the Bible. Many well-intentioned Christians–out of a desire to be compassionate, accepting, and loving–are succumbing to cultural pressure to conform to woke ideology, likely unaware of its unbiblical tendencies.

To help Christians think biblically about wokeness, Owen Strachan, FRC’s Senior Fellow for Biblical Worldview, has written a new book, ***Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel***. In the book, Strachan walks through the history of woke ideology and examines its consequences in American culture and the church. He also consults Scripture to give Christians advice for responding to the woke movement.

Wokeness in the Culture and the Church

The first two chapters of *Christianity and Wokeness* examine how woke ideology is entering the culture and, more consequentially, the church. According to Strachan, "wokeness" means to be "awake" and in tune with the prevailing zeitgeist. Critical Race Theory (CRT), which sees society as an intentional system of power structures meant to oppress others based on their skin color, is currently the most well-known example of woke ideology. CRT purports that "White Privilege" is at the root of social justice issues and must be eradicated.

The 21st century American church has been both passively and actively incorporating woke ideology into their institutions and practices. Strachan observes that some Christians have started apologizing for and repenting of their "whiteness." Often these actions are prefaced with the proposal that we should change the gospel to fit with woke ideology so that brothers and sisters of color will be more comfortable in the church. While true racial reconciliation is an important outworking of the gospel (Eph. 2), wokeness changes the gospel by teaching that white people are never able to fully repent for their actions because they are inherently racist by nature of being white. But the gospel says all have sinned, and everyone can be fully redeemed through the work of Christ. With its different view of sin and redemption, wokeness undermines the gospel. This is why Strachan argues, "okeness is not a prism by which we discover truths we couldn't see in a Christian worldview. Wokeness is a different system entirely than Christianity. It is, in fact, 'a different gospel.' But it is not just that. In the final evaluation, wokeness is not just *not the Gospel*. Wokeness is anti-Gospel."

Why is Wokeness an Ungodly System?

In chapters three and four, Strachan outlines his concern with the theological and cultural implications of CRT and woke ideology. First, he encourages believers to guard their hearts and minds, noting the apostle Paul's admonition not to be taken captive by false philosophies (Col. 2:8). Strachan argues that wokeness represents a man-centered gospel that takes others captive through legalism rather than setting them free in the grace of Christ. In other words, wokeness says that only your works can save you–but you can never actually accumulate enough works to satisfy its requirements. Ultimately, this philosophy promises so much, only to abandon its followers in the end.

Furthermore, Strachan provides guidance for responding to unbiblical ideologies. According to Strachan, wokeness calls into question the sovereignty of God and contradicts Scripture by saying that the root of all evil is "whiteness." But, as Strachan explains, " biblical terms, 'white' skin is not our biggest problem. Sin is." He goes on to say, "If you have been convicted and demeaned for your skin color or heritage (whatever each may be), you have been wronged." Woke ideology turns humans against one another, and results in individuals being judged by the color of their skin and status in society rather than the content of their character or their status in the eyes of God.

The Bible and Ethnicity

Because questions of race and ethnicity are so closely tied to woke ideology and CRT, chapter five and six provide an in-depth study of what the Old and New Testament have to say about our identity as human beings. Strachan explains how Genesis teaches that all humans are equally part of one human race. Although we may have different skin tones, languages, or ethnicities that distinguish us, we are all human beings who are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).

Further, the doctrine of the fall–not CRT–explains the fractured relationships present in humanity. It is not the differences between our skin colors that make us misunderstand, betray, and abuse one another but the sin that infects us all. One tragic consequence of the fall is the sin of racism, which is one way that humans wrongly show partiality. God is not elitist and shows no partiality to anyone, as the apostle Paul frequently discusses in his letters (Rom. 2:11, 10:12; Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9). The New Testament also demonstrates how everyone can be united and reconciled in Christ through the gospel message (Eph. 2:14-18, 2 Cor. 5:16-21). God desires that, ultimately, every tribe, tongue, and language be untied in Christ to form the household of God (Eph. 2:19; Rev. 5:9-10, 7:9, 21:3). As Strachan explains, "Distinctiveness is no bad thing and is, in truth, a gift and blessing of God–but unity will be our song in all the ages to come."

The Response to Wokeness

The final chapter of Strachan's book considers the reality of American history, specifically slavery and the civil rights movement. He concludes with recommendations for how Christians can respond to woke ideology in a biblical way, reminding his readers: "We cannot fall silent. We cannot stand by as people around us are taken captive by wokeness or any ungodly ideology."

Although Christians ought to recognize racism's sinfulness and the necessity of repentance for racist thoughts, actions, and attitudes, they should also recognize that certain groups of people are not inherently racist simply because of the color of their skin. Strachan concludes, "Wokeness is advancing far too quickly to treat this matter lightly, or to assume that these issues will simply 'go away.'" He reminds his readers, "No–they will not go away. As we have argued throughout the book, strongholds and false ideologies must be destroyed, not ignored or treated with a softshoe approach."

May we all heed this timely warning and put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17) to stand firm against all unbiblical ideologies in our day and proclaim the gospel of truth.

Owen Strachan's recent interview about his new book on Washington Watch with Tony Perkins ***can be viewed here***.

SOURCE: **FRC CENTER FOR BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW**

British Witches and Pagans Pledge their Allegiance to King Charles

MAY 9, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GLOBALISTS

A coven of British witches and pagans pledge their allegiance to King Charles, claiming he is 'very pagan' and 'supportive' of their beliefs

I posted an important article last week detailing how King Charles III is the **leader of the global Sustainable Development movement** being implemented through United Nations Agenda 2030 with help from the World Economic Forum. I noted in that article his near religious fervor in supporting the so-called "green agenda," complete with its insane plan for total decarbonization that, if successful, would lead to mass starvation and depopulation of the planet. Taken to its extreme, this is a form of "earth worship," I reported.

And let's not forget what took place at **last year's United Nations COP 27 Climate Conference** in Egypt, when blatant pagan earth worship was on full display.

For more on this, see my **Oct. 25 article** in which climate activist Dennis Meadows clearly explains in a video that the climate "crisis" can never be solved without drastic population reduction.

Now comes this bombshell from the U.K. tabloid ***The Sun***, which reports that witches and pagans from across the United Kingdom gathered to cast spells in support of King Charles during a special coronation ritual ceremony.

The spells involved lighting blue, red and white candles, burning incense, scattering rose petals and giving "magical gifts to each other on Coronation Day."

The witches began casting spells several days ahead of the May 6 coronation of King Charles.

Julie Aspinall, a 58-year-old self-described pagan, witch and the main organizer of the event, spoke in depth with *The Sun*.

She said the witches' coronation ritual took place at the Festival of Witches and Pagans, being held in Coventry over the coronation weekend.

More than 2,000 people were expected to attend the festival, which featured a range of workshops from wand-making and spell-casting to crystal skull healing. A series of "night rituals" were also planned, according to the official **website** description of the event, which stated:

> **"We have been tasked by the Great Mother to teach the ways of the witch and pagan to those that need it. We work hard to develop young curious minds, draw out and nurture natural talents."**

The event was organized by Aspinall and her coven, the **Coven of Gaia**. She told *The Sun* that King Charles has always been "very supportive of the pagan community."

In her interview with *The Sun*, Aspinall stated:

"We know King Charles is the head of the Church of England but to us he's very Pagan in his beliefs too. His invitation featured the Green Man and lots of other Pagan symbolism."

(See royal coronation invitation below with 'Green Man' at the bottom.)

"His mother the Queen was adopted as a druid in Wales when she was young," Aspinall told *The Sun*. "The royal family has always been supportive of Pagan beliefs. King Charles is very much into saving the family, saving the trees, nature — and that's how we live so we wanted to include him in the ceremony."

The Coven of Gaia's special coronation ritual took place on Sunday, May 7, and involved the witches and pagans gathering in a circle and chanting their allegiance to Charles.

This all lines up with the excellent report posted May 7 by journalist Naomi Wolf to her Substack titled: ***Weird things about King Charles' Coronation: As symbols are twisted, is Britain being de-consecrated?***

Only on Evil

APRIL 26, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Those who "watch," as commanded by the Lord Himself, should ask, at least to themselves: Has this generation reached the times totally saturated by evil as foretold by the Lord?

God gave the reason He "repented" that He had created man.

> And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

Jesus, building on the Heavenly Father's condemnation for sin-immersed, rebellious humankind, prophesied the following.

> So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24:33–39)

God the Son went on to further expound upon the results of evil at the end of the age and upon God's condemnation through suddenly imposed punishment for humankind's immersion in that unrepented-of wickedness.

> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. (Luke 17:28–30)

In terms of an earthly courtroom, any heavenly prosecutor against sin and all its deadly carnage wreaked every day upon this fallen sphere could bring forth mounting evidence that would lock in an airtight case for the verdict: *"Guilty."*

We who are charged with watching (Mark 13:37) are Heaven's witnesses of nonstop anti-God activity. As presented many times, news of the horrendous deportment of "evil men and seducers" saturates our news sources.

The following few briefs of such stories come from just one day on our **Rapture Ready News**:

> Dramatic Video Shows Indian Gangster-Turned-Politician Gun Down On Live TV
>
> Ahmed was speaking with reporters while in police custody when three men posing as journalists shot the former politician and his brother, reported BBC News. Both died on the spot.
>
> All Hell Breaks Out In Chicago As Hundreds Of Teenagers Wreak Havoc
>
> A trend of lawlessness has unfolded in cities run by progressive leaders this spring. The latest incident occurred on Saturday night in Downtown Chicago, where hundreds of teenagers wreaked havoc by smashing car windows and destroying public and private property…
>
> (A number of youth in Chicago also died by gunfire around this time in the city.)
>
> Gunmen storm Mexican resort, kill seven people, including child
>
> Armed men on Saturday killed a child and six others after storming a resort in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato, authorities said, in a region increasingly plagued by drug cartel violence.
>
> Even if it is not violent, deadly anti-God activity, the wickedness that grows more debased hourly builds the case for these days being like those of Noah and of Lot.
>
> UN Agencies' Report Subverts Age of Consent, Proclaims Sex with Minors 'May Be Consensual in Fact'
>
> A Switzerland-based group has issued a report urging nations to end the criminalization of various acts – the most notable being sex with a minor who supposedly consents to the activity.
>
> Largest Teachers Union in United Kingdom Votes to Have Drag Queen Grooming Hour in All Schools
>
> The National Education Union (NEU), the largest teachers union in Britain, is calling for schools across the United Kingdom to bring in drag queens to groom children in every school.
>
> Recording exposes homosexual teacher's bullying of students
>
> A British homosexual teacher at a state-run "academy school" in London was secretly taped telling his students that (pro-) "LGBTQ" education is mandatory.

As said, these few are taken from just one day of headlines. There are hundreds of reports of evil that could be gleaned in any given day that are even more egregious.

My own state, considered among the *reddest* of the red states in terms of Christian influence and political and ideological bent, was obviously chosen by the demonic powers that be as one place to, at the very end of this age, begin all-out invasion into America. The portals, as we have looked at many times, have been opened to the extent they're allowed by God's restraining influence.

In first mentioning the satanic temple Baphomet being placed some time ago in front of the Arkansas state Capitol in Little Rock, the writer presents thoughts about the evil that surely once must have begun invading the world leading to God's sending the destructive Flood.

> Pure and unspeakable evil has entered our country. And no wonder, it was invited. It can be petitioned by word or deed. But, in our case it was both. This brace of evil can be found not only here in the United States, but Canada and much of the Western World. And few people with any voice are talking about it.
>
> Hollywood is often a mirror of society. Is that why we are seeing a rash of new releases concerning evil, and demons?
>
> Some publications are saying that we should not complain about the decline in morality, but that a new morality is replacing the old one (ScienceDaily).
>
> That means, to the mind of the Left, there are no absolutes, everything is relative and fluid. That is the atheistic mindset that has us in this mess of a freefall.
>
> This is a well-planned destabilization initiated by Marxists generations ago. The statue depicted is a good representation of what we are seeing all over America…evil, malevolence, especially aimed at our children, our future.
>
> It is no different than the Hebrews forging a golden calf in the desert. How many have seen photos of freakish drag queens with children on their laps telling them a story of God knows what? Or gender disorientation on beer cans? How confused is the management of such companies? The instruction in values taught in public schools is now opposite of the mass majority of parents. (Ray DiLorenzo, "Evil by Invitation Only," *Canada Free Press*, April 16, 2023)

This generation is at the very least like in the Days of Noah and of Lot, it seems to me. –That's because the technological means now exist to make worldwide evil interconnected as perhaps never before.

I say "perhaps" because wickedness flows from the father of lies and is spiritually engendered. Its spread is supernatural and infects with more virulence than any physical disease. So, although the antediluvians might not have had the technologies to use in making the evil interconnectedness,

the demonic powers and principalities likely made the connections in their own deadly ways. Now, with the assistance of satellite, Internet and all the rest, the devil's spreading infection work seems on steroids, as is said.

Reprobate minds seem to be "only on evil continually."

But Jesus told us that it will be this way at the moment He next breaks into this world in what will be catastrophic for God-rejecting rebels of the earth. The same event will be glorious beyond description for all who know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Here is how you can know Him as Lord and make sure you go to the safety of His loving arms when He calls in the Rapture.

> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9–10)

SOURCE: **PROPHECY LINE**

Great Expectations of Great Awakenings

MARCH 29, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Bent and broken, into a better shape?

> **"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all."** (Acts 4:31-33)

2020 was the year it all came undone for American exceptionalism, with the loss of personal peace and prosperity, individual freedom, and essentially everything that describes middle class values, nuclear families, and trusted institutions. It was the year that ended the presumption of guaranteed liberty, equality, and racial harmony.

If America were an "empire," as some of her enemies foolishly claim, it would be ironic that it was accomplished by **defeating the crumbling Spanish Empire in 1898**. If we think of her as a **world "super" power**, **a mere eighty years have passed since the end of the World War II**. Only the

Soviet Union was considered a serious rival then. But things have changed now, and the reasons for this are many because **America has been gradually eroding from within.** And so, the *presumption* of our global dominance, by any measure, should be in serious doubt, since all that seems to be holding things together anymore is the presumption itself.

From a party politics perspective, only the seeming anomaly of the 2016 election of **Donald Trump**, prevented, or at least delayed, what we should now admit, and what was to be: the inevitable transformation of a great republic into a failing state. There has been nothing like this story in all of modern history. **The greatest nation—not just great—chose to commit political and cultural suicide—enabled by her gaslit citizenry, through cunning deceit.**

If we go only by this perspective, and given the evidence of that fateful year, we might be excused for saying, *"OK, last one out, turn off the lights."* But, is it really over? Is there some possibility that things can turn around? Can someone, or something, save us from collapse? Well, yes, of course. **But, the answer will only be found by reading history. And, of course, The Bible.**

We should be spending the time and read the real history books before someone burns them.

At this juncture we should remind ourselves that for people of genuine faith in God, **it isn't really over until He says it is**. Happily, for people of genuine faith, the end is in fact the beginning—of a perfect eternity. For the here and now—today—there is a very real possibility that these troubling days may spark a new **Great Awakening**. **In fact this is the very term some are using**.

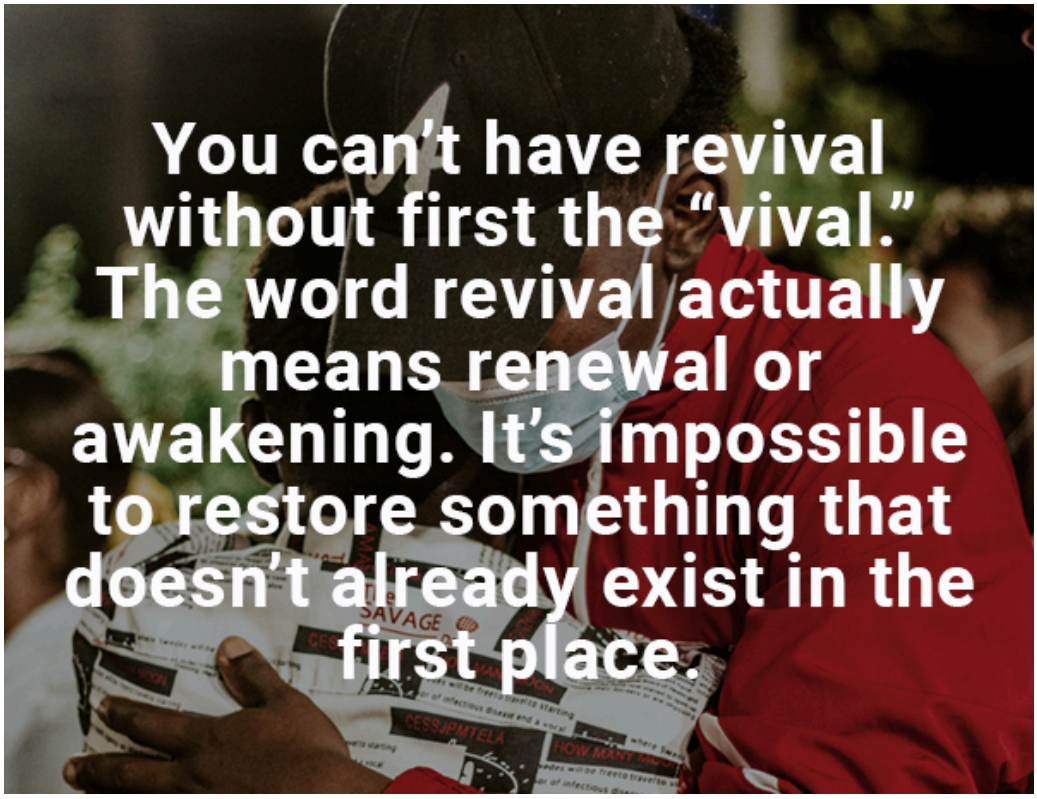
What were the Great Awakenings of the past?

The First Great Awakening began in the 1730s and lasted to about 1740, though pockets of revivalism had occurred in years prior, it is largely credited to the ministry of **Solomon Stoddard**, **Jonathan Edwards**' grandfather. But as American religious historian **Sydney E. Ahlstrom** noted, "The Great Awakening was still to come, ushered in by the British evangelist **George Whitefield**."

The Second Great Awakening (known simply as "The Great Awakening") began in the late eighteenth century and lasted through the mid-nineteenth century. The center of revivalism was the so-called **Burned-over district** in western New York. Named for its abundance of hellfire-and-damnation preaching, *the region produced dozens of new denominations, communal societies, and reform.*

The Third Great Awakening in the 1850s–1900s was characterized by new denominations, active missionary work, **Chautauquas**, and the **Social Gospel** approach to social issues. The YMCA (founded in 1844) played a major role in fostering revivals in the cities in the 1858 Awakening and

after. The revival of 1858 produced **Dwight L. Moody**, out of which came religious work carried on in the armies during the civil war. The **Christian** and **Sanitary** Commissions as well as the **Freedmen's Societies** were formed at that time. (**adopted from Wikipedia**)



The recently released "**The Jesus Revolution**" movie produced by **Greg Laurie**, is based on the most recent, and what many consider to be, the **fourth Great Awaking** in America. Regardless, it's thought to be a very important and pivotal episode in modern church history. **Time Magazine published the cover story** that included **Chuck Smith**, and his role in this movement on the West Coast, emanating out of his modest **Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa** church. That was fifty-five years ago—a time of great political and social upheaval for the country.

*"**Calvary Chapel** is an association of **evangelical** churches, mostly in the Moderate Faction of the **Charismatic movement** but with former historical origins in **Pentecostalism**. It maintains a number of radio stations around the world and operates many local **Calvary Chapel Bible College** programs."* (**Wikipedia**)

Some 30 years later, I was able to meet Chuck Smith (pictured) and hear him preach in his Costa Mesa church. Later, I met and talked with Greg Laurie when I volunteered to serve in two of his "**Harvest Crusades**" in Anaheim. These were very impactful times for me personally, shaping my faith as I witnessed this awakening with my own eyes. I guess I was by some measure, a "Jesus Freak" in those days too.

If, *and I say if*, there is to be a "*fifth"* Great Awakening, I wonder if it will be credited to **Asbury College**? It's too soon to tell. Admittedly, Asbury didn't conclude as spontaneously as it started.

"'The Asbury team was just fried, and there was decision fatigue, and just burnout,' Hall told Religion News Service. He said Brown told him the school's leaders felt like Asbury's role was complete. The school said its hope is that revival continues in other spaces." (**Religion News**)

Whatever else we might say, these were three great weeks of amazing revival. Some planned events have followed, but I believe we haven't seen the "breakout" yet that characterized the Great Awakenings of the past. I could, and I hope, be wrong.

All the historic revivals tended to share certain things common:

- **There is a powerful moving of The Holy Spirit**, as evidence of spontaneous emergence of, and prolonged working of miraculous experiences.
- **There is an abundance of prayer,** and most importantly, answered prayer.
- **There are profound and obvious changes in people** and the culture they were living in. (The Welsh Revivals of 1859 and 1904 transformed at least two generations of the Welsh people, and impacted much of the rest of England at that time.)
- **There is the music.** Great and powerful revivals encourage praise and worship, and the songs that were sung were a beautiful and impulsive response that has remained timeless. Some of the greatest hymns of the faith were born during these eras.

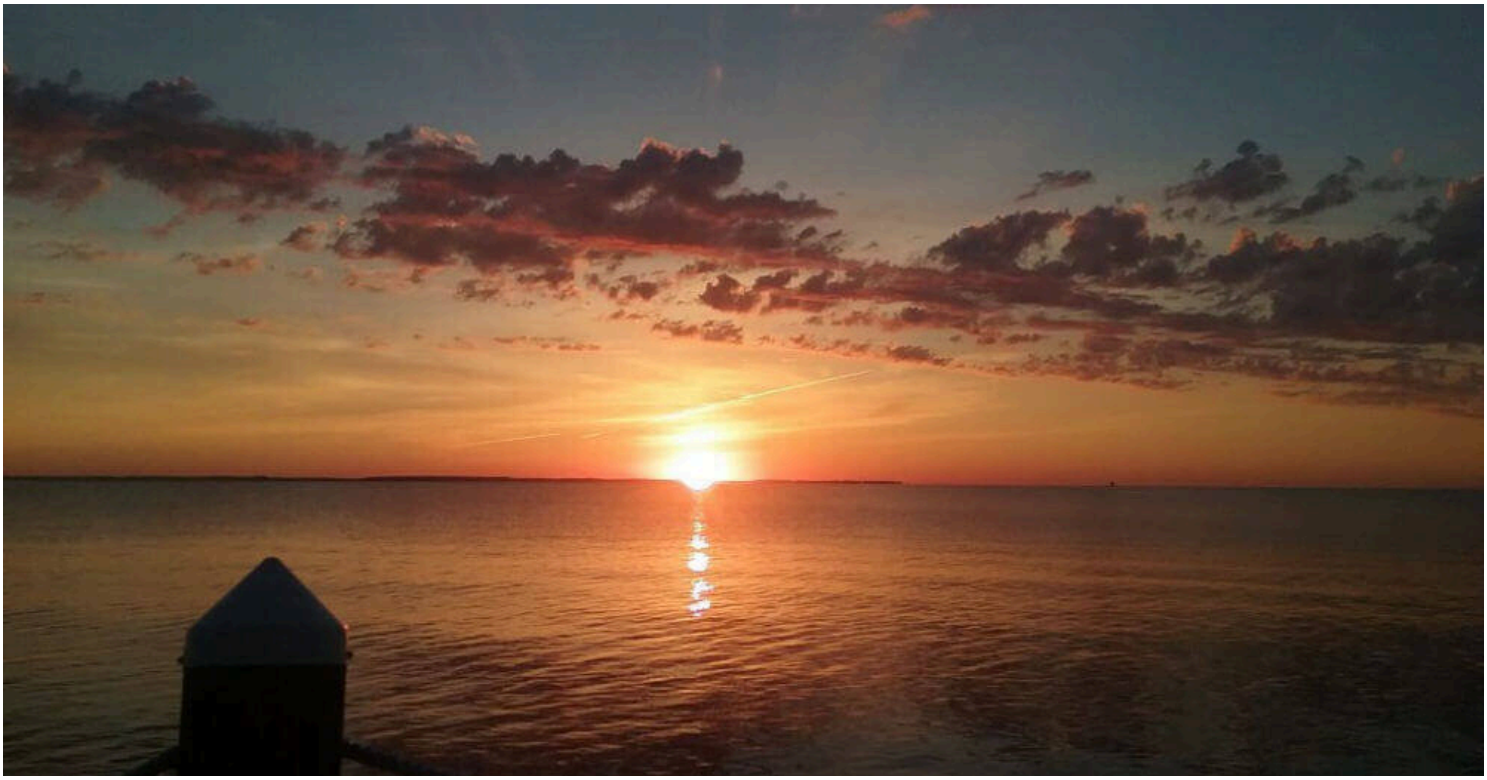
There is one final point that we must acknowledge: "You can't have 'revival' without first the 'vival.'" The word revival means **renewal or awakening**. It is impossible to restore something that didn't exist in the first place. Every Christian, in every family, in every church, in every city, in every part of this country, must pray for their salvation and rescue by God. In an increasingly Godless

culture, there must be a revival of the Body of Jesus Christ, before the Body can change the culture. It's happened before, and it can happen again.

- ***"O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy."*** (Habakkuk 3:2)

Regeneration: Steve Lawson Sermon Jam | #BornAgain

MARCH 28, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BORN AGAIN, REGENERATION



Do you know for sure that you are going to be with God in Heaven?

Regeneration: Steve Lawson Sermon Jam | #BornAgain
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Nr76APHnJ-4

Do you know for sure that you are going to be with God in Heaven?

If God were to ask you:

> "Why should I let you into My Heaven?"

...what would you say?

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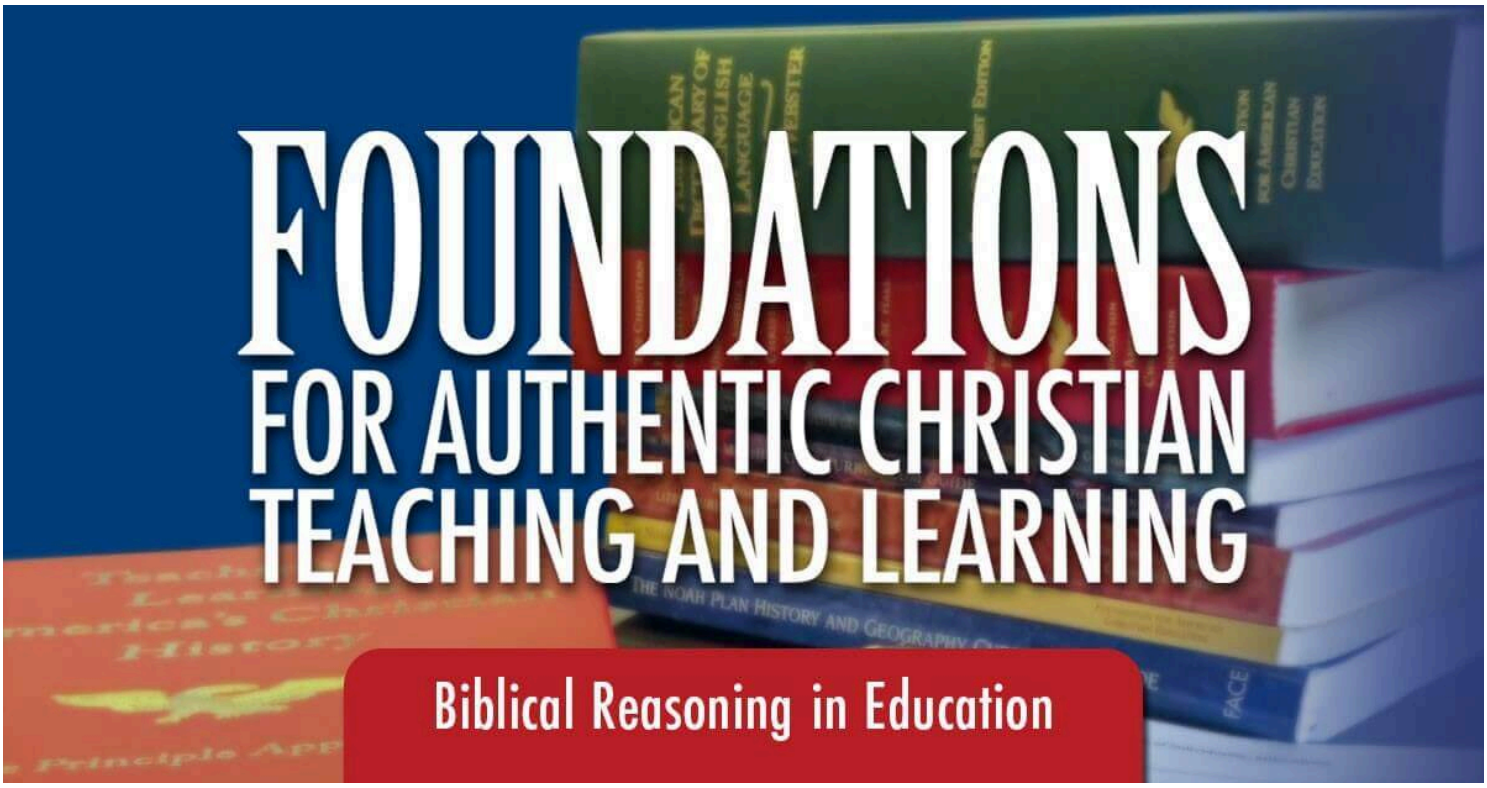
MARCH 11, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



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What Happens When You Die?

FEBRUARY 24, 2023
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRIST IN PROPHECY

Soul sleep or conscious existence?

If several years ago you had asked me what happens when you die, I would have given you a pathetic answer. I would have told you that when you die your soul goes to sleep until the Lord returns. At the return of the Lord, your soul is resurrected and judged, and you are either consigned to Hell or allowed to enter Heaven.

My conception of Heaven was that of a spirit world where the saved spend eternity as disembodied spirits, floating around on clouds, playing harps.

A Mistaken View

Needless to say, I couldn't get very excited about all that. I sure didn't like the idea of being unconscious in the grave for eons of time. Nor could I develop any enthusiasm for the prospect of being a disembodied spirit with no particular identity or personality. And the idea of playing a harp for all eternity was downright scandalous, for I had been taught that instrumental music in worship was an abomination!

You can imagine, therefore, the sense of shock I felt when I started studying Bible prophecy and discovered that all these ideas of mine about life after death were foreign to God's Word. But my shock quickly gave way to exhilaration when I discovered what the Lord really has in store for me.

Please watch this presentation by Dr. David Reagan as he articulates what happens to Christians when they die:

What HAPPENS When YOU DIE | Speaker: Dr. David Reagan
https://youtube.com/watch?v=91e-wZMYa5k

The Biblical View

I learned from God's Word that when those of us who are Christians die, our spirits never lose their consciousness (**Phil. 1:23**). Instead, our fully conscious spirits are immediately ushered into the presence of Jesus by His holy angels (**2 Cor. 5:8**).

Our spirits remain in the Lord's presence until He appears for His Church. At that time, He brings our spirits with Him, resurrects our bodies, reunites our spirits with our bodies, and then glorifies our bodies, perfecting them and rendering them eternal (**1 Thess. 4:13-18**).

We return with Him to Heaven in our glorified bodies where we are judged for our works to determine our degrees of rewards (**2 Cor. 5:10**). When this judgment is completed, we participate in a glorious wedding feast to celebrate the union of Jesus and His Bride, the Church (**Rev. 19:7-9**).

Witnesses of Glory

At the conclusion of the feast, we burst from the heavens with Jesus, returning with Him to the earth in glory (**Rev. 19:14**). We witness His victory at Armageddon, we shout "Hallelujah!" as He is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, and we revel in His glory as He begins to reign over all the earth from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (**Zech. 14:1-9**; **Rev. 19:17-21**).

For a thousand years we participate in that reign, assisting Him with the instruction, administration, and enforcement of His perfect laws (**Rev. 20:1-6**). We see the earth regenerated and nature reconciled (**Isa. 11:6-9**). We see holiness abound and the earth flooded with peace, righteousness and justice (**Mic. 4:1-7**).

At the end of the Millennium we witness the release of Satan to deceive the nations. We see the truly despicable nature of the heart of Man as millions rally to Satan in his attempt to overthrow the throne of Jesus. But we will shout "Hallelujah!" again when we witness God's supernatural destruction of Satan's armies and see Satan himself cast into Hell where he will be tormented forever (**Rev. 20:7-10**).

We will next witness the Great White Throne Judgment when the unrighteous are resurrected to stand before God. We will see perfect holiness and justice in action as God pronounces His terrible judgment upon this congregation of the damned who have rejected His gift of love and mercy in Jesus Christ (**Rev. 20:11-13**).

Jesus will be fully vindicated as every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Then the unrighteous will receive their just reward as they are cast into Hell (**Rev. 20:14-15**).

Witnesses of a New Creation

We will then witness the most spectacular fireworks display in all of history. We will be taken to the New Jerusalem, the eternal mansion prepared by Jesus for His Bride, and from there we will watch as God renovates this earth with fire, burning away all the filth and pollution left by Satan's last battle (**2 Pet. 3:12-13**).

Just as the angels rejoiced when God created the universe, we will rejoice as we watch God superheat this earth and reshape it like a hot ball of wax into the New Earth, the eternal earth, the paradise where we will live forever in the presence of God (**Rev. 21:1**).

What a glorious moment it will be when we are lowered to the New Earth inside the fabulous New Jerusalem (**Rev. 21:2**). God will come down from Heaven to dwell with us (**Rev. 21:3**). He will proclaim: "Behold, I make all things new" (**Rev. 21:5**) We will see God face to face (**Rev. 22:4**). He will wipe away all our tears (**Rev. 21:4**). Death will be no more (**Rev. 21:4**). We will be given new names (**Rev. 2:17**), and we will exist as individual personalities encased in perfect bodies (**Phil. 3:21**). And we will grow eternally in knowledge and love of our infinite Creator, honoring Him with our talents and gifts.

Now, I can get excited about that!

The Word vs. Tradition

Isn't it amazing how far we can drift away from the Word of God when we stop reading His Word and start mouthing the traditions of men?

As I kept making one discovery after another in God's Prophetic Word that ran contrary to what I had been taught, I began to wonder about the origin of the doctrines I had learned. It didn't take

me long to discover that the source was Greek philosophy.

The first attempt to mix the concepts of Greek philosophy with the teachings of God's Word came very early in the history of the Church. The attempt was called Gnosticism. The Gnostic heresy arose among the first Gentile converts because they tried to Hellenize the Scriptures; that is, they tried to make the Scriptures conform to the basic tenets of Greek philosophy.

The Greeks believed that the material universe, including the human body, was evil. This negative view of the creation was diametrically opposed to Hebrew thought, as revealed in the Bible. To the Hebrew mind, the world was created good (**Genesis 1:31**). And even though the goodness of the creation was corrupted by the sin of Man (**Isaiah 24:5-6**), the creation still reflects to some degree the glory of God (**Psalms 19:1**). Most important, the creation will someday be redeemed by God (**Romans 8:18-23**).

The Gnostic Heresy

When the first Gentiles were converted to the Gospel, their Greek-mind set immediately collided with some of the fundamental teachings of Christianity. For example, they wondered, "How could Jesus have come in the flesh if He was God? God is holy. How can He who is holy be encased in a body which is evil?"

In short, because they viewed the material universe as evil, they could not accept the Bible's teaching that God became incarnate in the flesh. Their response was to develop the Gnostic heresy that Jesus was a spirit being or phantom who never took on the flesh and therefore never experienced physical death.

This heresy is denounced strongly in Scripture. In **1 John 4:1-2** we are told to test those who seek our spiritual fellowship by asking them to confess "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh."

The Augustinian Corruption

About 400 A.D. a remarkable theologian by the name of St. Augustine attempted to Hellenize what the Scriptures taught about end time events and life after death. Augustine was very successful in his attempt. His views were adopted by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. and have remained Catholic dogma to this day.

The influence of Greek philosophy would not allow Augustine to accept what the Bible taught about life after death.

For example, the Bible says the saints will spend eternity in glorified bodies on a New Earth (**Revelation 21:1-7**). Such a concept was anathema to the Greek mind of Augustine. If the material world is evil, then he reasoned that the material world must cease to exist when the Lord returns.

Augustine solved the problem by spiritualizing what the Bible said. He did this by arguing that the "new earth" of Revelation 21 is just symbolic language for Heaven.

Augustine's views are held by most professing Christians today, both Catholic and Protestant. That means that most of Christianity today teaches Greek philosophy rather than the Word of God when it comes to the realm of end time prophecy and life after death.

The Intermediate State

Some of the greatest confusion about life after death relates to the intermediate state between death and eternity. Some people advocate a concept called "soul sleep." They argue that both the saved and unsaved are unconscious after death until the return of Jesus.

But the Bible makes it crystal clear that our spirit does not lose its consciousness at death. The only thing that "falls asleep" is our body — in a symbolic sense. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:8** that he would prefer to be "absent from the body and at home with the Lord." In **Philippians 1:21** he observes, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." He then adds in verse 23 that his desire is "to depart and be with Christ." Paul certainly did not expect to be in a coma after he died!

If then our spirits retain their consciousness after death, where do they go? The Bible teaches that prior to the resurrection of Jesus, the spirits of the dead went to a place called Hades ("Sheol" in the Old Testament). The spirits existed there consciously in one of two compartments, either Paradise or Torments. This concept is pictured graphically in Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus (**Luke 16:19-31**).

The Bible indicates that after the death of Jesus on the Cross, He descended into Hades and declared to all the spirits there His triumph over Satan (**1 Peter 3:18-19**; **4:6**). The Bible also indicates that after His resurrection, when He ascended into Heaven, Jesus took Paradise with Him, transferring the spirits of dead saints from Hades to Heaven (**Ephesians 4:8-9** and **2 Corinthians 12:1-4**). The spirits of dead saints are thereafter pictured as being in Heaven before the throne of God (See **Revelation 6:9** and **7:9**).

The spirits of the righteous dead could not go directly to Heaven before the Cross because their sins were not forgiven. Instead, their sins were merely covered by their faith. The forgiveness of their sins had to await the shedding of the blood of Christ (**Leviticus 17:11**; **Romans 5:8-9**; **Hebrews 9:22**).

Events at Death

So, what happens when you die? If you are a child of God, your spirit is immediately ushered into the bosom of Jesus by His holy angels. Your spirit remains in Heaven, in the presence of God, until the time of the Rapture. When Jesus comes for His Church, He brings your spirit with Him,

resurrects and glorifies your body, making it eternal in nature (1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4). You reign with Christ for a thousand years and then live eternally with Him on the new earth (Revelation 20-22).

If you are not a child of God, then your spirit goes to Hades at your death. This is a place of torments where your spirit is held until the resurrection of the unrighteous which takes place at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus. At that resurrection you are taken before the Great White Throne of God where you are judged by your works and then condemned to the "second death," which is the "lake of fire" or Hell (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

Preparing for Eternity

One thing is certain: "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that 'Jesus is Lord!'" (**Isaiah 45:23**; **Romans 14:11**). Your eternal destiny will be determined by when you make this confession.

If it is made before you die, then you will spend eternity with God. If not, then you will make the confession at the Great White Throne judgment before you are cast into Hell. To spend eternity with God, your confession of Jesus as Lord must be made now.

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (**Romans 10:9**).

It is Not Good for the Woman to Be Alone

DECEMBER 5, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, FATHERHOOD, GOD ORDAINED FAMILY, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, MOTHERHOOD, PANDEMIC

It is not the Way

The way of an eagle in the sky,

The way of a serpent on a rock,

The way of a ship in the middle of the sea,

And the way of a man with a maid. (Proverbs 30:19)

Ben Shapiro, in a YouTube Short Video, "**Why Single Women Vote for Biden**," had this to say:

> "What do you end up with if you have an entire group of people—single women—who are falling behind married women, who are not engaged in a social structure, who have had the most important mediating institution in human existence, marriage, ripped away from them? They've been told that it's no longer essential. It's not important. In fact in many ways, it's an institution that hems them in and harms their creativity."
>
> "So, what do require? Well, they're going to require a couple of things. they might require some government help. Why are single women voting at a larger clip for bigger government? This would be the answer. This is why. I mean Joe Biden knows his own constituency. This is why, you will recall, the Joe Biden campaign actually put out what they called the "Life of Linda." In the "Life of Linda," is exactly who Joe Biden thinks he is talking to—it is these women. Linda is a working mother in Peoria, Illinois. She works at a local manufacturing facility as a production worker, and earns forty-thousand dollars per year. She is pregnant with her son Leo."

"Now where's Dad? ***He doesn't exist.*** *is no doubt."*

There's a reason that Dad doesn't exist. If we put the case in military terms, he basically either surrendered, or he went absent without leave. Given the heavy weight of social reconstruction that men—and boys—have been forced to accept and endure, this should be no surprise. The enemies of the male sex are these: feminists, Marxists, mass media and marketing, youth worship, and in turn, the dwindling supply of mentoring fathers. We can also throw into the mix, the developing issue of accelerated acceptance of homosexuality and gender dysphoria.

Historically, men, by far, have always been attracted to the opposite sex—just as women have.

Missing fathers have been stamped with the pejorative term of "sperm donors." What do we call missing workers? Sons of sperm donors.

Horribly, this is the sum and substance of the greatest existential threat American primacy has ever seen.

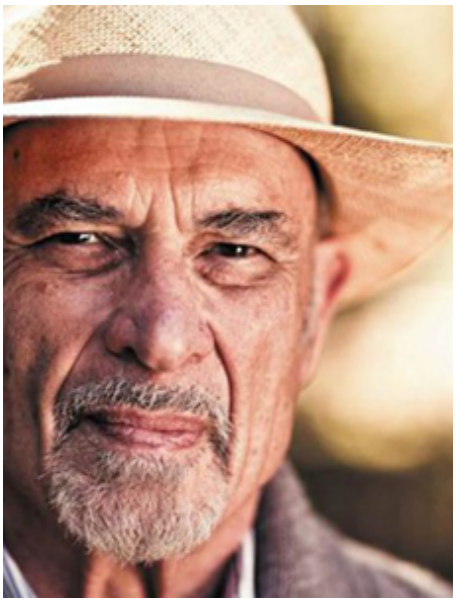
Historically, people of either sex (yes, Im avoiding the term gender intentionally) will—given no reason otherwise—accept who they are, and embrace their respective roles at least willingly, if not altogether enthusiastically, without serious reflection. But at this point, it seems that paradigm has been completely upended. The issue of fathers as irrelevant has developed, slowly at first, then gained real momentum in the sixties on onto the seventies. The contributing factors are a deeply flawed sexual liberation, role confusion, and something most of us had little idea was intentional: a long, slow *political* assault on the family, especially targeting the father. Not coincidentally, he has

been but one part of the assault on the institution of marriage, the Church, and the author of it all: God himself.

Now, in the post-pandemic social experiment, there exists a new cultural phenomenon that has a significant number of observers scratching their heads. Men, and to a lesser extent, women, are no longer interested in working a job. **Mike Rowe talked with Brian Kilmead about this phenomenon that really hasn't been discussed in the nation's town square.**

The Scottish poet **Charles MacKay** wrote: *"Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, one by one."* I think this is a deep truth, and I can only hope and pray that we will soon see the recovery phase begin soon.

It comes down to this: **the security and meaning authority provides. Dean Gotcher explains the phenomenon of abandoning responsibility, meaningful living and relationship**—for what amounts to carnal pleasures—with the relationship to the authority of our Father-God. God is replaced with a "**dopamine emancipation**" i.e. **the pleasures of the moment**. Abandoned are: obedience, accountability, humbleness, denial, self-discipline, and self-control.



Our natural fathers used to provide these essential "bumper guards" for raising boys to men, but not anymore. The authority of both earthly and heavenly Father, have been replaced by the father-state. Both men and women—but especially men—simply can't thrive, or for that matter really even survive, under that authority. **Gotcher** quotes **Irvin Yoram**, (pictured) a leading child psychologist who reveals how and why this was made to happen:

"Group therapists refuse to fill the traditional authority role: they do not lead in the ordinary manner, they do not provide answers and solutions , they urge the group to explore and to employ own resources ." (**Irvin Yalom**, *Theory and Practice and Group Psychotherapy*)

Yalom, and his colleagues have it all wrong—dangerously wrong. Because men and women are created in God's image, **His design demands discipline and authority**; this is **sine qua non**—not to quell the joy of life—but to ensure it remains. This is what ensures meaningful life and living.

This brings us back around to the observation Shapiro makes about single mothers preferring big government, and voting accordingly. Women have been raised with the same addiction to dopamine emancipation, but because they are female, they still have a deep desire for security, support, and protection. Not many women can abandon the need for security and still fill the innate need to

nurture. Often, left with no better choice, they turn to father-state for their safe-keeping. This is enough to upend election predictions, and demonstrate my point.

Even though there are people who won't dare admit it, men and women do need each other, to complement each other, and define the beautiful need for marriage–traditional marriage. God designed all of these things for our benefit. The prince of darkness, is doing all he can to destroy them. This is why people who don't know God have trouble understanding why there is so much confusion and distress, and puzzle over what seems to them, not all that important. But it is.

- ***For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.*** (1 Corinthians 11:12)

Image: **Irvin Yolam**, from https://www.yalom.com/biography

Cover image: Photo by **Magnet.me** on **Unsplash**

The Daily Skirmish – War on Parents: Is Disney Learning Pride Goeth Before the Fall?

DECEMBER 3, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, LGBTQ, WAR ON PARENTS

Disney is back in the news, this time appearing to eat a small slice of humble pie for leading the charge in the War on Parents.

How sincere or long-lasting Disney's new tune will be is anybody's guess, but let me start by saying something I've said many times before: There have always been gay and transgender people. Nobody should hate them or shoot them up in a nightclub. But that doesn't mean I want them in charge of public policy. I do not want the tail to wag the dog, or for religious liberty to come under assault in a country founded on religious liberty. If the radical communist-inspired gay political agenda upsets you, roll up your sleeves and get to work – the right way.

Disney went all out in pursuing its **self-described** "not-so-secret gay agenda" and "adding queerness", in its own words, to children's programming. Which led me to wonder why any parent of young children would invite Disney into their living room. But this week, returning Disney CEO Bob Iger **said** it's "important to listen to an audience. It's important to have respect for the people you are serving." He suggested the company should refrain from getting so involved in politics.

You might recall Disney had publicly condemned Florida's Parental Rights in Education law aimed at preventing the sexualization of young children in public schools. Disney went even further and said it would work to repeal the law. This led to a battle with the state of Florida over the company's special self-governing status in Orlando. "I was sorry to see us dragged into that battle," Iger said this week.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis was not impressed with Iger's comments. He said the state has no plans to restore Disney's legal privileges in Orlando. "They brought this upon themselves," DeSantis **said**. "All we did was stand up for what was right."

You have to wonder if the **big flop** at the box office of Disney's "Strange World" – an animated feature film about a gay teen romance – had something to do with Iger's expression of regrets. The film could lose as much as $100 million dollars. The shareholders aren't gonna like that.

It remains to be seen whether the Magic Kingdom will really listen to them or anybody else. I have my doubts. Disney has been pedal-to-the-medal sexualizing children and pursuing the radical gay agenda in recent months:

- it's new **Christmas TV series** features children holding signs saying "We Love You Satan"
- it bowed to pressure from the Left and started running **political and issue ads** on its streaming service, Hulu
- it teamed up with other companies to give **grants to college students** to make films promoting abortion
- it funds an advocacy group that is **creating propaganda** to influence policymakers to advance the LGBTQ agenda in schools
- it **lobbied** the Senate to pass the so-called Respect for Marriage Act which, critics say, threatens religious liberty

Disney has a lot of gay and Woke employees.

It's not clear Iger can make any headway against what is now very entrenched sick company culture that demands the right to sexualize your children and to have you pay them to do it. It's also not clear Iger even wants to. After all, he's the guy who **said** the Florida parental rights bill seemed wrong to him and would harm children. He also said his stance wasn't about politics. I don't know about you, but I get very nervous when somebody advocates for a left-wing cause and tells me they're not political.

Will Disney change course? I'm from Missouri. Show me. Meanwhile, keep your money in your wallet.

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Grinches: Pagan Charlottesville City Schools to “decenter Christmas”

NOVEMBER 20, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CULTURE WARS, DIVERSITY, FAMILY VALUES, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, LGBTQ

Wicked plots against the righteous…

Clandestine communications from the Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) “**Equity Committee**” indicate a push to “**decenter Christmas**,” a movement that seeks to deprecate America’s culturally and religiously primary holiday into nothingness.

A recent email from the Equity Committee outlines the effort to essentially destroy Christmas (and Thanksgiving), among other things:

Good morning all!

The Equity Committee wanted to send an email to explain some of what we've been doing, as well as some info on equity expectations for staff. We know this will be a review for many of you, but since we have so many new faces, we felt this was important information to share.

Our work over the last few years has included the following:

- We created a calendar of holidays, events, and announcements to recognize as many different cultures and religions as possible. We've worked hard to **de-center Christmas**. We've also worked to stop teaching the stereotypical **Thanksgiving story**.
- At the end of last year, we were focusing on LGBTQ+ students and community members – PD about the importance of respecting pronouns, using ungendered language, need for representation. This work will continue in the coming weeks.
- In previous years, we focused on dismantling some policies around stereotypes and race –
  - We don't ask kids to remove hats or hoods
  - We worked with the leadership team to conquer book study groups after we read Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain by Zaretta Hammond to allow for differentiated conversations.
    - We Got This!
    - So You Want to Talk about Race?
    - This Book is Anti-Racist

- > Our goal has been to create a culture where staff feel as if they can ask hard questions, to ask for clarification or more information if they are struggling with our equity work.

An explanatory link provided by the Equity Committee further elaborates on the "decenter Christmas" effort:

> "When I say "De-center Christmas in your classroom," that does not mean I am shutting down your religious beliefs and practices. I'm not banning holidays from the classroom. What I mean is stop and think about how you are perpetuating a HIERARCHY of Christian beliefs and culture in your classroom. Even if your classroom is made up 100% of Christian students or you teach at a Christian school, how are you going to teach your students that not ONE religion and holiday is superior to others? How are you teaching your students that ALL religions and cultures are valued at the SAME IMPORTANCE as Christian holidays and traditions?
>
> Please note that having one dreidel or Kinara up in your room does not make your class a culturally responsive space if everything else is decked out in red and green, AND that while so much of Christmas considered "normalized" or "mainstream," thing like elves, Santa, and reindeer are STILL Christmas symbols.
>
> Also note that in a time when millions of children are in virtual school and have teachers policing them in their own homes, virtual Elf on the Shelf in Zoom classes is NOT appropriate.
>
> Finally, address this time of year as "December holidays" not "The Holidays" because this is NOT the holiday season for non-Christian religions.
>
> If you do choose to bring in December holidays to your class, do so with a trauma informed lens and emphasize self-care because you do not know what this time of year represents to your students, who they may have lost, and who they may be mourning."

According to the presenter, the ultimate goal is to: "dismantle the hierarchy of religious practices and holidays."

Recommended "resources" on the subject include:

- *Problems with Christmas Curriculum* from Teaching Tolerance
- *Analyzing the School Holiday Calendar* from Teaching Tolerance
- *A Racial Justice Guide to The Winter Holiday Season for Educators and Families* from the Center for Racial Justice in Education
- *Five Ways Christian Privilege Shows Up During the Winter Holiday Season* by Miri Mogielevsky
- *Christian Culture in US Schools* by Paul Kivel
- *Culturally Responsive Instruction for Holiday and Religious Celebrations* by Dr. Cynthia Lundgren and Gisele Lundy-Ponce

While the CCS "Equity Committee" seeks to recognize and elevate cultural celebrations foreign to the United States, it portrays our own culture and holidays as exclusionary and racist.

And, while Charlottesville City Schools attacks and marginalizes America's key religious, foundational holiday celebrations—Christmas and Thanksgiving—it is not coincidental that **violence**, **hatred**, and **debauchery** spiral unchecked in our local government schools and manifest broadly in the surrounding community.

Are You Thankful for the Future?

NOVEMBER 17, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, BLESSINGS, CHRIST IN PROPHECY, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, THANKSGIVING

"Freedom from Want," also known as "The Thanksgiving Picture" or "I'll Be Home for Christmas," is the third of four oil paintings by American artist Norman Rockwell, known as the Four Freedoms series. The works were inspired by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 State of the Union Address, also known as Four Freedoms.

Thanksgiving: Not Just Looking Back

Next to Christmas, Thanksgiving is the holiday most cherished as a time to gather with family. Christians wonder how modern Jews can faithfully celebrate the Passover without recognizing the divine source of their deliverance from Egyptian captivity so long ago, but many Americans likewise commemorate Thanksgiving without confessing God as the proper recipient of their thanks.

Each of us should reflect on the blessings poured into our lives. Family, friends, health, memories, love, and life itself are all reasons to be grateful. Gratitude is meaningless unless it is directed at a person. A good exercise for families and individuals alike is to count our many blessings — one by one if necessary. As we do so, we indeed recollect what God has done.But have you ever considered the importance of anticipatory gratitude?

Gratitude in hindsight is the rightful response to favors given. The grace of God demonstrated in the Person of Jesus Christ is offered to everyone who trusts in His finished work on the cross of Calvary. Unworthy as we are, we receive His unmerited favor by simply believing on the Messiah for our salvation.

Over the years, I've made many lists — mental and written — of the blessings God has poured into my life. Each of them is incomplete, because it is simply impossible to produce an exhaustive list of what God has done for each of us. Yet I don't know that I've ever taken time to consciously thank Him for the many blessings I am looking forward to. I proclaim them with great anticipation and urge others to become excited about what lies ahead for those who long for Jesus' appearing. I want to receive the crown of righteousness Paul spoke of in **2 Timothy 4:8**.

So, this Thanksgiving I will intentionally thank God for the blessings I am still awaiting. Because His promises are "Yes and Amen" — and more certain than my own existence — they are as good as fulfilled already. That is why God often spoke through the prophets in the past tense even as He revealed the future. All that God has spoken will come true.

Whether you gather with family or friends this Thanksgiving, I hope that you'll take time to express your gratitude for what God has done, what He is doing, and what He will soon bring to pass — in your life and for all who hear His Voice.

SOURCE: **LAMB AND LION MINISTRIES**

Virginia bishops encourage faithful to support Gov. Youngkin's move to secure parental rights

OCTOBER 28, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PARENTAL RIGHTS

The bishops said the governor's policies 'uphold parents' God-given and constitutional right to guide their child's development. They also protect the First Amendment rights of students and staff.'

(**LifeSiteNews**) — Last week, Virginia bishops released a message to Catholics in the state calling on them to show support for the actions taken by Gov. Glenn Youngkin to protect parental rights in education.

The Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC), which addresses issues of public policy within the state, invited people to submit public comments to the state's Regulatory Town Hall expressing their support for the 2022 **model policies.** The new guidelines will require students to use pronouns and bathrooms as well as participate in sports that align with their biological sex.

"Parents are the first teachers of their children and have an irreplaceable role in guiding them and ensuring their well-being," the VCC **wrote.** "If you have not already done so, express your support for restoring the role of parents in public education."

The VCC explained that the policies "uphold parents' God-given and constitutional right to guide their child's development. They also protect the First Amendment rights of students and staff."

A 30-day public comment period will end October 26, at which time the policies may go into effect. the Virginia Board of Education hosted a public meeting and "took over two hours of testimony on the proposed changes."

The VCC also suggested reasons to include in statements of support, such as highlighting how the new policies "honor the sacred role of parents" in every aspect of their children's lives and "protect the fundamental religious liberty interests of personnel and students." Other recommendations include the importance of parental guidance "if children are struggling with gender dysphoria" and how "student participation in sex-specific athletics, school activities and events should be determined by sex." The VCC emphasized that bathrooms and other facilities should also be separated by biological sex.

Comments can be submitted on the state's Regulatory Town Hall **website** until 11:59 p.m. October 26.

So far, over "60,000 comments have been submitted online," and the reactions include both strong support and strong opposition.

"This bill will harm so many trans and non-binary kids," one comment from this morning **reads.** "Anyone who supports this is to blame for trans kids being abused and abandoned by their families."

- Another anonymous responder **wrote,** "Students should have the right to use any pronouns they would like. If they don't get this option, they may feel like their opinion isn't important … Students are supposed to feel supported in school, but if they don't get to choose how they identify, they aren't being supported. What Glenn Youngkin said isn't okay."
- "No public school should ever hide anything from parents about their children and the schools should not have to bear the burden of these actions or 'hide' this lifestyle action from them," a supporter **wrote.** "When children eventually become ADULTS they have their entire lives to live whatever lifestyle they choose. Until then, in public schools, parents should always, ALWAYS be kept informed and the children should not be making the rules."
- Another supporter **wrote** that "the LCPS child grooming agenda is truly scary. They want to keep parents in the dark while the staff (teachers and counselors) counsels our children regarding their sexuality. You see how well that is working out."

Youngkin, who campaigned largely on the issue of parental rights in education, began fulfilling promises to voters just days after he became governor. In January, he **banned** the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) in public schools and ordered an **investigation** into the allegations that the Loudoun County School District was covering up cases of a biological "gender fluid" boy raping girls in female bathrooms.

In August, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) finalized **policies** to ensure transparency for the sexual content of public-school materials. More recently, Youngkin's team **condemned** the near reintroduction of a bill that would have criminalized parents for refusing to "affirm" their children's gender confusion.

RELATED:

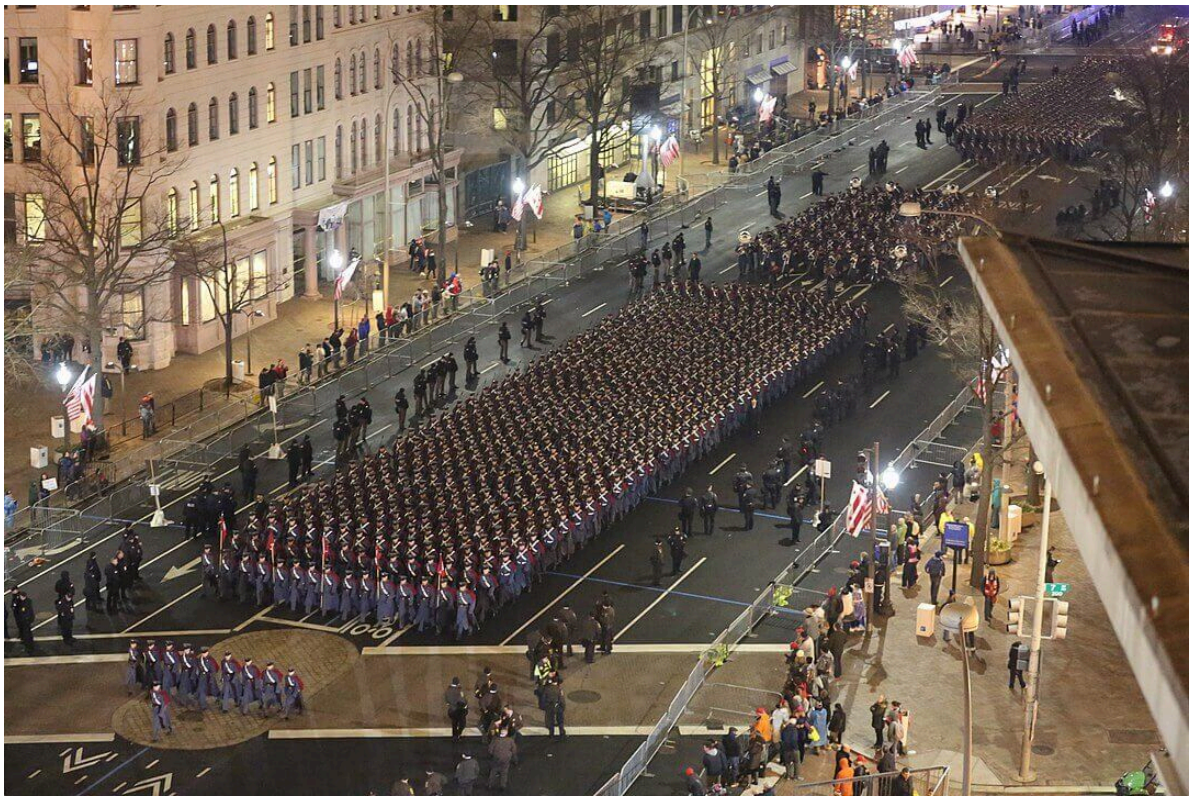
LGBT activists say they'll help kids run away from parents to live with 'queer friendly adult'

Judge rejects Virginia school district's bid to stop state investigation of transgender rape cover-up

Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin becomes first to attend state's March for Life

Virginia Military Institute Went Woke, Enrollment Fell 25%

OCTOBER 26, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, LGBTQ, PANDEMIC, WOKE, WOKENESS



The Virginia Military Institute is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the presence of women at the nation's oldest state military college with an appearance by Kimberly Dark: a **fat rights activist** and author of lesbian fanfic who wants to "reimagine masculinity".

"Why couldn't we see that America has been racist forever, sexist forever?" Dark ranted in a post titled, "For those who do not want a Trump presidency — this is what we will do now."

Under Superintendent Cedric Wins, this is what the Virginia Military Institute has become.

"How have you benefited from adherence to your gender role?" a VMI diversity training presentation **asks**. The **resources for it** included journal articles like, "How Military Service Members Reinforce Hegemonic Masculinity." There's not meant to be any room for "hegemonic masculinity" at an institution whose students experience spartan living and the warrior tradition.

The institution that gave us Patton, Marshall and Byrd now asks about your "gender role", urges you to reimagine "masculinity" and spews hate toward anyone who happens to be white.

VMI's Preston Library's DEI resources **features** "The History of White People" and "White Guys on Campus" discussing "whiteness" and the "habits of racism among white male undergraduates" along with the racist ravings of Ibram X. Kendi in "How to Be an Antiracist", Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility" and Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Between the World and Me".

The message at VMI is one of undisguised loathing for white people, injecting the ugliest racist concepts of critical race theory directly into the campus dialogue while trying to silence critics.

Superintendent Wins, VMI's woke head, has been accused of undermining its proud tradition and driving away cadets. His "One Corps, One VMI Unifying Action Plan" puts DEI at the heart of VMI and claims that it will "empower Cadets to gain strength through diversity, acceptance by inclusion". But the cadets aren't coming.

Enrollment for the new VMI class fell by 25%.

Wins blamed the pandemic and even falling **birth rates**, but that fails to explain why the number of freshmen fell from 522 in 2020 and 496 in 2021, to 375 now.

It clearly wasn't the pandemic. Were those the birth rates kicking in?

The VMI Inclusive Excellence plan **called for** pushing "diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice" on students, faculty and alumni. It was based on the One Virginia Plan which declared that "Inequity is rooted in America's foundation." Young men who once turned to VMI for its tradition of excellence and were eager to serve their country are now going elsewhere.

VMI's Board of Visitors **had already hosted** a state equity official pushing critical race theory and the hatred toward white people of "White Fragility" author Robin DiAngelo. A good deal of effort is being spent on eliminating, renaming and "recontextualizing" historical elements of VMI's legacy. And VMI's woke personnel are overtly dismissive. A faculty member **insisted**, "We really aren't military. I have a bird on my shoulder – doesn't mean anything – just I am a field professor, So – compare us more to University of Maryland than a military academy."

VMI's DEI training **included** "White Like Me: Race, Racism, and White Privilege in America."

According to the video, "white privilege" is "built into the very foundations of the country." The video, with its racist attacks on white people, its partisan attacks on Republicans and promotion of Obama shows where VMI's woke leadership wants it to be.

Another video, “Disarm Hate”, uses the Islamic terrorist attack at the Pulse nightclub to “demand LGBTQIA equal rights, fight the NRA and challenge America’s obsession with gun violence.”

Critics of critical race theory at VMI have spoken out through the **Spirit of VMI PAC**. Gov. Youngkin’s victory has brought a fresh wind of change to the racist equity systems imposed in the Northam era. But VMI’s woke leaders are doing their best to turn the proud institution into just another woke college campus. And the fall in enrollment shows that it’s working.

Superintendent Wins has angrily fought with VMI alumni working to defend its proud traditions in clashes that have gone public. Arguing over VMI’s massive spending on “equity”, the superintendent **railed at** a critic, “You have no understanding of DEI or what it means, or how much of the funding for DEI is represented in our request.”

To see what DEI means, just go to VMI’s DEI resources list assembled by Lt. Col. Ticen and Maj. Carroll that includes Ta-Nehisi Coates’ “Between the World and Me” which states that the 9/11 firefighters and police officers “were not human to me” and Ibram X Kendi’s “How To Be an Antiracist” **which contends** that, “The most threatening racist movement is not the alt right’s unlikely drive for a white ethnostate but the regular American’s drive for a race-neutral one.”

If there’s any ambiguity left about how much the VMI administration loathes and discriminates against white people, there’s a direct link of “anti-racism resources” as a “resource to white people”. Black people and other races, it’s understood, cannot be racist. Only white people.

The resources also include not only the 1619 Project, which claims that America was built on racism, but also “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution” and Howard Zinn

While trying to explain why students weren’t coming to VMI, Superintendent Win **blamed**, among other things, “Ideological differences among a divided alumni base.”

But the divisions aren’t among the patriotic alumni who served their country, they were imposed by Win and leftists who are making VMI a divisive place defined by the ugliest racism.

“Misinformation regarding our initiative for diversity, equity and inclusion and the thought, the notion, the misinformation about the institute and what it’s doing or what it’s not doing with critical race theory is certainly having an impact, we believe,” Win complained.

Except it’s not “misinformation”. It’s the DEI agenda that’s right there in VMI’s resources.

The Virginia Military Institute deserves better than Win and wokeness. So do the great men who came out of it. And their nation that needs the service of the heroes of tomorrow.

SOURCE: **SULTAN KNISH**

The Daily Skirmish – It's Time to Talk Turkey About Race (Part 2)

OCTOBER 14, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Today, I continue deconstructing the Left's phony diversity narrative. But first, two bits of astounding news about things **I told you yesterday**.

Democrat Nury Martinez apologized for racist remarks and **resigned** her post as president of the Los Angeles City Council, but retained her council seat. Martinez, who is Hispanic, was recorded referring to a black kid as a 'monkey' and making other racist comments. But if, as we're told, black and brown people can't be racist, why did she apologize and resign? Why didn't she defend herself and tell us she can't be racist because she's brown?

Because the diversity narrative is as phony as a three-dollar bill and everybody knows it, that's why.

I also told you **yesterday** about Kamala Harris saying hurricane relief should be made on the basis of skin color, not need, a blatant violation of the Equal Protection Clause.

Well, it turns out, **FEMA** was doing exactly that after Hurricane Ian devastated parts of Florida. FEMA apportions relief money partly on the basis of "social vulnerability" on the theory that

minorities suffer more from natural disasters. Including crazy rich Asians, according to FEMA. Racial discrimination is baked into FEMA policy. It's part of the Biden administration's requirement that every federal agency come up with a redistribution – oops, 'equity' – plan.

The justification? The historical denial of opportunity for minorities to participate in the economic life of the nation. Tell it to Oprah Winfrey and LeBron James, billionaires both.

The bottom line: "big chunks of federal money" are flowing out of the Treasury based on skin color.

This is not some sideshow – "At FEMA, we strive to place equity at the center of our efforts…," a FEMA official said. A Treasury Department official **said** the same thing, recently – put race at the center. All of this is blatantly unconstitutional, offending as it does the Equal Protection Clause that has served our nation well. If you're a thinking person, let me know when you think redistribution and the historical guilt trip are supposed to end.

Here are some other things that are wrong with the Left's phony diversity narrative:

It relies on **distortions of history**.

The latest example is Don Lemon asking a British guest if the crown should pay reparations for colonialism and slavery. But the guest pointed out the inconvenient facts slavery existed on the African continent carried on by Africans and the British were an early force in shutting down the slave trade, being the first nation to outlaw slavery on its soil.

If reparations are to be paid, they should come from the descendants of the African slave-traders who rounded up their own people, handcuffed them in cages, and brought them to the beach to be sold and put on ships. People looking for black pride need to look elsewhere, not distorted and fictionalized accounts of history.

The diversity narrative is thinly disguised revenge and leads to race hatred.

An arts festival in Portland let blacks in for **free** and charged everybody else $80. The Institute putting on the event gets **government grants**. So I object. This is enough state action to invoke the Equal Protection Clause. As for race hatred, Democrat South Carolina State Rep. and U.S. Senate candidate Krystle Matthews, who is black, was **caught on video** trashing white people and saying she keeps them "under her thumb" or they "get out of control like kids." We keep going like this and we'll end up like **South Africa** where the country's leaders **sing** about killing white people and black people kill white farmers to get them off the land. This way lies barbarism.

Finally, the diversity narrative is a crutch that holds people back.

First, it holds back the people who don't get hired because of affirmative action policies. The Supreme Court is **hearing** a case on October 31st brought by Asians who allege Harvard's race-based admissions policies are holding them back. Also, **a class action suit** has been brought against Texas A&M for reserving faculty posts based on race and giving six-figure bonuses only to minorities. Affirmative action also hurts the minorities by putting them in schools and jobs they can't handle and inducing learned helplessness in large numbers of people. It's racist to say minorities can't excel and make it on their own merit. When affirmative action started in the 1970s, it was supposed to be temporary. At some point, the guilt trip and the favoritism were supposed to stop. We're headed to India, where advantages are doled out by caste and the system is permanent. Not the best outcome for us, the country that became the best country on earth by making opportunity available to all.

The Left's phony diversity narrative is garbage, but will remain wildly successful for a while longer.

It sucks people in. It gets them to turn off their brain and ignore all the costs the narrative imposes. Identity politics is poisonous and destroys what unified us as a country – a belief in self-rule and rights for the most important minority, the individual. But the costs become more apparent with every passing day. Eventually, clear thinking will win out and the diversity narrative will get thrown into the dustbin of history. It happened with 'defund the police' and it will happen with the rest of the diversity narrative, as well. We will be much better off when we return to being a nation of sovereign individuals who are captains of their own fate not looking to government for favoritism or advantages others are not allowed to enjoy.

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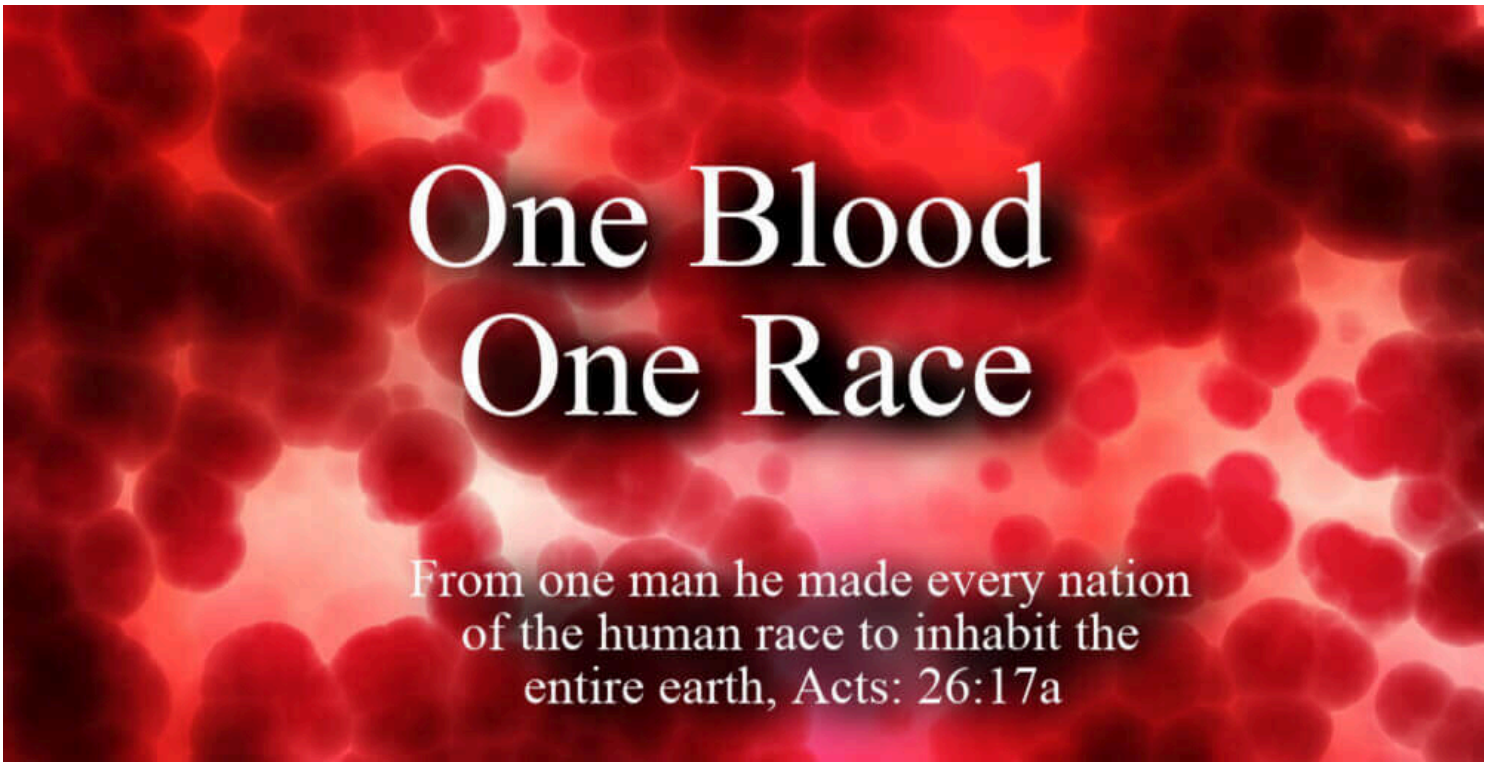
The Daily Skirmish – It's Time to Talk Turkey About Race (Part 1)

OCTOBER 13, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The diversity narrative may be the most successful fish story the Left tells America, but that doesn't make it right.

One part of the narrative says black and brown people can't be racist. That's crazy. Listen to this: Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez was **caught** saying a white man was showing off his black son like a trophy and, further, the black son is like a "monkey". "They're raising him like a little White kid…. this kid needs a beatdown," because he was misbehaving, this 'wise **Latina**' went on to say. Wow! Didn't we just go through a whole thing about renaming monkeypox because any reference to monkeys at all is offensive to blacks?

The diversity narrative also says Democrats can't be racist, only Republicans are racist.

Hate to break it to you, but Nury Martinez is a **Democrat**. It figures – Democrats are the party of slavery and segregation. If Nancy Pelosi **saying** last week we need immigrants to stay in Florida to pick our fruit isn't racist, I don't know what is. Her remark reminds me of Hitler's master plan for all the races. The German Volk were going to rule and everybody else was going to clean toilets, figuratively and literally speaking.

Another problem with the diversity narrative is that it's segregationist.

This whole thing about racially exclusive 'safe spaces' and segregated dorms is still going on. A self-described students-of-color group just **demanded** a safe space at a high school in Charlottesville. Not exactly Martin Luther King's dream. Things have taken a poisonous turn. I'm all for the First Amendment right of free association, but the answer is to start your own group, not demand that the government adopt segregation as its official policy.

Another time-honored value the diversity narrative tramples on is equal protection of the laws.

Kamala Harris **said** a couple weeks ago hurricane relief should be based on race, not need. This reflects the poisonous concept of 'equity' that has taken over civil rights thinking. People didn't all start out in the same place so we need to misuse the government to make sure they all end up in the same place. That might sound good to you, but if the government actually tried to hand out hurricane relief to minorities while telling similarly situated white people 'tough luck', it would be flatly unconstitutional, a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. 'Equity' is not equality. It's the opposite of equality. It's favoring one group over another and, I humbly submit to you, we've had enough of that. You can't cure racism with more racism.

The diversity narrative also makes people say and do the craziest things.

Someone on TikTok **claimed** the reason she's obese and can't lose weight is because of white people, something they did on the Indian subcontinent a century ago. Well, that's a stretch, to say the least. A government-funded report **concluded** that the study of "physics was racist, in part because it rewards students for getting the right answer…." The absurdity of this is easy to see. Would you rather have the airplane you're flying in be designed by people who know how to get the correct answers to physics problems or people who don't? Why on earth would you want to make excuses for people who don't know their stuff and turn them loose in the world to design airplanes and other things with life and death consequences?

As for doing crazy things, we were treated to another hate hoax, recently.

Rachel Richardson is a black volleyball player at Duke who **claimed** she was the victim of racial taunts and threats from a spectator while playing a game at Brigham Young University in August. However, the police investigated and reviewed surveillance video, but found no evidence to corroborate her story. Predictably, the media and the NAACP had all piled on, but they went silent after the police findings came out.

Here's my question:

If the diversity narrative is so good and racial prejudice in America is so bad, why do people keep having to make stuff up to make their case? Isn't there something wrong with a narrative that

promotes segregation, violates equal protection, and makes people tell big fat lies?

There are lots of other things wrong with the diversity narrative. I'll tell you about some more of them **tomorrow**.

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Love of Money: Evil

JULY 20, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, GREAT RESET

A question that frequently comes to mind:

Why does it appear that, no matter which way we look in the world of national leadership, there are those in charge who seem bent on destroying our nation?

For example, consider that one writer described the Biden administration as having "throttled" US energy production. The president has trapped much of our nation's vast energy reserves behind a wall of bureaucratic red tape. This action, which took place immediately after the president took office, has affected the American populace as few other economic decisions could.

Gas prices—as you no doubt can attest personally—have more than doubled in some areas around the country. We are now facing, according to some who are supposed to know, energy costs for our homes that will double in some areas of the nation.

All of this could begin to be instantly reversed by changing the energy policy back to the way it was before January of 2021.

But those who are in charge are in the camp of the *"green"* fanatics who constitute a very small percentage of the American population.

These have the complete support of the propagandists who are the national mainstream media and the Hollywood entertainment industry. They are the mouthpieces that day after day support every insane governmental policy imaginable.

This involves not only the destruction of energy that runs our industrial productivity, but the moral energy that the US inherited by our founding fathers, who saw fit to write into our Constitution and other documents common sense derived from God's Word.

The question, again, is: Why are there those in leadership who are accomplishing the destruction of America?

We have often heard that America won't be destroyed from outside forces, but by forces within. I used to doubt that when at university and even later, but not anymore. The erosion has become a caustic environment induced by leaders who seem to have lost their collective mind. They want to listen to the madness that is the mantra of the "Mother Earth" worshippers—the environmental wackos who say they believe we are destroying the earth through fossil fuels and must now go "green" in order to save the planet.

It is absolute madness, and we look at the leaders people keep electing who go along with all this insanity.

The answer is that the entire cabal that joins in this effort is controlled by the mind of Satan himself. It is Ephesians 6:12 "on steroids."

But dissecting the things involved, we come to the crux of the matter. The cabal of leaders who are in control—many after decades of entrenchment within Washington, DC— are, I believe, in the financial pockets of the likes of George Soros and other elite globalist influencers. These influencers constitute the human element of the minions—the powers and principalities— in the high places of wickedness described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12.

Bottom line is the *bottom line*. That is, the Washington, DC, leaders, it is obvious, cast aside all concern for national well-being, for sovereignty, and all other facets involving our republic, including constitutional safeguards. They do so for one thing—to work toward financially feathering their own nests. The *swamp* is indeed a *swamp* of incestuous evil (in terms of nepotism and every other form of insider nefariousness).

Now, I'm not saying that every congressman, senator, or other government official is in this category. But certainly those in this category control and shape policies that are, evidence proves, tearing the nation apart. A nation so divided cannot stand, said Lincoln, who was taking that truth from Jesus.

These are doing the work of the evil one, whether realizing and acknowledging it or not. They are doing the globalist elites' evil, which is, whether realizing it or not, doing the bidding of the

mastermind behind the Great Reset blueprint to supposedly "build back better."

It is the same old luciferic ploy: "I will ascend and put my star above the throne of God."

He is the one who convinced the Tower of Babel builders to try to usurp that Holy Throne. He is back, in full fury, knowing that he has but a short time to try to turn around the fate that he will find impossible to avoid.

He plies these one-world builders and the DC swamp creatures with promises of great financial gain, appealing to one of fallen man's most lusted-after commodity. He appeals to their love of money, which is the root of all sorts of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).

Money buys power and influence, which is at the nucleus of fallen man's pride and anti-God lusts. As Henry Kissinger once said, "Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac."

The wicked geopoliticians lust after what the devil offers—great wealth and power. It will bring them, they think, the ultimate in satisfaction and pleasure. They refuse to believe that God in Heaven owns everything of material and spiritual wealth, and He created it all in absolute perfection. Satan and his minions—both demonic and human—have perverted that which God created.

To be in Christ, who paid in full for the sins of mankind, is to be a *joint heir* with Christ. Those in God's family are to have all the wonders He owns.

The love of God, not the love of money, is where true riches await those who accept God's grace gift of salvation.

Here, again, is how to become a joint heir with Jesus Christ:

> **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9–10)**

The Gospel and Tisha B'Av | Will the Next 9th of Av Bring Israel Another Catastrophe?

JULY 20, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, CHRIST IN PROPHECY, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Tisha B'Av 2022: August 6-7– Put those dates on your radar and PRAY FOR ISRAEL!

Av is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar, and usually falls in the months of July and August on the Gregorian calendar. Tisha B'Av — also known as the 9th of Av — is what the Jews would consider "a date that lives in infamy."

According to Jewish scholars, on the 9th of Av the following historic catastrophes occurred:

1. Ten Jewish spies returned from the Promised Land with a bad report (leading the people to lose heart and be consigned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years).
2. The First and the Second temples were destroyed.
3. The Battle of Betar was lost (the Jewish rebellion under Simon bar Kochba was crushed and the remaining rebels were annihilated).
4. The Romans plowed the Temple Mount — in fulfillment of the prophecy of **Micah 3:11-12**.
5. Jews were expelled from England (in 1290 AD).
6. Jews were expelled from Spain (in 1492 — the same year Columbus "sailed the ocean blue").

7. Both World Wars in the 20th Century began — unleashing horrific tragedy upon the Jewish people.

Given all the sadness tied to this day, it is long been recognized as a Jewish day of mourning. But even as they commemorate tremendous suffering, the Jewish people also demonstrate a resilience that has inspired believers and objective skeptics alike.

Asked by King Louis XIV of France to provide proof of God's existence, Blaise Pascal responded, "Why the Jews, Your Majesty, the Jews!" (The same statement is ascribed to insightful individuals in England and Russia.) The point is that in spite of their suffering, the Jews are still here. Their very presence proves that God's promises are *"Yes and Amen"* (**2 Corinthians 1:20**).

And, although Satan was the instigator of all those historic tragedies, God repeatedly turned ashes into beauty for the Jewish people. He did that through Joseph's life. He did it again through Ruth. He will do it again when yet another threatened catastrophe will lead the Jewish people to cry out, *"Baruch haba b'shem Adonai"* — Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD. That prophecy points forward to a time that will lead up to Jesus' glorious Second Coming, His establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, and His reign from David's throne on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

The Cross represents another historic catastrophe

Following Jesus' death, His disciples despaired. When the Shepherd was arrested and then struck down, they scattered — just as He had foretold. Peter had denied Him three times, in spite of his own vehement profession of allegiance. The death of God's own Son seemed to represent an unprecedented victory for Satan and unmitigated disaster for the people of God. And yet…

And yet, God turned that tragedy into the greatest victory in human history. The disgrace of the Cross became our freedom from sin. The humiliation of Christ's shameful death became the Good News that we call the Gospel — because it provides the salvation of God to all who believe.

The 9th of Av will fall on August 5th this year. Jewish people will spend the day reflecting and mourning. The Christian sacrament of Communion offers us a regular opportunity to reflect and mourn — but our mourning is surmounted by the joy we have in knowing that Jesus lives.

Death could not hold Him. The tomb could not keep Him. Satan could not lock Him away

When Jesus stood in the synagogue in Nazareth, He read verse 1 and the first half of verse 2 from Isaiah 61:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent ME to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD…

Jesus stopped reading at that point, sat down, and said to them, *"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"* (**Luke 4:16-21**). At that moment, the rest of verse 2 and all of verse 3 still awaited fulfillment:

> …and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes; the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

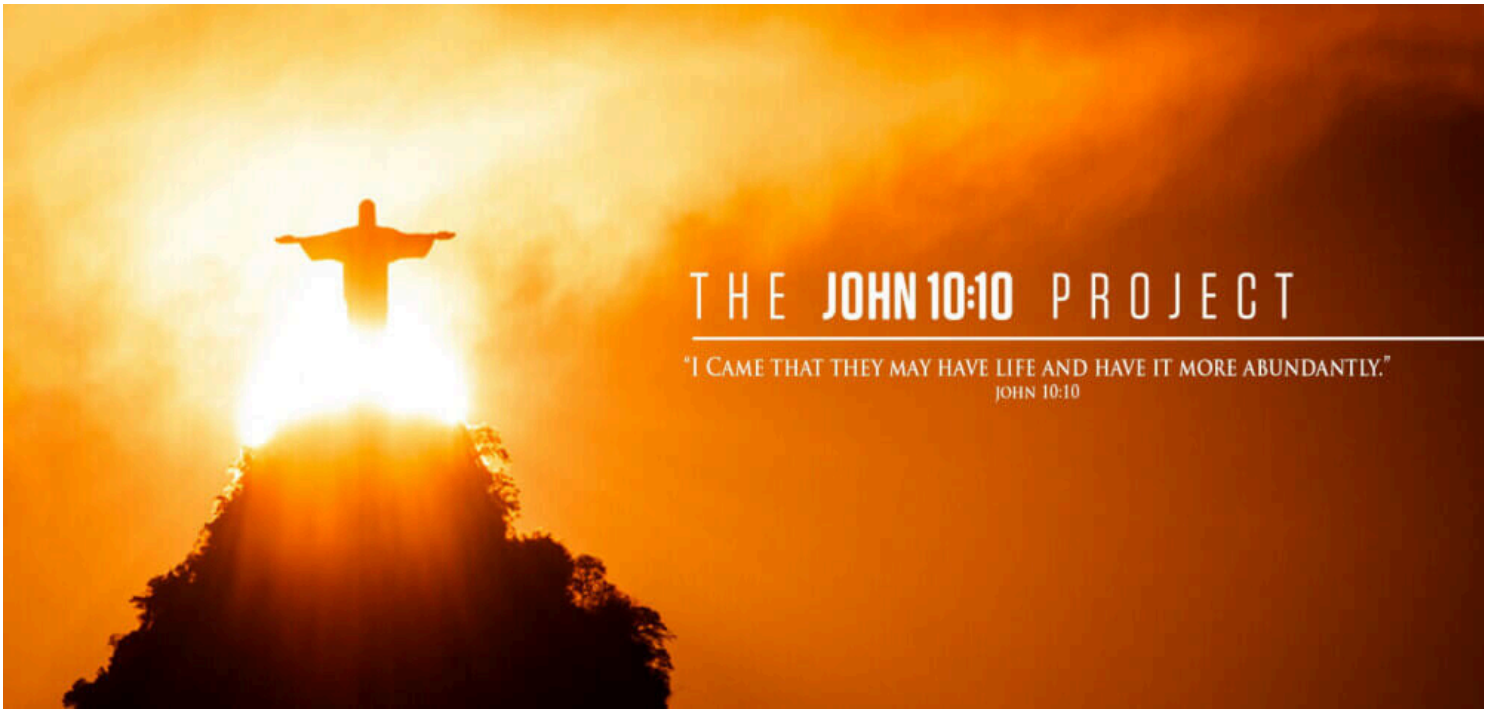
If you are close to a Jew on the 9th of Av, mourn with them on that day of sadness as a good friend should. And then take the opportunity to tell them about the Good News that turns ashes into beauty, mourning into joy, and despair into praise.

That is the power of the Gospel

SOURCE: **LAMB AND LION MINISTRIES**

#3 Other Gospels

JUNE 14, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The content and validity of the so-called "Gnostic gospels" is evaluated. Are they authentic accounts of New Testament events? Featuring Lee Strobel, Mark Strauss, CraIg Evans and N.T. Wright. This video is an excerpt from the feature-length documentary THE CASE FOR CHRIST.

For more information = **THE CHRISTIAN MOVIE SHOP**

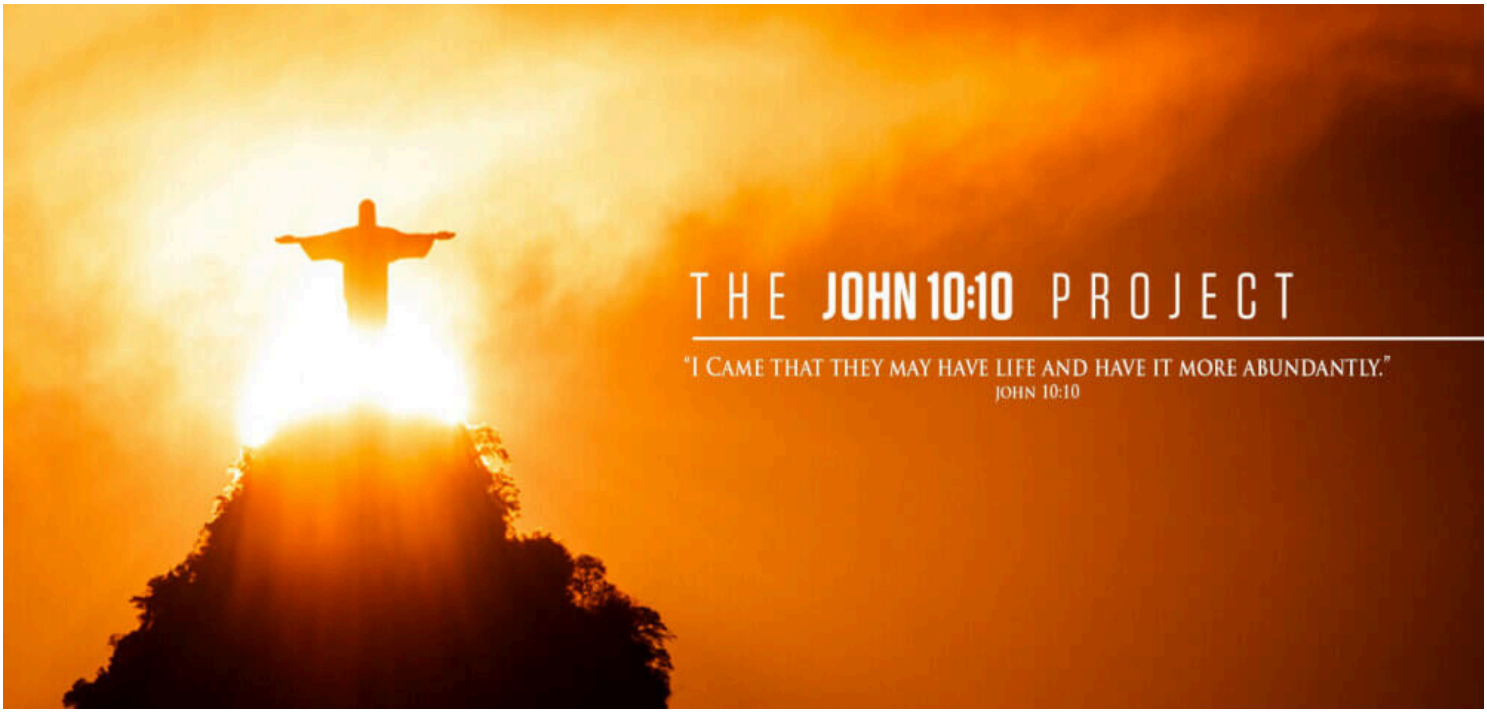
vimeo-player

https://vimeo.com/207227679

SOURCE: **THE JOHN 10:10 PROJECT**

#2 How Accurate are the Gospels?

JUNE 13, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Oral tradition, the age and quantity of ancient manuscripts, and extra-biblical evidence all point to the accuracy of the Gospels. Featuring Craig Blomberg, J.P. Moreland, Craig Evans and Lee Strobel. This short film is an excerpt from the feature-length documentary the case for Christ PRODUCED BY LA MIRADA FILMS AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE CHRISTIAN MOVIE SHOP.

Lee Strobel's blockbuster bestseller comes alive on your screen in this documentary that chronicles the reporter's journey from atheism to faith. The former legal editor of the ***Chicago Tribune*** draws upon his investigative skills to examine the historical viability and accuracy of the Gospels, along with the personal claims and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Project: Determine if there's credible evidence that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Son of God.

The Reporter: Lee Strobel, educated at Yale Law School, award-winning former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune-with a background of atheism.

The Experts: A dozen scholars, with doctorates from Cambridge, Princeton, Brandeis, and other top-flight institutions, who are recognized authorities on Jesus.

The Story: Retracing his own spiritual journey, Strobel cross-examines the experts with tough, point-blank questions: How reliable is the New Testament? Does evidence exist for Jesus outside the Bible? Is there any reason to believe the resurrection was an actual historical event?

This remarkable documentary is like reading a captivating, fast-paced novel. But it's not fiction. It's a riveting quest for the truth about history's most compelling figure. What will your verdict be in ***The Case for Christ?***

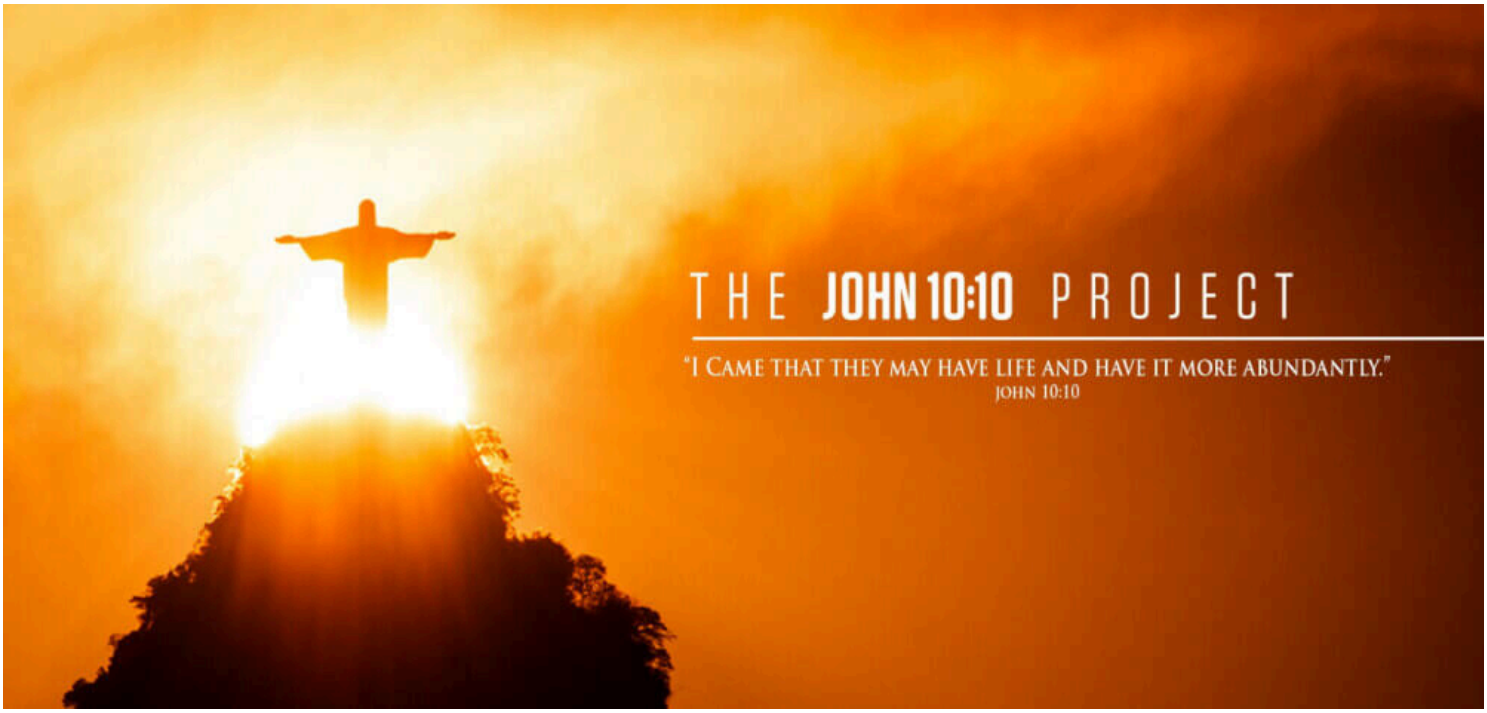
vimeo-player
https://vimeo.com/207227208

SOURCE: **JOHN 10:10 PROJECT**

Lee Strobel, with a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a Master of Studies in Law degree from Yale Law School, was the award-winning legal editor of the Chicago Tribune and a spiritual skeptic until 1981. His books include four Gold Medallion winners and the 2005 Christian Book of the Year (coauthored with Garry Poole). He and his wife live in California.

#1 Can the Gospels be Trusted?

JUNE 13, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: FAITH, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Are the Gospels eyewitness accounts of actual people and events? This question is crucial to any discussion about the validity of Scripture. Featuring N.T. Wright, Lee Strobel, Mark Strauss and J.P. Moreland. This short film is an excerpt from the feature-length documentary the case for Christ PRODUCED BY LA MIRADA FILMS AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE CHRISTIAN MOVIE SHOP.

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https://vimeo.com/207226829

SOURCE: **JOHN 10:10 PROJECT**

God Looks at Our Hearts

MAY 29, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

The story of David, an ordinary boy raised to extraordinary heights by an extraordinary God. The Son of Jesse, a simple shepherd boy, chosen by God to be the King of Israel. And the only figure in the bible to be called: “A man after God’s own Heart.” In so many ways, David is given to us as a type of Yeshua, a preeminence of Him to come. In this story, we follow the journey of a single man through his falls and triumphs of life, and in every way we see the fingerprints of God, piece-by-piece allowing David to submit his life to God so that in every way he would become “one” with his savior.

Godly Relationship

As such, this is a story of God’s relationship with fallen man, and it expresses so clearly the grace and love of God towards us, ever pointing our eyes towards heaven so that we would continually seek the mercy of God and his gift of eternal life given through Yeshua.

And, this is also our story, piece-by-piece, God is allowing us to submit to His will so that in every way we also will become one with our savior. Are we not also struggling in this journey of life,

desiring to become men and women after God's own heart? I say yes and yes, so let us begin with God's story of David.

We must first understand the period in Israel. The nation had fallen into one of its darkest hours. It continued to deteriorate after the death of Joshua, each man living according to his will. Desiring to be like the nations, they chose for themselves a king who became an apostate and led the nation astray. Man's failures are continually God's opportunities for deliverance. It was in this dark hour that He chose his instrument, His anointed one that would bring order to God's people and deliver them from their enemies. This anointed one was David.

To the nation, David was less than nothing.

He was the youngest of eight brothers, given the duty of tending to his Father's sheep, a job traditionally required of bondservants. Here immediately we see the encumbrances to Yeshua. Yeshua also came from humble beginnings, the son of a carpenter sent by God to be a servant to His people, and to gather his Father's lost sheep.

> "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29, NKJV).

God is jealous for His honor and therefore is pleased to select the most unlikely and unpromising instruments to execute His pleasure.

"Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons" (1Samual 16:1). It is interesting to note that despite the sinful condition of the nation, God made a merciful decision to choose his own.
For as always, forgiveness and deliverance from sin have been God's sovereign work and not ours. And in so choosing His king, God looked at one thing only: the heart of David. "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

God not only looks at our hearts; he desires them fully.

By faith in Yeshua, God sees our hearts as purified. We know that our hearts are not pure, at least not yet. God desires to build us up in faith and love so that we would ever grow closer to Him. It is

through this process that God transforms us and transform us completely. Let me say this plainly, it is His work in us and not ours. God is ever testing our faith, and it is through the tribulations and triumphs of life that we learn and grow. “To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity” (Proverbs 1:2-3).

All understanding and wisdom come from God, yet to receive this knowledge one must look at life’s circumstances, both His and of others, and allow the spirit of truth to reveal the straight path of righteousness. This is but one reason that I teach the story of King David from the bible. It is full of real-life experiences that through divine revelation and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can study these words and allow God to continue His transformation in us.

> “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14).

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

House of David
MINISTRIES

Restoration of the Kingdom

APRIL 28, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, ESCHATOLOGY, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Prophet Isaiah gave us a compelling glimpse into the future when he said:

> "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3, NKJV).

Mountains in scripture represent kingdoms

Therefore, the key to understanding here is that "the mountain of the Lord's house" represents Christ's Kingdom and His church. Still, there remains confusion within the church about what exactly is the Kingdom?

Here is a quick summary. The Kingdom of God is not an intangible spiritual place in the clouds. The Kingdom of God will be established right here on the earth, in Israel, from Jerusalem. Yeshua is the king, and we are His royal subjects—the *ecclesia*—a congregation of people from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. The nations do not replace Israel but are joined with her. We together are the

Kingdom of God, and the foundation of this great Kingdom is God's eternal law that was given to the Jewish people.

So when exactly will the Kingdom be established?

Yeshua said, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15)*. This would imply that the Kingdom of God is a *present* condition.

However, the commonly accepted pre-millennial view is that in one instantaneous moment, Christ returns to the earth and fixes everything. The remnant of unsaved Israel sees the one whom they have pierced and comes to faith in their Messiah, the church comes to her senses about Israel, and Yeshua establishes the Kingdom of God.

Before then, Israel is subject to God's judgment, which culminates in the great tribulation—the last three-and-a-half years of the age before Yeshua returns to the Mount of Olives. This scenario implies that the Kingdom of God is a *future* condition.

Unfortunately, neither view is not entirely accurate. The Kingdom of God is both a present and future condition. It is true that the return of Christ ushers in the Kingdom of God on earth, and begins the one-thousand-year rule of the Messiah (the Millennial Kingdom). But until His return, there is much biblical prophecy regarding Israel and the nations that must be fulfilled. The study of this prophecy is called eschatology—the study of the end-times.

Now, if you think for a moment this topic is unimportant, Yeshua sternly warned his disciples in all four of the gospels and the book of Revelation, to be watching with eager expectation for His imminent return. He also promised a blessing to those who were found watching when He returned.

Yeshua Spoke of the Kingdom of God

Yeshua had many things to say about the Kingdom of God, and we read that the disciples were deeply curious about the end of the age and the restoration of the Kingdom. Listen to their inquisitive hearts, and the answers Yeshua gave them:

> "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
>
> "And Jesus answered and said to them: Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:3-14).

These verses give us quite a bit is information about the last days. Unfortunately, this subject is considered by many to be irrelevant. But is it?

Last Days, Latter Days, Time of Sorrows, End of the Age

This period that Yeshua describes is called different things, including the last days, the latter days, the time of sorrows, and the end of the age. The last days are not the end of the world, nor are they the day that Yeshua returns to the earth. That day known only to the Lord will be unique in every way, and is called "the day of the Lord." This is the day that Yeshua physically returns to the earth.

The church should recognize the time and season leading up to this great day as the last or latter days. It is written, *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6)*.

So, are we in the last days leading up to the return of Yeshua? Very likely, but it is impossible to speculate just how long we have since no man knows the day or the hour. The Lord moves at a pace that seems slow to man, and a day to Him is like a thousand years to us. So if we don't know precisely how long, then we should at least be aware of prophetic events unfolding in the earth during this time.

The Lords Time Clock and Signs

Yeshua said, *"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near" (Matthew 24:32)*. We know from scripture that the fig

tree represents Israel, and since He gave Israel His biblical calendar, she is the Lord's time clock.

Yeshua also revealed many signs of the end: deception, false Messiahs, wars and threats of war, kingdoms rising and falling, famine, pestilence, and powerful earthquakes. But all this He says is just the beginning.

And it gets worse. Listen carefully to these words: *"Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens" (Hebrews 12:26)*. Everything in the world is going to begin to fall apart, but amid this chaos, there is a prophetic promise that God has made to Israel.

The Lord said: *"For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you" (Isaiah 60:2)*. If we continue reading, we see this scripture speaks about the restoration of Israel: *"Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side" (Isaiah 60:4)*.

What?

Wait a minute. I thought the Lord was done with Israel until the end of the tribulation?

There is a different picture here than what many theologians have taught you. As the earth falls into greater darkness, Israel will begin to rise and shine as a beacon of light in the earth. Let's go back to our opening scripture from Isaiah, where it says: "these things" shall come to pass in the "latter days," meaning the days leading up to the return of the Lord.

And what things are the Lord speaking of?

Specifically, it says that the Kingdom of the Lord's house, which is His holy temple, shall be established over all the kingdoms of the earth, and shall be exalted over all the nations. It says that all the nations shall flow up to Jerusalem to the Kingdom of God, and Israel will teach the nations how to walk in God's paths according to His laws.

We know that "all" who are in Christ Yeshua, Jew, and gentile, are both the temple and the Kingdom of the living God. I am explicitly referring to Messianic Jews (true Israel) and believing Gentiles who have been grafted in amongst us. I am speaking about the Lord's church—His *ecclesia* and congregation comprised of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. And I am talking about the "one new man" in Christ Yeshua who have been brought together by the blood of the Lamb—one people of God comprised of every tongue, tribe, nation, and people. We are the redeemed of the Lord.

Paul says,

> "But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:11).

He is not speaking exclusively about the gift of salvation. He is talking about the calling to share the message of salvation with all the nations. This calling, which was initially for Israel, has for a season been given to the Gentiles until Israel's temporary blindness is lifted, and the fullness of gentiles come into the Kingdom.

Yeshua's words will ring true, that the message of salvation would be shared in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). This time of the end, the latter days is when we would begin to see the restoration of God's Kingdom.

One Plus One = One!

If we study the history of both Israel and the church, we will discover there is a parallel—that God has been working for centuries to restore both. While they seem to be on different and even diverging paths, at some point not far into the future, the Lord will bring the two together as **one**.

Let's go back in time and look at some of the histories.

The Jewish enlightenment period began in the late 19th century. This period let to the Balfour declaration in 1917, and later the Council of the League of Nations agreeing to restore the Jewish homeland in 1922. Sadly, this Zionist vision would not be fully realized until after the ashes of the Holocaust when the United Nations General Assembly would vote in 1947 to partition an area of Palestine for the Jewish people.

On May 14, 1948, a gathering of Jewish leaders in Tel Aviv signed a proclamation that declared the establishment of a Jewish state, to be known as the State of Israel. Nineteen years later, in June 1967, during the six-day war, Israel regained control of the Temple Mount for the first time in nearly two thousand years. The Lord's prophetic words had been at least partially fulfilled as He began the restoration of His Kingdom.

And what of the church? With the Protestant Reformation in 1517, the Lord began to restore His written word to the body of Christ. The term "reformation" derives from the Latin word *reformatio* and means "restoration" or "renewal." The Lord brought the first and second great awakenings to the church from the 1730s through the 1800s, restoring the power of His Holy Spirit.

The third great awakening began in the 1850s and continued through the 1900s. The crescendo of this movement is commonly referred to as the "Azusa Street revival," and birthed the Pentecostal

church that moved in great signs, wonders, miracles, and healings.

Lastly, from the 1960s through the 1970s, the church experienced the fourth great awakening and the explosion of the Messianic movement. This initiated the last phase of God's restoration to the church—to bring the Messianic Jewish people together with their gentile brethren as "one new man." This move of the Holy Spirit was divinely timed with the return of east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount back to the Jewish people in 1967.

The Great Harvest of Souls

With the restoration of God's word, the power of His Holy Spirit, and the awakening of many Jewish people back to their Messiah, the church today is poised to receive the Lord's next great outpouring of His Spirit. This will culminate in the final restoration of Israel and the church, and the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever seen.

Yeshua's disciples, no doubt, had many questions for Him, but one stands out to me: *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)*. Yeshua kindly rebuked them and said that the time and season was not for them to worry about, but that they had one immediate task at hand—to receive the power of the Holy Spirit from on high and to preach the message of the gospel in every nation.

The fact that Yeshua's disciples asked this question reveals they understood that the Kingdom of God belonged to Israel. And we the church should understand the same—that God is restoring His Kingdom to the Jewish people, and we are part of His plan of restoration.

The other noticeable point is that the gospel was to be preached through Israel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. The clear indication is that it will be Israel, not Rome, America, or any other nation that will ultimately steward God's word to every nation. This again confirms the irrevocable calling to the Jewish people, that for this season has been entrusted to the Gentiles. Paul says, *"What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1-2)*.

The church needs to be aware of God's restorative work with His land and His covenant people—Israel.

And we need to get our eyes pointed in the right direction—towards Jerusalem. Here the Lord will reestablish His spiritual foundation and heritage, and this is where the center of Christianity will once again return in these last days before the return of Christ. It should be no surprise that the Lord has drawn so many influential Messianic leaders back to Israel over the past several decades. God is restoring His Kingdom.

The church has been invited to join the Lord is this great end-times endeavor. But will she respond?

The Lord told His disciples, *"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2)*. And Yeshua is selective about His servants. It is written, *" went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted" (Mark 3:13)*, *"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)*.

Yes, the Lord chooses those He wants. But how are we qualified to be chosen? First, I believe we must be willing. The Prophet Isaiah said: *"Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8)*. Second, we must have the Father's heart to fulfill His will. We must understand God's heart for Israel. The Lord declared: *"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you" (Jeremiah 31:3)*. *"Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul" (Jeremiah 32:41)*.

And we must understand God's heart for His land, *"a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12)*.

This is how we are qualified.

We must be willing, and we must have God's heart for His land and His people. I pray for you to read and understand the word of the Lord so that you will be qualified and chosen to fulfill His great commission regarding Israel and the nations— *"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11:25)*.

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

House of David
MINISTRIES

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

Deuteronomy 11:12.

Revelation 7:9.

Zechariah 2:11.

Zechariah 12:10.

Jeremiah 30:7, Zechariah 14:4.

Luke 12:37.

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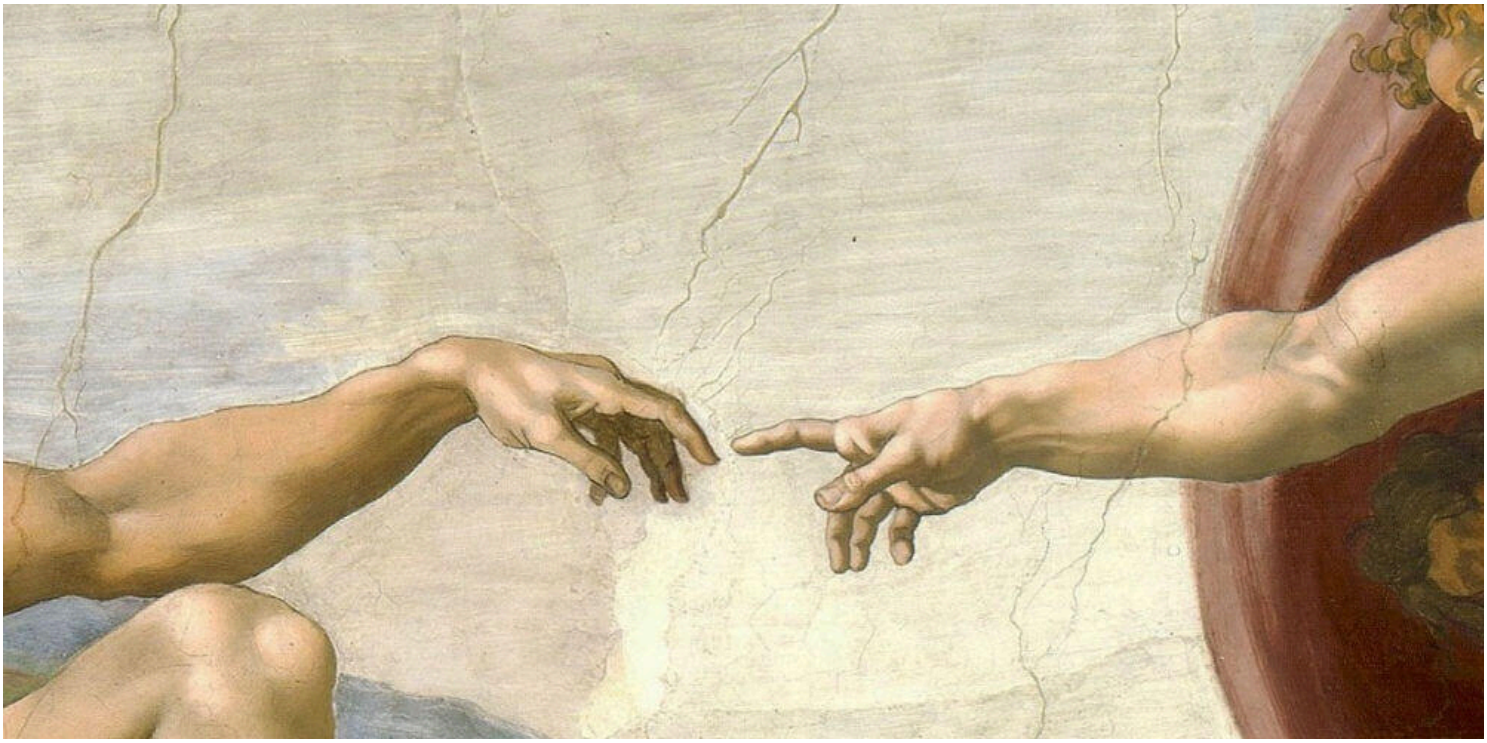
The Kingdom of God

APRIL 16, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The Bible tells us:

> There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25, NKJV). Yeshua affirmed this when He said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14).

I want to go back in time and tell you more about how my walk with the Lord has changed over the years. Before I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior in 2002, just as it says in Proverbs, I was also following a way that seemed right to me. It was the way of the world.

When I moved back to the United States from Israel in 1984, I came here like an immigrant in search of the opportunities this nation provided. I was intensely focused on going to college so that I could start a career. I wanted to get married, buy a house, and live out the American dream. Even now, it is hard to find anything inherently wrong or sinful with this desire. After all, didn't the Lord tell Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply the earth? It appeared that I was at least fulfilling one of God's commandments. And to the best extent possible, I was trying to be a good person, treating others as I desired to be treated—the golden rule.

Within ten years, I had achieved what many others only dreamed of. I was married to a kind and beautiful wife. My two children were healthy and incredibly smart. I had risen the career ladder very quickly and excelled in executive management from the young age of twenty-six. My income was above average, and we could afford to live in an upper-middle-class neighborhood that provided the best public schools. We were not, but we lived comfortably. Sure, there were challenges here and there, but overall, life was perfect.

But the Lord had another plan and purpose for my life. Though I was not aware at the time, His grace was gently leading me towards an alternative reality. I still had many questions about life. And so, sitting on my couch in New Hampshire, I decided to read the New Testament. That was the moment that would change my life forever.

I was not desperately looking to fill some void in my heart. But I was curious and adventurous enough to read a book that was, for the most part, forbidden by the Jewish people. I was seeking the truth about Christianity. It was either a false religion fabricated around a false Jewish Messiah named Jesus, or, maybe, there was something I was failing to understand about this widely accepted world religion.

I opened a King James Bible and began reading the book of Matthew.

What I discovered began to shatter and unravel my comfortable view of the world. On virtually every page there was something Yeshua said that challenged my life, and I needed to decide. Would I accept Yeshua as my Lord and Savior? That was the easy answer—Yes. But would I be willing to follow Him into the darkest places in the earth and possibly sacrifice everything I had gained? That answer was not so simple.

The book of Matthew uses the term "**Kingdom of Heaven**" and "**Kingdom of God**" interchangeably. The other three gospels use the term "Kingdom of God" exclusively. The Hebrew word for "heaven" is ***shamayim***, which was used by the Jewish people as a circumlocution (substitute) for the name of God. So, the Kingdom of Heaven is also a reference to the Kingdom of God—they are the same.

Yeshua had some challenging things to say about His Kingdom. First, He required repentance, proclaiming: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2 & 4:17)*. Then He began to demonstrate what He further required to qualify for the Kingdom. Yeshua called this the narrow gate and the difficult way that leads to eternal life.

Let us explore more of Jesus' challenging Kingdom principles:

1. We must seek the Kingdom of God above anything else. Yeshua said: *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*.

2. We must humble ourselves before the Lord and submit to Him. Yeshua said: *"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3)*.
3. We must do the will of our heavenly Father. Yeshua said: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)*.
4. We must put everything else in this world as secondary, even our own families, follow the Lord and become His disciple. Yeshua said: *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26)*.
5. We must be fully dedicated to the Lord and walking a straight path. Yeshua said: *"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62)*.
6. We must be willing to sell everything and invest it into His Kingdom. Yeshua said: *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44)*.

There are many other parables that Yeshua shared about the Kingdom of God. But from what I have briefly shared, you may be guessing by now that my comfortable little world was beginning to turn upside down. Everything I had labored for all these years had revolved around me. It was my career, my income, my wife, my house, and my family.

Suddenly, Yeshua's words required a radical change in my thinking. It was His Kingdom, His calling on my life, His finances, and His family. Even my very life was determined by Him and was now His possession.

I was faced with a crucial decision. Would I allow the Lord to radically change my earthly views and transform my thinking into that of the Kingdom? Or would I desperately hold onto the comfortable American life and ignore the higher call on my life?

I began to understand that there are two kingdoms—one of this world, and one *not* of this world. The prince of this world governed this kingdom. The other was governed by Yeshua, the chief Prince and the Prince of all princes. That is why He said, *"My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:6)*. But one day soon, it will.

Yeshua spoke of two things we needed to sustain our lives. We need His living bread, and we need His living water. We know that Yeshua is the word of God made flesh. And so, the word of God is our daily bread. We need to read His word and allow it to renew and radically transform our minds—continually. Yeshua also asked the Father to send His Spirit into the world. He is the water of life that heals and continues to sustain all created things—*ex nihilo*.

Being hungry or thirsty is our initial motivation, yet desire alone will not sustain us. We must act by picking up our Bibles and reading them every day. And we must spend time in worship and prayer

with the Lord so that we are refreshed every morning and renewed by His Spirit.

In contrast, there is a counterfeit to the Kingdom of God. This world has its own spirit—that of the anti-Christ—and this world also has its written ideologies. If we are not careful, it would be just as easy for us to translate these earthly views into the Kingdom of God. How many times have we done that? After all, the natural way of this world doesn't seem all that bad?

But following the ways of the world are of little use in building the Kingdom of God. The Lord said: *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9)*.

So what exactly does His Kingdom look like? Let us begin with a definition. A kingdom is a nation of people—both physical and spiritual—whose ruler is God as King. God's Kingship (*Malchut*) and His Lordship (*Adnut*) lies in the fact that He is Lord of the whole universe. So, in summary, a kingdom has a King, and His name is Yeshua, and a kingdom has a people who form a nation that serves that King. There is one more aspect to God's Kingdom—His citizenship

The sages tell us: "It is known to all that the purpose of the creation of the world is the revelation of God's sovereignty, for there is no king without a nation." That nation at the heart of God's Kingdom is Israel. But the Kingdom now encompasses all who have been grafted into Israel. Paul said: "grafted in amongst them," the natural branches who are Israelites and the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, God's church, His *ecclesia*, and congregation are now encompassing people from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue.

The kingdom belongs to the King, and its people are His domain. Therefore, the Kingdom is as much about the people of God as it is about God Himself. But this is no ordinary Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of kingdoms as it says, *"He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Revelation 17:14)*.

Many Christians misunderstand the Kingdom of Heaven. They believe it is a spiritual place that exists in some far-off location or alternate dimension. While we know there is a heavenly spiritual realm, God intends to bring heaven to earth. In other words, the spiritual and natural worlds will one day collide, and the Kingdom of Heaven will invade the earth, so the two shall become *one*.

The Lord instructed Moses concerning the building of the Tabernacle. He said: *"According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it" (Exodus 25:9)*. The Tabernacle and all its artifacts provide a copy and shadow of heavenly things. Yeshua instructed us to pray, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)*. God's Kingdom will one day be fully established in this natural realm.

To demonstrate that, Yeshua rose from the grave and was resurrected into a physical body. And He is returning with His bride—the church—to a physical earth. The prophets declared: *"Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You" (Zechariah 14:5)*, for *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is*

with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).

When Yeshua returns, He will establish His earthly Kingdom in Israel from Jerusalem for all eternity just as the Lord promised to David, *"Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16).*

My walk with the Lord these past fifteen years has been one of gradual and continual transformation. The reality of God's word has slowly become a reality in my life. I know that I am far from perfect, and admittedly, I don't understand what a life completely sold out for Yeshua would look like. What I do know is that He has a desire and purpose for my life that is much different than the life I carved out for myself, and day-by-day, He continues to open doors for me to serve Him.

I have raised my children and continue to support our household. I continue to work a regular job at a local government agency and spend as much of my available time serving the Lord. I have read the entirety of scripture many times over, and my prayer life is continually advancing. My confidence rests in His salvation and transforming power over my life. And I love to sing and worship the Lord.

My faith continues to be challenged by the cares of this world and the flaming arrows of our adversary. My flesh is weak and aging, there are things I still fear, and strongholds I continue to wrestle with. And yet, God is gracious and incredibly patient with me.

When I read scripture, I notice that Yeshua never gave His disciples an itinerary. He would often disappear—either going to a nearby mountain to pray to His heavenly Father or walking away to His next assignment. Leaving His disciples perplexed and running after Him. I feel like our present walk with the Lord is often the same. Yeshua knows that my heart desires to serve Him, and I pray yours will be the same. However, following Yeshua requires a decision that we each must make.

In 2013, the Lord gave me a dream. In it, I was riding my bike to meet up with a group of Christians. As I entered a stone building, I saw to my left a sizeable group of men and women sitting at long rectangular tables. They were talking, laughing, and having a great time of fellowship. To my right, I saw Yeshua walking quickly towards a small door that was positioned along the backside of the building. He was wearing a long reddish-purple colored robe and had a gold crown on his head.

Yeshua did not look at me or any of the other Christians. He had His eyes fixed on the door and moved quickly towards it. I said to Him in my spirit: "I also have a crown on my head. Why did you not take notice of me?" I then answered the Lord in my spirit as He gave me understanding: "The crown I am to wear is a crown of suffering."

I saw Yeshua open the door. Behind the door was complete darkness. He paused for a minute to look back and see if anyone else was standing there with Him. As there was no one, He entered in

and closed the door behind Him.

This dream represents an every-day decision the Lord gives me. I do have an opportunity to join the fellowship of Christians, and surely there is no condemnation for that. But I have also been presented a chance to follow Yeshua into the dark places. And following Him requires me to wear His crown of suffering. This is a life of sacrifice.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us become radically transformed, fully surrendered, and completely sold-out disciples of Yeshua. Paul reminded us that, *"Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:1-5)*.

" let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

John 4:10, 6:35, 7:38.

John 1:14.

Ephesians 4:23.

Ephesians 2:2.

Emek HaMelech, Shaar HaMitzvot, beginning of ch. 1; Rabbeinu Bachaye, Parshat Vayeishev, 38:2. Cf. Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer, ch. 3.

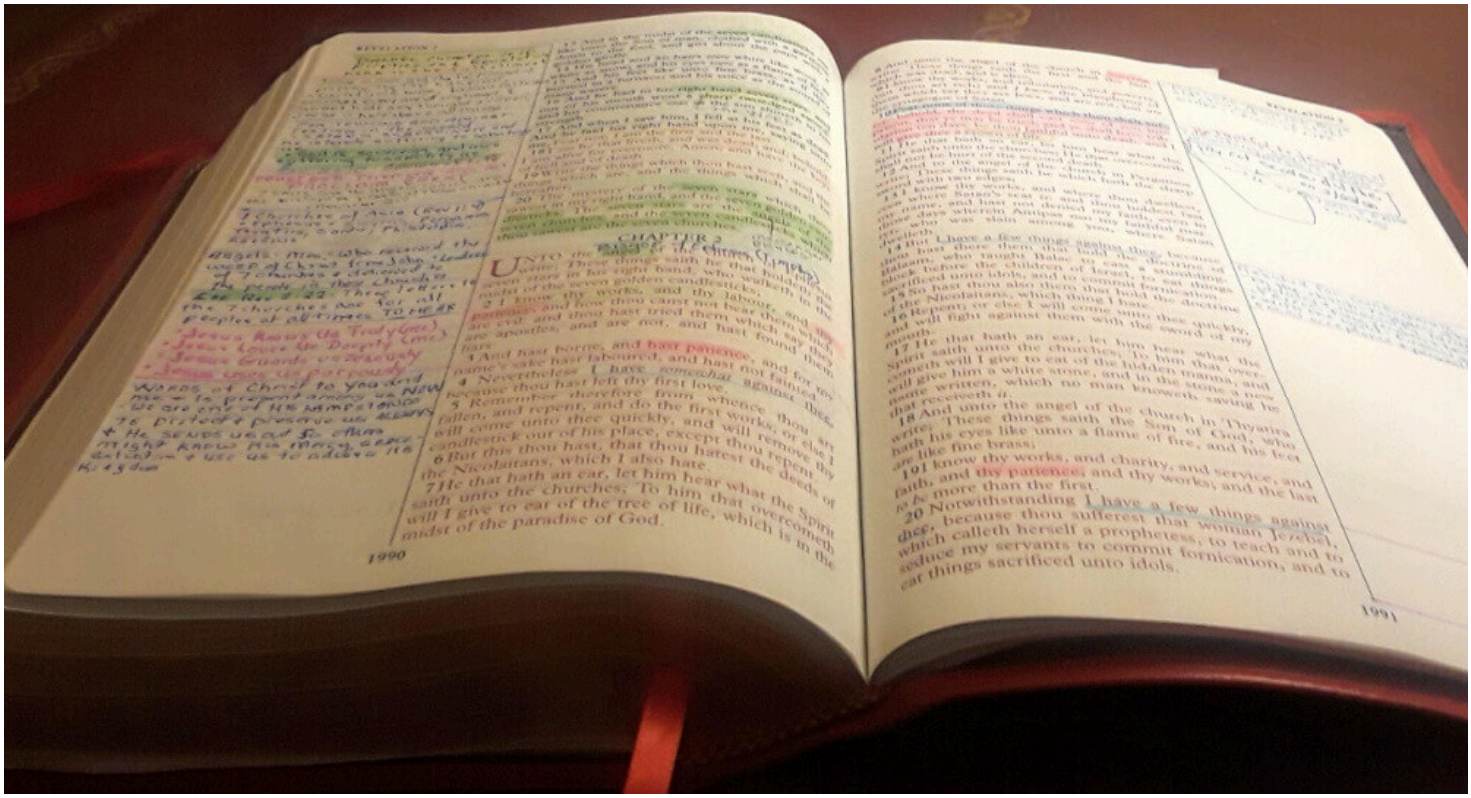
Revelation 7:9.

Hebrews 8:5.

John 20:27.

The Importance of Context in Bible Study

APRIL 14, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



> Approaching Scripture with the question, 'What did this mean to the original hearer or reader?' will get us headed in the right direction.

David G. Hansen PhD | **Associates for Biblical Research**

During my freshman year of college, a Bible professor said we should put Bible stories into context to find the excitement in them and appreciate their real meaning. I never understood what he meant and was too embarrassed to ask in front of the class…

During my freshman year of college, a Bible professor said we should put Bible stories into *context* to find the excitement in them and appreciate their real meaning. I never understood what he meant, and was too embarrassed to ask in front of the class. As the years went by, I frequently heard the same axiom, and looked for an explanation. Some sources said context meant examining a Bible passage in relationship to the verses preceding and following the ones I was reading. Others asserted context meant I should be careful not to read something into a Bible story that did not fit the perspective of the complete narrative. To say the least, these definitions, and

others I found, were not very helpful in explaining context. Therefore, as I did my Bible reading, I generally ignored context, whatever it meant.

As the years went by, I realized something was seriously wrong with my Bible study. I found it difficult to kindle excitement and, in all honesty, Bible stories and reading became boring. In an effort to make my Bible reading more satisfying, I frequently puzzled over the illusive concept of context. Finding no answer, I continued to interpret and apply Scripture based on my knowledge and life experiences, and looked for answers to puzzling questions in commentaries and books written by people who, I believed, had deeper insights than I.

Then, I went to a seminar in Israel led by a wise teacher who introduced me to his concept of context. During the few weeks I studied under this man, he challenged me to read and comprehend Bible stories as the original hearer or reader would have understood them.

What a revolutionary idea: Read the Bible as would the original recipient! Comprehending context in this manner reformed how I viewed the whole Bible. It has revitalized my excitement of Bible accounts, and led me to deeper insights of both the Old and New Testaments. Examining the Bible accounts in context has revealed meanings transcending the ones I usually read or hear.

But, be forewarned. Although I advocate applying the simple theorem context, anyone who practices this method will quickly find it takes effort. To learn what the stories meant to the original hearer or reader is difficult because we live in a different environment from those who first saw, heard or read about Jesus. We must get out of our comfortable, twenty-first century understanding of culture and life.

To really appreciate the Bible stories of Jesus, we must discover what existence was like in Bible times. To do so requires a basic understanding of Middle East geography and its sub-disciplines (geology, topography, climate, etc.), ancient history, first-century languages, economics, law, and cultural practices. It also helps to have an acquaintance with the many archaeological discoveries being reported every year that illuminate life and religious practices recorded in the Bible.

But, don't let the difficulty of exploring context dissuade you. In spite of its hurdles, I have come to the conclusion that context is crucially important for a correct understanding of what the biblical authors were telling their audiences. Before I realized the significance of context, I would have asked why everyday Christians should do such arduous research. Surely, scholarly investigation of this type is the provenance of college professors, pastors, and other academics.

Doug Greenwold,[2] a proponent for contextual sudy, gives us the following reason:

All too often in our church lifetime, we end up being given many theological and doctrinal factual ornaments, but seldom are we shown the tree upon which to hang them. It's as if we have been handed dozens of pieces to a puzzle, but have never seen what the finished picture on the top of the puzzle box looks like.

I admit, I frequently mishandled Scripture before I began to recognize the value of context in Bible study. I only saw the 'pieces' of the puzzle and tried to fit them into what I thought the top of the box should look like. Doing so resulted in making a 'picture' based on my cultural experiences. It was hurtful to the Message and harmful to students and the readers of my articles.

Bible authors, especially the New Testament writers, were literate in Old Testament history, languages, general history, etc., and expected those who read their writings to understand the setting of the stories. Most Christians will profess they have some familiarity with New Testament culture and life. But our education is usually superficial and comes from movies, television documentaries, novels, and commentaries. Even though we may believe we understand New Testament times, almost all of us will agree that the Old Testament is a little-discussed portion of Scripture to most lay people.

Now, thousands of years later, we *think* we can imagine what the Bible stories may have meant, but in fact, we have no real basis for our understanding. It is hard to put ourselves in the original hearers' sandals – those people who lived thousands of years ago. If we are brutally honest, we will admit we have limited knowledge of their climate, geology, politics, languages, history, legalisms, religions, and daily life, and as well as what archaeologists have learned about the Bible world.

A problem, it seems to me, is commentaries attempt to investigate context without explaining why they are doing it. The beautiful simplicity of my seminar teacher's explanation, that we should discover what the *original writer's* message meant or what the *original listener* heard, resolves the problem. When we don't try to get to the writer's intentions, our twenty-first century contextual understanding of subjects can and will lead us to conclusions other than those intended by the original authors.

But, you can't become a contextual scholar overnight. We're busy people, and unable to simply drop everything to become literate in Bible context. Still, I believe serious readers of the Bible – those who desire to learn what the New Testament writers really wanted their readers to know about Jesus, or understand the accounts in the Old Testament – should recognize they must investigate the environment in which the authors wrote.

Approaching Scripture with the question, 'What did this mean to the original hearer or reader?' will get us headed in the right direction. To answer the question, we need to broaden our reading and find resources that will assist us to know how people in antiquity lived and worked. My thesis is simply this: I don't believe the New Testament writers, or others before them, selected stories and accounts of Jesus so we could interpret them based on our lifestyle two thousand years later. Surely, some of those early writers would be shocked to learn how we have misconstrued what they wrote. I have found it helpful to question why, of the many things that Jesus did on Earth, did the writer select the story he did. Even John admitted, 'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written' (Jn 21:25).

In New Testament times, too much information might account for why Bible authors excluded certain stories and others did not. But, overload of information was probably not the primary reason. Consider, instead, that each of them was writing about Jesus for varied audiences and for different motives. The operative question for them was how the stories confirmed – for their specific reader – that Jesus was the Messiah, God's Son, the One who gave His life so we can be eternally reconciled with God. In other words, how did the stories affirm and explain Jesus' message of salvation?

That seminar leader years ago in Israel impressed on me how I needed to change what I read, taught, and studied in the Bible. Instead of wearing twenty-first century glasses when I read the stories, with all my Western prejudices and cultural biases, I now know that I need to go back in time to the first century, or even before. When I do so, I discover important meanings in Bible events that greatly deepen my appreciation of the totality of the Bible story, from Genesis to Revelation.

Now, when I read the Bible, I try to go back to the time of the writer. I attempt to place myself in the story, and I wonder: what would I…? By practicing context, it is my prayer you will see many well-known stories from an excitingly new point-of-view. Hopefully, each will refresh your curiosity about the Bible, and encourage you to know more of the intentions of the original writers. If you accept the challenge of seeking context, I can guarantee that you will be rewarded with faithful and accurate interpretation of the stories.

A final thought. Knowing what life was like in Bible times will not change what Jesus has done. What it will do, however, is clarify the truth of the stories of how God informed us that He was going to send the Rescuer, Jesus. God told us this using the life and times of real men and real women in the Old and New Testaments. Their stories began in Genesis and continued until after Jesus was resurrected. The Bible is a narrative of God's faithful promises. The evidence for its truth is the stories of the Bible. The goal of contextual study is to know the truthful stories as their authors, and God, intended them: as a revelation of His Son. They are not to be interpreted in the light of our contemporary culture.

SOURCE: **ASSOCIATES FOR BIBLICAL RESEARCH**

Notes

[1] Portions of this article appeared in David G. Hansen, *In Their Sandals* (Xulon, 2007).
[2] Doug Greenwold, *Zechariah & Elizabeth* (Rockville, MD: Bible-in-Context Ministries, 2004), p.73.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

APRIL 12, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, JUSTICE, RESTORATION

The World Today is Becoming More Divisive and Destructive

It should be apparent to anyone reading the news that the world is becoming more divisive. Some might argue the earth has always experienced conflict. This is probably true, but it only proves that humanity continues to go through self-destructive behavior cycles that have ultimately led to major national and international conflicts. The question is, are we in that same place today? A new survey from the Pew Research Center reveals the political polarization in the United States has reached a dangerous extreme.

One hundred fifty years earlier, during the 1850s, America had become deeply polarized over geopolitical territories. The south was pro-slavery, while the north was mainly abolitionists. However, the division was much more profound as there was plenty of racism and segregation in the north. The nation was also divided over political ideologies. The northern Republican party favored a more powerful Union that could wield even greater power at the federal level. In contrast, the predominately southern Democratic party emphasized the rights of individual states to self-govern and create and enforce their laws.

How does God want us to deal with injustice in this world?

Sadly, the American Civil War, in the end, was not fought around biblical or constitutional principles of emancipation. It was also fought over economic and political power centers, those who would control the destiny of this young nation. The Civil War broke out in 1861 when the Confederate States of America (eleven southern states) seceded from the Union following the election of President Abraham Lincoln a year earlier. The vote was labeled an act of war by some southern politicians who believed the newly elected president would send Union troops into the south to retain military control over the Union.

The end of the Civil War brought about numerous Civil Rights bills from 1866 to 1875, eventually paving the way for the historic landmark bill of 1964 and the provisions to the Post Civil War Federal Rights Acts in 1983. Some might argue that slavery had not only ended in America, but the injustice brought about by enslaving twelve million Africans had been appropriately mitigated. Not so.

The end of slavery only perpetuated the extreme level of poverty already inflicted upon our African American brothers and sisters, and the passing of these laws did not resolve the racial division in this nation between blacks and whites. Justice may have been served, but the reconciliation did not happen.

You might be wondering if I am trying to give us a history lesson on the Civil War. Not at all. I am trying to illustrate that the Civil War and the polarization that preceded it represent man's way of dealing with division. The outcome of this division left a trail of death and destruction that nearly destroyed this country. Now, I am not suggesting that conflict and even war are not necessary to resolve tyranny. However, as Christians, we need to be asking this question: How does God want us to deal with injustice in this world?

All division exists because humanity has allowed sin to separate us from God.

We need to understand that injustice is rooted in division, and all division exists because humanity has allowed sin to separate us from God.

Our separation has given root for division to sprout and flourish within God's creation. God is indivisible, and mankind, created in the image of God, was intended to walk in the Garden of Eden in perfect union with Him, with no division at all. Adam also walked in perfect harmony with Eve and co-existed in perfect harmony with the animals and the whole of creation until their fall.

Once again, the root of division, including racial division, and the origin of its resulting injustice, is attributed to man's sinful nature. We now live in a fallen world where God is concealed and separated from humanity. The result of this spiritual condition will always lead to further division,

hostility, and inevitable conflict. So, here is another question: Can a man-made solution resolve a spiritual problem? Absolutely not.

To confirm this point. God chose the nation of Israel and brought the Jewish people out of slavery from Egypt. There, in the Sinai wilderness, God gave us His perfect law. If the Law of Moses could have created an ideal society where all twelve tribes lived in blissful harmony, the New Covenant and Christ's sacrifice on the cross would not have been necessary. The prophet Jeremiah said, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, NKJV)*. The Law of Moses could not fix the heart of man. Through the indwelling presence and transforming power of His Holy Spirit, only the Lord can redeem our souls.

We will now explore several biblical passages that shed light on God's viewpoint about justice:

1. ***"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face" (Psalm 89:14).***

This verse reveals God's standard of justice and righteousness, which are mercy and truth.

2. ***"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:15).***

This verse delegates God's standard of justice and righteousness for mankind to uphold.

Like Christ, we must also be full of compassion, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in mercy and truth.

From these two passages, we can conclude that God's justice and righteousness work together as an indivisible unit that establishes a foundation for His Kingdom.

Conversely, injustice would be defined as treating or judging someone unrighteously. And because man is sinful by nature, we are also unjust and unrighteous by nature. Therefore, how can a wicked person create or establish a moral and just foundation for the Kingdom of God? We cannot. All forms of division and injustice, including slavery, racial segregation, socioeconomic division, anti-Semitism, and misogyny, are caused by man's sinful nature.

When Christ died on the cross for our sins, He not only justified us before God, He also imputed His righteousness to us. In Christ, we are now seen by God as both "just" and "righteous;" however, He does so only because God is "just" and "righteous," and Christ now dwells within us. Therefore, we, the church, should have no excuse for allowing division within God's household. This division has brought about injustice to God's people. As Christ is unified and indivisible with His Heavenly Father, the church must be the same.

Yeshua said,

> I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me (John 17:20-23).

So, here is the answer to the question we asked at the beginning: How does God want us to deal with injustice in this world? He wants us to reconcile it through the cross. The Apostle Paul said, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19)*.

Through Christ's Eyes, the Believer Understands the Root of Injustice is Man's Sinful Nature

When we view injustice through the eyes of Yeshua, we understand the root of injustice is attributed to man's sinful nature. And the solution to injustice is not more laws or more incarceration for breaking those laws. The answer to man's sinful nature is Christ's propitiation on the cross and the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit to redeem and transform our wicked souls.

If God was reconciling the world to Himself by forgiving our trespasses (meaning He was removing the division between God and man for forgiving our sin), then we should also reconcile the world to God by forgiving those who have trespassed against us? After all, we are told that God has committed to the church the word of reconciliation. It is now our ministry. Forgiveness does not condone injustice. On the contrary, our forgiveness reconciles unjust men to be reconciled to a just God who died on the cross for their transgressions. Reconciliation is God's spiritual solution to a man-made problem.

When we forgive, we also open the door for repentance. Notice the order of God's reconciliation with mankind. It is written, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)*. God did not wait for mankind to repent first so that we might be reconciled to Himself. Christ died for us while we were still sinful and unrepentant, and He forgave our sins so that we *might* repent and be reconciled back to God. It is written, *"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17)*. Therefore, we must not wait for mankind to repent for us to administer God's word of reconciliation. We are also obligated to forgive first, with the anticipated hope that our fellow man will, in turn, repent and be reconciled back to God and then to man.

Yeshua said:

> Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). And if we do not forgive, we have been warned. So, it is written, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). "Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses (Matthew 18:33-35).

Reconciliation is an Act of Forgiveness that Leads to Repentance

In summary, reconciliation is the act of forgiveness that leads to repentance. And ultimately, it leads to the removal of our sinful nature that has caused division and injustice within God's creation. Reconciliation is a process that takes time. We must forgive one person at a time, allowing that person to receive forgiveness and become healed by the Holy Spirit of any offense we have carried in our hearts.

Let me close by sharing with you a personal journey of forgiveness. Being that I am Jewish, I am sure you can appreciate the hatred I have felt towards the Nazis because of the Holocaust. There would be no rational justification to forgive them for committing such atrocities against God's chosen people.

In April 2006, the Lord gave me a dream about forgiveness. In the dream, my wife and I were walking towards a small group of people. I looked at a short, stocky German woman and asked her where I could find a Jew. She rolled up her sleeve and pointed to a swastika on her arm, saying, "I am a Nazi." Rather than getting angry, I felt compassion and sympathy for the woman. I leaned over and kissed her twice on the forehead, saying, "I forgive you."

This dream, I believe, demonstrates the Lord's desire for reconciliation, even amongst the most hateful enemies.

Therefore, I pray that we, the church, come together with indivisible unity that demonstrates God's mercy by forgiving all who have trespassed against us.

And in this demonstration of Divine unity, that we might lead men to repentance and into the Kingdom of God. Therefore, let us shine with the righteousness of Christ before God, walking in His love and obedience to His commandments, and most significantly, the commandment to be ministers of His reconciliation.

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

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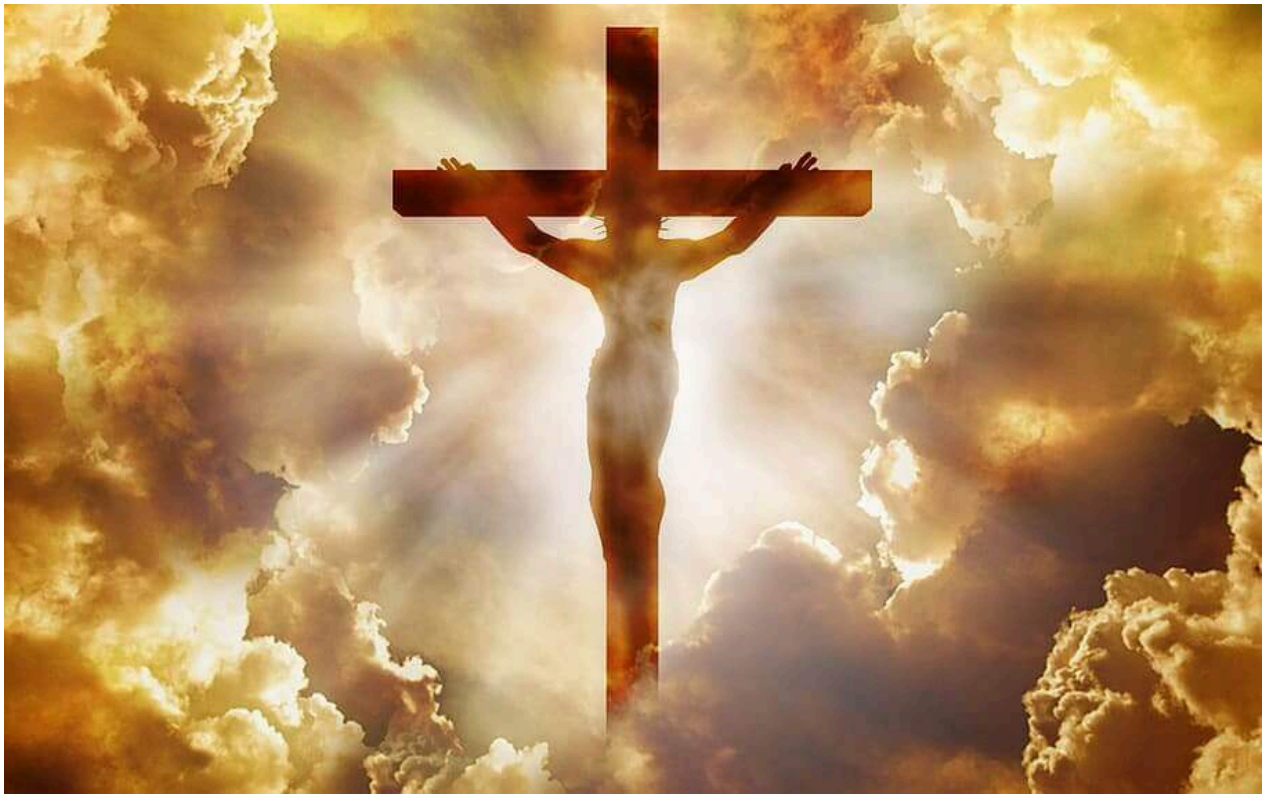
The Worst Moment in History

APRIL 8, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The John 10:10 Project

Through the resurrection of Jesus, God transformed the worst event the world has ever known into the greatest possible good – the salvation of humanity. Featuring N.T. Wright, Peter Kreeft, Greg Koukl, J.P. Moreland and Lee Strobel.

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This short film is an excerpt from the feature-length documentary the case for FAITH PRODUCED BY **LA MIRADA FILMS** AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE CHRISTIAN MOVIE SHOP.

Click here TO Purchase DVD

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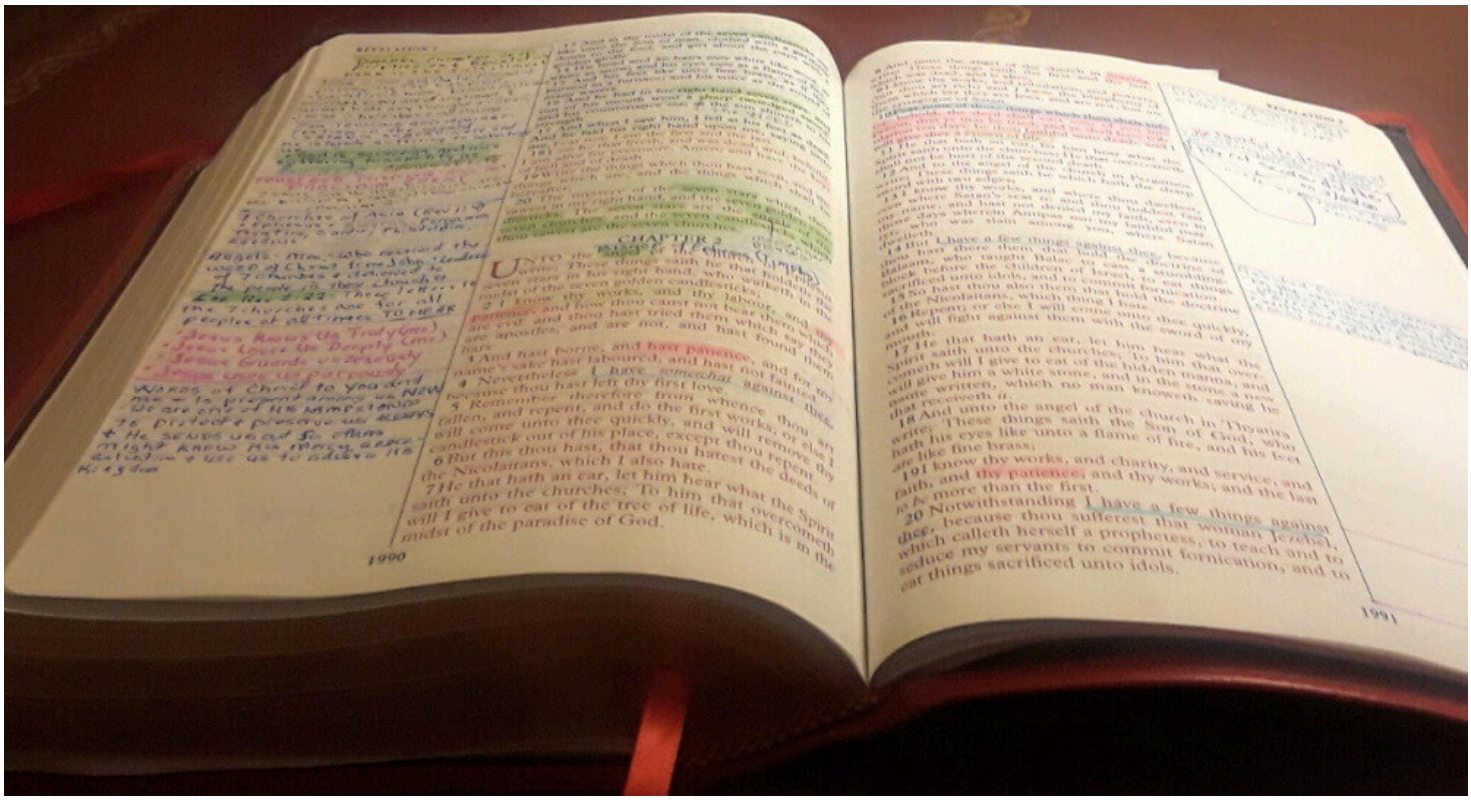
Source: **The John 10:10 Project**

‘Remarkable’: Trusted Church Leader’s Podcast Tops Charts Immediately Upon Launch

MARCH 30, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



A Christian **podcast** launched last week quickly jumped to the top of both secular and religious charts, causing its host, **Jack Hibbs**, founder and senior Pastor of **Calvary Chapel Chino Hills**, to scratch his head with amazement at God’s hand of blessing. Discussing the extraordinary success of the podcast, Hibbs told his congregation that he and his team “honestly don’t know how this happened other than God.”

After the release of their **first episode**, ministry staff notified him of the incredible numbers and ranking the podcast was experiencing on **apple’s charts**.

CONTINUE

The Word Became Flesh

MARCH 27, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

It is written, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NKJV).* This verse is one of the most popular in the New Testament, and it points to Yeshua as the Divine Messiah, God in human form, who was manifest and *revealed* to the creation. However, what exactly did the Apostle John mean when he said, "the Word became flesh?" In a general sense, the Word *is* the bible. But how does paper or parchment turn into living flesh? I believe there is more for us to understand from scripture.

The One Who Dwells

The rabbis teach us that the Word of God is referred to as the *Shechinah* (שכינה) pronounced *Shekhina* in English. The word derives from the root *Shechen* (שכן), which means to dwell. Although not written in scripture, the term is used to describe God's manifest glory or His visible presence in the creation. Interestingly, the Hebrew phrase "words of the living God" (דברי אלקים חיים), appears in

the plural form, which, in my opinion, confirms the plurality of God's nature—One God *revealed* in multiple ways.

The sages acknowledge that God occupies physical space, and factually, He exists at the center of all He created and enables their existence. Rabbinic sage Nehunya ben HaKanah said: "God is the place of the world." The sages further articulate that the part of the Divine sphere that interacts with man is the *Shechinah*. This interaction represents God in the lower spheres, which I call the natural realm. As it is written, *"It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:22)*.

The rabbis also refer to the Word of God as the "breath of His mouth" and His *Malchut* (Kingship), for they say: "the Word of a king (*Melech*—מלך) rules and a king rules his kingdom through his speech, which is his Word (*Milah*—מילה)." Therefore, we surmise, the Word of God is His *breath* and His *speech*. Both are tangible and audible and correlate with God's manifest, i.e., *revealed* presence (the *Shechinah*) within creation and His Lordship (*Malchut*) over all creation. These, again, also show the plurality of God's nature.

We now understand that the Word of God (His *Shechinah*) both dwells (*Shochen*—שוכן) and vests itself in created beings, giving them life. And we know that Yeshua is the King who presently dwells (*Shochen*) within us and will one day dwell and live amongst us, communicating and communing as the King of Kings through His speech. He is the one who holds the keys to life in His hand, and He gives life to all men.

Yeshua also gives us His peace and His rest, which is called a Sabbath, as it is written, *"For we who have believed do enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:3)*. The sages also tell us two Sabbaths are associated with each week. One being the eternity that existed before the creation. The other is the elevation of the Son of God to His throne, the Sabbath of the Messianic Kingdom. It is written, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32)*. Therefore, the *Shechinah*, Christ, is both the Sabbath and the Kingship (*Malchut*), and the Sabbath is God's presence in the world.

Additionally, the rabbis refer to the Sabbath as the bride and the lower Garden of Eden. God calls us His bride, as it is written, *"For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth" (Isaiah 54:5)*. And now, the church, the ecclesia of God, is the Bride of Christ and includes the Gentiles who have been called by His name.

The church has not replaced Israel. Instead, the nations have been grafted into Israel to become one with the Jewish people and one new man in Christ. Yeshua is the incarnate God who is one with His Heavenly Father, as He said, *"I and My Father are one" (John 10:30)*. In Christ, the wall of separation between Israel and the nations has been removed. And now one with each other, and

one with Christ and our Heavenly Father. Yeshua is our rest and our Sabbath, and we are His; as it is written, *"My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies" (Song of Solomon 2:16)*.

In Christ, through the New Covenant, the church has inherited both the physical presence of God (the Shechinah) and His written Word (spoken to Moses and the prophets). These now dwell within our hearts and minds. As the Lord said, *"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33)*. In Jewish understanding, the heart and mind are the same. Therefore, the fullness of God now lives within us, as Yeshua declared, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We (plural) will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23)*.

God's written Word and Yeshua, His living Word made flesh and revealed to the creation, are inseparable. Therefore, Yeshua and the *Shechinah* must be *one*, wholly united within themselves. One does not annul the other, nor did God's Word vanish when Yeshua came to the earth. On the contrary, God's written Word came to life. Hence we read, the "Word became flesh."

The Shechinah and Prophesy

There is a mysterious correlation between the *Shechinah*, the Holy Spirit, and God's Divine Light or glory (*Kavod*). Of course, they are not necessarily the same. Yet all of them signify some form of Divine immanence, and both the *Shechinah* and Holy Spirit are commonly associated with prophecy.

Our Sages, of blessed memory, said that: "The *Shechinah* spoke from the throat of Moses." They believed that Moses was so translucent because of his utmost humility towards God that when he prophesied, he did not just relay God's message; instead, the *Shechinah* spoke directly through his mouth.

We also see with the prophets and those possessed of the Holy Spirit that it was the supernal voice and speech of God that vested itself in their actual voice and speech. So it is written, *"The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2)*. Paul affirmed this when he said, *"The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers" (Acts 28:25)*. And we see this happening on the Day of Pentecost, as it is written, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4)*.

The Law and the Prophets

God communicated His Law and instruction (which is called the *Torah*) through Moses to Israel, revealing His knowledge and wisdom. The Psalmist declared, *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul…" (Psalm 19:7)*. If God's Law were so perfect, why could Israel not receive God's salvation by obeying the Law?

We know from Jeremiah that *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked…" (Jeremiah 17:9)*. So again, from Isaiah, we read, *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6)*. And Paul said, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*.

God has laid our iniquity on Christ. Thus, it is written, *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21)*. God did not just take away our sins. He became our sin. And this was a debt we could *never* repay.

When the Lord spoke through His holy prophets, what did the *Shechinah* communicate? The Lord told of a mysterious one who was to come and deliver Israel, and ultimately, all humanity from the curse of the Law—the law of sin and death. Israel had brought this curse of the Law upon itself because of her iniquity and their fallen, corrupt nature. We are also incapable of converting our souls through the works of the Law.

But this mysterious one, the Christ, would reveal God's heart of love and mercy towards humanity, demonstrating His ultimate plan to restore us to the heart of the Law itself—the law of love, compassion, and kindness. So it is written, *"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17)*.

There is no problem with God's Law. The issue has continuously resided with us; imperfect and fallen men and women birthed in iniquity. It would take the shed blood of Christ and the breath of God to make us a new creation in Him, for it is written, *"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22-23)*.

The Law of Moses (the *Torah*) came with the curse of the Law for those who broke it. And yet, in Jewish tradition, the *Torah* is correlated with the right hand of God, which is His attribute of kindness (*Chesed*). Thus, it is written, *"Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand…" (Psalm 17:7)*. Therefore, with its limited priesthood and temporary covering for sin through the shedding of animal blood, the Torah effectively demonstrated God's grace and mercy towards Israel. Still, we know the Mosaic covenant was temporary, as it is written, *"Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant" (Hebrews 7:22)*.

Living Water

The rabbis have compared the *Torah* to water. Just as water descends from a higher level to a lower level, so has the knowledge and wisdom of God been brought down to ours. Using this analogy of water (emphasis added), the rabbis tell us: "From there the Torah has journeyed in a descent through hidden stages, stage after stage, in the chain-like order of interconnected spiritual

'Worlds,' until it clothed itself in material matters and things of this corporeal world, which comprise nearly all the *Torah's* commandments and their laws."

Wow! The rabbis prophetically declared, "until the Torah clothed itself in material matters." That sounds like the Word of God becoming flesh.

Yeshua certainly understood these prophetic teachings of the rabbis when He said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38)*. I believe it is an inescapable conclusion that Yeshua is the *Torah* made flesh. He is the living water, which is the wisdom, knowledge, and most importantly, the heart of God who has come down to our level and become manifest to us as both His *Shechinah* (His Divine presence) and His *Malchut* (His Divine Kingship). Alas, the Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

The Bread of Life

Yeshua also referred to Himself as the bread of life. It is written, *"For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33)*. Water is a primary ingredient in making bread. Yeshua combined these two elements when He said, *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35)*. Once again, the Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

These verses from Yeshua affirm that we need both bread and water to survive spiritually—bread, which is analogous to the written Word of God, and water which is comparable to the Holy Spirit. Combining these gives us the fullness of God's written Word, which now comes to life by the revelation and instruction of the Holy Spirit. It also comes to life in the person of Yeshua, the fullness of God's written Word and Spirit revealed to humanity. Yeshua is both the dwelling and indwelling presence of the *Shechinah*. The Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

Christ—The Embodiment of the Law

Everything concerning the Law and the prophets was and is to be fulfilled in Christ, for it is written, *"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44)*. Yeshua said, *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18)*.

Therefore, all of scripture points to Christ, who is not only the one who would exclusively fulfill the commandments and ordinances of the Law but is the one who solely *is* the embodiment of the Law

itself. Thus, the Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

The Infinite Light

The rabbis refer to God, the Holy One, blessed be He, as the Infinite Light (the *Ein Sof*). The Hebrew word *Baruch* (blessed— ברוך), also means to descend and be revealed. God's greatness can never be fathomed, and no thought can apprehend Him at all. God's will and His wisdom are infinite and unfathomable, as it is written, *"Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). "His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28)*.

Therefore, human thought is incapable of grasping Divine thought. How, then, can the rabbis say that in understanding the *Torah*, that man can comprehend God's wisdom? They explain that *"God compressed and lowered His wisdom, clothing it in the physical terms and objects of Torah and its commandments, so that it might be accessible to human intelligence, in order that man may thereby be united with God."* Thus, the Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

Revelation Out of Concealment

The Divine light in scripture signifies revelation out of concealment. The light (which is truth) that was previously concealed within its luminary source is now drawn from its source and revealed as light (truth). Thus, it is written, *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life…'" (John 14:6)*. And the Apostle John declared, *"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)*.

When God's concealed light is in a state of revelation, it is called an utterance. They also refer to it as the "Word and the breath of His mouth." Therefore, we conclude that Divine speech utters and reveals that which was previously concealed. As it is written, *"And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:22)*. Paul said (uttered), *"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32)*.

This descent of God in bodily form is the purpose of the *Shechinah* to reveal to the world the light, which is higher than the world. Therefore, the *Shechinah* was and is the level from which life and vitality are drawn down and revealed to all God's creation. God's revelation is for giving life to His created beings. Hence, the Words of the *Torah* became flesh.

Chanukah—The Festival of Light

In December, Jewish people all around the world will celebrate Chanukah, the festival of light. In Jewish tradition, the festival is as much a savoring of the darkness as it is a celebration of the light. Rabbi David Seidenberg said: "No one sits in front of the menorah thinking, 'I can't wait for these candles to grow so bright that there's no more darkness.' On the contrary, darkness is the condition that makes the candles beautiful and sweet."

Darkness was necessary so that God's light would be revealed, for it is written, *"Clouds and darkness surround Him" (Psalm 97:2)*. However, God's ultimate purpose is not just to show His light (His *Shechinah*), but ultimately to entirely dispel the darkness in this world, replacing it with His light (Who is the Resurrected Christ and the Word of God, the *Torah* made flesh). For it is written, "*The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light" (Revelation 21:23)*.

Hebrew—The Holy Tongue

The Holy Tongue, the Hebrew of the *Torah*, was the language used in creation. And so, all created things are directly affected by their Hebrew names. It is the *Shechinah* that emanates the power of God's speech to utter the Words of *Torah* into creation, as it is written, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*. This verse is a direct reference to Christ. The rabbis teach us that the heavens were made by the Word of God and all their hosts by the breath of His mouth.

It is written, *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7)*. For this reason, the *Shechinah* is called our *Nefesh* (Soul) and our heart. We can, therefore, conclude that it was the *Shechinah* that Divinely spoke creation into existence and breathed life into Adam.

If Yeshua, the last Adam, is the *Shechinah* of God revealed in human form, we can conclude that it is the *Shechinah* dwelling within that brings us life. And how does Yeshua bring us life? He does so through His Word, which now comes to life in the Holy Spirit that was sent from our Heavenly Father, as it is written, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26)*.

Written on our Minds and Hearts

If the Word of God has come to life in us, then what things will the Holy Spirit teach? Primarily, it will be God's Law, for it is written, *"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts…" (Jeremiah 31:33)*. And what does God's Law look like when it is written on our hearts and minds? Most significantly, it becomes the full manifest expression of love, for God is love. So Yeshua said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments… He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:15-21)*.

We can now begin to understand the *oneness* and *unity* of God. His written Word is not just a narration of His knowledge and wisdom or a casual description of His perfect nature. God's Word brings us life because of the truth it communicates to our hearts and minds. God's Word *is* life, and it becomes life for all who drink from it, meaning obey and follow it. If God dwells with and within us but does not speak, then His presence cannot bring revelation (which is truth) to illuminate our minds, and His Kingship has no authority over us. Without God's voice, how are we to be renewed in the spirit of our minds? How can God's Law and nature be written on our hearts? It cannot.

From the moment we accept Yeshua (whose name means salvation) until we go to Him, our walk with the Lord is a lifelong journey of learning and transformation—countless salvation moments. As it is written, *"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 2:15)*.

Yeshua said, *"Do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12)*. The fact that we can presently be with Christ and hear from the one who dwells within us should bring an even greater fullness to our friendship with God.

Closing

One day soon, Christ Yeshua, the *Shechinah*, our Lord and Savior, and our King will not only dwell within us, but He will also dwell amongst us for all eternity. Yes, the Word of God, the Words of the *Torah* made flesh, will live with us forever.

At that time, the *Shechinah*, who the rabbis associated with the Tabernacle of David, will be restored, for it is written, *"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11)*. For, *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3)*.

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

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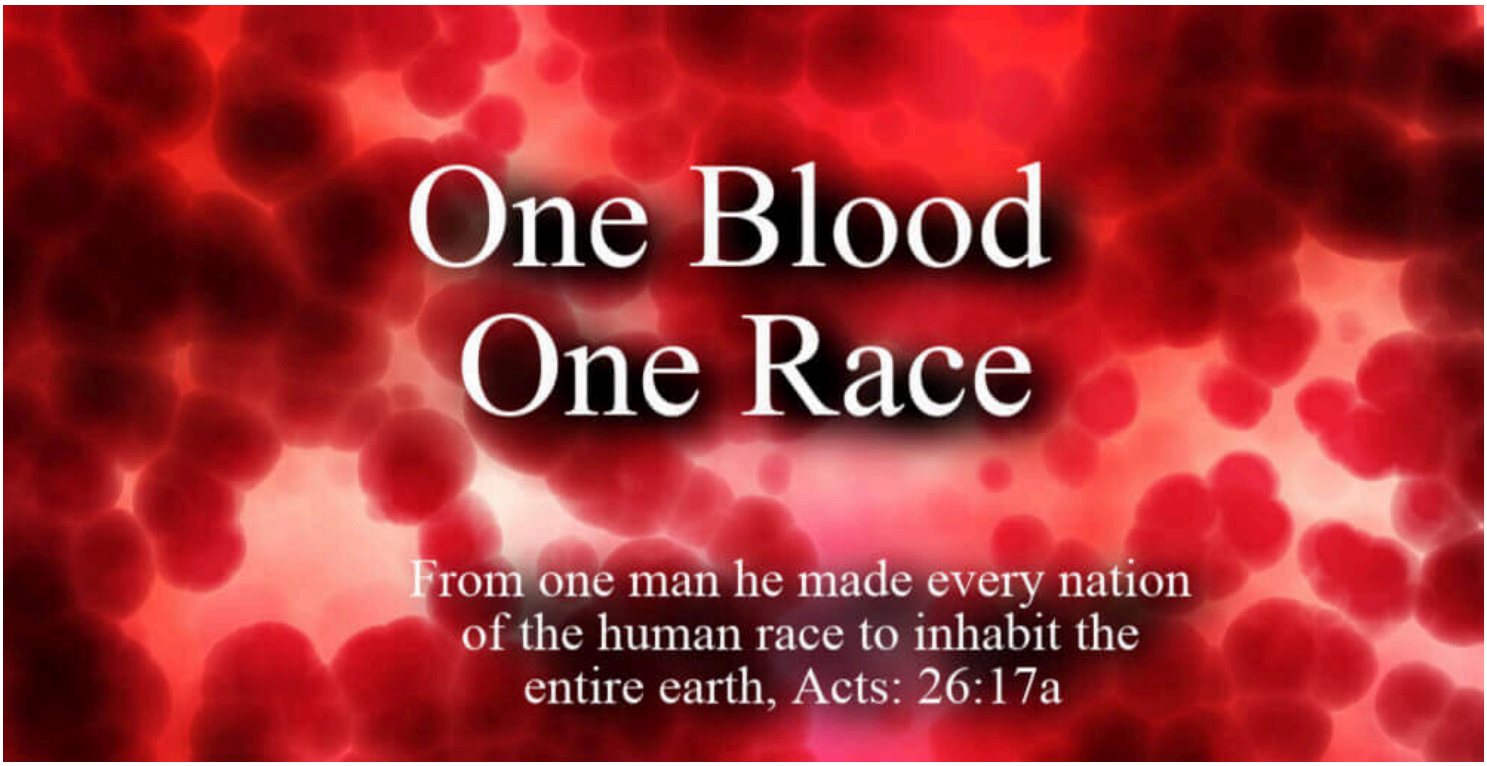
The Daily Skirmish – The Doctor Will See You Now If You're Not White

MARCH 14, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Jussie Smollett was sentenced to 150 days in jail and fined $25,000 for lying to police about his **hate hoax**. Smollett, who is black and gay, claimed two men attacked him on the street in the middle of the night, poured a chemical on him, tied a rope around his neck, and shouted "**MAGA country**" at him. The yarn was never believable from the beginning, and justice has been served.

Hate hoaxes are just one of the absurdities that have arisen from the Left's phony and poisonous diversity narrative. Another is the new 21st century sin of cultural appropriation.

In the latest transgression of new cultural norms, Crazy Rich Asians Star Awkwafina was **trounced** on Twitter for speaking like black people and stealing their culture. Cultural appropriation is a dangerous game, though. Computers and cell phones were invented by white people, so does that mean only whites can use Twitter and everyone else should get off? That would be absurd, right? But if we're going to hold everyone to the new rules, the publisher of Dr. Seuss should not be allowed to **issue** a new series written by nonwhites, because the original author was white. How dare nonwhites appropriate the achievements of white people? White people should not stop at red lights because the traffic light was invented by a black man. See how absurd this is getting?

You can twist yourself into a pretzel with this stuff, as the AMA recently did. The AMA is **telling** doctors to stop referring to patients as 'minorities' – they are now "historically marginalized". How does that apply to their Asian patients who, on average, have the highest incomes in the country? This is not just an amusing story. Racial centralism in medicine can have life-and-death consequences. A Phoenix man was **denied** monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID because he marked his race as white on the paperwork. He's really Hispanic, but saying he's white caused the hospital to stop the treatment just as the IV entered his arm because, they told him, he wasn't 'high-risk' enough. He got quite ill over the next four days, coughing up blood. But that doesn't matter to the new modern medicine which labors under the absurdities that risk of illness is determined by skin color and sick people don't deserve treatment today because we have to compensate for what happened to "historically marginalized" people in the past.

This kind of thinking first came up in affirmative action which, at the beginning, was called "compensatory equal protection", an absurd oxymoron. Something can be 'compensatory' or 'equal', but it can't be both at the same time. To believe such a fantastical proposition is to twist yourself into a pretzel and invite confusion. Besides, it's really quite a dangerous game when you start treating people differently based on the color of their skin. Didn't we go through a whole civil rights movement to get rid of that kind of thing? Are you sure that's the road you want to go down?

Which brings us to the great civil rights struggle of our time.

- Is it preventing blacks from getting lynched? No.
- Is it getting the governor out of the schoolhouse door? No.
- Is it making sure blacks can sit at the lunch counter? No, …It's making sure your students don't bring **Valentine's Day cards** that depict white people to class.

The racial centralists among us are getting more vicious and more absurd by the day. The hills they choose to die on are nothing more than molehills, at this point.

There is another way, the road not taken.

The road we're on is a dead end – we've gotten everything constructive out of civil rights thinking we possibly can.

Civil rights thinking has moved away from simple justice in individual cases of discrimination to special rights for certain groups at the expense of others. The departures started with affirmative action and are now culminating with the haranguing of everyone with 24/7 in-your-face antiracism today. These departures are increasingly poisonous and counterproductive.

It's time now to take the road not taken, the road to self-reliance and economic self-sufficiency Booker T. Washington mapped out for blacks. As he wrote, it is the road to financial independence

and, eventually, political independence for blacks. It is also the road to what I wish most for minorities currently trapped in the Left's phony diversity narrative and identity politics grievance groups – emotional independence. Obsessing about race is a dead end; it's a prison of your own making. May you be free and emotionally independent from the race hustlers who have set themselves up as your overseers. And may you also be free of the childish need to look to white people for approval. I've seen this many times. Stop 'Waiting for Whitey.' You don't need anybody's approval to get on with your life. You are free. What I wish most for you is that you feel it to the marrow of your bones.

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Incredible Compilation of Ukrainian Christians Turning to God, Praying Psalm 31 From Bomb Shelters Amid Deadly Uncertainty

MARCH 4, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, RUSSIA, UKRAINE

FAITHWIRE

Ukrainian Christians continue to turn to their faith amid Russia's brutal onslaught, as the violent military assault increasingly claims lives and property.

As uncertainty persists, many openly pray and worship, seeking God to calm and ease their pain. Throughout the ordeal, Psalm 31 has taken on special meaning in the hearts of Ukrainians.

Anatoliy Raychynets of the Ukrainian Bible Society is among those who have prayed Psalm 31, and he has spoken about the new lens through which he sees these ancient Scriptures.

"For me, as a pastor, that Psalm … well, I read it differently now because it's about our current situation in Ukraine," Raychynets recently **said**. "This ancient prayer — written several thousand years ago — now we see is so alive, is living."

READ MORE and SEE POWERFUL VIDEO

County Commissioner resigns after pressure from MassResistance parents over obscene library books.

FEBRUARY 9, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

> If any Virginians are doing the same as this story, **please reach out to us!** Virginia citizens and parents can make a difference in their schools and public libraries. When looking at education sources it is like looking at an iceberg. You see what is above the water, but the real content is underneath?
>
> **What books lie within your child's reach?**
> **or worse: what books will be given to your child without your knowledge?**

From **Mass Resistance** comes this wonderful success story and pulling down strongholds and protecting children from porn!

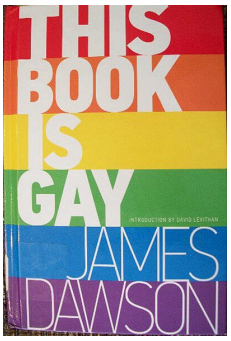
Wyoming County Commissioner was the strong man:

- He had compared local parents to Nazis. Railed about parents' "ignorance and hate."

- An arrogant pro-LGBT liberal who got elected in a conservative area.
- A new pro-family Commissioner has been voted in to take his place!

When it comes to arrogant anti-family public officials, parents don't have to just sit and take it. But they have to be willing to take a very strong stand and be persistent.

Like most areas in Wyoming, Campbell County is quite conservative. But unfortunately, liberals and RINOs have been elected to key positions. Last summer, local MassResistance parents began **complaining to their County Commission** about the **pornographic and obscene LGBT books** for children and teenagers appearing in the public library. Some of the graphic homosexual books for young teenagers are sickening even for adults.



This Book is Gay
by James Dawson
In library's Teen section

SUMMARY: This book is pornographic and truly obscene. All forms of "gay" and "lesbian" sexual practices and perversions are endorsed and celebrated with graphic instructions for teenagers. It promotes medically unsafe behaviors and perversions and is filled with false information.

Read sample pages here. (CAUTION: obscene material.)

The Library Board, which the County Commission controls, is run by leftists. But the five-member County Commission was stacked 3-2 against doing anything to challenge the Board.

A particularly hostile Commissioner

One County Commissioner, Daniel G. Reardon, was particularly hostile to the idea of shielding children from obscenity and LGBT pornography.

On July 13, Reardon sent an email to a constituent smearing the parents who had objected to a "transgender" performing for young children at the library. He wrote, **"It is a sad state of affairs where we regress back to the Matthew Shepard days because of ignorance of hate."** When this became public, parents were livid.

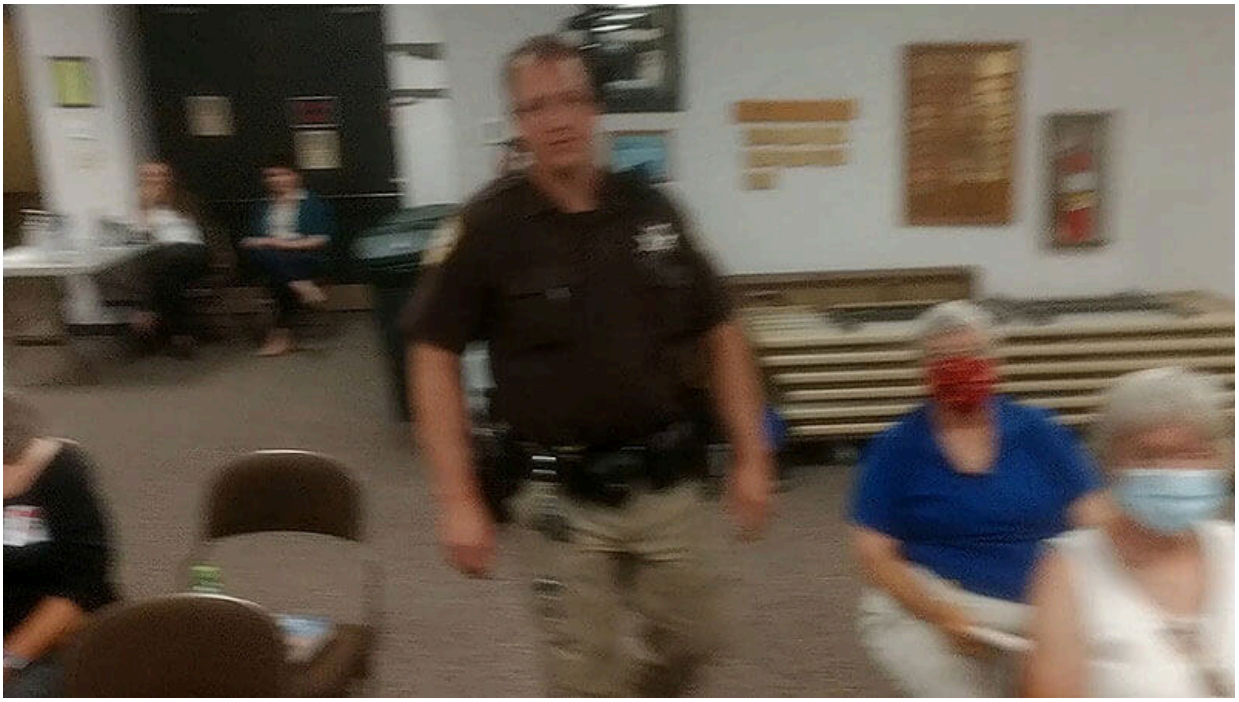
Then on August 12 during a County Commission meeting, Reardon suddenly launched into an angry rant against the parents in the room.

He started out by defending library staff and their bureaucratic "processes that are in place" for selecting the books and allowing for parents to fill out forms to "challenge" books. He said that the Commission's job is to *support* the Library Board.

He went on to say that "censoring" LGBT books (i.e., homosexual pornography) was equivalent to censoring books on guns, the military, blacks, or religions other than Christianity.

Then he really went off the rails. It's the *parents* who are not doing their jobs, he said. It's the *parents'* fault for not supervising what their children are reading in the library. He said that parents need to **"stop talking about censoring, taking books out, burning books, and going back to the days of the Nazis."**

An audience member angrily yelled back at Reardon that he was lying about the parents. Reardon had a Sheriff's officer escort the man out of the room. He then looked right at the parents and scolded them, "Don't tell us we're not doing our job. We *are* doing our job."



After the audience member yelled back at Reardon, the sheriff's deputy immediately came to eject him from the room.

Parents fight back!

Reardon clearly intended to intimidate and silence the Wyoming MassResistance parents. But his tirade had the opposite effect.

Our activists made sure that the community heard about Reardon's offensive remarks. They got the message out on social media.

They leafletted the community:

They continued to come to every County Commission meeting and Library Board meeting to demand that the local children be protected from the library staff's promotion of obscenity and pornography. Though the Commission's 3-2 majority refused to do the right thing, they were clearly being worn down.

In October they voted to ban all public comment to keep the parents from being able to complain at the Commission meetings. Of course, this just riled the parents up even more.

Reardon announces his resignation

On January 5, 2022, without prior notice, Reardon delivered **a letter of resignation** to the Campbell County Commission.

His "official" reason was that he had moved to another community (Cheyenne). However, **as he told the local newspaper**, his family had moved to Cheyenne some time earlier, and he had rented an apartment in Campbell County and was spending more than half of his time there. (It's not required to live in the County to serve on the County Commission.) He also cited his fear of COVID, though did not elaborate. Reardon said that he had "intended to serve his full term" through 2022, but changed his mind and decided to resign now.

This came just weeks after the Library Board Chairman had also suddenly announced her resignation, although she will continue to serve as a regular Board member.

A new pro-family Commissioner gets voted in!

Since Reardon was technically a Republican (though an insufferable RINO), the process for replacing him was for the local Republican Central Committee to nominate three people, and the Commissioners would vote to accept one of them.

The Commissioners apparently got the message from the outraged parents. At the Jan. 27 Commission meeting, they selected Don Hamm as the new Commissioner. According to the parents who met with the candidates, Hamm was right on their wavelength regarding the library problems.

Don Hamm (center) is congratulated after becoming the new County Commissioner.

To start with, the parents are now expecting the Commission to repeal the offensive ban on public comment, when one of the family-friendly Commissioners also becomes the new Chairman this month. And there's talk of even bigger changes.

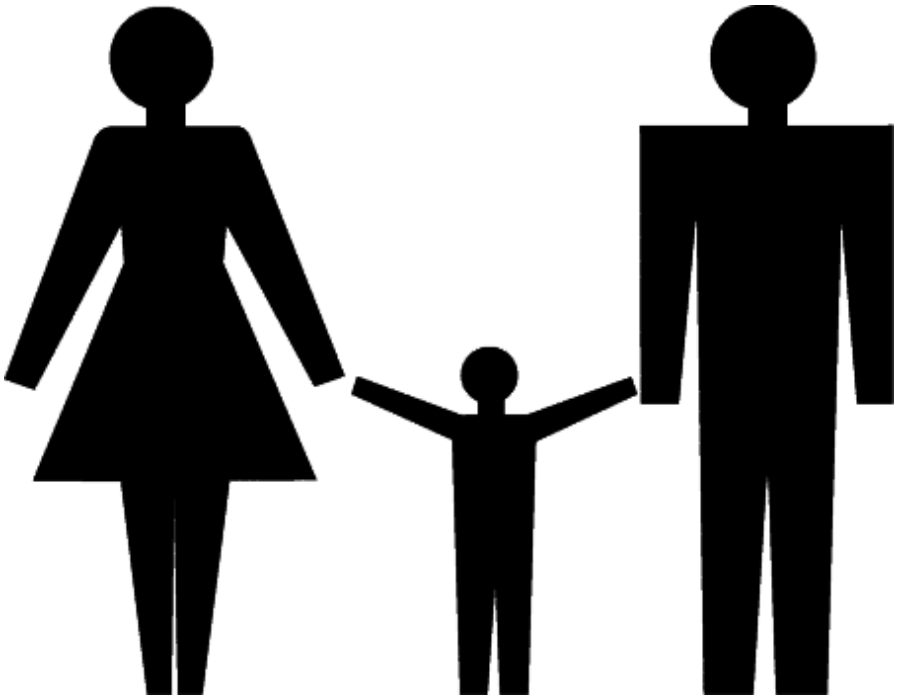
Final thoughts

We may sound like a broken record, but we'll say it again: These people running our libraries and the politicians who support them have neither morals nor conscience. They know what they're doing to children and are proud of it. Too many conservatives more interested in appearing reasonable and polite than standing up for the truth. But this gains them nothing. The best way: *Be resolute and don't give up.*

SOURCE: **MASS RESISTANCE**

Diverse group of VA parents join to protect their children from radical ideology

FEBRUARY 9, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CRITICAL RACE THEORY, CRT, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, INDOCTRINATION



C.I. v. Albemarle County School Board

Description: A group of religiously and ethnically diverse parents and their children are suing the Albemarle County School Board for enacting discriminatory policies and indoctrinating students in radical ideology. In 2019, the school board enacted a policy that violates students' civil rights by treating them differently based on race, and by compelling them to affirm and support ideas contrary to their deeply held moral, philosophical, and religious beliefs.

ASHBURN, Va. – Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing an ethnically and religiously diverse group of nine parents and their children filed a **motion** Friday asking the court to halt Albemarle County School Board's enforcement of its discriminatory policy and indoctrination of students in radical ideology. ADF attorneys filed the **lawsuit**, *C.I. v. Albemarle County School Board*, in December.

In 2019, the school board enacted a policy based in critical race theory, a radical ideology that requires students and teachers to view everything and everybody through the lens of race. The policy violates students' civil rights by treating them differently based on race and by compelling them to affirm and support ideas contrary to their deeply held moral and religious beliefs. The school district goes so far as to declare that every core subject must include teaching through its

new ideological lens that emphasizes racial and religious stereotypes. It then squelches debate on the issue by mislabeling any opinion not aligned with its radical ideology as "racist" and threatens to punish dissent based on its redefinition of "racism."

> "Parents have the fundamental right to know what their kids are being taught in public schools and to express their dissent when policies and curriculum are compelling their kids to accept harmful ideologies," said ADF Senior Counsel Kate Anderson, director of the ADF Center for Parental Rights.

"Public schools should never promote race-based division among kids, but that is exactly what Albemarle County is doing. The school board's so-called 'Anti-Racism' policy is in fact teaching children *how to be* racist—it mandates treating one another differently based on one's race. The ethnically and religiously diverse group of parents and students we represent are asking the court to halt the discriminatory policy and stop the school board from further violating their children's constitutional rights."

The motion filed in the Albemarle County Circuit Court asks the school board to "refrain from implementing, enforcing, or engaging in policies, practices, and conduct that…

1. inculcate racial stereotypes and treat students differently based on race;
2. demean, punish, and threaten to punish students for articulating viewpoints that differ or dissent from the ideology imposed by the policy;
3. require students to adopt and affirm the ideology imposed by the Policy, including racially discriminatory views;
4. inculcate religious stereotypes and treat students differently based on religion; or
5. are hostile to religious beliefs."

Alliance Defending Freedom is an alliance-building, non-profit legal organization committed to protecting religious freedom, free speech, parental rights, and the sanctity of life.

SOURCE: **ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM**

Christian Community: Then and Now

JANUARY 20, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

What Does Christian Community Today Look Like Compared to The Early Christian Church

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

I hear a lot these days about what our Christian Community should look like. The book of Acts is often cited as the Biblical model of what the early Christian church resembled. It is written,

> "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 2:43-45 NKJV).

Now, this would have been a Christian community to behold. The church members prayed, took communion, and studied the word of God together as one family.

The church walked in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, and miraculous healings, and the church members shared their material and financial resources with each other so that each

could fulfill their God-given calling. Thus, the narrative in the book of Acts continues:

> "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

The early church was truly reflecting God's light in the world, and people took notice. And the church offered something the world could never provide, and for this reason, many gave their lives to the Lord. I believe people today are also desperately searching for something more from this world, and that something is the love of God.

Yeshua gave the church His model for the Christian community when He said,

> "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23). "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Paul said it like this, *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3)*.

The first-century church operated in the residual outpouring of the Holy Spirit that fell on the Day of Pentecost. But what did the church look like one hundred years later?

There is an epistle from the second-century church called The Manner of Christians. It describes what the Christian community looked like as the church grew and expanded throughout the Roman empire. We read in part:

> *"For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity."*
>
> *"The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines."*
>
> *"But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of*

their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life."

"They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers."

"They marry, as do all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven."

"They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all."

"They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified."

"They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers."

"When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred."

I believe the narrative speaks for itself, but I want to highlight a few points.

First, there was something unique about these Christian men and women that set them apart from the world they lived in.

Second, they were ordinary people, yet they were seen as above reproach in their conduct and mannerism. It reminds me of what the Lord said to Abraham, *"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1)*.

Third, their allegiance was clearly to the Kingdom of Heaven. Still, they did not despise, nor were they persuaded by this earthly realm and its fallen condition. And fourth, lastly, persecution was expected.

Tertullian, an early Christian author, gives us another picture of the Christian community in his second-century writing called The Apology. It reads in part:

"We are a body knit together as such by a common religious profession, by unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common hope. We meet together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. This violence

God delights in. We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation."

"We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our confidence more steadfast; and no less by inculcations of God's precepts we confirm good habits."

"In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered. For with a great gravity is the work of judging carried on among us, as befits those who feel assured that they are in the sight of God; and you have the most notable example of judgment to come when any one has sinned so grievously as to require his severance from us in prayer, in the congregation and in all sacred intercourse. The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honor not by purchase, but by established character."

"There is no buying and selling of any sort in the things of God. Though we have our treasure chest, it is not made up of purchase-money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund."

"For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession."

"But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner put to death."

After reading these two epistles from the early church, we can see a difference from the Christianity of our modern Western culture. Are we ordinary people who seek first the Kingdom of God? Or are we comfortable, complacent, and isolated from the world around us, thinking of ourselves more highly than our neighbor because we are assured of our salvation or have attained a certain level of financial prosperity?

Has Western Christianity been focused on building a Biblical Christian community, or have we become preoccupied with fulfilling our selfish ambitions and personal gains? And, has the Western church been more attentive to informing people about Christ rather than introducing them to Him?

I believe we have, maybe unintentionally, implemented a Greek model for knowledge-based instruction rather than the Hebraic model designed to impart skills for serving God. The Greek

model says, “To each his own.” The Hebrew model says, “Love one another and deny thyself.”

The Greek model says, “believe in Jesus, who you have just learned about.” The Hebrew model says “know your Savior who knows you and loves you,” for it is written, *“Now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1)*.

We know from scripture that God is not looking for people to know about Him. God is looking for people to *know* Him, and knowing Him requires us to encounter His love and then model His character and imitate His behavior. This characteristic is developed through discipleship—which again is a Hebrew model. It is written, *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8)*.

God’s standard for our Christian community is love, and love is never about the self but always about serving and giving selflessly. As it is written, *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up” (1 Corinthians 13:4)*. From this verse, it is evident that pride is the greatest obstacle to the church of receiving and displaying the love of God.

Many in the church are crying for revival to break out in the world. They are asking God to fix the lost and save our nation. I am not. Instead, I am praying for an awakening in the church to the love of Christ because only then will the church display the manner of Christlikeness the world is desperately seeking. When the world sees Christ in us, the lost will be saved. And when the lost get saved, then maybe God will use these men and women to transform our nation.

Yeshua said, *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 15:8). “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32)*. And how are we to lift up Christ? By loving each other as He has loved us.

Yes, we are called to worship and praise the Lord. But in moving away from the individualistic and self-focused western model, where I become my own Temple, we need to surrender to the Hebrew model that teaches us that we are a community of believers and the family of God who collectively are the Temple. Family members love each other unconditionally, despite our differences and petty disagreements.

Paul said, *“Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building… Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:8-16)*. Notice the plurality. The workers labor as one unit, and the field comprises many plants that make one crop.

Additionally, the Temple itself was assembled from many uniquely carved stones. It is written, *“Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief*

cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22). Here again, Paul spoke about the Christian community being the house and Temple of God, and not the individual church members living in their own home.

In Judaism, it is prohibited for a Jew to enter a church, even to attend a friend's wedding or funeral. Why? The rabbis say that "Because Judaism sees faith and worship as something very powerful and palpable. You cannot enter a church without some aspect of the church's religious experience entering you. To argue that a church is nothing more than a building is to trivialize the potent atmosphere of a house of worship." If the Jewish people hold such high regard for church buildings, how much more should they revere and esteem the earthly vessels that collectively house the manifest presence of God Himself? We, the church, are that Temple and community of the living God.

It is difficult to preach that tribulation is the only thing required to bring about humility within God's people. Nevertheless, I believe we can choose to humble ourselves, for it is written, *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves…" (2 Chronicles 7:14)*. The church in America is in desperate need of such repentance and humbling. We need to implement a restored Hebraic model that does not exclusively focus on the Greek method of educating God's people but disciple the church in Godly instruction necessary to live peacefully and lovingly in a community of believers. What I call "Christian community." Even more so, we need the love of God to Divinely unite the church through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, let us pay, *"When the as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when lifted up voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and the Lord, saying: For He is good, For His mercy endures forever, the house, the of the Lord, filled with a cloud" (2 Chronicles 5:13)*.

Christianity is all about us, the church, becoming a community of God's people, joining together in prayer, bible study, communion, evangelism, and just about every facet of daily life, including the obligation to care for widows, orphans, and the poor amongst us.

In the words of John Fenn from Church Without Walls International, he said, "See what I see, many small churches and ministries investing in relationships, walking in love, pouring their lives into each other; this is where the Spirit is moving today. There is a revolution taking place in my body, a revolution of relationships, discipleship, and love. This will affect whole communities and economies." And I believe this revolution of love will bring about the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever seen.

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

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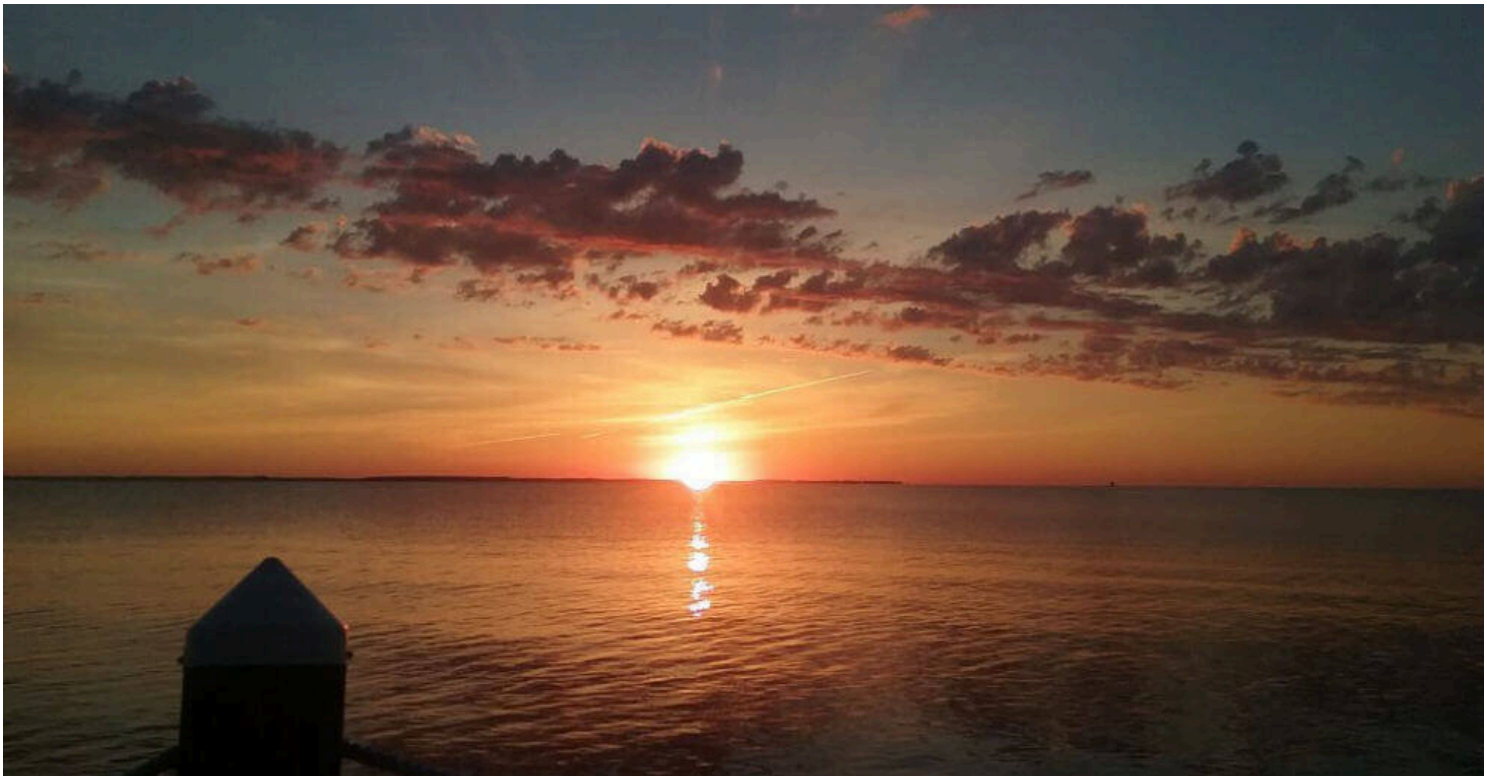
We are a People of Hope!

JANUARY 6, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRIST IN PROPHECY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Lamb and Lion Ministries

Throughout Scripture, God's people are instructed to mark the passage of time with regular memorials of His providence and provision. Seven times a year, the Jewish people observed ceremonial feasts ordained by God.

Christians also commemorate key events. We honor Jesus' first advent, His crucifixion and resurrection, and the "last supper," marking a new covenant in His body and blood. We gather each "Lord's Day," as the early disciples did — celebrating each week His validation of the good news of the Gospel.
Thankfully, God has given us seasons of life so we can appreciate the progression of our lives and the tender mercies He showers down upon us. *"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works"* (Psalm 145:9).

The transition from one year to another presents yet another kindness of Almighty God. We are compelled to consider that we've lingered yet another year on the earth and realize that a brand new year — filled with unknown challenges and opportunities — lies ahead. And most of us are more than ready to turn the page.

Looking back on the past year or two, we might be tempted to give in to pessimism about the state of our nation. Indeed, the signs of decline and discouragement are all around us. Conversely, others are determined to see the world through rose-colored glasses, intent to remain oblivious to the moral and spiritual carnage growing year by year. But neither extreme is appropriate for a child of God.

Followers of Jesus Christ are neither pessimists nor optimists. We know that God will work all things together for our good and His glory, so we can't be pessimistic. Yet, we also understand that the world will grow darker and darker as the end draws near, so we can't be optimistic about the trajectory of the world around us.

Instead, we are people of hope. Our hope is not some ephemeral thing based on the whim of man or the compulsions of fate. As Edward Mote wrote in 1834, Our hope is built "on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness" — His, not ours. The world will indeed grow darker, but our eyes are fixed on our Blessed Hope — Jesus Christ.

In the fullness of time, He has promised to make all things new. Soon — very soon — He will burst from the heavens, and we will be caught up to join Him in new glorified bodies. When that happens, the old will be swept aside, and we will be new — forevermore.

I can hardly wait!

We Shall Judge the Angels

JANUARY 4, 2022
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

To Judge or Not to Judge?

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

I often hear people say, "it's not for me to judge another person," even when they know they are acting sinfully. They cite the words of Yeshua, where He said, *"Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3, NKJV)*.

But Paul said this, *"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)*. Was Paul contradicting Yeshua? I do not believe so.

Yeshua was telling us that if we have sin in our lives, we will not see clearly or discern other people's actions. Notice He said, *"First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5)*. In other words, once we remove the sin from our lives, we will be in a rightful place to help others remove theirs also.

Yeshua also said, *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother" (Matthew 18:15)*. He never said that we should ignore the sin in our brother's life, exceedingly if he has sinned against us. As Christians, we are to live, to the best of our abilities, a blameless life that avoids sinning, and we are to help others do the same.

Paul addresses the issue of sexual sin even more seriously. He said, *"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person" (1 Corinthians 5:9-11)*.

Wow! Harsh words. I do not believe Paul would have said anything like, "It's not for me to judge another person," especially one in the church living a sexually immoral life. No, I think Paul would have gone to that person, in love, and quoted Yeshua, saying, "Let me help remove the speck from my brother's eye."

Maybe because of the abuse of power, but somehow the church has primarily absolved itself of the God-given responsibility to govern its affairs and the conduct of fellow Christians. And yet, Yeshua said to His disciples, *"You who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28)*. We see a shadow, a type of this prophecy in the Old Testament where we read, *"Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters" (Exodus 15:27)*. We will expound in a moment on the significance of the number "seventy."

Yeshua is not only our Lord and Savior, but He is also the supreme judge of all humanity, as it is written, *"And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42)*. And yet, Yeshua said, *"But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father" (Matthew 20:23)*. *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21)*. While God is sovereign, Yeshua is inferring a portion of delegated authority to His church.

We see another type with Moses and the seventy elders he later gathered before the Lord. We read, *"I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone" (Numbers 11:17)*. Israel's judges and court system were later formalized in the *Sanhedrin* (Council) or *Sanhedrin ha-Gadol* (the Great Council). It consisted of seventy judges following the seventy elders, plus one additional judge representing Moses.

The anti-type of this court system is fulfilled in Christ and His church, as it is written, *"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1)*.

The sages tell us that seventy is a unique number that correlates with leadership. They explain that the natural order, the creation, is represented by the number seven. Ten is also a complete number because we begin counting again with one after ten (ten plus one is eleven). Thus, seven times ten represents the completion of the natural order. In Christ, the natural order is complete, and we who are in Christ are completed in Him. So, it is logical that Christ would have appointed seventy leaders to represent Him and share the gospel.

The idea that all humanity was to set up righteous courts is believed, by the rabbis, to be God-ordained. Per the covenant that God made with Noah, called the Noahide Covenant, and during the Talmudic period (200-600 BC), the sages derived seven universal laws of morality:

1. The positive injunction to establish just laws and courts.
2. Prohibition of blasphemy against the one God of the universe.
3. Prohibition of idolatry.
4. Prohibitions of grave sexual immorality.
5. Prohibition of murder.
6. Prohibition of theft.
7. Prohibition against animal cruelty.

There are similarities to these Noahide laws listed in the letter of the Jewish council sent to the Gentile community. It is written, *"But that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:20)*.

The point here is that the church is not without any Law, and such laws are explicitly called out by the Apostle Paul to be enforced by Christian judges appointed within the church. As we just read, the Lord appointed judges over Israel to enforce His Law, and as Israel is a type for the church, we also are to do the same.

To be clear, however, I am not suggesting the church adopt the papal and religious hierarchy of the Catholic church. Sadly, that system has been corrupted. But I am inferring that from scripture, Christians have a God-given responsibility to establish proper governance. And we will be individually judged by the Lord for how we have used the delegated authority that Christ has given us. As it is written, *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey" (Matthew 25:14-15)*.

Yeshua referred to this system of delegated authority in speaking with the leaders of Israel. He said, *"Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods?" (John 10:34)*. He was *not* saying that Jews are gods. He was affirming the delegated ruling and judging authority that God had given to the leaders of Israel. Yeshua was quoting the Psalms, which reads in part: *"I said, You are gods , and all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations" (Psalm 82:6-8)*. While *Elohim* is often translated as "god," in Hebrew, it also means "judge."

Yeshua also told His disciples to honor the leaders of Israel, saying, *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat . Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works" (Matthew 23:2-3)*. Honoring the God-given seat of authority does not absolve that person from being held accountable by the Lord for abusing power He has given them. The Apostle James said, *"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1)*.

Yeshua is returning sooner than anyone realizes, as He said, *"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12)*. We are called to labor until then, and I believe we are also being tested. As it is written, *"For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance" (Matthew 25:29)*.

Salvation is a gift from God, but to serve Christ and follow Him is a calling, for it is written, *"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-15)*. *"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)*.

The be selected as a judge for Israel's high court, the *Sanhedrin*, a person was required to have seven attributes that included wisdom, humility, the awe of heaven, a loathing for money, a love for truth, love of the people, and a good reputation. Many of these same qualities are in the New Testament for those who desire to be overseers of God's church: blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his own house well, and has a good testimony.

When the Lord returns, He will establish His eternal court in Jerusalem, as it is written, *"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated" (Daniel 7:9)*. These thrones are set apart for the church, *"A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9)*. Indeed, for those of us who have been tested, refined, and qualified by the Lord, we will judge angels, and more so, we will judge the things that pertain to this world.

Amen!

SOURCE: **HOUSE OF DAVID MINISTRIES**

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How to Break Free of Fear Addiction

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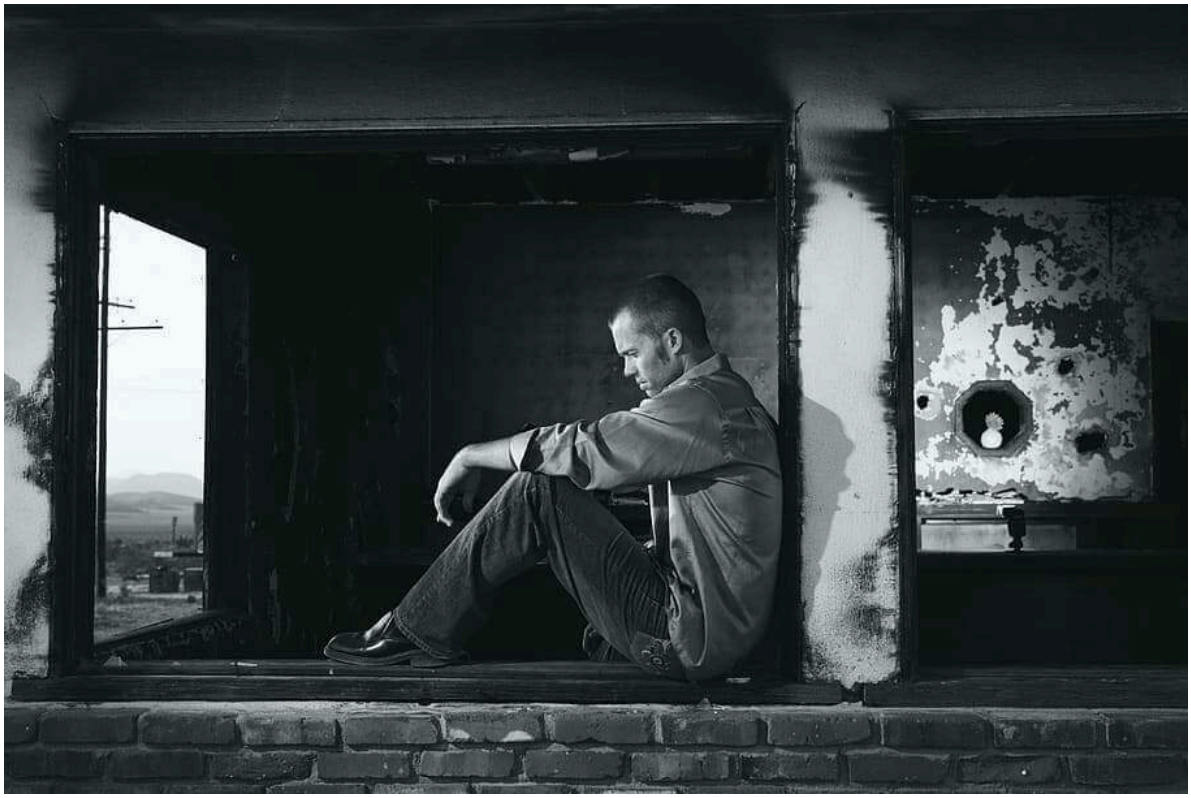


How to 'Snap' Loved Ones Out of COVID Brainwashing

Government, corporations and powerful individuals have used systematic 'grooming' toward irrational fear for decades – and they're using it to rob us of our freedoms. So how do you help your brainwashed friends and family see clearly, when they're essentially in a cult?

Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola | FACT CHECKED ✓

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- In his book "United States of Fear," psychiatrist Mark McDonald diagnoses the U.S. as suffering from mass delusional psychosis, driven by an irrational fear of what is now a rather innocuous virus
- The fearful overreaction didn't have its origin in what happened in 2020. Government, corporations and powerful individuals have engaged in a systematic "grooming" effort toward irrational fear addiction for decades
- Without fear, they cannot rob us of our freedoms

- The underlying motivation of this psychological campaign has been an attack on the core structures, foundations and institutions of society in order to nurture a sense of dependency on government
- To overcome their addiction to fear, a person must still have a sense of curiosity and be willing to look at new information. If they're not, they're not treatable and cannot be stopped from trading their (and our) freedom for a false sense of security. So, the key is finding those who are still open and receptive to new information, so that we can reach a tipping point where there are more fearless people than fear addicted ones

Dr. Mark McDonald is a psychiatrist in the Los Angeles, California, area. He's written a book called "**United States of Fear: How America Fell Victim to Mass Delusional Psychosis**," which is the topic of today's discussion. Around April 2020, McDonald actually made the brave decision to "fire" patients who refused to accept his stand on certain realities and truths.

"LA is a very politically-charged climate," he says. *"A lot of my patients, particularly those who would not identify as either conservative or even sincerely independent, tend to react in a very emotionally-charged way when they work with somebody who does not share their value system, and then it becomes difficult to work with them. I can't help them …*

I noticed that there was something bigger than just politics at play with the whole rise of the pandemic. About 10 to 20% of my patients, they either left abruptly without saying anything … or they argued with me. Some of them actually attacked me personally and condemned me.

A few threatened to report me to the medical board for saying such 'horrible' things as children should be able to breathe without a mask on their face. What I concluded after seeing the fallout from this is that those who left, those who attacked me, they really are no longer people that I can help, because really good therapeutic work, at least the work that I do, starts from a position of truth and reality.

Now, I'm not claiming to have the monopoly on truth or reality, but I certainly value it so highly that I'm not willing to sacrifice it for someone else's emotional comfort or well-being in the moment …

The ones that stayed and those who've taken their places have all been far, far more committed to the work and to getting better, to healing themselves emotionally and psychologically, than any of the people that left.

So, I am in no way regretful of that decision. I think it's made me a better clinician, a better practitioner. And most importantly, it's enabled me to continue to speak clearly, publicly and honestly about what I think is a much more important problem than just shots and masks, which is the state of our country and how we are being controlled and manipulated by corrupt individuals and corporations."

The Public Has Been Groomed to Fear

Fear is one of the most powerful motivators of behavior and, clearly, people's behavior has been massively manipulated through the use of fear these past two years. The motivation behind the book was to provide a retrospective analysis and explanation for how it all happened.

> *"The wool wasn't pulled over our eyes on March 15 ,"* McDonald says. *"What I suspected, uncovered and explained in the first third of the book is that this process actually began a long time before that.*

> *What we've had, and have been suffering from, is a slow grooming effort by government, by corporations, by wealthy, powerful individuals for a number of decades … I even go back to post-World War II in my book with a very specific example for those who were growing up during those times, of the duck-and-cover exercises to protect against nuclear holocaust.*

> *Obviously, hiding under your desk is not going to protect you from a nuclear bomb. And yet, we were all told to do this … This practice, in my view, instilled in children a sense of fear, a sense of vulnerability and a reliance on a higher power — not God, but a higher human power, usually an authoritarian power, the power of schools or officials to protect you from this very unspecified, vague … threat."*

The fearmongering about climate change and ecosystem collapse also falls under this "grooming." "I'm not going to say the existence of pollution is not real," he says. "However, to say that the world will end in 12 years … is not truthful." The goal is to change people's behavior, to instill a sense of compliance, so that resources can be reallocated.

> *"So, at the outset of the book, my goal is to explain: 'How did we get to be so afraid?' How did we get to be so capable of being fear-struck so quickly by something that very early on was clearly not a significant threat to most Americans?*

> *Even to those for whom it was a threat … there have been very helpful, successful, cheap, effective treatments that essentially cured nearly 100% of the people who were struck by this virus. So why ?*

> *In explaining the how and the why of how we got to this point, my hope has been that people who are perhaps not entirely brainwashed, but those who are just somewhat confused, somewhat perplexed, not entirely clear-thinking but certainly want to be, will see their thoughts organized so that they can then move to the more important step, which is what do we do about it?"*

Addicted to Fear

One likely reason why outright nonsensical countermeasures have been embraced is because fear paralyzes rational thinking. People who are terrified of dying from COVID cannot comprehend how ridiculous masking is because they cannot reason their way through the problem logically. What's more, they don't want to. As explained by McDonald, they're not curious at all.

> *"This is my little diagnostic technique: Does the person express curiosity to know something different than what he or she knows right now? If the answer is no, I don't even go further with that person in conversation. It's absolutely pointless …*

> *Ambivalence is another word that we use in motivational interviewing. We assess for ambivalence. Is the person trying to hold two different, opposing positions at the same time? Because that leads to a resolution. If there's no ambivalence at all and there's no curiosity, I don't really know where you start. So, I'll ask, 'What is it that you understand right now about what's happening?'*

> *If I sense some ambivalence, if I sense some lack of confidence, then I'll ask a follow-up question. I'll say, 'Are you curious? Are you interested in learning about some other information or some other viewpoints that you might not be aware of right now?'*

> *And often, if I've got to that point, the person will say tentatively, 'Yeah, maybe.' If I get, on the other hand, 'Absolutely not,' or more of a condemnation, 'What do you mean? Are you one of those anti-vaxxer hoaxers?' Then I know I'm probably not going to really proceed very successfully, so I let up. I back off … If someone's addicted to fear, I just wait and see if they're open and willing and ready to lose their addiction."*

In short, unless a person is open to new information, it doesn't matter how many peer-reviewed studies you throw before them. Facts and data don't matter if they don't have curiosity or this ambivalence. As explained by McDonald, this is not a data war. We won that a long time ago. It's a psychological war, and it really needs to be thought of that way.

The goal is to take away the interest, the capacity, the comfort, both internally and also on a societal level, of men and women coming together. If men and women stop … speaking to one another, stop dating, getting married, having children, then we no longer have families. If we don't have families, we don't have civic organizations, churches and communities. The state then steps in and supplants the role of the father and begins to take over. ~ Dr. Mark McDonald

"You always have to keep in mind that information and data is only as useful as the psychological state of the recipient," he says. You could actually worsen the situation if they're not open and receptive.

The Emasculation of Society

Another cultural factor that has played an important role is the emasculation of society. This is problematic, as this also impacts our ability to defend ourselves against the next attack on our liberties and bodily integrity.

"My concern is that the underlying motivation of this psychological campaign has been for a long time, and it is still today, an attack on the core structures, foundations, institutions of our country … Certainly in all the Anglophone countries, there has been an attack for many, many years on the core archetypes of the male and the female, the masculine and the feminine.

The goal is to take away the interest, the capacity, the comfort, both internally and also on a societal level, of men and women coming together. If men and women stop coming together, if they stop desiring one another, if they stop speaking to one another, if they stop dating, getting married, having children, then we no longer have families. We have single parents.

If we don't have families, we don't have civic organizations. We don't have churches. We don't have communities. All we have are single parents running around with their own children, relying on, most likely, government, to help keep them financially and physically safe. So, the role of the father, the role of the mother is simply eliminated.

The state then steps in and the state supplants the role of the father and begins to take over. There is a young girl who had been sexually abused by her biological father for a number of years, and eventually he impregnated her. He was arrested after a paternity test was performed.

I've been reviewing her therapy notes on a legal case recently, and what I'm struck by is that now, two years later, she is still insistent that her father was unjustly taken away from her. He did not deserve to be arrested, should not be in prison and that all she really wants is to be reunited with him.

You'd think this makes no sense. I mean, no sane person would want to reunite with a father who sexually abused her and impregnated her, but she does. I think there's a psychological reason for it. We only have one father. We only have one mother. If our father or mother is removed, we can't replace that person. We're essentially abandoned. We're lost …

> *So, what happens if we reject the government? If we don't want to use the government as a way to keep ourselves safe, to be reliant on government for our money, for our sanctity, we have to rely on each other. We can do that if we have a family, if we have a community, if we have a church, civic organizations and structures.*

> *But what if we're a single mother with a couple of children living in a Santa Monica apartment that's being subsidized by the Santa Monica city government, and getting food stamps from the state of California? Well, now we can't say goodbye to government. We have to keep the government.*

> *So, I really do believe that the attacks on masculinity, on femininity, are specifically designed to end the family unit and to cause all men and women to turn towards government for their security rather than to one another, as has traditionally been the case …"*

McDonald stresses that this isn't really a political issue per se, although the left "seems to have almost a near monopoly on it," primarily because "the left is inherently a communist or socialist movement. It's anti-religious, anti-family, anti-individual."

The problem, of course, is that communist and socialist societies are built on a foundation of corruption, where a small group of elites end up pilfering from everyone else. That's why communist and socialist regimes don't last. They always end up collapsing from the rot of corruption.

What's the Solution?

As for how we are to solve our current problems, McDonald says:

> *"I have faith and confidence in individuals, but in humanity as a whole, I have lost quite a degree of faith.*

> *Although there have always been corrupt individuals, the fact that humans as a group have allowed them, in the last couple of years, to gain such a foothold through their own voluntary compliance says to me that humanity does not have, at least not now, the inherent capacity to resist true evil to the degree that I believed it had. So, I was mistaken.*

> *This is what's led me to have some, depending on the day, different feelings and views towards the possibility for a way out. I do not believe right now that the way out is to wait for a messiah … I think the way out is going to be from the grassroots … a rising from the ashes, essentially.*

> *the public school system in the United States, which I think is unsalvageable; I don't think it can be fixed. We need to build a new school system. We need to be build a new banking system, a new food system, a new supply delivery system.*

> *We need to build a new political system. All of these systems need to be basically rebuilt. And they're not going to be rebuilt by a leader, they're going to be rebuilt by the people, and that's going to require international cooperation …*

> *It's so important that the American people actually come together and throw off this corrupt cabal of power and structure so that they can rebuild … If it doesn't happen, I think we're going to look forward to a very, very dark period of time that's going to last … for years or decades. I don't know if we'll ever really be able to get out of it."*

Decentralization of Power Is Crucial

As we rebuild, it's quite clear that decentralization is going to be absolutely essential. As explained by McDonald, one of the reasons for the United States' success is the Founding Fathers' foresight to create a system where power is decentralized across the 50 states. The reason the U.S. is on the

brink of losing our freedom now is because the power has been reconcentrated through technology and social media.

> *"The only way for this degree of evil to exist and for it to have such a strong grip over the country, is for the power to be concentrated. If the power were spread out, it would be very difficult for this type of brainwashing to occur because there would be enough counterbalance, there'd be enough dispersion of the corruptive influence, that truth and honesty and the forces for good would actually have a foothold.*

> *I mean, Parler was destroyed a year ago because two men in Silicon Valley flipped a switch and 30 million voices were silenced. I mean, this has never been possible before. Never … I believe right now that … it will take a personal loss, something profound and significant, for those who are still brainwashed to be able to actually start to think clearly again.*

> *Perhaps the loss of a child to a vaccine injury, the loss of a parent who's denied hospital treatment for heart failure because he decided not to get a vaccine, the complete economic collapse of the home, the community, or perhaps even the country, because we are allowing ourselves to no longer work and believe that somehow productivity will happen somewhere else by some other person.*

> *We may wind up, as is happening in LA, in a state of absolute anarchy, where wealthy people in the Palisades, in Malibu, in Beverly Hills, are now being robbed, raped and murdered by gang members in the same way that they are in the Favelas in Brazil.*

> *This type of crime wave, not just among the poor people out in the ghetto, but among the wealthy class, the ones who are voting in all of the people who are pushing this corruption and this technological brainwashing … has never happened in my lifetime in Los Angeles. may be requisite that those who are helping support this brainwashing actually suffer significant personal losses before they wake up and pull their support from it."*

Based on what I've seen and heard, I suspect even personal losses won't wake some of them up. I've seen cases where a loved one has died within minutes or hours of their COVID shot, and if they've lived through it, the person brushes it off as coincidence and schedules their booster. They simply refuse to see the correlation.

This tendency toward blind self-destructiveness is part and parcel of a psychiatric condition known as "mass formation psychosis," which is the clinical diagnosis proposed by Mattias Desmet, professor of clinical psychology at Ghent University in Belgium.[1]

Is It Just Corruption or Something More Sinister?

Clearly, the concentration of power was not accidental. It's been planned and executed over decades. Ultimately, technology — which is at the heart of the technocratic world view — was needed to succeed. Today, the technology to manipulate and control the global population exists.

> *"This gives rise to another question, which I would've answered very differently a year ago. I'm asked very frequently, 'Is this simply corruption?' Meaning 'I want more money. I want more power.' Or is there something more sinister? Is there at least a sociopathy or perhaps even existence of evil behind it?*

> *Two years ago, I would've said that's absurd. Maybe there's a few sociopathic individuals. Certainly, there's nothing evil. I don't believe in the devil. But I'm now starting to wonder whether this goes beyond just simple human corruption. Greed is so banal … That seems like such a relatively innocuous vice given what we're seeing as the consequences of these decisions.*

> *I am now open, as I never have been before, to the possibility of the existence of evil. Of a force, which is actually at play, driving these individuals to commit such acts of horrible evil. And it is evil. The outcomes are evil. They are not errors, and they are orchestrated. That's what leads me to being so questioning now of these explanations that involve simply errors or isolated corruption.*

> *There is something so, so beautifully precise and well connected and enduring about how all of these actions have come together in the last couple of years that it leads me to think that there must be some sort of force or power at play that goes beyond simple human frailty."*

Moving Forward

McDonald is currently writing a second book, in which he'll delve deeper into solutions for overcoming fear on a personal and national level. Some of his ideas and treatment

recommendations have grown out of a consolidation and evolution of his viewpoints over the last couple of years.

But before we can do anything, we need to understand which groups of people are amenable to treatment and which are not. Some are so deeply brainwashed, they're seemingly unreachable. Others are scared, but they would like to not be. The first is untreatable, while the other is treatable.

> *"The brainwashed group, in the same way that we would treat a cult, cannot be treated voluntarily,"* he says. *"I cannot provide information, education, counseling or even a book for them, because they will not listen. They will not read it. They don't want to, because I am an enemy. Anybody that provides truth and hope and information is the enemy.*

> *The only ally they have is the guru. Just as a cult is closed off, their family members completely separated from them … these people will only listen to and take commands from Anthony Fauci, from Joe Biden, from Don Lemon, people in media, people in politics, people in bureaucratic government, and nothing will change their mind. Absolutely nothing.*

> *They could see people dying around them, their own parents, their own children, and they would still go take another shot. They are lost, unless and until they are physically removed, essentially in the way that we would with a cult, to a remote location where they can be deprogrammed. And I am not in that business. So that's not the group that I'm speaking to.*

> *I have to be realistic. We have to be practical and efficient with how we use our time. We don't want to preach to the choir, but we also don't want to try to go after people who are closed off, lacking curiosity, utterly brainwashed. They're not going to listen. It's useless.*

> *So that leaves the other group, which is the open-minded, maybe scared, maybe anxious, curious group. I would call these people the fear addicts who want to lose their addiction … Those are the people that I want to reach out to with the next book."*

Breaking Fear Addiction

The paradigm McDonald proposes is a basic 12-step program to overcoming addiction, in this case the addiction to fear. As in any 12-step program, the first step is to admit you have an addiction. They must admit they're addicted to fear, because without losing the fear, they cannot move forward.

> *"Fear is the obstacle to being able to think and act rationally. So, the fear has to be overcome. But in order to overcome fear, you have to admit that you're addicted to it, that this is not something that you want to hold onto,"* McDonald explains.

> *"From there, there are other things you can do. One of them, which I don't think anyone has really talked about much, is you need to embrace humor. Humor is what allows us to have a perspective. Without a perspective, we're like a sailor looking through a monoscope. Everything is just focused on one little target off in the distance.*

> *We lose everything around us. We lose our context. We're unable to assign value and priority to things. Everything becomes about cases, death, cases, death, shots, masks. One of the best ways to step away from that is to actually develop humor and to embrace it. To start to laugh again, to tell jokes, to see the lighter side of our time here. We're not here just to exist. We're here to live. We're here to live fully …*

> *Developing that sense of perspective allows them to embrace more curiosity. They must also cut themselves off from media, at least temporarily, because media is what's fueling the addiction … You've got to stop going to your dealer …*

> *I'm going to go through a lot of other steps as well as I elucidate them. But these are some of the ones I think are very important for people to consider — admitting that you have a problem and desiring to end it; developing, or at least embracing, humor; and avoiding the dealer of the fear, which is, largely speaking, the media.*

> *Also, return to what's around you. Stop cutting yourself off from people. You may be embracing people who are also fearful. Hanging out with alcoholics is not the best way to stop drinking. Go to people who are sober.*

> *Build friendships, relationships with people who don't have the addiction to fear … You'll discover an entire world that does not revolve around viruses, injections, masks and shutting down schools and businesses."*

Do You Have the Basic Will To Be Free?

According to Robert Malone, Ph.D., in private conversation with Desmet, Desmet suggested that one of the things that can work is to shift the focus from the irrational fear of death from a relatively innocuous virus to the rational fear of global tyranny, the entire human race being subjugated to slavery for the remainder of time.

Desmet claimed he had tested it out and found that, in some cases, people who are afraid of COVID can be steered to a saner frame of mind by, essentially, giving them a greater fear with which to replace their irrational fear of the virus. McDonald doesn't believe this will work, at least not to any significant degree.

> *"I wrote about the cultural prerequisites in my book. describes in purely psychological terms, although there's also cultural overlay lack of meaning and being disconnected from family. Well, how does that happen?*

> *When you don't really know what your purpose is as a man, when you don't have a nuclear family, you lose family relationships. You're cut off from your friends because of political differences. So, we kind of reached the same end points from different starting points, but I completely agree with him.*

> *The idea of hypnosis is also very interesting. I've studied clinical hypnosis. As we all know in stage performances, the hypnotist will bring on a dozen people on the stage, try to suggest different things to 12 people.*

> *And then he'll gradually pick off 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 of them, send them back to the audience when he diagnoses them as non-suggestible. He keeps two or three who are, and those people usually perform beautifully throughout the hypnosis on stage.*

> *I think that's also true. I think there are people who are just, for some reason, more easily suggestible. And so, they are more prone to a hypnotic trance. And I think there is a kind of hypnotic trance going on right now in the world. Those people just have an inherent suggestibility.*

> *The idea that we could supplant the fear of death with a fear of totalitarian control is an interesting one, but I'm not sure that I agree with that for the following reason.*

> *I think one of the reasons why people have become so compliant, especially in the Western countries, in the more affluent, the more kind of technologically-connected, interpersonally-disconnected societies, is that we have largely lost the … intrinsic revolt and push back against being controlled by a higher non-God-like authority.*

> *I think that people today, they do not intrinsically crave freedom. I think they crave being taken care of. And one of the great strengths of totalitarian regimes throughout the 20th century is that they have offered security at the expense of freedom.*

> *And people have largely embraced it, at least at the beginning, before all of the camps started and the executions, because they don't see the end point of the loss of freedom. They see the immediate benefits of security, of being taken care of. I don't have to go to work every day … This is such an easier life. This is like going back in time to the day I was born and every need that I had was taken care of …*

> *Now, I had no freedom. I was at the mercy of the mother. But wow, what an easy life. No responsibility … So, there's something psychologically hardwired into us to want to embrace something simple, something easy, give away our autonomy to a higher authority that is a state that will take care of us.*

> *And, of course, it always turns into a totalitarian system and then the people end up dying, being murdered, we have mass starvation, executions. We've seen it time and time again throughout the 20th century.*

> *But from my experience as a clinician, people are actually far more scared of death, of losing security, of losing so-called protection from the state, than they are of losing all of their liberties, their freedoms, and ultimately just being fed into a meat grinder for society's despots.*

> *At its core, the totalitarian system offers a cheat. It says, 'Stop believing in a higher power that isn't real, God, and believe in a higher power which is me and the party. I can offer you the potatoes. I can offer you the guards … I can offer you all of that right now. What can God offer you? … You can't rely on him. Well, you can rely on me.' It's almost like a devilish kind of Faustian play that these totalitarian despots always engage in, but people fall for it.*

> *And this is one of the reasons why every communist system, every dictatorship, essentially attacks all forms of religious worship and organization. They need a secular society, because when there is the higher power, above the state, that people believe in or rely on, it diminishes the absolute power of the state. It brings it into context.*

> *And the context is that it's flawed, because totalitarian regimes are still run by human beings. They're not run by angels. They're not run by God. And if we can remove God from the picture, now suddenly, the whole hierarchy shifts and the top power becomes the state and there's nothing above the state.*

> *I don't think there's any exception to this. And this is another reason why the attack on the church and the attack on Christmas, for example, has been so ongoing in the last couple decades."*

Be Brave, Speak Out, Find Your Tribe

If you haven't done so already, the first thing you'll want to do is surround yourself with like-minded people, and be sure to meet in person, whenever possible. Part of finding your "tribe" involves gathering your courage and speaking your mind.

> *"One of the key things that I discovered personally, which I strongly suggest everyone do, is come out of the closet,"* McDonald says.

> *"I recognize it is far easier to come out of the closet as a transgendered non-binary right now than it is to come out as a conservative, but even if you lose a few friends and colleagues, you will gain far, far more from high-quality, supportive, loving, freedom defending people with integrity than anything that you've ever lost.*

> *As Mikki Willis said to me after he filmed his first movie, 'I didn't lose a single friend.' I said, how is that possible? He said, 'Because all the people that left, they weren't friends to begin with.' And I completely agree with him. That has been true in my experience. It will be true in yours.*

> *All you have to do is you have to tolerate and accept the immediate temporary fire-branding that will occur once you put your head up and … start speaking from your heart and being honest, showing your own integrity …*

> *The people that don't support you, they will leave. They will create space for those who do. Those who hear you and agree with you, they will come to you. They will say, 'Thank God, another person who shares my views. What's your name? Can we meet for coffee? Have you heard about this group I organized? We meet on Thursdays over at the coffee shop. I want you to introduce you to my friends.'*

> *That will happen to you. And I think that is the first, most important step that you can take to becoming a stronger, healthier, and more pro-freedom, pro-American individual."*

In closing, be sure to pick up a copy of "**United States of Fear: How America Fell Victim to Mass Delusional Psychosis**" to learn more.

Video and Carol: Come Let Us Adore Him

DECEMBER 19, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Celebrate Christmas with a breathtaking tour of Earth from the perspective of the International Space Station. Photographed at night more than 200 miles above the surface of our planet, this unforgettable video is a unique call to worship and rejoice in the greatest gift the world has ever received: Jesus Christ, the Savior and King of all creation.

COME LET US ADORE HIM

https://youtube.com/watch?v=N8zedFx8ebE

Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

[26] In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, [27] to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. [28] The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

[29] Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. [30] But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. [31] You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

[34] "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

[35] The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. [36] Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. [37] For no word from God will ever fail."

[38] "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Read full chapter

Footnotes

1. **Luke 1:35** Or *So the child to be born will be called holy,*

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-12; ,

[18] This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. [19] Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

[20] But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

[22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: [23] "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

[24] When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. [25] But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. [2] (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) [3] And everyone went to their own town to register.

[4] So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. [5] He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. [6] While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, [7] and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

[8] And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. [9] An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. [10] But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. [11] Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. [12] This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

[13] Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

[15] When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

[16] So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. [17] When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, [18] and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. [20] The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Read full chapter

Footnotes

1. **Luke 2:2** Or *This census took place before*

2:1-12;

The Magi Visit the Messiah

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east
came to Jerusalem [2] and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his
star when it rose and have come to worship him."

[3] When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. [4] When he had called
together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah
was to be born. [5] "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

[6] "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

[7] Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had
appeared. [8] He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as
you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

[9] After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose
went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. [10] When they saw the star,
they were overjoyed. [11] On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they
bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of
gold, frankincense and myrrh. [12] And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they
returned to their country by another route.

Read full chapter

Luke 1:26-38

Justice Reformation, or Transformation

DECEMBER 7, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PANDEMIC

There is justice, then there is injustice.

By J. Jeff Toler, for Shenandoah Christian Alliance

Well, what have we all learned about justice these days? If anything, you haven't learned much—if you're under the age of 30 without the obligatory racial constructs for reform and, of course, messaging the tragedy of *injustice*. Indeed, justice reform has long been the cause célèbre for so-called liberals. It was the rallying cry for campus riots of the seventies, along with ending the war in Viet Nam of course. So too, justice reform usually includes prison reform when the issue comes up.

Generally, Americans agree that the top criminal justice/prison reform priorities are in-prison job or educational training programs.

Prison Fellowship reports: practicing Christians believe that the top three criminal justice reform issues that must be addressed are:

- Expanding the availability of in-prison programs, such as education, job training, and substance abuse recovery: 29%

- Reducing barriers returning citizens face in accessing employment, affordable housing, and other social service supports: 29%
- Keeping youth under 18 out of adult prisons: 27%

Recently, a new idea in criminal justice reform was on full display as a contributing factor in the **Thanksgiving Day Christmas parade massacre**. This is because a career criminal, **released on bond only days earlier,** intentionally plowed through participants and onlookers alike, killing six people, and injuring dozens more.

Very recently, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., was interviewed by Axios reporter Jonathon Swan, about her sponsoring the **Breathe Act**, a delightful piece of legislation which calls for the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services to create a **"roadmap for prison abolition,"** including the "full decarceration of federal detention facilities within 10 years" and "a moratorium on all new federal prison, jail, immigrant and youth detention construction."

There is a saying, "Mercy for the guilty is cruelty for the innocent."

Of course that seems a bit of a stretch, even for someone of Tlaib's political persuasion, as evidence, the following exchange:

"To what extent have you wrestled with releasing any potential downsides of releasing into society every single person who currently in a federal prison?" Swan asked the congresswoman.

"Yeah, I think that everyone's like, 'Oh my God, we're going to just release everybody,'" Tlaib said. "That's not what I'm—"

"That's what the act says," Swan fired back.

"Yeah, but did you see how many people are mentally ill that are in prison right now," Tlaib argued.

"No, I know," Swan said. "But the act you endorsed actually says ***release everyone in 10 years.*** *… There are like, human traffickers, child sex . Do you mean that you don't actually support that? Because you endorsed the bill."*

This astonishing and revelatory exchange reveals two things right off the bat. (1) Swan deserves kudos for real (and persistent) journalistic questioning—which is a real rarity in this day and age, and (2) Tlaib's vacuous defense of what is an obviously horrible idea.

"I would have to look at every case individually and figure all of that out," she added later. "Everyone in jail is not the same."

No, they clearly are not. Most however, do belong there. There are arguments for the rehabilitative aspects of jail and prison. But by far the most important reason is, and ought to be, punishment. There is a saying, **"Mercy for the guilty is cruelty for the innocent."** That is certainly a worldly concept that holds truth, but even that idea must go under the microscope of biblical understanding to fully appreciate. As recently as 2016, the issue was framed around the Trump administration's law and order position—which at that time at least, reflected a majority of American's own personal desire. Locking up bad people is, after all, something that typically engenders security within a population. Today, that has been exchanged for safety against a pandemic.

Allie Beth Stuckey, provided a **brilliant exposition** of the widely quoted, but often misinterpreted Verse, ***"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*** (Micah 6:8) to explain how God wants us to understand true justice.

This verse has become a favorite among progressive Christians for promoting their social justice agendas. If they were honest with themselves and their follow adherents, they would want to find another verse—or another Bible. In context, it will condemn them for their own hubris.

Micah was a prophet in the days of Jotham (742-735 BC), Ahaz (735-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC). He was a contemporary of Isaiah. Micah lived in a time of international fear and uncertainty, and it was fueled by the increasing evil and injustice, particularly with King Ahaz, and the temple priests, who prophesied for money. So, here is the context: read the preceding seven verses. God will not let them off the hook because they are the priests, or God's anointed kings. They are in sin, they should know it, and so they have no excuse. Does this sound familiar?

He has told us what is good, and what he requires of us.

We are expected to *do* justice; This is the *mishpat*—no passive act of observance, but an active verb. This is all but impossible if we confuse God's justice with social justice. Bearing false witness, prosecuting innocent people—these are not justice.

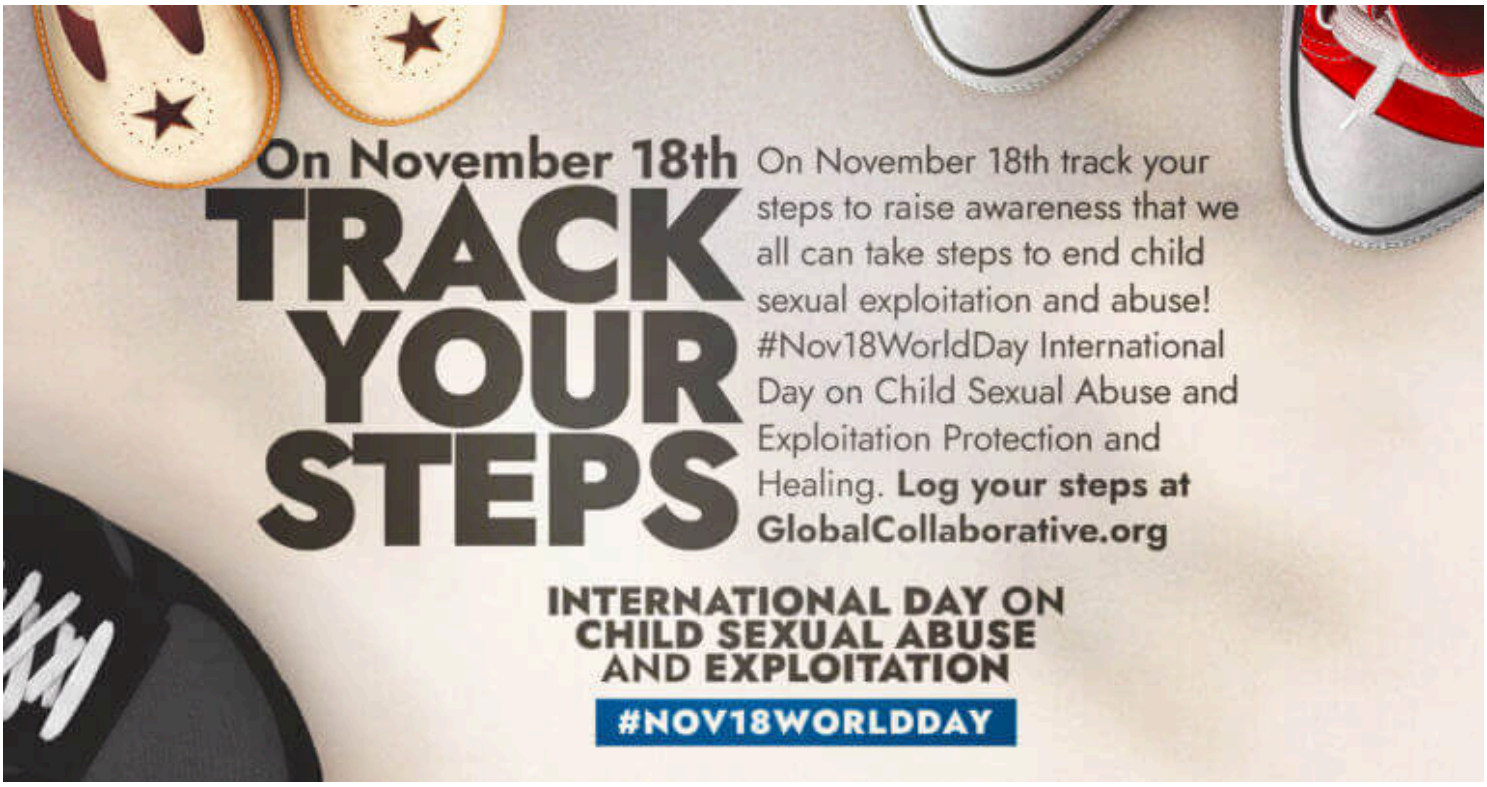
We are to *love* kindness (or mercy). What's kind or merciful about slandering someone, calling him a racist, or demanding he conforms to reckless government mandates?

We are to *walk humbly* with God. If we remain in righteous awe and fear, we will humbly obey Him, and it will be for our own good as well as our neighbors.

> ***"Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness and his upper rooms without justice, Who uses his neighbor's services without pay, And does not give him his wages"*** (Jeremiah 22:13).

Call for a UN World Day on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

NOVEMBER 15, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHILD ABUSE, GLOBALIST, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, UN, UNITED NATIONS, WEF, WHO



The International Center on Sexual Exploitation—a division of NCOSE—is proud to join the Global Collaborative effort to establish an international day of recognition for child sexual exploitation and abuse prevention and healing. The Global Collaborative is a survivor led network of NGO's, faith-based institutions, survivor networks and governments.

As the **Global Collaborative states**:

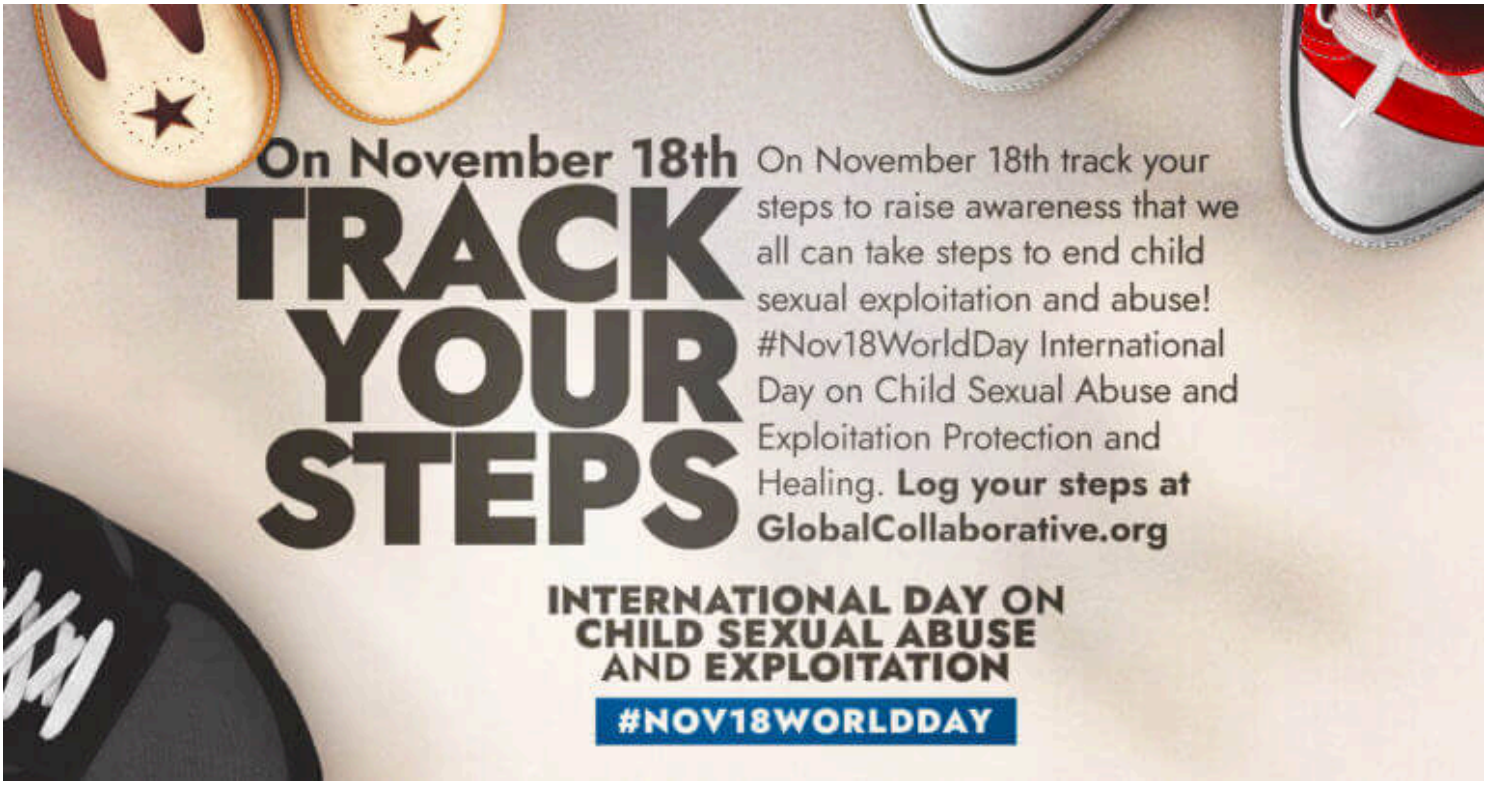
> "The World Health Organization reports 120 million girls and young women under 20 years of age have suffered some form of forced sexual contact; that one in five women, and one in thirteen men report experiencing sexual abuse before their 18th birthday; and that in some parts of the world, one out of every two children have experienced sexual abuse; and that because of the shame, stigma, and fear associated with their experience, at least sixty percent of child sexual abuse victims/survivors never disclose their abuse."

“The members of the Global Collaborative believe the 18 November International Day will provide a forum to bring survivors, civil society, and governments together to focus and better align vital resources, heighten awareness of the problem of CSEA, and support victims and their families in their quest for healing and justice.”

This will be accomplished through the following actions:

- Bringing global visibility to the right for every child to grow up free from all forms of sexual abuse, both on-line and off-line.
- Raising awareness of measures that can be taken by communities, schools, religious institutions, recreational venues, inter-governmental organizations, families, and young persons to ensure that every child is protected.
- Harnessing the power of social media with celebrity, and high-profile survivors sharing their stories to help eliminate the stigma experienced by victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Channeling the creativity and influence of a range of partners to accelerate adoption of legislation, policies, and procedures to ensure all children are safe, and victims/survivors receive justice, and have access to the resources they need to heal.
- Accelerating adoption of evidence-based practices by health care providers, social welfare organizations and faith communities to enabling effective healing for victims/survivors of abuse, their family members, and communities.

THIS NOVEMBER 18th YOU CAN HELP CALL ON THE UNITED NATIONS TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE THIS IMPORTANT DAY



Take Action: Record your steps on November 18th and **log them on this webpage**! (You can use an app on your phone, a Fitbit, or whatever you like! Set a reminder in your phone to log your steps on our webpage by the end of the day.)

This simple, easy action will symbolize the powerful reality that people around the world want to take steps to end child sexual abuse and exploitation!

Please take action and show the international community that all nations must recognize these issues and must work collaboratively to protect children and strive for justice.

The following organizations are co-founders and Partners of the International Day for Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Prevention and Healing:

- A Breeze of Hope Foundation
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
- Arigatou International Army of Survivors
- Australia eSafety Commission
- Awake
- Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
- Bellweather International
- Candle in a Dark Room
- Child Abuse Council
- Christian Cultural Center
- Darkness to Light
- Global Partnership to End Violence Against Women

- General Federation of Women's Clubs
- End FGM/C U.S./Network
- Enough Abuse Campaign
- Human Flourishing Program, Harvard University
- Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities
- International Board of Rabbi's
- ISPCAN
- Keep Kids Safe Coalition
- Islamic Relief
- Male Survivors
- Maria Goretti Network
- Monique Burr Foundation
- New York Board of Rabbi's
- National Center on Sexual Exploitation
- PACE

- Prevent Child Abuse America
- RHAMA
- Roads of Success
- Sacred Spaces
- Shine on Sierra Leone
- Survivor Network for Those Abused by Priests
- The Catholic Project
- The New York Foundling
- Their Story is our Story
- Together for Girls
- WeProtect Global Alliance
- World Childhood Foundation, USA
- World Council of Churches
- World Vision
- YMCA USA

Christian Families Against Destructive Decisions

NOVEMBER 13, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

> God alone sustains us at every moment, in every stage of life; infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age: and God has ordained the family as the primary means through which He does this.

Christian Families Against Destructive Decisions was founded in 2020 by Apostle Tommy E. Quick in response to the devastation of broken homes that he witnessed during his 45 years of evangelistic and pastoral ministry. After seeking God for answers, he concluded that the problems and challenges that many families experience today will not be solved in the political arena, social programs, or demonstrations. It is his belief that the state of each family is largely due to the decisions individuals make on a day-to-day basis.

All the pain, grief, sorrow, and sin in the world is the result of just one wrong decision. Every day we make hundreds of decisions that determine what we say and do which in turn effects the quality of lives and the conditions of our homes and families. Considering the alarming statistics, that 1 in 4 Americans under the age of 18 live in a single parent home and that 3 in 4 in the African American community live in a single parent home, it is evident that destructive decisions is proliferate in our nation. Consequences of the family breakdown range from health issues, emotional stress, educational failure, family disfunction, delinquency, bullying, anger, poverty, drug abuse, incarceration, fatherless and more.

Christian Families Against Destructive Decision's mission is to influence the building and sustaining of strong families and strong generational heritages by promoting a biblical worldview and a God first lifestyle. CFADD seeks to educate the public of the benefits and consequences of

decisions that affect them and their loved ones, and to provide biblical instruction, resources, strategies, and principles that will aid them in making good sound decisions. For no good action can be taken unless it is preceded by a good decision, because each good decision is an investment in a great future.

Christian Families Against Destructive Decisions will:

· Eliminate the misinformation and ignorance that effects our families

· Assure that children have dedicated mothers and fathers to protect, nurture and guide their development toward their adulthood.

· To combat all cultural ideologies and/or behavior that disrupts the nuclear family.

· To end all media violence against the family.

· Promote equality and justice for all babies conceived in the womb.

· Promote abstinence before marriage and monogamy.

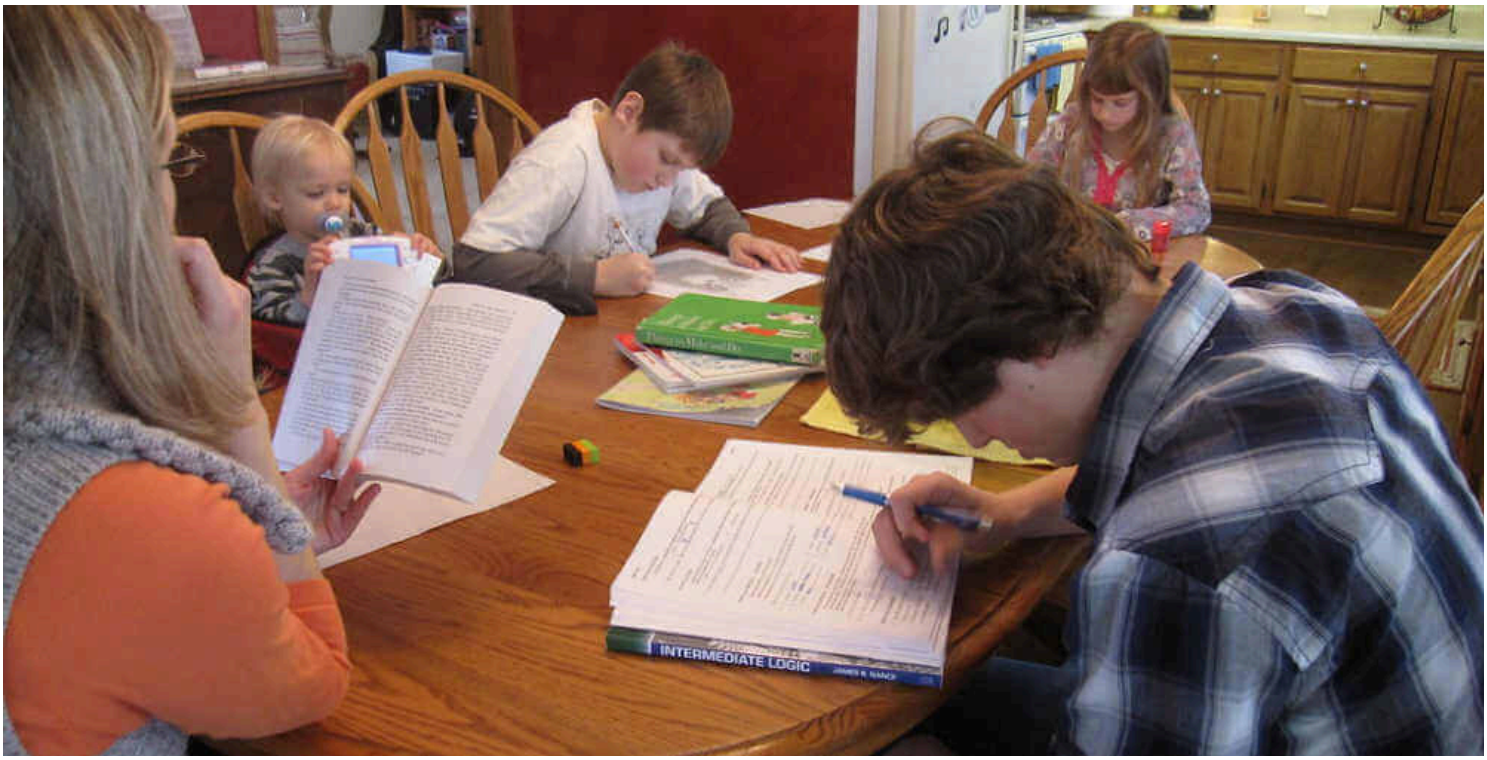
· Enhance the desirability of marriage and family life.

CFADD will accomplish this by focusing on marriage, fatherhood, motherhood, financial security, avoiding divorce, drugs and violence, parental rights, addressing the gender confusion, sex education, abstinence, addressing pornography, and the murdering of the unborn.

For more information about CFADD or to join its cause visit www.cfadd.org. Only by restoring the biblical foundations of the home, can the church and society flourish. Our journey together to restore the foundations of the families and repair the breaches has just begun. Through CFADD, you will become a part of the revival of the traditional family values. Together we will see the heart of the fathers turn to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers and an end to the curse of fatherlessness in the Earth (Malachi 4:6). Visit **DFADD** and find out more.

Parents Teaching or Government Indoctrination – You Choose – Home Schooling is "Safe and Effective"

OCTOBER 26, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



> McAuliffe, Garland, and the NSBA would have you believe that parents are domestic terrorists, but it is time for them to realize how their way of thinking poses a real threat to American rights. Put me in the category of those that believe **parents are the ones who should be raising our kids.**

Pete Hoekstra | **Gatestone Institute**

- Every expert who came in indicated that the most important thing in a child's learning was the presence of a caring adult in that child's life. We learned that schools most connected to their community were most likely to be successful. And that schools that focused on the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic achieved the best results.

- Hillary Clinton once famously said it takes a village to raise a child. It is hard to disagree with that statement on its face until you realize the village Clinton had in mind is the government and not the parents and families who make it up.

- While the media may portray this as a battle about COVID mandates, American history, or the teaching of sexuality, those are just the scrimmages that we are witnessing. The real battle is for who the teacher will be in our children's lives — parents and loving local individuals who know our children's names, or faceless government bureaucrats hell-bent on indoctrinating our children with their particular worldview.

- McAuliffe, Garland, and the NSBA would have you believe that parents are domestic terrorists, but it is time for them to realize how their way of thinking poses a real threat to American rights. Put me in the category of those that believe parents are the ones who should be raising our kids.

The discontent at school board meetings across America is hard to miss. It is showing up in the news and social media feeds that people are watching and reading in their homes. Many people, however, are missing the major driver of this discontent — the **major transformation** that the White House, National School Boards Association (NSBA) and **others** are trying to impose on our government schools.

The recent debate **statements** by Terry McAuliffe, the Democrats' Virginia gubernatorial candidate, and **actions** by Attorney General Merrick Garland following a **letter** from the NSBA clearly signal they believe that government schools are a tool to be used to indoctrinate children. They also believe the force of the federal government should be used to back them up.

They no longer to believe that a child's primary instructor in life is their parents or a close loved and that local control of schools is a central tenet of the American way of life. Instead, they believe it is the responsibility of the federal government to impose a certain way of thinking and what curriculum children are taught.

I take McAuliffe at his word that he really does not believe parents should have a role in developing or reviewing the curriculum that their children are taught in their local public schools. I take the NSBA at its word that it views parents who question local government school curriculum on sexuality, critical race theory, COVID mandates, and other items should be investigated as domestic terrorists. And I believe Garland really does think it is the role of the FBI to protect government schools from concerned parents.

When someone tells you what they are planning, or better yet shows you, you should take them seriously. And these individuals should be taken seriously. They are the same people who want to control local education from Washington, and kick parents out of the process, that say they want **open borders**, **cradle-to-grave social programs** for everyone, **higher taxes**, and a . Far from meaningless campaign rhetoric, the left is doing everything and more that they promised in the run-up to the 2020 election. And now they are targeting our children.

I spent 18 years on the House Education and Labor Committee. Every expert who came in indicated that the most important thing in a child's learning was the presence of a caring adult in that child's life. We learned that schools most connected to their community were most likely to be successful. And that schools that focused on the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic achieved the best results.

Republicans and Democrats have been dismantling that paradigm for the last 50 years. In that time, local schools have shifted from safe zones where parents could assume that values taught at home would be reflected at their local government school. Instead, government schools are being forged into the latest tool used to indoctrinate our children with **Marxist ideology**. To them, parents are no longer an integral part of the learning process, parents have apparently become an impediment.

Hillary Clinton once famously **said** it takes a village to raise a child. It is hard to disagree with that statement on its face until you realize the village Clinton had in mind is the government and not the parents and families who make it up. It is little wonder that McAuliffe, who is a **key figure** in the **Clinton machine**, sees things the same way when it comes to parents and education. They evidently believe it must protect our children from what it perceives as backward ideas such as clinging to "guns or religion" as then-presidential candidate Barack Obama **said.**

While the media may portray this as a battle about **COVID mandates**, **American history**, or the **teaching of sexuality**, those are just the scrimmages that we are witnessing. The real battle is for who the teacher will be in our children's lives — parents and loving local individuals who know our children's names, or faceless government bureaucrats hell-bent on indoctrinating our children with their particular worldview. This is an attack and disruption of the **nuclear family** as prescribed by Black Lives Matter.

It is far past time to stop the controlling influence on education coming from Washington. McAuliffe, Garland, and the NSBA would have you believe that parents **are domestic terrorists**, but it is time for them to realize how their way of thinking poses a real threat to American rights. Put me in the category of those that believe parents are the ones who should be raising our kids.

> *Peter Hoekstra was US Ambassador to the Netherlands during the Trump administration. He served 18 years in the U.S. House of Representatives representing the second district of Michigan and served as Chairman and Ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee. He is currently Chairman of the Center for Security Policy Board of Advisors.*

SOURCE: **GATESTONE INSTITUTE**

Gatestone Institute, a non-partisan, not-for-profit international policy council and think tank is dedicated to educating the public about what the mainstream media fails to report in promoting:

- Institutions of Democracy and the Rule of Law;
- Human Rights
- A free and strong economy
- A military capable of ensuring peace at home and in the free world
- Energy independence
- Ensuring the public stay informed of threats to our individual liberty, sovereignty and free speech.

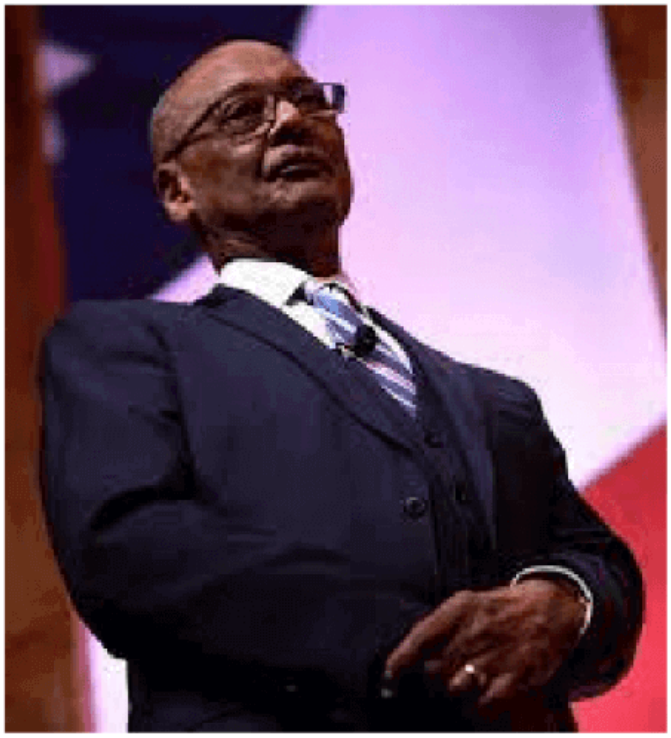
Gatestone Institute conducts national and international conferences, briefings and events for its members and others, with world leaders, journalists and experts — analyzing, strategizing, and keeping them informed on current issues, and where possible recommending solutions.

Gatestone Institute will be publishing books, and continues to publish an online daily report, **www.gatestoneinstitute.org**, that features topics such as military and diplomatic threats to the United States and our allies; events in the Middle East and their possible consequences, and the transparency and accountability of international organizations.

Gatestone Institute is funded by private donors and foundations. We are grateful for your support. Gatestone Institute is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, Federal Tax ID #454724565.

REMINDER: Bob Woodson at November 10 Federal Policy Dinner!

OCTOBER 22, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



You are Cordially Invited
to the next Thomas Jefferson Institute's
Federal Policy Dinner
Wednesday November 10, 2021
6:30 pm
Bob Woodson
Founder, 1776Unites!

Red, White and Black:

Rescuing American History from Revisionists and Race Hustlers

In the rush to redefine the place of black Americans in contemporary society, many radical activists and academics have mounted a campaign to destroy traditional American history and replace it

with a politicized version that few would recognize. According to the new radical orthodoxy, the United States was founded as a racist nation—and everything that has happened throughout our history must be viewed through the lens of the systemic oppression of black people.

That's why Bob Woodson started the 1776 Unites! project, building a positive movement in response to the overwhelming narratives of oppression, grievance and ignorance of American history – and its promise for the future.

After two decades in the civil rights movement, Bob Woodson started the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. Through its 40-year history, the Center has worked to bring recognition, training and funding to grassroots leaders and organizations working to confront the problems facing their communities and heal their neighborhoods with proven, sustainable solutions, bringing training and assistance to more than 2600 leaders of faith-based and community organizations in 39 states,

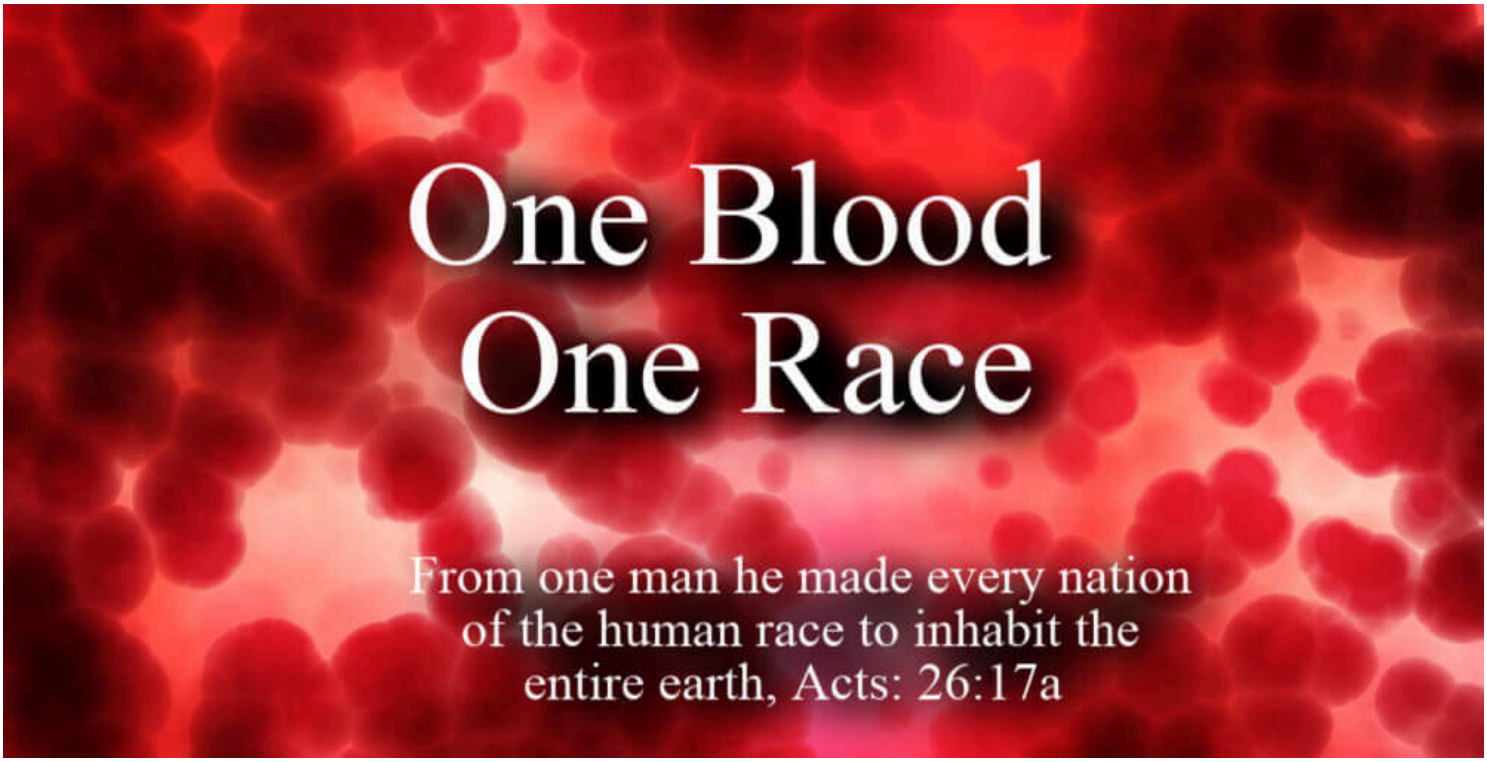
Now, Bob Woodson has turned his attention to American history, offering in his new book Red, White and Black an indispensable corrective to the falsified version of black history presented by the 1619 Project, radical activists and money-hungry "diversity consultants."

Next year, Virginia will adopt new History and Social Studies standards. There's never been a more important time to listen to a more important message. Don't miss this dinner!

Wednesday,
November 10, 2021
6:30pm
$60 per person
JR's Stockyards Inn
8130 Watson Street
McLean, VA 22102
To Register, Click Here!
sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy

CRT from God's Viewpoint

OCTOBER 19, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: ANTICHRIST SYSTEM, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



> Acts: 26:17 From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live,

Terry James | **Prophecy Watch**

A growing threat in America at this critical moment of US history involves a term we've become familiar with; it's one we hear on an almost daily basis. It involves the most basic element of the nation's family unit.

The term is CRT—for Critical Race Theory. The threat the term and ideology most represents is aimed at America's children.

Here is one definition as presented in today's leftist vernacular.

> **critical race theory (CRT),** intellectual movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour. (**https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory**)

CRT is a direct and destructive assault on the foundation of morality and liberty endowed by God and constitutionally assured by the founding fathers. This is because at its black heart is the insidious brainwashing of children in the public classrooms, from kindergarten through graduate levels of higher education.

CRT pits human being against human being. It divides in a most hateful and dangerous way at the God-ordained level of individual personhood, using skin color to do its destructive work.

Luciferian minions among us are rewriting history to paint true champions of God-given human rights as evil tyrants, even though it is those heroes who ultimately did away with slavery and legislated rights that were totally inclusive for all men and women, no matter their gender or the hue of their skin.

These minions are inculcating white children with the lies that they are evil perpetrators of hatred against people of color. They are guilty of being white, guilty of association to the founding fathers and all their whiteness. These minions are teaching children of darker-hued skin that they are victims and must do what is necessary to come against all whose skin is determined to be white. It is taught that violence against such whiteness is justified. Black lives matter and white lives don't is at the center of the CRT curriculum.

The minions have so infiltrated the US government that institutions under the Justice Department, such as the FBI, now insanely threaten to incarcerate and punish in many personal and family ways moms and dads who legally protest school boards that continue to fill the children with such hellish, hateful propaganda.

It looks for the moment that the minions are having their way. The satanic blueprint to bring down the United States of America so that the Antichrist system of global control can be constructed, unhampered, seems to be coming to fruition.

But, as we've observed time and time again, God's restrainer, the Holy Spirit, indwelling all believers who constitute the Church of Jesus Christ, continues to hold back the evil that threatens.

We see this again in the mothers and fathers standing against CRT being taught in the schools of America. A great many of these parents are Christians, and, I believe, are Holy Spirit-inspired to

make this stand in these closing days of the Church Age (Age of Grace). God is using these to restrain Satan and his minions' assault on the children of the nation.

The God of Heaven is not idle. He is at work in many ways we aren't aware of. He sees the end-times battle against the powers and principalities of Ephesians 6:12 in terms of His Son's perfect righteousness.

God's own CRT program is in direct opposition to the wicked CRT campaign on earth we're witnessing in its attempts to destroy the nation through stealing the minds of our children and youth. I term God's CRT program "Christ's Righteousness Theology." This CRT contains all that is necessary to combat all the wickedness the powers and principalities in high places can throw at our nation—at us.

We as Christians must let the world around us see our Lord's righteousness—yes, even His righteous anger—against evil that is exploding across culture and society at this closing time for human history.

Christians are a last line of defense at this crucial time just before the Rapture takes us to the dwelling places Jesus has prepared for those who belong to Him (John 14:1–3).

We must stand against the atrocity of abortion, against the madness of anti-God sexual deviancy, against the humanity-destructive things wrapped up in racism, no matter the perpetrators.

All people are equal in our God's holy eyes, as He offers mankind the righteousness that makes men, women, and children eligible for redemption. The words of His own son, Jesus, says it all about Heaven's CRT program.

> For god so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

McAuliffe Says Parents Should Not Be Involved In Their Children's Education

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Jeanine Martin | **BLE**

And Bill Kristol is the leading conservative in Virginia

In the debate this week between Gubernatorial candidates, Republican Glenn Youngkin expressed his view that parents should be involved in their children's education to which

Democrat Terry McAuliffe replied,

> "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach"

Wow. So our kids are stuck learning CRT and very explicit sex acts because the educrats want those things to be taught in our government schools even over parents' strong objections? (And they wonder why enrollment in public schools has dropped.)

From **foxnews.com:**

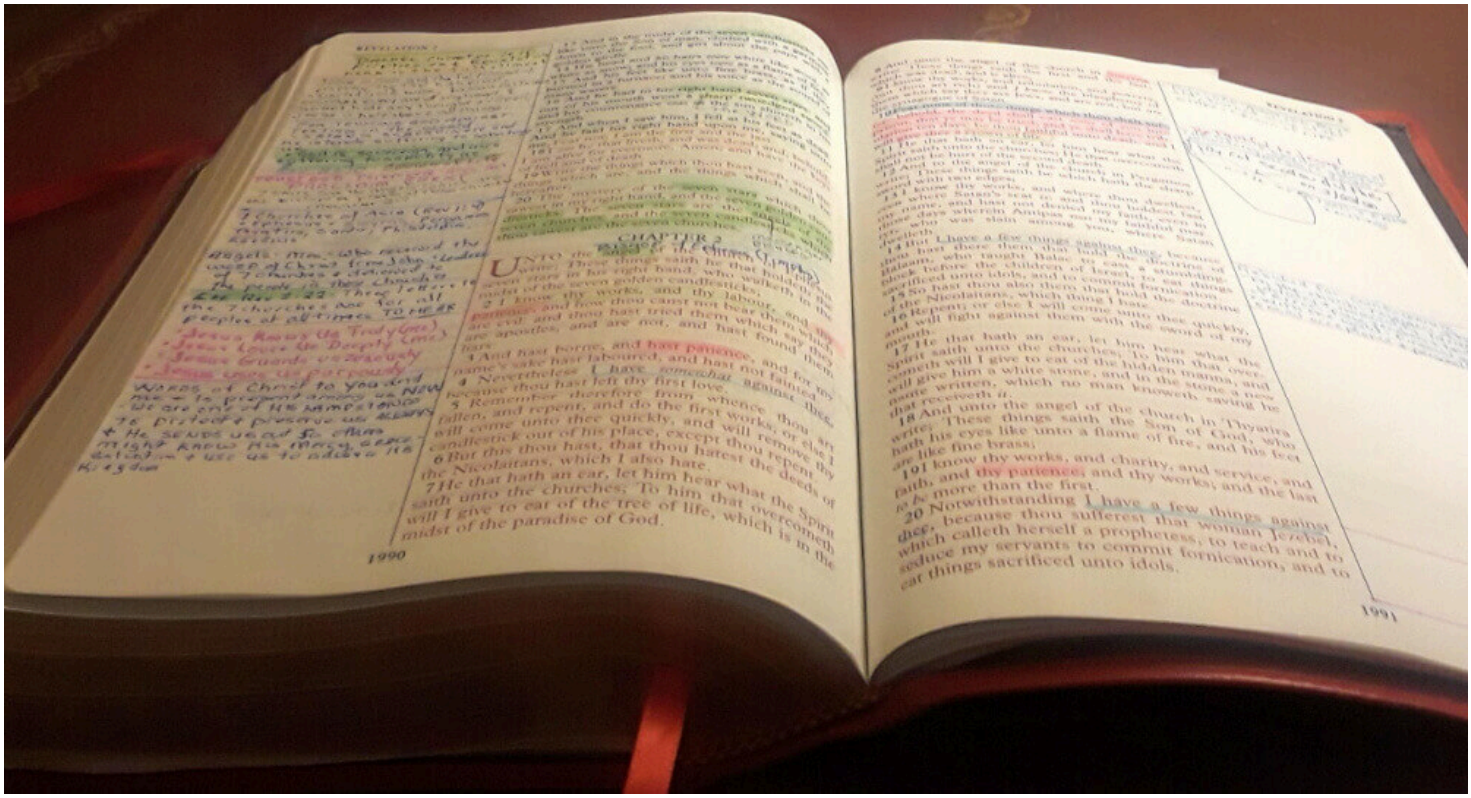
> **McAuliffe made the remarks in response to Youngkin's argument that parents should be more involved in the decisions of local school districts.**

> **"I agree with your conclusion Terry, that we should let local school districts actually make these decisions," Youngkin said. "But we must ask them to include concepts of safety and privacy and respect in the discussion. And we must demand that they include parents in this dialogue.**

READ MORE ON BLE

Searching for Identity in Christ

AUGUST 16, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Randall Murphree, Editor of The Journal | **The Stand**

I watched a young man at the mall as he walked in small circles, talking on his phone. Trying to find his wife? Probably. He was a big man. Massive wooly beard. Broad shoulders. An imposing aura surrounded him. Not a man you'd want to cross. That's how I supposed he would identify himself.

As I walked on past him, I heard a child's excited voice. I spotted her; she was about two years old, maybe younger, and running as fast as her little legs would carry her.

"Daddy!" She shrieked and giggled, grinning ear to ear. Mom followed close behind, laughing and anticipating the scene that would develop. I turned back to watch as the laughing child made a bee-line for the imposing big guy. By the time she reached him, he was on his knees on the floor waiting to embrace her with both arms, her face buried in his bushy beard.

I guess I had him wrong. Now *there*, I concluded, is a man who knows who he is. Identity. He's a daddy. Sure, he's many other things as well, but one thing's for sure: He's got "daddy" down good.

Identity. I was captured by the scene because it reminded me that identity is one of the concepts I've been thinking about a lot lately, praying about it, and searching the Scriptures to build a more

solid foundation for my grasp on my identity in Christ. To affirm my relationship with Him.

I've been reading *Black Belt Discipleship* by Gino Mingo, a California pastor, and he focuses a lot on the subject of identity, how a Christian sees himself or defines himself. Mingo's wife Michelle contributed a chapter titled "Spiritual Authority in Discipleship."

She writes, "The mind-boggling authority that Jesus walked in was because He was secure in His identity. His identity wasn't found in His gender as a man." Or, she goes on to say, His race, or His career as a carpenter, or His role of religious leader.

Fortunately for us today, there are scores of Scriptures to define the identity of a follower of Christ. A little online research produced long lists that took me to the Bible. I'm sharing only a few of the countless verses which explain what it means to be in relationship with Christ.

- I am chosen. *"…even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world…"* (**Ephesians 1:4**).
- I am created. *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"* (**Ephesians 2:10**).
- I am a child of God. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"* (**Romans 8:16**).
- I am a co-heir with Christ. *"…and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him"* (**Romans 8:17**).
- I am called. *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"* (**Romans 8:28**).
- I am a citizen of heaven. *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (**Philippians 3:20**).
- I am confident. *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* (**Philippians 1:6**).
- I am a conqueror. *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us"* (**Romans 8:37**).

And, friends, those are only the C-words! Imagine how many more words God uses to define who we are in Him.

I plan to continue seeking, reading, and absorbing the Scriptures that teach me about my true identity – my identity in Christ. But I've fine-tuned my plan. I want to follow Jesus' example more closely. How did He affirm His own identity?

The bottom line according to Michelle Mingo: "Jesus' identity was firmly rooted in His deep and abiding relationship with his Father. He spent time with His Father. He continually drew away to pray – to get alone with his Father. He needed the Father's presence, voice, guidance, and leading."

SOURCE: **THE STAND**

What Makes a Man Makes a Husband

AUGUST 5, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, FAMILY VALUES, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES, VIRTUE

(Editor's Note: The writer, Nick Dean, is a former employee and friend of AFA.)

There are countless articles for men on dating and marriage, but many seem to focus on what we ought to expect from our future wife and not enough on our own responsibilities in becoming her future husband.

For young men who hope to someday marry, this trend reflects a particular danger: bad husbands.

Why?

Because the young husband who expects only of others and not of himself is little more than a foolish boy with a ring. In the interest of full disclosure, allow me to make clear I am twenty-two and unmarried. This article is every bit as much for me as it is for the other young men I hope will read it. The practices and challenges I set forth are ones I have not yet mastered. Some I do well, others I do poorly. I am not here as a pretender or preacher. I am here as a participant. I am learning and practicing these things right alongside you. That being said, I believe what makes a good man will make a good husband.

Spiritual cultivation

First and foremost in the process of becoming a good man is spiritual formation. Spiritual formation can take many forms, but the most helpful for me are habitual prayer and Scripture reading. A habit of prayer deepens the relationship between a man and his God. This relational intimacy creates a context and a rootedness that will support a man — and a marriage — through the best and worst of times. Additionally, by reading Scripture regularly, we become more knowledgeable in the narrative of our faith, a worthwhile result in and of itself. Beyond that, we also become more in tune with how to live life according to God's will. Scripture is a beautiful, albeit sometimes difficult to read, collection of 66 articles of antiquity that teaches us much about what we are to do and how we are to do it. By these practices, we cultivate ourselves and our intimacy with the Lord. We become men of God, ever loving the One who created us to love and be loved, and prepared to love our future wives as Christ loves the church.

Self-discipline and care

As we practice these spiritual disciplines, our focus of mind and heart will be honed. We may utilize this to cultivate a steadfast self-discipline in all aspects of life. Hold yourself accountable to times of prayer and Scripture reading, but do not allow yourself to stop there. It is so easy to become slaves to our capricious desires and always be in a state of indulging, whether those desires are for laziness, sex, alcohol, money, the latest gadget, junk food, or just one more episode season on Netflix. Self-discipline is necessarily about denying ourselves some of life's pleasures. But self-denial is not an end to itself. Rather, we deny ourselves the too much so that we might properly enjoy the good, protecting ourselves from the bad. In the day to day, this means fulfilling responsibilities, eating healthy, staying active, limiting entertainment, practicing sexual purity, and not drinking to excess. It also means setting aside some time and money to treat ourselves on occasion because self-discipline is not some guilt-driven denial of one's nature; it is taking care of oneself properly. If we can take care of ourselves, we will be that much more prepared to take care of our wives.

Loving hard work

With self-discipline comes a work ethic. As young men, we must develop a work ethic predicated upon diligence and not warm, fuzzy feelings because our future marriages will require the same of us. Certainly, loving relationships are, at times, filled with romantic feelings and profound moments of emotion, but, particularly in the long term, they are about working through the difficult times with your partner. Whether in relationship or work, we must intentionally make the decision to not give up. We will all have to work long hours and take on unappealing assignments. Take these as opportunities to work hard and with excellence, even if your desire is to slack off or quit. This in turn will help to develop the sort of depth of character and uncompromising fidelity that sustains a marriage through sickness and health, good times and bad.

Selfless service

Very much tied to work ethic in the development of our manliness is servanthood and self-sacrifice. Someday, we will need to be servants to our wives and love them selflessly (**Ephesians 5:25**), and we will be better at this if we have an established habit of serving sacrificially. We can begin by setting aside time to serve others. Become involved with an after-school program, a homeless ministry, a community development project, an assisted living home, or special projects at your day job. Work ethic is not simply about what you do, but how you do it. Whether we are volunteering or at work, let us go about both with an attitude that reflects servanthood. Doing so will not only expand our love for others but will also train us to serve well.

Right relationships

The process of becoming a good man has to do with more than ourselves and our work. It also involves our relationships. Wherever possible, we should endeavor to be a friend to all, but we should also nurture and maintain deep, abiding friendships that last a lifetime. In our romantic relationships, we should honor the women we date. It is worth noting that dating-age people are getting to know others at a time when they are still getting to know themselves. Large portions of grace ought to be brought to the table with an understanding that things will not always work out, and that has nothing to do with the value, or dare I say righteousness, of either individual. Moreover, we must take care not to place lofty expectations upon women whom we have only just started dating. We can enjoy the process of dating, getting to know a young woman and appreciating her company, without expecting marriage as a necessary result. That being said, we must continuously exercise discernment before giving our hearts away to a woman who will someday be the wife of another. Honor those you date as well as their future husbands by protecting their hearts and maintaining their purity and integrity. And do your future wife the great honor of not having given your whole heart, body, and eyes to another woman.

Finally, benefit also from mentoring relationships with older men. As young, relatively inexperienced men, we should be thirsty for mentorship. Older men have a wealth of wisdom, knowledge, and practical experience. Home repairs, office politics, what marriage is really like, there is so much we do not yet know. Yet all we need do is ask. As we learn from these men who have walked the road further than us, we grow. Eventually, we will grow to the point that we will be able to pass on this collective wisdom to the next generation of young men.

Grace for growth

At the end of the day, we must remember that this is not some magic formula for becoming Mr. Perfect. And so we must allow ourselves grace as we stumble through these practices in different ways and in different seasons. For what it is worth, though, I think that a real man, a strong man, is one whose greatest passion is demonstrating service and love to his God, family, friend, neighbor,

and enemy; and one who is intent on cultivating himself. Not that he will do so perfectly at all times, but that he is intent on trying. Let us strive to be that kind of man, and then we may be that kind of husband.

SOURCE: **THE STAND**

Divide and conquer: Will America fall?

JULY 15, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Virginia Christian Alliance urges our readers to support the American Family Association in this war against critical race theory.

Dear AFA Partner,

Marxists hate America. They hate individual freedom because they believe the state should rule men and women like sheep.

They hate our Constitution because it limits government power, when the socialist mindset is to aggregate power.

They hate the Declaration of Independence because it recognizes and honors God in its history-shaking propositions – "that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. …"

That's why I regret to say that the Marxists are gaining ground in our nation and are closer than ever to overthrowing our constitutional republic.

As they continue their march through the institutions of our nation, their latest tactic is to divide the American people into warring factions. **Now more than ever, the wedge used to splinter us is *race*.**

That said, let me be perfectly clear: All true Christians abhor actual racism.

To hate people because of their skin color, to persecute them, to deny them their rights as humans created in the image of God, to treat them unjustly before the Lord – these things have no place in a Christian's life.

It might have been in a different context – showing favoritism to those who are rich while disdaining those who are poor – but James makes clear that such partiality makes us "judges with evil motives" (James 2:4).

Yet, while many Americans are willing to open the door to an honest discussion about racism, something else has taken the opportunity to slither into the house.

Beneath the surface, an evil, Marxist-based ideology is dominating the public discourse about race in America, and you need to be made aware.

It's called Critical Race Theory (CRT).

CRT is so sinister that we asked our very own Meeke Addison to address this issue from a gospel-centric perspective. Meeke is assistant director of special initiatives for AFA and co-host, with her husband Wil, of **Airing the Addisons** on American Family Radio. (**CHECK OUT THE SERIES HERE**)

In **A Biblical Response to Critical Race Theory**, Meeke offers an informed and passionate challenge to the Marxist perspective that has taken hold in many of the power centers of our culture.

In appreciation for your generosity to AFA, I want you to have a copy of **A Biblical Response to Critical Race Theory**.

READ MORE

Loudon County School Board Trigger Arrests of Their Citizens Protesting Critical Race Theory

JUNE 28, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CRITICAL RACE THEORY, DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, LGBTQ

'Unlawful assembly': 2 parents arrested after protesting trans policies, critical race theory at Virginia school board meeting

(see full post on **LIFESITE NEWS** which has more video clips)

The meeting was dominated by members of the board exercising heavy control over parental concerns about the promotion of transgenderism and CRT to kids, and when parents attempted to continue speaking after the board ended the meeting, two were arrested by sheriff's deputies.

LOUDOUN COUNTY, Virginia, June 23, 2021 (**LifeSiteNews**) – Hundreds of concerned parents were denied the opportunity to oppose critical race theory and transgender bathrooms when board members of Loudoun County Public Schools pre-emptively closed a public meeting yesterday, which saw two people arrested.

Parents, students, and teachers all took part in speaking out against the proposed introduction of critical race theory (CRT) as well as the **promotion** of broad transgender policies, in a long meeting

of the Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) Board on Tuesday, June 22. The meeting was dominated by members of the board exercising heavy control over parental concerns about the promotion of transgenderism and CRT to kids, and when parents attempted to continue speaking after the board ended the meeting, two were arrested by sheriff's deputies.

Loudoun County is about 30 miles outside of Washington, D.C. Located near Dulles International Airport, it's the **richest county in the United States** and borders Fairfax County, which is just outside D.C. Fairfax County is already well-known to social conservatives for its graphic public school sex-ed curriculum and transgender bathroom policies.

LCPS teachers previously compiled a "list" of parents who opposed critical race theory with the stated purpose to "infiltrate" their groups, use "hackers" to disrupt their communications, and "expose these people publicly." In 2019, Loudoun County's "Diverse Classroom Library Initiative" saw sexually explicit books placed in school libraries. An alarming number of the books focused on "sexual diversity" and contained sexually explicit language, including "frequent descriptions of underage drinking, fondling, masturbation, orgasms, oral sex, sexual intercourse, sexual abuse, statutory rape, incest, and rape," the *Daily Signal* **reported at the time**.

Former state senator excoriates anti-free speech Loudoun County school board: 'I am disgusted by your bigotry and your depravity'

People began queuing up outside the board room early on Tuesday, in order to secure their place to speak during the public comment session. A total of 259 people signed up for public comments, but less than one-fifth of that number, 51, were officially heard.

Those called upon to speak were allowed just one minute at the microphone.

LifeSiteNews spoke to Brenda Tillett, President of Stand Up Virginia, an organization which was instrumental in encouraging concerned parents to attend Tuesday's school board meeting.

Tillett herself was present at the meeting, and noted how Loudoun has recently become the "battleground county for Virginia and all of the U.S., fighting critical race theory and school boards that are overriding the parental rights and infusing politics into the classroom."

However, such was the firm opposition to the school board's proposals to radically advance the transgender issue, that transgender supporters were called in to attend the meeting and support the board. Buses were in fact arranged to transport them, but only a "handful" of supporters **appeared**.

As the meeting began, the opening speakers were in favor of the school board's far-left policies, with one mother accusing others in the room of spreading "hate," which she claimed was "dripping from the followers of Jesus in this room."

This verbal attack prompted upset in the room, with some shouting their opposition to the comment and accusing her of spreading hate, although no one expressed physical opposition. Following this, the board exited the room, and upon returning after a five minute "time-out," issued the ultimatum that any further interruptions would lead to the closure of the public comment session. The board had apparently held a vote on the matter while out of the room, and decided unanimously in favor of the ruling.

Such a threat had the desired effect, with attendees at the meeting keeping a hushed atmosphere in order to survive the threatened prevention of their address to the board.

However, former State Senator Dick Black **delivered** an impassioned set of **remarks** to the board, accusing the board of having a "dark history of suppressing free speech."

"I am disgusted by your bigotry and your depravity," he ended, which led to almost instinctive applause and mass cheering from the crowd in the room.

True to its threat, the board thus took another vote in front of the meeting, unanimously voting to end the public comments session and the meeting itself.

Attendees protested the decision, calling for the meeting to reconvene in order to have the opportunity to exercise their freedom of speech and express an opinion on the formation of school-children in the county. Parents booed the school board, and cries of "shame on you" rang through the room. Parents even spontaneously broke into a rendition of the national anthem.

Even though the meeting had been terminated, many decided to remain in the room and give their testimonies regardless, with community leader Jon Tigges providing a megaphone to the nearly 200 people who still wished to present their comments.

The Family Foundation, which had representatives also present at the meeting, **noted** that the remarks which followed were "some of the most moving and inspiring moments of the evening."

Members of the school board then emerged and accused the meeting attendees who were still present of conducting an "unlawful assembly," ordering people to vacate the room. Tigges and many others were unwilling to leave, given the circumstances of how the meeting had ended. Tigges added that he would **stay** until everyone had been able to speak, a decision which led to his subsequent **arrest** by sheriff's deputies who were present.

He was later released, after receiving a trespassing summons, while another man was also arrested for Obstruction of Justice and Disorderly Conduct.

Brenda Sheridan, the LCPS Board Chairman, issued a **statement** after the meeting claiming that the meeting was "interrupted by those who wish to use the public comment period to disrupt our work and disrespect each other."

> Update: former VA state senator Dick Black spoke out against critical race theory in the board meeting and crowd couldn't stay silent. The Loudoun Co school board said if there were eruptions like this they'd end public comment **pic.twitter.com/dx0oMAy1Fu**
>
> — Gabriella Borter (@gabriellaborter) **June 22, 2021**

> The Loudoun County sheriff's office declared the school board meeting an unlawful assembly. Everyone told to get out or will be trespassing. Two arrests made **#CriticalRaceTheory pic.twitter.com/23Cojtczvy**
>
> — Gabriella Borter (@gabriellaborter) **June 22, 2021**

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She also addressed the parental concern over LGBT promotion, writing: "During the month of June, Virginia recognizes Pride Month, a time to celebrate the LGBTQIA community and the progress we have made to be inclusive of all Loudoun County residents. I am proud of all of our students and I stand with them."

LCPS considering forcing fake trans pronouns on teachers and students, allowing boys in girls' bathrooms

Tillett explained to LifeSiteNews that the chief issue of the recent meeting was the school board's rampant promotion of transgender ideology in the classroom, as outlined in a draft **policy**. She noted how children and teachers would be forced to call their classmates or students by their "preferred pronouns," instead of by those which reflect to their biological sex.

Such a policy would be a violation of freedom of speech, Tillett noted.

Under terms of the LCPS proposed draft policy, students would have access to any restroom or locker room which corresponded to "their gender identity," meaning that biological males could aches female restrooms, should they "identify" as female. All a student has to do in order to identify as a different sex, is use different pronouns, "without any substantiating evidence, regardless of the name and gender recorded in the student's permanent educational record."

Should a female student object to a biological male in the female restrooms, she would be in violation of the policy, and the "equality" offered to LGBT students.

An eighth-grade student **slammed** the proposal at a previous LCPS meeting, describing it as "dangerous and rooted in sexism."

"You do this in the name of inclusivity while ignoring the girls who will pay the price. Your policies choose boys' wants over girls' needs," the student added.

The school board has already risen to media notoriety in the recent weeks with its decision to **suspend** a P.E. teacher for his refusal to call students by fake pronouns and instead refer to them based on their actual sex. Bryon "Tanner" Cross was later **reinstated** by order of Loudoun County Circuit Judge, James Plowman, but the school district has **indicated** that it will not rest with the decision, and even take the matter to the Supreme Court, in order to punish Cross.

Critical race theory 'a political goal to create a divide based on race'

Transgenderism is not the only issue being forced upon school-children in the LCPS, however, as aspects of **critical race theory** are already being taught in the classrooms. Tillett mentioned how current class content includes the teaching that white people are "oppressors," that students must "examine your white privilege," and have retrospective guilt for historical oppression.

Meanwhile black students are taught that they are currently oppressed, and always will be oppressed by the white supremacists who rule America.

"Children who never even thought about color, are now discussing color," lamented Tillett.

"It's a political goal to create a divide based on race," she added. "If you continue to create a divide based on race, then that's how you keep people voting in a certain pocket, because Democrats usually target the race issue, and then say that Republicans are racist."

Black Loudoun County residents have a median income of $112,000; the county elected a black woman **Chair At-Large** to its board of supervisors in 2015.

'They are moving forward with their own political agenda irrespective of the constituents they represent – and because of that, they will be recalled'

The events at the LCPS board meeting, including the arrest of some of those present to express their concerns, has further highlighted the importance of the conflict which is being waged in Loudoun County.

Tillett issued a stern rebuke of the LCPS Board. "Shutting down the meeting was another example of them treating parents as if we're children, and as if they're our parents, and another example of them shutting down the conversation and not taking into consideration the wishes and thoughts, and views, and values of parents in Loudoun County," she declared.

“We are the majority, and they are cancelling us, they are censoring us, they are moving forward with their own political agenda irrespective of the constituents they represent – and because of that, they will be recalled.”

Terry Schilling, the president of pro-family **American Principles Project**, echoed this in comments provided to LifeSite: “What is happening in Loudoun County right now is important but not unique. Across the country, parents are organizing to fight back against the radical agenda being foisted upon their children in schools, from the racist and Marxist ‘critical race theory’ to the dangerous, anti-scientific transgender ideology and highly explicit, age-inappropriate sex-ed curricula.”

“All of this has parents incredibly angry at their school board members and local leaders, and they have every right to be,” Schilling added.

Schilling also noted that the event is not a one-off, but a harbinger of things to come: “While the left may hope this is only a temporary flare-up, the truth is that this has all the makings of a serious, long-lasting movement. Like the Tea Party a decade ago, this is a movement being built and fought by normal people – but instead of focusing on pocketbook issues such as taxes and budget deficits, it is concerned with something infinitely more important: the education and innocence of our children. And because these issues hit so close to home for so many families, it’s unlikely these battles will be dying down anytime soon. If anything, they’re only getting started.”

SOURCE: **LIFESITE NEWS**

Jesus Loves the Little Children

JUNE 22, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW, CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Even the white kids are precious.

By J. Jeff Toler, for **Shenandoah Christian Alliance**

Jesus loves the little children

All the children of the world

Red and yellow, black or white

They are precious in His sight

Jesus loves the little children of the world

For some of us at least, it's not easy to simply read these lyrics without the tune playing in our heads. That's because this familiar old Sunday school ditty was regularly sung in the classrooms in church and schools for decades and decades. I'm not so sure it's all that popular anymore. And, if that's true, there must somehow be a reason for that, and it may have something to do with racism—or what passes for racism these days. How is it some of us are infuriated that this song signals white complacency that racism is so easily conquered? Is it because Jesus really does love all the children of the world?

It's not unheard of within Christian circles, Bible studies, Sunday school, and the like to see how tragic things have become when topics like "systemic racism" are discussed. The unavoidable assumption of systemic racism, is simply: everyone and everything is racist. Why is it we are enslaved to the popular cultural narratives are influencing clear Bible teaching? It is enough to make one wonder how much clear Bible teaching is available in *some* circles these days. First of all, are we really talking about racism, or are we really talking about tribalism, or ethnicity instead?

That said, what do the scriptures teach us abut racism? In short, they teach us that:

> "There is only one race—the human race. Caucasians, Africans, Asians, Indians, Arabs, and Jews are not different races. Rather, they are different ethnicities of the human race. All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations, of course). More importantly, all human beings are equally created in the image and likeness of God (**Genesis 1:26-27**). God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus to lay down His life for us (**John 3:16**). The 'world' obviously includes all ethnic groups." (From **gotquestions.org**)

The Bible also teaches us, ***"My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism"*** (James 2:1 NASB) Racism exists because we are sinners, living in sin, and only released from the bondage of sin through repentance and by faith in Jesus Christ. So, there is something taking place that doesn't quite square with the gospel.

Racism is the chief tool of Marxist use today for destroying honest efforts at brotherhood among the faithful. We would be all the better for understanding that. We must be certain of our apologetics in this matter.

Wouldn't we have to say that racism is an extreme example of partiality?

The Sin of Partiality

"But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." (James 2:9 ESV)

Now, if we think about this for only a minute, we would have to say that, "Racism" is an *extreme* example of partiality—if for no other reason that a racist, by definition, would necessarily be partial to his own "race." With that being true, an "anti-racist" would *likewise* also have to admit to partiality in his paradigm that all people are racist except him. Both are guilty of partiality. So, if we begin with the premise of a racist and an anti-racist both demonstrating extreme partiality, then neither party can lecture anyone using the yardstick of Christian apologetics. And yet, witness the anti-racist/anti-white supremacist (where all white people are

deemed privileged) who lectures on CRT, intersectionality, and anti-racism in our public schools, corporate board rooms, employee training, and a long list of social and cultural venues. But Christian schools? Sunday school classes? Entire Christian denominations? That does not seem like a good way to battle partiality.

Voddie Baucham has said—repeatedly—for the cultural Marxist, "Everything is racist." And, we might add, *everyone* is racist. At this point, every white students, no matter how innocent he or she truly may be of racism, must bear the sin of being white. They have to because they are guilty of a sin that can't be pardoned: the color of their skin.

On Tuesday, June 15, the Southern Baptist Convention elected a new president, **Ed Litton**, a pastor heretofore little known outside of "racial reconciliation" activists. The SBC also passed **Resolution 2** in an attempt to mollify the opponents of **Resolution 9**. (which we have discussed before) Nevertheless, Litton has his work cut out for him, if he wants to keep the SBC in tact. Quite possibly a split has already begun—along the "fault line" of **Critical Race Theory.** The impassioned convention rhetoric **can be seen here**, along with analysis by Jon Harris of **Conversations that Matter** podcast.

Once again, conservatives (in this case of course, conservative Christians) seem to be shouldering the burden of being out of step with the current cultural movement toward legitimizing CRT, and other ideologies, especially its use as "analysis" for its teaching.

A Christian worldview, with its fealty to honest truth is imperative, as just this one video will show. Politics is a word many of us are not always comfortable with in the context of Christian endeavor, but it is always present, and something with which we always contend, like it or not.

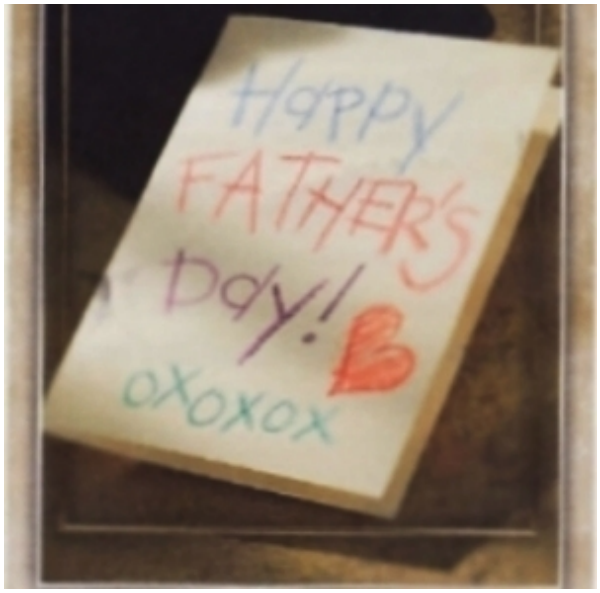
SCA, regardless of any of our denominational relationships, view the current racist tropes for what they are: Marxist constructs designed and developed to divide followers of Christ with the immutable ethnic identities of skin color. In God's economy, *all mankind are of one race*. What we really are up in arms about is ethnicity—the tribal realities of mankind. And, this too, is created by God.

"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Corinthians 4:7 NIV)

Read **Matthew 13:24-30** for insight on how the enemy infiltrates even among well-meaning believers. ***Then, whatever you do, take your students out of the public school system.*** The enemy has made a stronghold there.

Story of Father's Day – June 15, 2014

JUNE 20, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



> He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.
> Malachi 4:6

Father's Day is a beautiful festival that acknowledges and appreciates the important role played by a father in raising the child and consequently building a stronger society. Though fathers have been revered at all times by civilizations across the globe ironically what was missing until the last century was the official recognition of the significance of fathers in one's life. Father's Day story is the tale of realization of the need for a Father's Day festival primarily by Ms Sonora Louise Smart Dodd of Washington. The story narrates Sonora's unflagging struggle to officially set a day to honor all fathers. Thanks to Sonora, today Fathers Day is celebrated in a large number of countries around the world.

The Beginning of Father's Day Story

Historians have recorded that there was a tradition to celebrate Father's Day even thousands of years ago. Their studies say that 4,000 years ago in Babylon a son called Elmesu carved a father's day message on a clay card. In his message Elmesu wished his father a long and healthy life. There is no knowledge as to what happened to this father son duo, but it is believed that several countries retained the custom of celebrating Father's Day.

Genesis of Father's Day in Modern Society

The tradition of celebrating Father's Day as seen today originated in the last century. Though there are several people who are credited for furthering the cause of Father's Day, there is far greater acceptance for Ms Sonora Louise Smart Dodd's contribution. A doting daughter from Spokane, Washington, Ms Dodd is recognized as the Founder or Mother of the Father's Day Festival.

Inception of the Father's Day took place in Sonora's mind when she happened to hear a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. Sonora, who was 27 then, had begun to recognize the hardships her father must have gone through while bringing up his six children alone. When Sonora was 16, her mother had died during childbirth. Sonora's father a Civil War veteran by the name of William Jackson Smart raised six children including the newborn on his own. Sonora questioned that if there is a day to recognize mothers then why is not there a day to honor fathers?

Many people laughed and joked at Sonora's idea. But her will did not droop. She began a sincere campaign lobbying for the cause of Father's Day. Her hard work began to show signs of success when Spokane celebrated its first Father's Day on June 19, 1910 with the support of Spokane Ministerial Association and the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). To pay tribute to her affectionate father, Sonora wished that Father's Day be celebrated on her father's birthday on June 5, but it so happened that there was not enough time for preparation and the day came to be celebrated on third Sunday in the month of June.

The noble idea of celebrating Father's Day became quite popular in the U.S., so much so that President Woodrow Wilson approved of the festival in 1916. President Calvin Coolidge too supported the idea but it was President Lyndon Johnson who signed a Presidential Proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day in 1966. Then in 1972, President Richard Nixon established a permanent national observance of Father's Day to be held on the third Sunday of June.

Fathers Day Celebration in Present Time

Father's Day has become a hugely popular festival. World over, people thank their fathers and pay tribute to them.

SOURCE: FATHERSDAYCELEBRATION

Critical Race Theory: It's a cancer, not a cure

MAY 24, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

May 21, 2021 (**Radiance Foundation**) – I'm half white and half black. My melanin doesn't change my worth or my propensity to sin. Yet we live in a culture where we are told that our skin color confers upon us a status that is fixed, assigned by an elite class of humans who call themselves "scholars." They want us to see everything through the broken lens of "race"—a human construct that has only served to dehumanize us throughout history. As a person with brown skin, I reject my assigned "status" and refuse to see everything through that distorted prism.

It leads to blindness.

Instead, I choose to see through the breakthrough filter of Scripture that opens our eyes to the truth of our identity, the perfect bond of love, our oneness through Christ, and the freedom of forgiveness. Our human condition, and the frailty that marks us, can never be illuminated by the darkness of tattered theories.

READ MORE

See Video:

https://youtu.be/xuSMvIVtd0A

Human Zoos and the Ota Benga Story

APRIL 28, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: EUGENICS, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

by William Wegert, D.Min

I was embarrassed, ashamed, and angry at the same time, but the most powerful emotion was anger. Before I explain the reason for these emotions, let me back up. I have lived in the beautiful city of Lynchburg, Virginia for the past 37 years. Much of my free time is spent studying the overwhelming amount of scientific evidence demonstrating the inadequacy of Charles Darwin's theory to explain the life we see around us.

Evolutionist and the Emperor's New Clothes

This is a passionate interest of mine because I was once a staunch evolutionist, having been well indoctrinated in the theory by college professors at the likes of Miami University, The Ohio State University, and Colorado State University.

However, after graduating with two science degrees and taking the time to actually look at the evidence, it became clear that the theory of evolution is the scientific equivalent of the Hans Christian Andersen's folktale "The Emperor's New Clothes."

Everybody talks about evolution as if it is an established fact, when there is not a shred of evidence that one kind of plant or animal has ever morphed into a new one through random errors

(mutations) in the genetic code followed by natural selection. Despite the 'millions of years' narrative, Darwin's theory lacks any support in the realm of true science.

Human Zoos

Back to my emotions. I was listening to a powerful documentary entitled "Human Zoos," a piece that begins by describing events that took place during the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. I learned that a man named Samuel Verner who was, sadly, a former missionary, went to the Congo in Africa and brought back a group of Pygmies who were put on display in an exhibit purporting to support the theory of human evolution from monkeys. Fair visitors looked as what they were told were pre-humans, creatures that reflected an earlier period in the long evolutionary path to modern *Homo sapiens*.

Ota Benga Displayed at the Bronx Zoo

After the fair ended, Verner returned the Africans to their native country, but one of the Pygmies named Ota Benga, ended up coming back to the US with him. Benga was later put on display at the Bronx Zoo in New York. At first, he could freely roam the zoo grounds, but after reacting violently against the crowds that chased, poked, and otherwise harassed him, he was placed in the zoo's Monkey House. Though officials would later deny it, he was looked upon as a sub-human, once again on exhibit to curious zoo-goers as evidence of human evolution.

The New York Times vs Black Clergymen

Thankfully, a group of Black clergymen protested Benga's treatment and said that he should be in school not in a zoo. However, the New York Times had a different view when they wrote, "The pygmies … are very low in the human scale, and the suggestion that Benga should be in a school instead of a cage ignores the high probability that school would be a place … from which he could draw no advantage whatever." Finally, after the pastors appealed to the mayor of New York for his release, Benga was put into the custody of a man named James M. Gordon, supervisor of the **Howard Colored Orphan Asylum** in Brooklyn.

While this setting was better than the zoo, Benga was by this time 23 years old and having been married twice and fathered two children back in Africa. Being much older than the other orphans, he was moved to the Baptist Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. It was at this point in the documentary that I froze in my tracks. Ota Benga lived in my city of Lynchburg, Virginia? How could I not have known this after living here for nearly four decades?

Ota Benga's Tragic End

But the story gets much worse. Benga became very homesick and began making plans to return to the Congo. However, in 1914, World War I broke out, halting passenger ship traffic across the ocean. Benga realized that his dream of being reunited with his people would never be realized. Falling into a depression, Benga took his own life with a borrowed pistol in 1916.

At this point in the story, I experienced the triple emotions referenced above. I am embarrassed that I have lived in Lynchburg for as long as I have without knowing this unbelievably tragic story. I was ashamed that fellow humans would treat a person in such a humiliating fashion. But most of all, I was angry that our society continues to perpetuate the lie of Darwinian evolution despite the horrifying consequences when the theory is taken to its logical conclusion.

Eugenics and Hitler's Holocaust | Rooted in Darwin's theory of Evolution

I highly recommend this award-winning documentary, which can be found at **www.humanzoos.org**. But be prepared to be further angered as it goes on to describe the horrors of the eugenics movement and Hitler's Holocaust, both firmly rooted in Darwin's theory of evolution.

William Wegert, D.Min., M.Div., M.S., B.S.

Human Zoos: America's Forgotten History of Scientific Racism

Human Zoos: America's Forgotten History of Scientific Racism
https://youtube.com/watch?v=nY6Zrol5QEk

What is My Identity?

MARCH 8, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Greene Hollowell

If someone would ask how you identify yourself other than by name you might answer by your occupation or where you worked or where you are from. There are a number of choices but in the final analysis, there is one overriding answer and that is you are *a Child of God*.

God formed you in your mother's womb, gave you a soul, and breathed in you the breath of life. He brings you into a sinful world. In addition, you were born with a sinful nature that was passed down to you through the ages because of an act of disobedience by ADAM, the first human who was created. There is another negative, there is an evil fallen angel called Satan, the devil who is in charge of this sinful world and who tries to lead you astray. You were born with a strike against you!

Even though you were born *a Child of God* you still have this sinful nature that causes you to sin and that leads you to be unacceptable to God. But HE has provided a way to remedy this dilemma.

God, the Father has sacrificed His son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for our sins. If we come to Him in faith and ask for forgiveness, repent of our sins and acknowledge Him, we will have the experience of being 'born-again', of being saved. This is a new life for us! God pours our sins into Jesus and pours Jesus' goodness into us. In addition, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Now your own

body does not belong to you. For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God, because He owns it.

Traditionally your mother and father are responsible for leading you to have this 'born-again' experience at an early age as possible. They bring you to church for instruction and fellowship with other Christians. It's your responsibility to make your commitment to God and only you can do it.

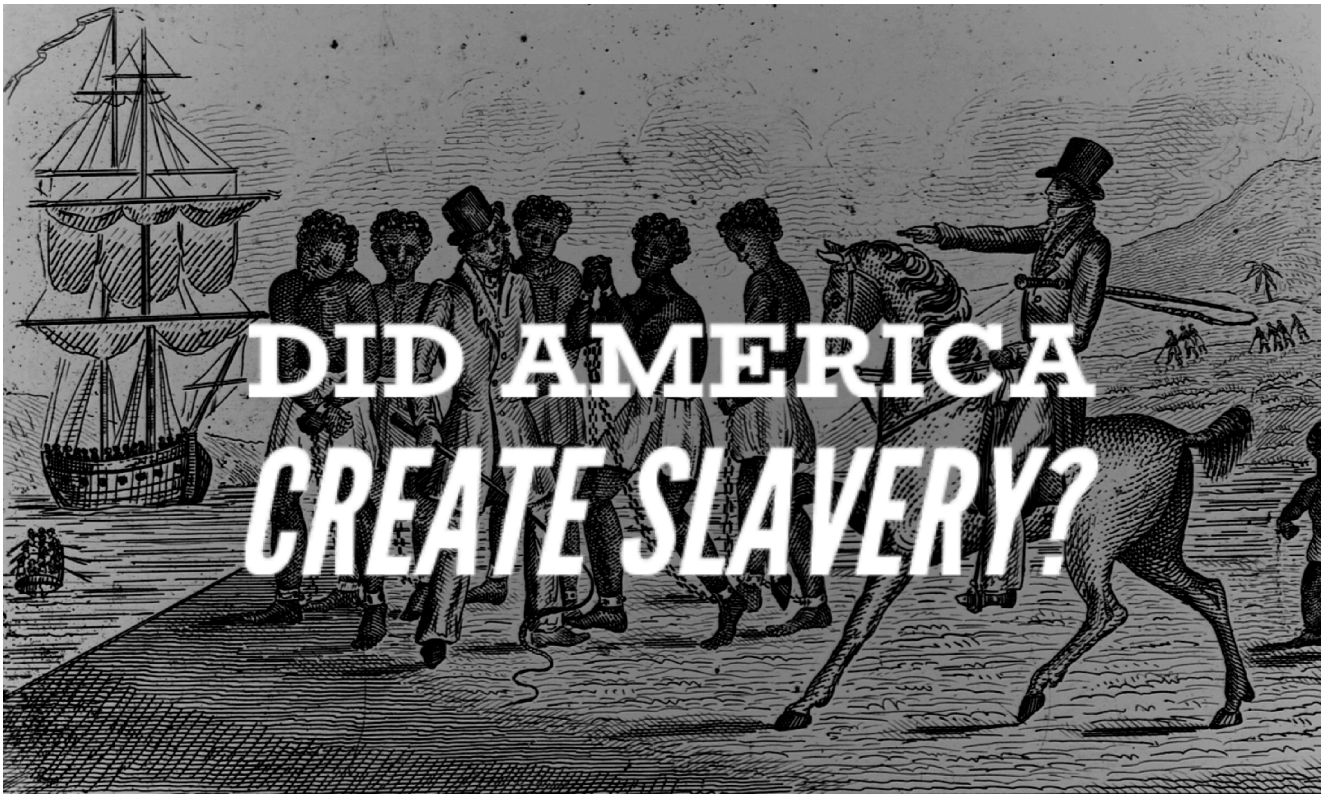
You move ahead in life asking God to guide you and help you. He is in command of your life now. Yes, there will be times when you sin and you ask for forgiveness and you move back ahead in confidence that your 'born again' experience is real.

Many babies who come in the world don't have the same experience as above. Their parents might not be Christians, they might have parents that have abandoned them. They might be brought up in heathen cultures with different gods. Some so-called Christian churches and pastors have no conception of this born-again necessity. This is also a big strike you must overcome. Life can be very, very hard, particularly if you were born with a handicap or sickness. And oh, there is more.

We all know there is an end to this experience here on earth. The *tent is struck* and death eventually comes to all. God gives us the good news that we will be with Him in Heaven provided we have stayed true to our commitment to Him. He states that if we deviate and waddle in sin, we will not be with Him in Heaven. He lists certain sins in the Bible that if we continue in them, we will have another designation at death, Hell. The Bible list sexual sins, idol worship, thievery, greed, drunkenness, abuse, and swindling.

Did America Create Slavery?

FEBRUARY 14, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Democratic Senator Tim Kaine announced on the floor of the Senate that:

> "The United States didn't inherit slavery from anybody. We created it."

For even the most basic student of world history such a statement ought to immediately be recognized as incomprehensively ridiculous. Historically, every single people, nation, culture, and race has at various times been both the slave and the master. Indeed, *"all have sinned and fallen short"* (Romans 3:23). Sen. Kaine, just like the famously inaccurate *1619 Project*, must ignore documented history and create his own fantasy world to arrive at such a conclusion.

For example, in ancient Greece—which existed thousands of years before America—nearly 30% of their population were slaves. The Roman Empire reached a staggering 40%. In fact, one of the most significant and widely known aspects of the Bible centers around the Israelites being delivered out of slavery in Egypt through the famous Exodus. We could walk through every nation in human history and find a tragic past riddled with slavery.

READ MORE

SOURCE: **WALL BUILDERS**

Pastoring During A Pandemic

FEBRUARY 7, 2021
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PANDEMIC

Brad Huddleston

It would be an understatement to say that the current pandemic has brought challenges to the Body of Christ. Many churches across our nation and around the world have shut their doors, never to reopen. There are, thank the Lord, many churches that are thriving. What can we learn from them? One such church is Cornerstone Church of Augusta, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Join me as I discuss these issues with my guest, Pastor Josh Wheeler.

Pastoring During A Pandemic
https://youtube.com/watch?v=LAAc_Js5QSw

Structural Racism

SEPTEMBER 19, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Liberato | **Full Article posted here**

Editor's Note 8/29/20: This was written by a Tea Partier in 2011. Everything came true, except it only took nine years and it's being carried on by self-declared "trained Marxists".

Highlights:

- The Left is misusing race under the banner of 'structural racism' as a weapon to advance its collectivist, redistributionist agenda.
- Structural racism advocates are making significant inroads in both civil rights circles and popular thought.
- Unless somebody with influence starts standing up to the structural racism crowd, structural racism will become a 20-year overnight policy success. It's already well on its way.
- Anyone hoping to compete with structural racism advocates rhetorically had better come to the battle well-prepared and able to match their sophistication.

Why This Report?

Now is the time to pay attention to the Left's new rallying cries, "structural racism". Issue campaigns can take 20 years to gestate. The Supreme Court's recognition of gun rights for individuals came after 20 years of effort on the part of the National Rifle Association that begin with commissioning law professors to write scholarly articles in law journals. Gays can marry in five states today because gay activists have been working the gay marriage issue for the last 15 years or more.

A year before the push for Obamacare, Left-wing activists at a progressive conference discussed how to craft a bill to make insurance companies "whither on the vine" so the country would eventually have no choice but to turn to single-payer, i.e., socialized medicine. The activists' vision came to fruition a year later in Obamacare.
A similar campaign is now underway for structural racism and its redistributionist policy aims. The groundwork is being laid and headway is steadily being made. The idea has thoroughly penetrated civil rights circles and is grabbing mindshare elsewhere. Agitators are indoctrinating minority youth in structural racism concepts, setting up future policy successes at the voting booth. The Left can win again unless attention is paid to structural racism now and the efforts of its advocates resisted.

CONTINUE TO FULL ARTICLE

Are BLM Leaders Calling on the Spirits of the Dead?

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Dr Michael Brown

Is it true that leaders of the BLM movement, including one of the co-founders, are calling on the spirits of the dead? That they claim to receive spiritual power from the deceased? That they talk with these spirits and even give them names? The answer to all these questions is yes. This is now an open secret.

Lest you think that this type of "spirituality" is exceedingly rare, I remind you that in October, 2019, the *New York Times* ran a **story** titled, "When Did Everybody Become a Witch?" The article claimed that, "We have reached peak witch," noting that, "Real witches are roaming among us, and they're seemingly everywhere."

Yes, "Witches are influencers who use the hashtag #witchesofinstagram to share horoscopes, spells and witchy memes, and they are anti-Trump resistance activists carrying signs that say "Hex the Patriarchy" (also the title of a new book of spells) and "We are the granddaughters of the witches you weren't able to burn."

I documented this phenomenon in my book, ***Jezebel's War with America***, also arguing that many of the major trends in our society could be traced back to this "Jezebelic" spirit. These include the rise

of pornography; the shout your abortion movement; radical feminism; the emasculating of men; the war on gender; the rise of witchcraft and sorcery; and the silencing of the prophetic voice of the church.

With the rise of the BLM movement, we have further evidence of this **Jezebelic influence**, as the co-founders are all radical feminists, with two of the three identifying as queer. (Please note that I use the initials BLM to distinguish this Marxist-based movement from the important affirmation that black lives do matter.)

We can now trace this demonic influence one step further, with the open, unapologetic statements of two key BLM leaders. I'm speaking about BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors and Prof. Melina Abdullah, chair of the department of Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles, and a co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of Black Lives Matter.

Their relevant **video discussion** on Facebook was posted on June 13. But even before that, on June 9, Heba Farrag posted an **article** on the Berkeley Center website titled, "The Fight for Black Lives is a Spiritual Movement."

Farrag explained how Prof. Abdullah met with a BLM group in front of the house of Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti:

"She led the group in a ritual: the reciting of names of those taken by state violence before their time — ancestors now being called back to animate their own justice:

"'George Floyd. Asé. Philandro Castille. Asé. Andrew Joseph. Asé. Michael Brown. Asé. Erika Garner. Asé. Harriet Tubman. Asé. Malcom X. Asé. Martin Luther King. Asé.'

"As each name is recited, Dr. Abdullah poured libations on the ground as the group of over 100 chanted 'Asé,' a Yoruba term often used by practitioners of Ifa, a faith and divination system that originated in West Africa, in return. This ritual, Dr. Abdullah explained, is a form of worship."

Yes, this helps fuel the fires of the BLM movement: worship of the dead; calling on the dead; asking the spirits of the dead to empower the living today.

Abdullah and Cullors discussed this openly on their Facebook video, which Abraham Hamilton, III, brought to national attention on his **daily radio show** on August 13, playing relevant clips, in context.

In the video, Prof. Abdullah stated that "we become very intimate with the spirits that we call on regularly. Right, like, each of them seems to have a different presence and personality. You know, I laugh a lot with Wakisha, you know, and I didn't meet her in her body. Right, I met her through this work."

Yes, the spirits of the dead even have names, like Wakisha, with whom Abdullah exchanges some laughs.

Cullors, in response, explained how she has been empowered by these spirits and how the mantra to "say his (or, her) name" was more than a slogan. It was an appeal to the spirits of the deceased to rise up and work through her and others.

As **summed up** by Cullors, "The fight to save your life is a spiritual fight."

Of course, she is entirely right. The battles we fight in our society are, ultimately, spiritual battles. But victory is found, not in calling on the spirits of the dead but in calling on the Spirit of the living God.

As we have been **emphasizing** for months now, one is from below; the other is from above. One brings death, the other brings life.

Let the reader be aware. Fully aware. Calling on the spirits of the dead is a practice you want to avoid at all costs – for your own soul's sake.

Understanding the BLM Movement: A Primer

AUGUST 27, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Tim Wildmon, President
American Family Association

There are many Americans, especially Christians, who struggle with understanding exactly what the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is all about. What does the organization stand for? Who runs it? How is it funded? Why is there so much violence and looting at BLM protests?

It's easy to get confused over whether BLM is a legitimate organization sincerely protesting perceived injustices or a group of anti-American Marxists out to destroy our great country.
I have two resources from American Family Association that clearly and concisely break down the truth about this dangerous organization. By taking just a few minutes, every Christian can learn the truth about the BLM agenda and how to biblically respond to it.

First, Meeke Addison's article, ***3 Reasons Black Lives Matter Is Incompatible With Biblical Christianity***, takes on BLM's leadership and their anti-biblical beliefs. Meeke is assistant director of special initiatives for AFA and co-host of AFR's popular talk show, **Airing the Addisons**.

Second, on his program, **The Hamilton Corner**, Abraham Hamilton III outlines BLM's connection to Marxism, witchcraft, and feminism. BLM organization co-founder Patrisse Cullors admitted that

she and fellow co-founder Alicia Garza are “trained Marxists.” The truth is that the organization’s leaders are trained in other things too –– which you’ll find out on the YouTube broadcast of Abe’s program.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

I encourage you to take a look at these trustworthy resources. They will help you understand what Americans and Christians are facing in the midst of national unrest.

I also want to invite you to sign up to receive **The Daily Stand**, our timely blogs delivered in your email box each weekday from writers you can trust, addressing culture, promoting faith, and defending the family.

As always, we count on your prayers for and involvement with AFA as we continue to inform, equip, and activate individuals and families to transform American culture and to give aid to the church, here and abroad, in its calling to fulfill the Great Commission.

Tim Wildmon, President
American Family Association

P.S. If our mission resonates with you, please consider **supporting our work financially with a tax-deductible donation**. The easiest way to do that is through online giving. It is easy to use, and most of all, it is secure.

Black Lives Matter: An Occult with America Under Spiritual Attack

AUGUST 22, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Zach Drew Show

Much of the coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement focuses only on its political and social objectives; but something that many people don't know, something that has been hiding in plain sight, is that Black Lives Matter is a deeply spiritual movement, steeped in the Occult.

The founders and leaders of each of the 16 chapters of Black Lives Matter are devout worshippers of ancient African paganism rooted in witchcraft and divination.

Yes, they are witches.

Witches run Black Lives Matter. This is not something that should excite any of us. America is under a strong spiritual attack, and it's time for us as Christians to put on the full armor of God.

BLM: An Occult Movement
https://youtube.com/watch?v=vHhsoN5hVHA

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If you would like to donate, just follow this link: **https://www.zachdrewshow.com/donate/** and hit the bright orange “Donate” button!

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IGBY International Ministries
PO Box 797
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BLM Movement Driven by Occultic Practice

AUGUST 22, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DIVERSITY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, LGBTQ

Anne Reed | **The Stand**

Many Americans support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement because, we actually agree with the statement by which it is named. Of course, black lives matter!

But at its core, BLM is dark and evil.

The organization's founders, Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi are known as community organizers, but there's more to the story…much more. You've likely seen or heard about the recently resurfaced 2015 interview wherein Cullors revealed its true underpinnings:

"We do have an ideological frame. Myself and Alicia, in particular, are trained organizers; **we are trained Marxists.**"

Karl Marx, the founder of Marxism, was a Satanist. In his poem Human Pride, he admitted his desire was not to improve the world, but to destroy it:

With disdain I will throw my gauntlet full in the face of the world,

And see the collapse of this pygmy giant whose fall will not stifle my ardor.

Then will I wander godlike and victorious through the ruins of the world

And, giving my words an active force, I will feel equal to the Creator.

Sound familiar? Oh, I don't know… maybe a bit like Lucifer?

Not only are BLM's founders trained in Marxism, an ideology with demonic roots, but its founders are actively operating in the demonic realm, here and now.

"Spirituality is at the center of BLM," said Cullors during a **June 13 Zoom call** with Dr. Melina Abdullah, co-founder of BLM Los Angeles, as they discussed the methods by which they "practice traditions from West African places."

"When we come out into the streets, and we pray – the first thing we do when we hear of a murder is we come out and we pray, we pour *libation* we built with community where the person's life was stolen," said Abdullah.

The term libation is, by definition, "the act of pouring a liquid as a sacrifice (as to a deity)."

As Abdullah described the act performed on the street, she added, "And it took almost a year for me to realize that this movement is much more than a racial and social justice movement. At its core, it's a spiritual movement. Because we are literally standing on spilled blood. And you can't pretend like that's work – that's just like some organizing work."

Hebah Farrag, assistant director of research at the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture, examined one of Abdullah's rituals. And she **explained** that as Abdullah was pouring libations on the ground, those present chanted "Asé." She clarified that the Yoruba term is "often used by practitioners of Ifa, *a faith and divination system that originated in West Africa*" – occult practices. (Emphasis added.)

And Cullors did not argue with Farrag's assessment, but she actually pointed to the article and its writer to help the viewers properly understand the spiritual foundation and practices of the BLM movement.

"It's a very important practice," said Cullors. "Hashtags are for us way more than a hashtag. It is literally, almost resurrecting spirits so they can work through us to get the work that we need to get done. I started to feel personally connected and responsible and accountable to them. Both from a deeply political place, but also from a deeply spiritual place."

Abdulah explained that when they "say the names," they "invoke that spirit, and then those spirits actually become present with you."

“Maybe I’m sharing too much,” she said, “but we become very intimate with the spirits that we call on regularly.”

Abraham Hamilton, host of AFR’s **The Hamilton Corner** covered this story Tuesday **and describe**d the Ifa practices.

“They’re not doing what you think they’re doing,” he insisted. “You think they are just honoring people. They are conjuring up spirits!”

It is no surprise that BLM has also taken under its wings the LGBTQ cause – a movement that, by its very essence, is shaking its fist at the Creator.

BLM is an anti-God organization that, to many, is appearing as an “angel of light,” a benevolent cause. As of mid-August, 49% of registered voters support BLM **according** to Civiqs, an online survey research firm.

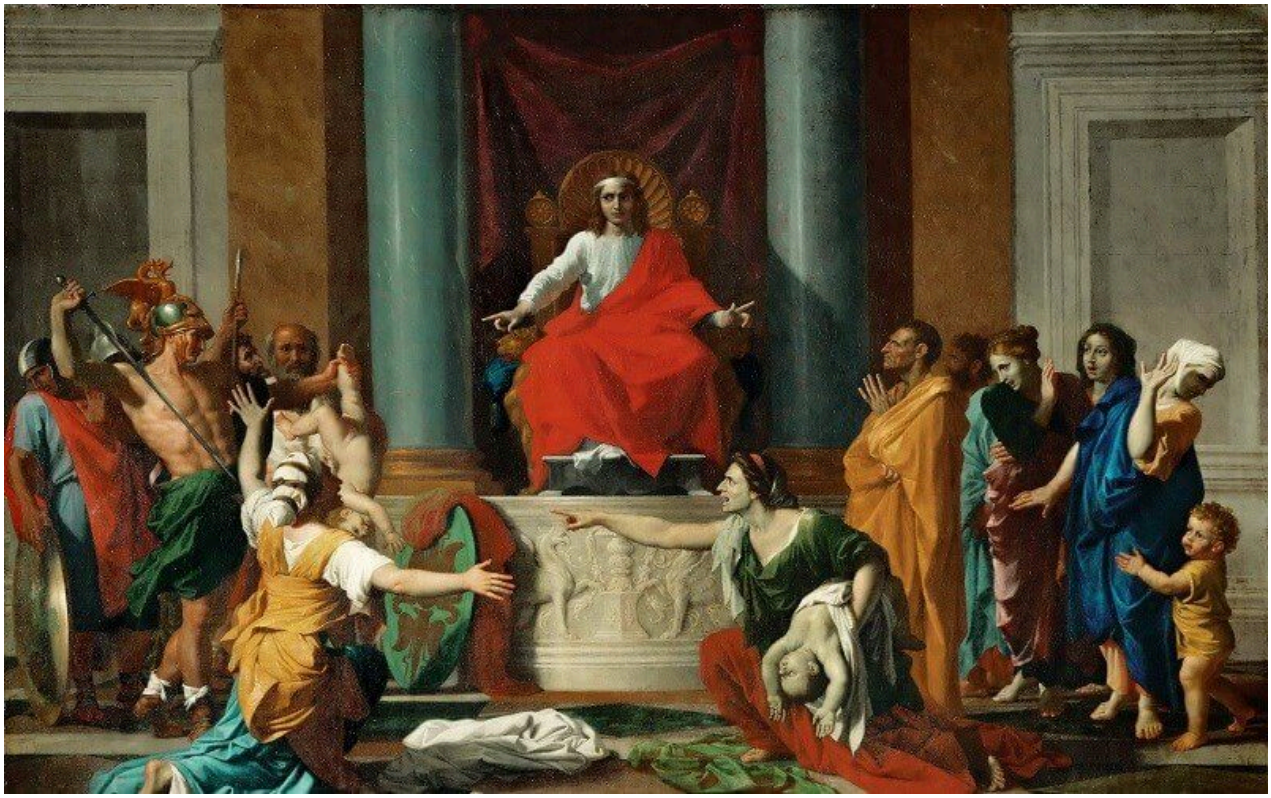
The compassion of many believers, including Christian leaders, is too often misdirected through support of BLM. And others are attracted to a different kind of lure – the bait of victimhood, a mindset that enslaves rather than liberates.

*Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (**Ephesians 5:6**). All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).*

God has given us all that we need through His Word and His Spirit to love our neighbors. Love is not found in darkness. Love is found in light.

Equity or Equality?

AUGUST 18, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Darrell Harrison | **The Stand**

> **For God shows no partiality. — Romans 2:11**

The Old Testament provides an excellent, though rather disturbing, example of the distinction between equity and equality.

It is found in **1 Kings 3:16-28**, wherein is the account of two mothers, both of whom are prostitutes (v. 16), who went to King Solomon to settle a dispute between them involving two babies: one dead, one living.

As the situation unfolds, it becomes apparent that the two discordant women possess vastly contrasting paradigms of what justice is. One viewed it in terms of outcome (equality), whereas the other viewed it in terms of truth (equity).

In the end, King Solomon judged with equity, not equality, a decision that subsequently garnered him great acclaim throughout the nation of Israel (v. 28). King Solomon chose equity over equality knowing fully that his decision would mean one of the two maternal petitioners who stood before him would depart from his presence childless.

King Solomon understood that his primary responsibility was to God and, as such, that he should judge his people — the small and the great — on the basis of objective truth, not subjective outcomes (**Deuteronomy 1:17**; **1 Kings 3:9**).

And yet interestingly, if not ironically, therein lies the rub for many social justice equalitarians today, namely, that equity is no guarantee of outcome, and for social justice equalitarians outcome is everything — everything.

"It is a wretched plight for a nation to be in when its justices know no justice, and its judges are devoid of judgment."
— Charles Haddon Spurgeon

The first occurrence of the word equity in Scripture is in **Psalm 9:8**, where the psalmist, speaking of God, declares: *"And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity."*

The word equity in **Psalm 9:8** is the Hebrew noun *meyshar* (מֵישָׁר). It is an architectural term that denotes straightness, levelness, and evenness in measurement. The word carries with it the concept of judging with a straight line, one that is devoid of ethical or moral defects, irregularities, or deformities, such as partiality, prejudice, or bias. As John Calvin states in his **Institutes of the Christian Religion**:

"In all laws we must bear these two things in mind: what the law prescribes, and how equitable it is, for **it is on equity that the law's prescription rests. Since equity is natural it is inevitably the same for all peoples.** Thus all the laws on earth, whatever their particular concern, should be about equity. As for the law's regulations or prescriptions, because they are conditioned by circumstances on which they partly depend, there is no reason why they should not be different, **provided they are all directed to the goal of equity.** Now as God's law, which we call moral, essentially bears witness to the natural law and to conscience which our Lord has imprinted on the hearts of all men — **Romans 1:19** — there is no doubt that the equity of which we now speak is wholly revealed in natural law. That is why equity must be the goal, the rule, and the finality of all laws."

There are professing Christians today, particularly in America, who, under the guise of "justice," are proffering a "gospel" of equality over and above a gospel of equity. That reality has become increasingly evident given the current socio-political milieu in which equality, not equity, is regarded as the highest standard of biblical probity and virtue.

But for King Solomon to have employed that kind of judicial hermeneutic and resolved the dispute that was before him through a deliberate or premeditated bias toward equality, rather than equity, would have been to distort justice (**Deuteronomy 16:19-20**).

How could it possibly have been justice to divide a living baby in two on the basis of accusation and not truth?

"In a crooked mind even the right thing becomes crooked."
— Arsenie Boca

True — biblical — equality means that each person and situation is judged with *equity*, not *partiality*.

Truth always must be the goal, not outcomes.

Partiality inherently involves prejudice, and God has expressly commanded in His Word that His people are to not harbor such sinful bias in their hearts (**James 2:9**).

Equity seeks first to discern what is objectively true and, subsequently, to render a ruling or verdict solely on that basis. Equality, on the other hand, prioritizes pursuing a desired or preferred outcome without regard to that which is objectively true.

Scripture teaches that the providence of God reigns over all outcomes and judgments that come to pass in this world (**Proverbs 16:33**). So even when the outcome of a disputed matter is not what you or I may have desired, as believers in an altogether holy, just, and righteous God, we remain steadfast in the hope that one day all wrongs will be made right — just as God, who cannot lie, has promised (**Leviticus 19:18**; **Romans 12:19**; **Colossians 3:25**; **2 Thessalonians 1:6-9**; **1 Timothy 5:24**; **Revelation 7:16-17**).

"Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let your eyes look with equity."
— **Psalm 17:2 (NASB)**

Biblical justice is first and foremost a matter of equity, not equality (**Proverbs 2:9**). There is a distinction to be made between the two and it is not an insignificant one.

Any concept of equality that is not fundamentally rooted in equity can never be regarded as justice.

Followers of Jesus Christ are to judge with truth in mind, not outcome. That principle is emphasized by Jesus Himself in **John 7:24**, where He says, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

King Solomon applied that principle in his dealings with the two women in 1 Kings 3. His righteous judgment was rendered not on the basis of emotional pleadings subjective presuppositions, but on

objective and impartial truth, even though for one of the two women who entreated him the outcome would be other than what she desired.

Believers in Christ are to judge with equity and leave any consequences to an omniscient and omnipotent God who alone is sovereign over all outcomes.

Soli Deo Gloria!

*Editor's Note: This originally appeared online **here** at the author's website.*

What Does the Organization Black Lives Matter Truly Believe?

AUGUST 13, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRIST IN PROPHECY, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Prophetic Perspectives #63: #BLM on Systematic Racism

Nathan Jones: It is universally agreed that Black lives matter. But, what does the organization that calls itself by the same name actually believe? We are now going to find out exactly what the organization Black Lives Matter (BLM) believes.

The organization called Black Lives Matter was created a few years ago in response to the Trayvon Martin incident, who was killed by a neighborhood patrol. The organization exploded again onto the world scene in early 2020 when George Floyd was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis.

According to Don Lemon, who is a news commentator at CNN, he claims Black Lives Matter is an organization that is just concerned about fighting police brutality. But, is that solely why BLM exists? I went to their website at **blacklivesmatter.com** to find out if that truly was the case. Let's go right to their What We Believe page and let's see what Black Lives Matter actually believes, because when we see on the streets riots and chaos and the destruction of our history and the

tearing down of statues, is that really about ending supposed police brutality? So, let's look through a little of what they believe from their website to understand BLM's purpose.

For one, BLM's mission is to "build local power and intervene when violence was inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes." It appears that's what most people generally believe Black Lives Matter stands for.

BLM on Systemic Racism | Prophetic Perspectives 63
https://youtube.com/watch?v=dJ1H9Yp5Vhw

Their mission is: "Imagining and creating a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive." Obviously, most everybody wants Black lives to thrive. They then say they want to "connect Black people from all over the world," so this is a global organization, "who have a shared desire for justice to act together in their communities."

They see the fundamental problem as this, and it's why BLM's founders say they exist, is because there is "rampant and deliberate violence inflicted on us by the state." This persecution by the State is what they call systemic racism. Systemic racism can be defined as "a system or structure with an unfair impact upon a particular group, even if no law mentions the race." So, BLM believes that it is not just racism against Black people from individuals or small groups around the world, but that governments are organized to inflict systemic racism against Black people.

BLM is clearly a political party, so don't get that wrong. They say right on their website that they are a "political home for many," and have "ousted anti-Black politicians, won critical legislator to benefit Black lives," and so on.

Black Lives Matter's motive, it says right there on their website, desires to "continue the work of our ancestors in fighting for our collective freedom" and "healing ourselves and each other." When I read that motivation, it sounds like they are connecting the racism their ancestors experienced, speaking of the slavery that existed in the United States and around the world that ended over 150 years ago, to a wound that continues to be felt and a desire to right a wrong that happened many decades ago.

Tim Moore: I think that is the crux of their argument, obviously. Let's be clear, we are two Caucasian guys talking about an organization called Black Lives Matter and trying to comment on the organization aside from the idea that all lives clearly matter. Black lives matter. White lives matter.

“Red and Yellow, Black and White, they are all precious in His sight,” as the children’s song we learned in Sunday school goes. We don’t take any issue with the fact that all men and women regardless of ethnicity or color are created in the image of God. So, let’s be very clear about that.

But, the systemic racism that they are claiming still exists does seem to be a continuing wound that has festered in different ways over the years, and now it has become a source of division in our country and along racial lines, tragically. The reality is that in this country and around the world, slavery has been a problem that has been a manifestation of sin in many regards, even in recent years. We have to also remember that the way that slavery has been perpetrated has never been limited to any one race. There were White slaves brought over from Europe back a couple of hundred years ago to this country.

Nathan Jones: There is child slavery now. Saudi Arabia currently deals with slaves. The sex industry is considered slavery. But, is there systemic, State-sponsored racism here in the United States? You said we are two White guys, but if anyone thinks White guys have no right to comment on racism, then you’ve got to wonder if that in and of itself is a racist viewpoint.

So, let’s then look at what some famous African-American pundits have had to say about systemic racism. Larry Elder says: “One of the big fake news narratives is that institutional, structural, and systemic racism remains a major problem in American. When, in fact, race has never been a more insignificant barrier to success in America.”

And, Burgess Owens says: “No, my friends, there is no systemic racism in America, just systemic Marxism elitism and evil that uses, abuses, and discards anyone for power.”

These pundits, and many like them, are pointing out that Black Lives Matter as an organization is using the moral cause of anti-racism, which all sane people and especially Christians believe in, but they are using a good cause to hide their Marxist agenda, which is an anti-God, very humanistic, anti-Christian agenda they’re ramming forward.

Let’s look at what the statistics have to say about systemic racism in America as they relate to BLM’s claim that the police are killing droves of unarmed Blacks. These pundits point to the *Washington Post* database which reports that in 2019 there were 328 million people in the United States’ population. The police arrested 10 million people. Of those, 600,000 were arrests for violent crimes. Of those arrests, only 1,003 people were shot and killed by police comprising 405 White people, 250 Black people, 163 Hispanics, and 185 Other. Of those who were unarmed when the police killed them, the numbers equal 55 total comprised of 25 Whites who were shot, 14 Blacks, 11 Hispanics, and 5 Other. Out of 328 million people, that means 14 unarmed Blacks — 9 less than Whites — were killed out of 10 million arrests which equates to .00014% of the population.

So, are the police actually looking for Black people to gun down? The statistics say no. More White people have died at the hands of the police than Black people. Therefore, these African-American pundits do not believe this country is suffering from systemic racism. After all, we elected a Black president — twice! Many of the police chiefs and the city councils leading these riotous cities ensconced in upheaval are run by African-Americans.

Tim Moore: One of those quotes spoke of evil. Really, evil is the crux of the problem. It's not racism, per se, but sin. Sin manifests itself in so many different ways. It is institutional in the human heart. So, if there is systemic sin, we would agree with that. It is systematic in that all people fall short of the glory of God. The systems that we create — systems made by mankind — have woven in them sinfulness because you cannot remove the human element. And so, there are always going to be manifestations of sin, which becomes evil in terms of the effects sin has on individual lives.

Obviously, statistically, we are concluding that there is no systemic racism per se in this country, so much as there is a continuing sin problem. As far as a prophetic perspective about this, the reality is sin is going to continue to infect human hearts until Jesus Christ returns to reign with perfect peace, righteousness, and justice during the Millennial Kingdom.

For us Christians today, we still grapple with sin. Paul talks about sin as the "old man." But, Christians have the penalty for our sins covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we advocate for truth, we advocate for righteousness, and we advocate for justice in this world today.

So, do all lives matter? Clearly, they do. Black lives do matter. But, as a movement and organization, Black Lives Matter is trying to divide people by ethnicity, which is actually a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 that the nations will be divided in the last days. The nations will be at each other's throats. There will be wars and rumors of wars. And, there will be ethnos against ethnos, meaning ethnicities. So, the BLM movement is feeding into that end times hysteria and division, meaning we are on the crux of the Lord's return because this division is one of the signs of the times. Division now afflicts our own nation.

Nathan Jones: The cure to racism and racial reconciliation is Jesus Christ. We are told again and again, such as in **James 2:1**, *"My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory with partiality."* We as Christians are not to show partiality. **First Corinthians 12:13** and other parallel verses reveal that for Christians, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is neither male nor female, for you are one in Jesus Christ."* It is Jesus Christ and Christianity which bring warring races, or ethnicities, together.

Black Lives Matter the organization, not the idea behind it, is driving people apart. That's why we here at Lamb & Lion Ministries would say, Christians, Black Lives Matter is not an organization that we should support. Rather, support the evangelistic efforts of your local church.

In the **second segment** of our look into what the organization Black Lives Matter believes, we'll explore how BLM redefines freedom and justice.

Racism, Prejudice, and Justice

JUNE 30, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Joseph Parker | **The Stand**

> But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream (**Amos 5:24**).
>
> Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (**Matthew 7:12**).

This verse from the Word of God is known as the Golden Rule. If everyone lived by it, this wisdom would solve a lot of problems in our world – including racism.

Racism.

We hear the word every day, all over the place, it seems. This leader, that politician, this celebrity, that group is racist! In this day and time, "racist" is one of the ultimate tags that is to be avoided like COVID-19.

What is the definition of "racism"? Webster defines it as

> "A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race."

Another definition from Merriam-Webster states that racism is "racial prejudice or discrimination."

Abortion is the number-one cause of intentional African-American deaths in the United States. Is this deliberate and massive slaughter of a single race not a clear demonstration of the epitome of racism? This is not the enslavement of black people; rather, it is an attempt to exterminate African-Americans. It's genocide!

Who is the number-one provider of abortions in the United States? It's the organization Planned Parenthood. No other group provides more abortions in our nation than they do.

So where is the outrage toward Planned Parenthood? Where are the angry cries of racism? Where is the cultural and media attention and why is no one labeling this genuinely racist group for what it is to its core?

Many people today have no idea just how racist the abortion giant really is. Planned Parenthood has a large number of abortion clinics throughout the nation, 2/3 of which are in minority neighborhoods. Planned Parenthood kills more black babies through abortion in four weeks than the KKK killed over the span of 150 years. Yet for some reason, many in our culture and many in the media consistently give them a pass when it comes to the designation of racism. Why?

In her published article titled "Woman, Morality, and Birth Control," Margaret Sanger (the founder of Planned Parenthood) states the following:

> "We should hire three or four colored ministers, preferably with social-service backgrounds and with engaging personalities. The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We don't want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

I don't believe it would be difficult to classify such remarks as racist. Not only was Margaret Sanger a racist, but she was passionately zealous about this cause.

Planned Parenthood and those who support the organization to this day continue to lift up Margaret Sanger as a heroine and honor her legacy. What a tragedy. If ever there was an

organization that had thoroughly earned the designation of being racist, Planned Parenthood is in the running for the number-one spot.

Think long and hard about the following parabolic story in which Mr. KKK and Mr. PP meet one day and have a long discussion:

> **Mr. PP**: Mr. KKK, you've been around a long time, and you have quite a legacy of fighting and getting rid of black folks. But I need to inform you — You've been going about it all wrong.
>
> **Mr. KKK**: How so? I think I've been pretty successful. We have gotten rid of a lot of black folks in our time.
>
> **Mr. PP**: Let me educate you. Your perspective is ok; your methodology is the problem. You're going about it all wrong.
>
> **Mr. KKK**: Ok, Mr. PP, educate me.
>
> **Mr. PP**: I'll do just that. You have been opposing black folks and getting rid of them for more than 150 years. You don't like them, and they don't like you. Look at me and my associates. Black folks don't like you, but they love us. They love us and consider us their friends. We've managed to encourage them to think that we both love them and want what is best for them. And we have gotten rid of a lot more of them than you ever will.
>
> **Mr. KKK**: Hmm. You've got a point there.
>
> **Mr. PP**: There are laws against getting rid of black folks the way you've done it – by lynching, murder, etc. We were wise and cunning enough to make it legal to get rid of black folks by our methodology: abortion. You and your associates can potentially go to jail for using your methods. Me and my associates are heralded as compassionate heroes and heroines for using our methods.
>
> **Mr. KKK**: You know, you've got a point.
>
> **Mr. PP**: You and your associates have to chase and capture your victims. We, on the other hand, have persuaded these folks to bring their little ones to us and let us get rid of them for them. And they pay us to do it!
>
> **Mr. KKK**: Man, I would have never thought of such a plan! You guys make us look like amateurs!
>
> **Mr. PP**: Exactly!

So, the sad reality is this. No group or organization has murdered more Black people than Planned Parenthood. And they get paid well to do it.

Where then is the outcry of racism towards Planned Parenthood? Tragically, the cries are few and far between.

The hypocrisy of some of the loudest voices that are crying racism today is astounding. If those persons are genuinely desiring justice for all, they would be just as loud if not louder for children in the womb.

Clearly, they are not wanting justice for all. They, just like some the people they vehemently condemn, want "justice" for those they deem worthy of it in *their* eyes.

So many of these loud voices are often just as guilty of injustice as those they are criticizing.

So once again, the point needs to be made. We all need to repent of our wrongdoing. Every one of us. We are in great need of the forgiveness and the mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And we need to allow the Word of God to help us understand what justice really is.

> He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (**Micah 6:8**)
>
> Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (**Matthew 7:12**).
>
> When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow (**Isaiah 1:15–17**).
>
> How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them (**Isaiah 1:21-23**).

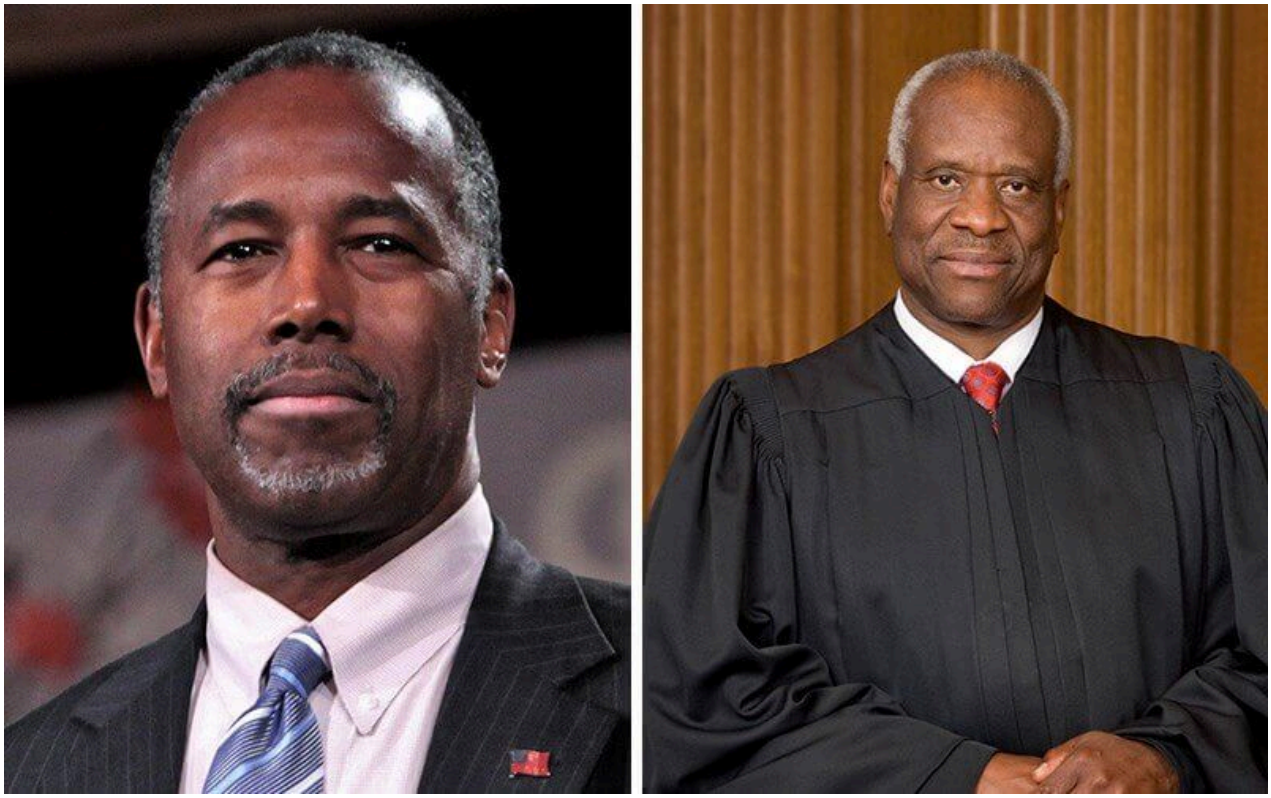
God's view of justice is often much different than our own. Our understandings fall way short. We need to take our understanding and perspectives from the Word of God, not from the world.

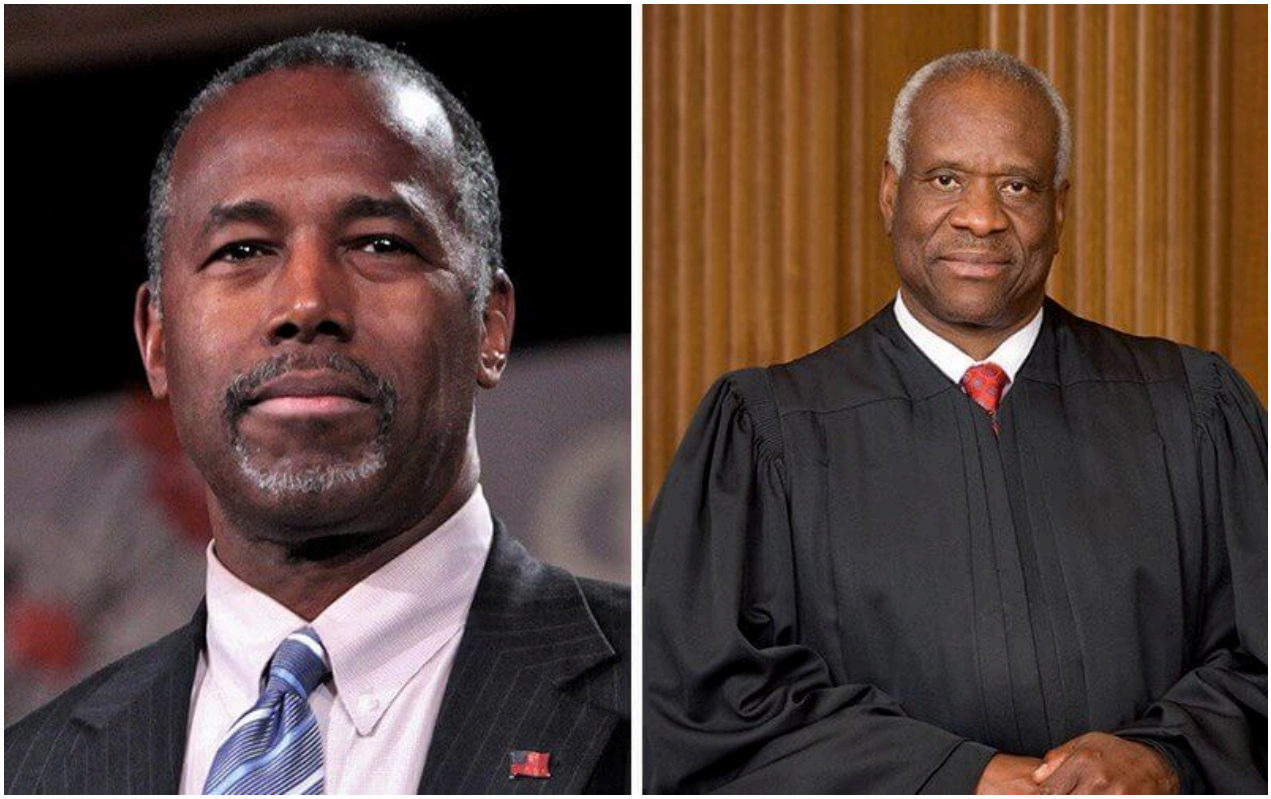
The world's answers are always wrong and typically make a bad situation worse. God's way will bring healing, unity, and blessing to a world desperately in need of these graces.

SOURCE: **AFR THE STAND**

God Took the Anger and Granted Success

JUNE 9, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS





> And I asked God, 'If you take anger out of my heart, I'll never hate again,'

The Stand | AFR

In today's volatile environment, rage is taking center stage. Anger is something that comes from deep within – seemingly uncontrollable. How can a hot-tempered person possibly rid himself of indwelling hatred and become a person who, rather than stirring up strife, calms a dispute (**Proverbs 15:18**)?

"I saw what I had become, lashing out at every single thing. And I asked God, 'If you take anger out of my heart, I'll never hate again,' Justice Clarence Thomas reminisced in **Created Equal**, an auto-biographical, feature-length documentary distributed by PBS.

Thomas is perhaps best known for the U.S. Supreme Court confirmation hearings in 1991 and the explosive sexual harassment claims by Anita Hill. If ever there was a time to be angry – to lash out in defense, it was then. But God had already answered Thomas's prayer. The hate was gone.

As I listened to Thomas tell his story, Dr. Ben Carson came to mind, who also struggled with anger and called out to God for healing. Now U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Carson has led a successful life as one of the world's most renowned pediatric neurosurgeons, a man marked by a kind and gentle demeanor.

After attempting to stab one of his friends at age eight, Carson spent two hours in the bathroom crying out to God for help. When he read **Proverbs 16:32**, it felt as though it was written just for him: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

"At last I stood up, placed the Bible on the edge of the sink," he wrote in his autobiography ***Gifted Hands***. "I washed my face and hands, straightened my clothes. I walked out of the bathroom a changed young man…I've lived more than twenty years since that experience. I've never had another flare-up or even had a serious problem of needing to control my temper."

Without question, these two men have become mighty men of integrity – free from the anger and hatred that once shackled them.

Both men grew up in poverty, were without their fathers, and faced discrimination. The obstacles were seemingly insurmountable.

I've known these things about Carson for over a decade, having read his autobiography *Gifted Hands* and watched **Gifted Hands,** the 2009 inspirational movie starring Cuba Gooding Jr.

But I did not know these things about Justice Clarence Thomas.

I reluctantly agreed to watch the documentary on a Friday night with my husband – not thrilled about surrendering that precious end-of-week recovery time to the viewing of a political commentary. But once the cameras began rolling, I discovered it was neither dull nor distressing, but, rather engaging and insightful with captivating photography and story-telling.

It is through the words of Thomas himself that I now feel I've come to know this Supreme Court justice as more than a political figure, but I've been endeared to a man who has victoriously overcome hardship with grace and humility.

I knew nothing of his seminary training, his falling away, and participation in the Black Power movement. As he thought critically about racial issues, his views began to change and return to the ideals his grandfather had instilled in him. But then, he began to face another set of issues.

He described the onslaught of discriminatory attacks and the prevalence of antagonism concerning his conservative views: "It's stereotypes draped in sanctimony and self-congratulations. There's a different set of rules for different people. If you criticize a black person who's more liberal, you're a racist. Whereas, you can do whatever to me or to, now, Ben Carson, and that's fine. Because you're not really black because you're not doing what we expect black people to do."

But he, like Carson, continues to show us how God can change a heart, how forgiveness brings clarity and peace, and hard work and resilience brings prosperity.

The question isn't "Is my anger justified?" Rather, it's "Will I allow my anger to destroy lives including my own?" Thank God for these two Americans and the choices they made. We should follow their lead.

Created Equal is rated PG-13 for the segment on sexual harassment, and it does contain limited profanities. For more information, **click here**. A companion website providing additional details from over 30 hours of interviews with Justice Thomas and his wife will soon be available. Also accessible is Thomas's 2007 memoir, ***My Grandfather's Son***.

Godless People do Godless Things

JUNE 5, 2020
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PANDEMIC

(The Service for George Floyd)

> **Racism is first and foremost a spiritual problem.**

Michael Giere |

If you're like me, the last ninety days have been incredibly emotional and heartbreaking in the catalog of lifetime experiences, as we witness the national and worldwide Wuhan coronavirus calamity unfold, not just represented in the lives lost, but in the massive upheaval and economic destruction across the world.

Equally bitter is to see the pandemic diminishing behind us, and what it tells us about ourselves, our leaders, our science, and our faith. It will be a greater tragedy than the virus itself if raw emotions obscure the lessons of the self-inflicted and unnecessary destruction of economies and irrelevant lock-downs, denying us of the wisdom of perspective.

And yet, that's just what's happening.

The mindless, irrational murder of a black American citizen whose throat was under the full weight of a white police officer's knee for nearly ten minutes ensured that.

The firestorm that it brought to American cities was predictably planned. And, as we are in danger of doing with the Wuhan crisis, we have misjudged or ignored the lessons of the past, so we have no perspective from which to grasp the events intellectually or, more importantly, spiritually.

And, racism is first and foremost a spiritual problem. **And, even though there were, and are, men who claim the Name of God who ignore or alter the clear, repeated meaning of God's grace in Scripture, doesn't make it less so.** (see **Galatians 3:28**.)

Even now, I can recall in precise detail my thoughts and emotions after the major riots across the country fueled by the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, on April 4th, 1968.

Dr. King had erected the rhetorical scaffolding around a "non-violent revolution" to fulfill the dream of economic and social inclusion for African-Americans promised by the advancement of the Great Society programs and the Voting Rights Act. That mostly ended with his death.

Floyd McKissick, then director of the Congress of Racial Equality, famously declared after the murder, "Nonviolence is a dead philosophy." The radical left stepped into the breach.

While there were civil, non-violent protests after the assassination, it was the looters and rioters that ended Dr. King's dream. As a practical matter, they destroyed large sections of the established

black community in many cities and destroyed small, minority-owned businesses. In Washington, D.C., as an example, took over *thirty years* to rebuild many areas that were burned down and to attract new businesses back to the community.

Fifty-two years later, we are witnessing the same rodeo again.

The past week of violence will not result in "justice" either, regardless of how the term is defined. There will only be greater mistrust, antipathy, and polarization, even among African-American's themselves. Any reform of policing standards (or defunding police) will only *increase* crime and *decrease* the physical security in the black community.

Likewise, the type of looting, criminal assault, and violence against innocent (often minority) business owners, and the destruction of job-producing businesses, especially in New York, the Los Angeles area, and Chicago, can only make the lives of the broader black community worse.

Antifa, the well-organized communist and anarchist group, have gladly seen to that.

There is an Ancient Law at work here. We ignore it at our peril. Scripture frequently asserts that there is "nothing new" under the sun in the human experience and that there is Evil in this world, as real and as powerful as we allow it to be.

There is not one thing we're enduring in the twenty-first century that we can't read about in the ancient world. Politics, intrigue, pandemics, famines, power, money, hatred, murder, envy, one ethic group mistreating another, great empires collapsing, and new empires fighting their way to power are nothing new. They only difference is that you and I have a front-row seat.

That we should think like the modern radical socialists and one-world devotees, supposing that we can mediate the human experience without the unbending rule of law, or that we can enforce a classless coexistence through the force of a government, is hubris. It's the conceit of man that presumes he can revoke or set aside the Ageless laws of morality and order that control the created universe, or the sin of ignoring it.

Read the Old Testament book of Hosea, **here**, chapter 5, and insert the modern names of nations, rulers, and religions. It's not complicated. It's simple. The further we move from the truth, the more we invite chaos, and evil, to fill the vacuum of the human heart.

Of course, over the last century, we've expunged absolute values from our society, as we have from our formative schooling that instructs our children about right and wrong. When we eliminated God from our schools in 1964, we knowingly or unknowingly replaced it with the religion of secularism, and it has proven a *demanding god*. Now firmly in command of the culture, rejoicing in the revelation of the worst in us.

The new god of secularism has no brakes to stop it, so it justifies killing the most innocent among us. And it delights in destroying the age-old design of family, attacking it with laws and machinations that dismiss responsibility and parenthood, and simple decency. It whispers to us that we are more worthy, more important than some other human being. It suggests violence is elective. The god of secularism speaks to our children's emotions, telling them that truth is only a figure of speech and a lie will always say yes to their wishes. It all makes Evil smile.

It's an endless loop. Godless people do godless things. And too often, people who call themselves Godly, allow it. Coming to grips with racism will first require us to acknowledge it's source. There is no other way.

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Michael Giere writes award-winning commentary on the intersection of politics, culture, and faith, and has published more than 500 articles and essays. He is also a critically acclaimed novelist (***White River Series***). Giere is a former candidate for the US House from Texas and served as a senior executive in both the Reagan and the Bush (41) Administrations.

A Kingdom for All: The Gospel of Luke and the Birth of Jesus

DECEMBER 25, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Luke Ch 1-2

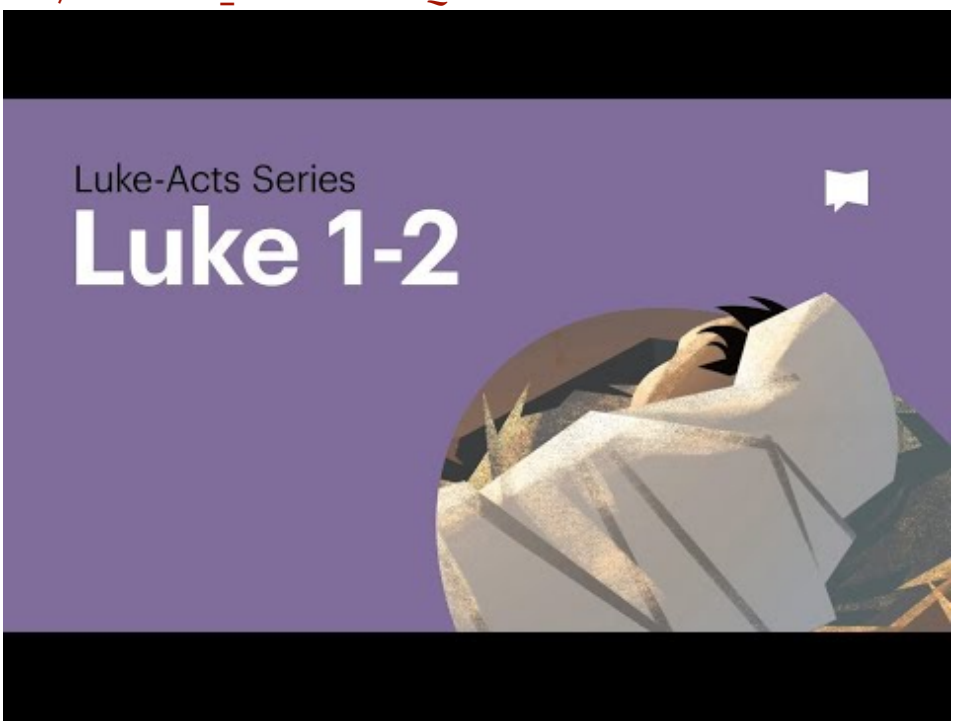
The first in a five-part series on the Gospel of Luke. We explore the amazing events surrounding the birth of Jesus. The humble conditions of his family and their low status in Israelite society foreshadow the upside-down nature of Jesus' kingdom.

Luke documents how Jesus expands God's kingdom and covenant by creating a new Israel that includes the poor, outcasts and others to whom Jesus brings restoration and reverses their life circumstances as He gives them freedom and release from the tyranny of evil and sin.

Throughout the book, we see that Jesus is indeed the messianic king, but He will reign over Israel by suffering. His actions usher in an upside down kingdom marked by self-giving love, and He challenges his disciples to follow His example and share in His ministry.

The first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels, show us the life and teachings of Jesus Christ while providing evidence that He is the Son of God and the Messiah.

The Birth of Jesus: Luke 1-2
https://youtube.com/watch?v=_OLezoUvOEQ



Luke Ch 3-9

The second in a five-part series on the Gospel of Luke. We watch Jesus launch his ministry of good news for the poor and how he brought together people from very diverse backgrounds to live together in peace.

The Baptism of Jesus: Luke 3-9
https://youtube.com/watch?v=0k4GbvZUPuo

The entire series and a full library of the Bible Project's work can be found here

Black Nationalist Hate Group Praised by Media Shot Up Kosher Market

DECEMBER 18, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Daniel Greenfield | **Sultan Knish**

The New York Times called them "sidewalk ministers" who practice "tough love." The paper quoted Heidi Beirich of the Southern Poverty Law Center who described them as victims of racism and claimed that they were non-violent.

The Washington Post, in its own puff piece on the Black Hebrew Israelites, also falsely described them as non-violent, and concluded that, "Israelite street preaching in parts of D.C., Philadelphia and New York is commonplace, a familiar if odd accent to city life."

The odd accent to city life in Jersey City came amid a hail of bullets as two members of the racist black nationalist hate group opened fire in the JC Supermarket. Despite initial claims by the media and the authorities that the Jewish market had not been targeted, David Anderson and Francine Graham ignored passerby on Martin Luther King Dr, to get to the store and kill as many Jewish people as they could.

When the shooting had ended, Moshe Hersh Deutsch, a yeshiva student who was known for helping distribute food packages to the needy, Mrs Leah Mindel Ferencz, a mother of 3 who helped her husband run the grocery store, and Miguel Jason Rodriguez, the father of an 11-year-old daughter and a parishioner at an Assemblies of God church, were all dead.

Anderson, who left behind anti-Semitic and anti-police writings, had also killed Detective Joseph Seals, a father of 5, and wounded Officer Ray Sanchez and Officer Ferenella Fernandez.

The black nationalist terrorist had hated cops and Jews. He managed to kill both.

The media whitewash of the racist Black Israelites had come during the Covington Catholic case when the Washington Post, among other papers, had falsely blamed the pro-life students for a confrontation that actually began when members of the nationalist hate group had begun calling them, "crackers," "faggots," and "pedophiles." An African-American pro-life student was called the 'n-word'.

Rep. Ilhan Omar, who has her own history of racism and anti-Semitism, falsely claimed that the Covington Catholic students were "taunting 5 black men."

The New York Times equivocated that members of the hate group "use blunt and sometimes offensive language, and gamely engage in arguments". The typical "offensive language" and argumentative style of the Times' second favorite racist hate group involves shouting racist and anti-Semitic slurs at people.

David Anderson, the Kosher supermarket shooter, had a whole YouTube playlist of such ugly incidents. In one video, a Black Israelite preacher shouts, "Satan is in you" at a Jewish man. "You stole our history. You are pretending to be us. The messiah, who is a black man, is going to kill you."

Gamely indeed.

In another video, a Black Israelite preacher calls a Jewish teen a member of the "Synagogue of Satan". "We want our book back and we want our land back," the preacher demands. "Go back to Russia."

You can see why Rep. Ilhan Omar might have felt called to defend the racist hate group.

"They move you all over the earth, but we know who you are. You are part of the Zionist deception. You go among the earth to spread Zionism, which is really Catholicism," he rants. "Witchcraft and sorcery."

Such statements may seem deranged, but they're typical of the supremacist theology of the hate group.

Previous incidents involving the hate group have been even uglier with a video that doesn't appear on Anderson's playlist showcasing a Black Israelite preacher shouting, "The Holocaust is a damn joke! Heil Hitler!" A documentary shows another preacher standing on a prone white man and declaiming, "We're coming for you, white boys. Negroes are the real Jews. Get ready for war."

It's no wonder that Tom Metzger a KKK leader and the founder of the White Aryan Resistance, had described them, as "the black counterparts of us".

And yet, the New York Times concluded its whitewash of the hate group with a closing quote by Todd Boyd, a professor of race and culture at UCLA, which claimed that, "To many black people, Hebrew Israelites are a harmless part of their communities."

No doubt to many white people the KKK are a harmless part of their communities. Racist hate groups are the bigger problem for people who aren't a member of their race.

"More alarming to many African Americans," the UCLA professor of race had argued, is "seeing a white guy in a 'Make America Great Again' hat."

The dead at the JC Supermarket would have liked to have seen a MAGA had instead of black coats.

The whitewash of the Black Israelite hate group was the work of John Eligon, a reporter hired by the New York Times to report on race, who had previously defended Rep. Ilhan Omar's anti-Semitism, and had injected black nationalist sympathies into his writing. The Washington Post's whitewash of the hate group was the work of Sam Kestenbaum, a contributing editor at the radical leftist The Forward. The anti-Jewish paper has a long history of whitewashing and defending anti-Semitism by its political allies.

But the problem is much bigger than just the media's whitewash of the Black Israelites.

The FBI's warning about the threat of "black identity extremism" was met with a wave of attacks by the media. A New York Times op-ed warned of "The F.B.I.'s Dangerous Crackdown on 'Black Identity Extremists'" The Intercept, a notorious radical hate site funded by Franco-Persian eBay billionaire Pierre Omidyar, joined in. "Why the FBI's "Black Identity Extremist" Classification Is Dangerous," Teen Vogue had argued. The Nation had warned of a "Coming War on 'Black Nationalists'".

Rep. Karen Bass, a militant anti-Israel Democrat, despite representing a partially Jewish district, attacked former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the FBI, and other officials over the BIE category. This was after the murder of 4 Dallas police officers by Micah X. Johnson and Kori Ali Muhammad's targeted killing of three white men in Fresno.

"I don't believe black identity extremists exist, and I believe the FBI should retract the document and send out a document throughout law enforcement saying that black identity extremists do not

exist," Bass had ranted.

This year, under pressure, the FBI jettisoned the BIE term. Just in time for the Kosher market shooting.

The FBI report helps police officers prepare for coming threats. By undermining the warnings about black nationalist violence, Rep. Bass, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and every media activist and politician who went to bat for black nationalist racists sabotaged police preparedness.

And they have blood on their hands.

The media is already embracing the familiar narrative about lone wolves and individual instability. That's the same story we hear after acts of violence by members of a movement that it is politically allied with.

Hate groups, whether it's the KKK or the Black Israelites, or campus hate groups like the Groypers or SJP, should be exposed with clear and honest facts about who they are and what they believe.

When political activists and media whitewashes cover up the truth for partisan reasons, people can die.

A father of five with a badge, a mother of three running a grocery store, a man working to support his daughter, another man delivering food packages, did not have to die. If the truth had been told about the Black Israelites, they might still be alive today. Instead the media lied and they are gone.

Truly standing up against racism and anti-Semitism means jettisoning partisan agendas for the truth.

Rep. Karen Bass, the New York Times, The Intercept, the ACLU, and others colluded to tie the hands of the FBI and local police because they see black nationalists like Anderson as allies in their cause.

After the attack, a representative from Americans Against Anti-Semitism, an organization which, unlike the ADL, actually opposes hate wherever it comes from, took a camera to record local reactions.

"I blame the Jews. We never had a shooting like this until they came," one resident bellows. "My children are stuck at school because of Jew shenanigans."

"Four of y'all are dead right? That's great. If they was there, they got shot dead, that's great," a man says.

"Get the Jews out of Jersey City," someone else shouts.

There's nothing extraordinary about this. It's the everyday hate that we can't talk about. The hate that the media is quick to cover up. If you want to understand why children are beaten on Brooklyn streets and why a Kosher supermarket was shot up, it's because we aren't allowed to talk about it.

Evil needs silence and complicity. The media and Democrat politicians are guilty of both.

The Ferencz family, Moishe and Leah, opened a small market on Martin Luther King Dr. They filled the narrow aisles with bread, juice, candy, milk, and the household staples you need when time is short.

They worked late hours.

And then, while Moishe was praying next door, the black nationalist bigots whom the New York Times, the Washington Post, Rep. Ilhan Omar, and Rep. Karen Bass had defended, killed his wife.

That is the story that the media won't tell. But it must be told.
SOURCE: **SULTAN KNISH**

Daniel Greenfield *is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This article previously appeared at the Center's* ***Front Page Magazine****.*

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Thank you for reading.

Media's Inaccurate Reporting on Ferguson Increases Racism

AUGUST 27, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The continual negative reporting of the Ferguson killing is a prime reason for racial tensions to increase on the part of whites. Only by reading deeper in the articles do you see the justification for officer's actions. Tragic as Brown's death is, his belligerent behavior was the cause. This was seen in the video that showed him stealing items and threatening the clerk with bodily harm and then disobeying and assaulting the officer and trying to get his gun. Thankfully the investigators used common sense and did not charge the officer. Tragically the gutless Ferguson officials pushed him out instead of giving him an accommodation for upholding law and order under difficult circumstances. Yes, there are cases that a policeman has done wrong but Ferguson is not one of them.

Next, the violent black community protest, rioting, looting, confrontation with the police, setting a police car on fire added additional evidence for not supporting the law. Add to this the usual voices of out of town race hustlers to increase the confrontations. Responsible blacks should speak out and support the law.

I believe the great majority of whites are not racist and want to see justice done. Yes, there are some who have hate for some reason or no reason and they will not change. But the point is that the conduct by blacks in this rioting erodes the support of the former. The great majority of the blacks are not racist but there are those who are and who are just as responsible for the conditions that exist.

The disgraceful conduct of the blacks in assaulting policemen in Philadelphia is another example of their racism. They complain about so many blacks being jailed in comparison to whites, it should not be too complicated to figure out.

The blacks I know are decent, hard working people, mostly Christians. They have no responsibility for the lawless blacks as whites have none for lawless whites. Black political and religious leaders have a responsibility to speak out against them instead of capitulating to the race hustlers. And the black citizens have a responsibility not to vote and support for those who do not speak out.

Greene Hollowell

Richmond, VA

Equal Rights Amendment: Its Consequences and Attempts to Resurrect it 37 Years Too Late

AUGUST 12, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

"Equality of rights under law shall not be denied or abridged … on account of sex."

The ERA would require drafting women if men are drafted, and fighting in front-line ground combat even without a draft. ERA would require tax-paid abortions, no abortion restrictions for all nine months of pregnancy, and penalize doctors/nurses opposed to abortion.

ERA would end women/girls (and men's) privacy rights in homeless shelters, prisons, hospitals, locker rooms, gyms. Men/boys could demand to play on women/girls' sports teams and effectively end women's sports scholarships. The ERA would end tax exemptions for religious schools and churches with male-only clergy.

The ERA lost in 1982 when 38 states failed to approve it by the Congressional deadline. Some Virginia politicians say the ERA can be revived 37 years after its time expired. **They are wrong. Here's why:**

ERA leaders knew the ERA would die if Congress did not "extend" the ratification time.

Eleanor Smeal, President, National Organization of Women, "… we are currently in a state of emergency on the ERA … we believe the life of the equal rights amendment is indeed in peril. … So we implore that you do not close the door on constitutional equality for women…and that you vote to extend the time limit."

Rep. Volkmer (D-MO) : "…in the event we did not extend by March 22, 1979 do you have an opinion as to whether Congress could open it up again for ratification?

Rep. Barbara Jordan (D-TX): " ...Congressman Volkmer, the time will have expired for that resolution, and I do not feel that would be a viable issue for consideration by the Congress because the resolution would, for all intents and purposes, be dead."

The Supreme Court ruled Congress may impose a time limit to ratify Amendments.

"Of the power of Congress ... to fix a definite period for the ratification we entertain no doubt. ..." (*DILLON v. GLOSS*, (1921) No. 251 Argued: March 22, 1921 Decided: May 16, 1921)

The Supreme Court and Congress clearly affirmed that state legislatures have no authority to "ratify" the ERA after June 30, 1982.

On October 20, 1978 Congress passed H. J. Res. 688 purporting to add 39 months and a few days to the ERA ratification period. The resolution stated that the ERA, "shall be part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States **not later than June 30, 1982**."

Further, the Clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court on October 4, 1982 notified Lawrence Tribe, counsel for the National Organization for Women, that all pending law suits associated with the extension of the ERA were moot, as three-fourths of the states had not ratified the ERA.

Democrat President Jimmy Carter was told by the Justice Department the ERA could NOT be revived if the ratification time expired.

"Certainly if a time limit has expired before an intervening Congress has taken action to extend that limit, a strong argument could be made that the only constitutional means of reviving a proposed amendment would be to propose the amendment anew by two-thirds vote of each House ... omments on the floor of the House and Senate generally assume that the seven-year period was a limitation on the time in which ratification could occur. ..."

The ERA will require women to be drafted (if men are) and fight in frontline combat whether or not there is a draft.

"The position of the Justice Department and the Defense Department is that women will be subject to

the draft."

"The Equal Rights Amendment will have a substantial and pervasive impact upon military practices and institutions. ... the Amendment permits no exceptions for the military. Neither the right to privacy nor any unique physical characteristic justifies different treatment of the sexes with respect

to voluntary or involuntary service … These changes will require a radical restructuring of the military's view of women. . … A woman will register for the draft at the age of eighteen, as a man now does. …"

"Equal rights and responsibilities for men and women implies that women must be subject to draft registration if men are … Supporters of the equal rights principle firmly reject draft or combat exemptions for women as Congress did when it refused to qualify the Equal Rights Amendment by incorporating any military service exemptions."

"The proponents of the proposed amendment … all concede that if this amendment is written into the Constitution of the United States the Congress will be compelled, at any time it drafts men for military service, to draft women, and at any time it drafts fathers to draft mothers. … the drafting of American women and mothers into the military service … would go far, indeed, to transform us into a national socialist state."

"Actually, as I have read the debates, the proponents are quite literal and, for example, acknowledge very freely that women would be subjected to compulsory military service …"

ERA would require tax paid abortions, force doctors/nurses to perform abortions or lose medical licenses, allow sex-selection abortion, ban any abortion restrictions (informed consent, waiting period, clinic regulations) for all 9 months of pregnancy.

"Since 1970, the ERA advocates have emphasized that the amendment's principle legal effect would be to make sex a suspect classification under the Constitution … If sex discrimination were treated like race discrimination, government refusal to fund abortion abortions would be treated like a refusal to fund medical procedures that affect members of minority races."

"Suppose that the Federal Government provided funding for procedures designed to treat most diseases, but enacted a special exclusion for sickle cell anemia, which affects only black people. The courts would certainly declare that exclusion unconstitutional. …"

"Conscience clauses … which give doctors and nurses in State-supported institutions the right to refuse to participate in abortions would be treated like laws giving State officials the right to deny services to blacks but not to whites."

Testimony of Pro-Life Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL) on S. J. Res. 10, The Impact of the Equal Rights Amendment. Part 1. Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Ninety-Eighth Congress, First and Second Sessions (May 26, September 13, November 1, 1983; January 24, February 21, March 20, April 23, and May 23, 1984, p. 84).

ERA would end privacy rights for women/girls during TSA or police pat downs, and in locker rooms, changing areas, prisons, hospitals and women-only homeless shelters.

"The strict model of racial equality, moreover, would require that there be no segregation of the sexes in prisons, reform schools, public restrooms, and other public facilities. … It has been stated that equal treatment would not be required if it ran counter to prevailing standards … This is an escape valve not found in the amendment itself and one of very uncertain dimensions. … ."

"Police practices by which a search involving the removal of clothing will be able to be performed by members of either sex without regard to the sex of the one to be searched. Segregation by sex in sleeping quarters or prisons or similar public institutions would be outlawed."

"… segregated institutions would violate the E. R. A. Segregation of institutions on the basis of sex harkens back to segregation based on race. As with race, separate-but equal sexually segregated institutions would not be allowed. … regulations must be designed to protect both sexes, for instance, protection from heterosexual or homosexual assaults. Therefore, the simple segregating of the sexes for sleeping or bathing purposes would be insufficient and would be discrimination in the guise of protection."

"Prisoners could be assigned to institutions based on, e.g., the nature of the offense committed, disciplinary record, danger of escape, and other security considerations. ***But gender should not be a relevant factor in determining institutional assignments."*** ***(emphasis added)***

In Anchorage, Alaska, "The Hope Center's women's shelter consists of one room with mattresses set three to five feet apart from one another. Although the Hope Center serves meals, provides clothing, laundry facilities, and job skills training to men and women during the day, its religious commitment to help battered and abused women require the Hope Center to provide a safe space for women to sleep and change without men."

"But Anchorage's Equal Rights Commission is investigating the Hope Center for allegedly violating a local law after a biological man sought overnight housing and the Hope Center referred that man and paid for his transportation to a hospital because he was injured and inebriated. With this investigation, Anchorage is trying to force the Hope Center to house biological men alongside women in a shared, overnight sleeping facility."

The ERA would end female sports including chances for scholarships.

Massachusetts has a state ERA that is very similar to the proposed 1972 federal ERA.

"'Our constitution says that you can make no distinction based on sex,' said Roger Dowd, the governing body's longtime attorney. 'That makes it tough, because this is a distinction. You're saying, 'We're distinguishing between boys and girls.'"

"… before the Supreme Judicial Court, Dowd argued that allowing boys on girls' teams would put girls at a disadvantage, and he still believes that's true, he said. Similarly, former Olympic gold-

medal swimmer Nancy Hogshead-Makar maintains that the Massachusetts court got the case wrong, creating a mixed-gender competition situation that's unique among U.S. states."

"'Other states that also have an don't look at it sport for sport,' said Hogshead-Makar, a professor at Florida Coastal School of Law and the senior director of advocacy for the Women's Sports Foundation. 'The reason why that analysis is wrong is because girls will always lose … .'"

"In the 2010 Western Massachusetts Division I title game, South Hadley forward Ben Menard (25) scored the winning goal, colliding at full speed with Longmeadow goaltender Corey Hedges , who suffered a concussion on the play."

In Connecticut a few teen boys claiming to be female have won several track and field contests edging out girls who would have otherwise won. The 1972 ERA would ensure that "transgender" girls (biological boys) could NOT be excluded from competing against girls.

In June, 2019 the Alliance Defending Freedom filed a lawsuit with the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights on behalf of three female, high-school athletes who now must compete against boys who claim status as females, and who have posted faster times in track competition.

These three girl athletes from Connecticut and others are losing their "opportunities for participation, recruitment, and scholarships—are now being directly and negatively impacted by a new policy that is permitting boys who are male in every biological and physiological respect including unaltered male hormone levels and musculature—to compete in girls' athletic competitions if they claim a female gender identity."

"This discriminatory policy is now regularly resulting in boys displacing girls in competitive track events in Connecticut—excluding specific and identifiable girls including Complainants from honors, opportunities to compete at higher levels, and public recognition critical to college recruiting and scholarship opportunities that should go to those girls."

"As a result, in scholastic track competition in Connecticut, more boys than girls are experiencing victory and gaining the advantages that follow even though postseason competition is nominally designed to ensure that equal numbers of boys and girls advance to higher levels of competition. This discrimination must end: "'Treating girls differently regarding a matter so fundamental to the experience of sports—the chance to be champions—is inconsistent with Title IX's mandate of equal opportunity for both sexes.' *McCormick ex rel. McCormick v. Sch. Dist. of Mamaroneck, 370 F.3d 275, 295* (2d Cir. 2004)."

Religious groups and single sex private schools would lose Tax Exempt status.

"… it seems to me indisputable that the equal rights amendment would prohibit direct Federal or for that matter, direct state grants to any single sex institution. … it is very, very likely that the equal rights amendment would prohibit tax exemptions for single-sex institutions and indeed, tax

exemptions for institutions that practice any form of sexual differentiation. … Catholic seminaries which exclude women would be ineligible for tax exemptions, but Orthodox Jewish schools which maintain separation in seating between men and women in religious ceremonies would be on the same reasoning ineligible for tax exemption. … contributions to the school are also not tax deductible. …

"Even participation in Federal student loan programs would have to be forfeited by schools that maintain some kind of sexual distinction."

"At the Missouri Senate Committee hearing on ERA on January 28,1975, a Senator asked the lawyer for the ERA proponents if ERA would deprive single-sex private and religious schools and colleges of their tax-exemption. She readily agreed … and added that the proponents want this because they object to tax-exemption for any school or college that discriminates on the basis of sex in its admissions policy."

Women are already Constitutional persons and have equal rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.

"The Supreme Court has not held, as is sometimes loosely stated, that women are not 'persons' within the meaning of that amendment."

National Public Radio's Nina Totenburg Interviewed Supreme Court Justice Anton Scalia.

"Totenberg: *Covering women under the 14th Amendment?*

Scalia: Well, come on. Covering women under the 14th Amendment . Women were always covered under the 14th Amendment. What are you talking about? Were they entitled to due process of law? Could you send them to jail without a trial? Without a jury? Come on, women were always covered by the 14th. …

Totenberg: … Scalia didn't mention it, but of course, discrimination against women in employment and other spheres is now banned under federal law, a ban that Scalia has consistently enforced."

Democrat Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson opposed the ERA.

"… President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women after a great deal of study rejected the equal rights amendment. The Commission report stated "since the Commission is convinced that the U.S. Constitution now embodies equality of rights for men and women, we conclude that a. constitutional amendment need not now be sought in order to establish that principle."

"In 1968 President Johnson's Inter-Departmental Committee on the Status of Women issued the report "American Women, 1963-68" and like President Kennedy's Commission, did not recommend support for passage of the equal rights amendment."

“More recently, President Nixon’s Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women issued an endorsement of the equal rights amendment. … Unlike the original Presidential Commission and successive Advisory Councils, it had no representation of working women but was made up of business and professional women. The Council held no public hearings and rather speedily came out with an endorsement of the equal rights amendment in February of this year. …”

“President Kennedy’s Commission considered the amendment with great care for a period of 2 years. Its Committee on Civil and Political Rights held open hearings on the question. … the present President’s Commission (Nixon-ed) because of its unrepresentative composition, holds a different concept of the purpose of Government and because they are totally unaware of what real working women and the housewives of America really want. …”

The ERA will require identical treatment of men and women, not equal treatment.

“… the amendment itself … would wipe the slate clean … would eliminate all present legal distinctions based on sex, and would reject the presumption that sex is ever a reasonable legal classification.”

“It is suggested that the proposed amendment seeks not equality of the two sexes before the law but identiy of them. And surely the elimination of differences between men and women cannot be obliterated by constitutional fiat. And so far as I know, the current state of knowledge of the biological sciences is not yet adequate to bring this about as a fact

The ERA’s, “broad general language … would … add substantial uncertainties in this area of constitutional law which would probably require extensive and protracted litigation to dispel … We would have some doubt as to whether there is a national consensus for compelling all levels of government to treat men and women across the board as if they were identical human beings.”

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Poll on Protecting Privacy: In July, 2016 Wilson, Perkins, Allen Opinion Research surveyed 1,012 adults nationwide. Respondents were asked:

“Do you approve or disapprove of government forcing schools, businesses, and non-profit organizations to open the showers, changing facilities, locker rooms, and bathrooms designated for women and girls, to biological males and vice versa? And, would you say you STRONGLY approve/disapprove, or just SOMEWHAT?”

The responses were: Total Approve 28% (Strong – 15%, Somewhat – 13%); Total Disapprove 66% (Strong – 52%, Somewhat – 14%); Don’t Know/Refused 7%

Bob Marshall served 26 years in the Virginia House of Delegates and was the chief House sponsor of the 2006 voter-approved Virginia Marriage Amendment and a ban on late term abortion. He recently wrote *Reclaiming the Republic: How Christians and Other Conservatives Can Win Back America* (TAN Books). Previously, he co-authored *Blessed are the Barren*, a social history of Planned Parenthood (Ignatius Press), with introductory comments from His Eminence, the late John Cardinal O'Connor of New York City, and Dr. Barnard Nathanson, co-founder of the National Abortion Rights Action League before his conversion to the Catholic Church.

For an Errant Education

AUGUST 9, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION, COMMON CORE, DECEPTION, EDUCATION, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Editor's Note: Modern day education is off the rails, omitting God and the ethics from the moral law. There is no morality without Almighty God, as Psalm 119: 33-36 states:

> God. Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! (**DOWNLOAD LINK FOR EXPOSITION: PSALM 119 33-36**)

By Tabitha Korol

We saw the changes coming.

We heard all the historic revisionism about Israel and the boycott/divestment/sanctions of the only democratic state in the Middle East; the anti-Zionist textbooks and programs that took root in colleges and universities across the country; and the assault upon the vulnerable K-12 students.

We learned that schools were discouraging little ones from having a "best friend," that they would be isolated in front of a computer every day, with the adults' role changing from teacher to facilitator, to increase learning frustration.

We know that Common Core brought them difficult math and uninspiring literature, the children learning less, knowing less, and with equalized grades, grasping that they are less sure of themselves. Yes, they're graduating, but they don't seem to know enough to hold a decent job or

qualify for a higher wage. They know less about their own country, its founding, its history and mission, and more about Islam, resulting in less pride in their heritage and feeling more discontent.

They're learning that men, particularly white men, are worthless, that boys can be girls, that they can indulge in sexual activity at a young age and human babies are dispensable. Has the educational establishment lost its mind and/or purposely ceded control to powers with severely evil intent?

National Education Association (NEA), the largest labor union of professionals with three million members in 14,000 communities across the country, held a 7,000-strong assembly in Houston. They represented faculty and support staff of public schools, colleges and universities, and retirees. With an exemplar budget of more than $341 million for fiscal year 2012-2013, its official mission is "to advocate for educational professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world." It has drifted off course.

Originally conservative, it now lobbies and firmly supports with ample campaign contributions the Democrat party, changing the tenor of the promise of education to indoctrination at full throttle. The assemblage was described as an anti-Israel fest.

The program's **New Business Item #26** may be read in its entirety on the link. The several supporting groups listed are notably anti-American, antisemitic, anti-Israel, and supportive of the Palestinian narrative. They form part of the Red/Green Axis (Communist and agents of Islam), using propaganda designed to destroy America's ideals, undermine Israel's legitimacy, and to remove security, liberty and our Judeo-Christian values from our children by seeking to sever Christianity from its Jewish roots and graft it onto Islam.

Parents Against Child Detentions (PACD) is an organization of Palestinians in the (Judea-Samaria) West Bank's Jenin refugee camp, the site of the infamous April 2002 "Jenin Massacre." Jenin had been the launch site for numerous terrorist attacks against Israel, and Israel's Defense Forces (IDF) entered, only to walk into a booby-trapped ambush. After a 12-day battle, with 46 to 55 Palestinian fighters and 23 IDF soldiers killed, the Palestinians surrendered and the IDF withdrew a week later.

Yet, the official Palestinian report accused Israel of full-scale genocide, a massacre. However, Doctors Without Borders revealed that 500 bodies were actually corpses that had been unearthed from a cemetery and booby-trapped (wired with explosives) by the Palestinians. Islam relies on lies for their agenda; the "massacre" was a hoax to reap world sympathy.

Instead of revealing the truth that Jenin's constant refugee status continues because their brethren are unwelcoming, PACD blames Israel to again engage world pity. It also accuses Israel of

incarcerating Palestinian children, insinuating that these are young, innocent children, but without providing the backstory.

To the West, children are our most precious possessions, but to Islam, they are the **expendable warrior class,** pressed into jihad, trained to kill with deadly weapons and become **enthusiastic martyrs.** They are practiced at throwing deadly missiles at passing Israeli vehicles; igniting and sending aloft incendiary kites and balloons that destroyed **thousands of acres** of Israel's agricultural land, forestry and wildlife; and stabbing unarmed citizens on the streets.

Judaism teaches values and ethics, basic life skills, and provides their children with a strong education for a productive future. Islam teaches the obligation of self-sacrifice for Hamas and Allah, for **exploitation and death**. Their early immersion in warrior activities feeds their desire to engage in criminality and become **suicide bombers**, with their parents generously rewarded.

Hamoked: Center for the Defense of the Individual is an Israel-based, anti-Israel human rights organization, funded by Europe, the Ford Foundation, The Forward (NY newspaper), the Finnish government, a Ramallah-based NGO and other anti-Semitic foundations. It seeks self-determination for a fictitious "Palestinian" people at the expense of self-determination for the indigenous people, Jews, on their own land for 3,000 years.

They use terminology, such as "occupier" and "settlement," to demonize Israel as the fraud, engaging in apartheid rhetoric to support anti-Israel BDS and cripple her economy. Some of its activities include challenging delays at checkpoints, never acknowledging the need to prevent infiltration for border security, and against the IDF's destruction of illegal housing built by Bedouins or the **UN in defiance of** building requirements. Bedouins often refuse other viable land. Again, the slander validates the Palestinians for world opinion.

Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIPalestine) is an independent Palestinian organization created to defend human rights of children in the Arab-made "humanitarian crisis," falsely dubbed "Occupied Palestinian Territory." Again, jihad includes a war of language. Occupied" implies illegality and aggression, but Israel occupies only historically and legally documented territory, and this territory became Israel's when she won her defensive war of 1967 against five attacking Arab armies. Every inch of Gaza is now under Palestinian control, containing not one Israeli soldier, not one Jewish settler.

Yes, their children need to be protected — from the Islamic culture in which they are **objectified**, used by their parents and Hamas as weapons to carry out violence. The children understand that their lives have little value and their futures hold little promise.

American Friends Service Committee is a religious Quaker society that alleges to work for nonviolence and justice, yet it supports the Islamic culture that encourages violence. Ignoring all the peoples that have **lost to Islam,** the Friends desire land for Palestinians at the expense of

Israel, which is just 1/6th of 1% of the Arab land mass. Friends have worked with UNRWA schools, never changing the students' educational message that includes biases and violence against Jews, resulting in the continued support of youthful Palestinian terrorists who are at the front lines, shooting, igniting volatile missiles to Israel, and carrying out stabbings and suicidal explosions among Israeli citizens.

Jews Against Anti-Muslim Racism (JAAMR), offers resources for "**community education and organizing**." Part of the Islamic psychological war strategy against the West is to go on the offensive with a defensive approach, challenging Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism to make their prey apologetic and obedient. They instruct and use the word "terrorist" to include white supremacists and others who commit ideologically motivated acts of violence, thereby deflecting the focus from Muslims.

A member of JAAMR's advisory circle, blatantly antisemitic activist and jihada, Linda Sarsour, often speaks to the community, organizations and foundations, high schools and universities, synagogues and Hebrew schools, to curb free speech and whitewash Islamic crimes and stealth jihad.

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), **a left-wing activist organization**, claims to oppose anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim and anti-Arab bigotry, but Its members disrespect the international laws of Israel's sovereignty by speaking of Israeli occupation on her own land. Generously supported by Nazi collaborator George Soros, JVP stands with antisemitic representative Ilhan Omar, BDS and Trump resistance, and against Israel. Very active on college campuses across the country, the group uses organizers for grassroots anti-Israel advocacy, and strong-arm tactics to censor pro-Israel speakers. Their objective is to create a widespread *Jewish* anti-Zionist movement.

The final entry listed was the **No Way to Treat a Child** campaign, designed to continue the victimhood position of Islam, in this instance, to pressure relevant Israeli authorities to "end the detention and abuse of Palestinian children." This is blatant mendacity; it is not – neither has it ever been – Israeli policy to kidnap and incarcerate small children! There are **203 minors** in Israeli prisons, 80 percent over 16, none under 14, all guilty of having committed deadly jihad crimes. While we understand **childhood** to be the time for developing building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, and successful parenting of the next generation, Islam's belief system is diametrically opposed to our own.

It is a shame-blame culture that creates stress, emphasizes victimhood and, in fact, **weakens the brain's development.** Females are subservient, the males disrespectful of all women, and their youth are made ready to do battle and sacrifice their lives for jihad. Palestinian children are kept uneducated, exploited by their families as terrorist decoys, human shields, and participants in propaganda films for monetary gain. Islam is no way to treat a child; it is the dehumanization of the individual.

Why have some Christian groups joined on the side of Islam? We may first credit the strain of **Christianity's bitter split** from Judaism, the ensuing framework for the negative perception of the Jew, and the charge of deicide by Bishop Melito of Sardis in the second century and into the time of the Crusades, when antisemitism became an integral part of European and Western culture.

It may be the desire for **supersessionism**, or replacement theology, which asserts that the New Covenant has superseded the Mosaic covenant.

There are myriad speculations for why such Jews become virulent and join the antisemites to disparage and harm other Jews, but there are no definitive answers. I believe them to be collateral damage from the many centuries of persecution, and the totality of stories of cruelty and exile in an unwelcoming world. These "Jews" have abandoned Judaism and are eager to become invisible and unrecognizable as they join their foes in a future globalist world.

There is a curious parallel with Chancellor Angela Merkel, who apparently seeks to erase Germany and its dark, evil past by receiving hordes of migrants of another culture, but also to annihilate and completely change her country, hoping to make Germany invisible and indistinguishable within the burgeoning global community.

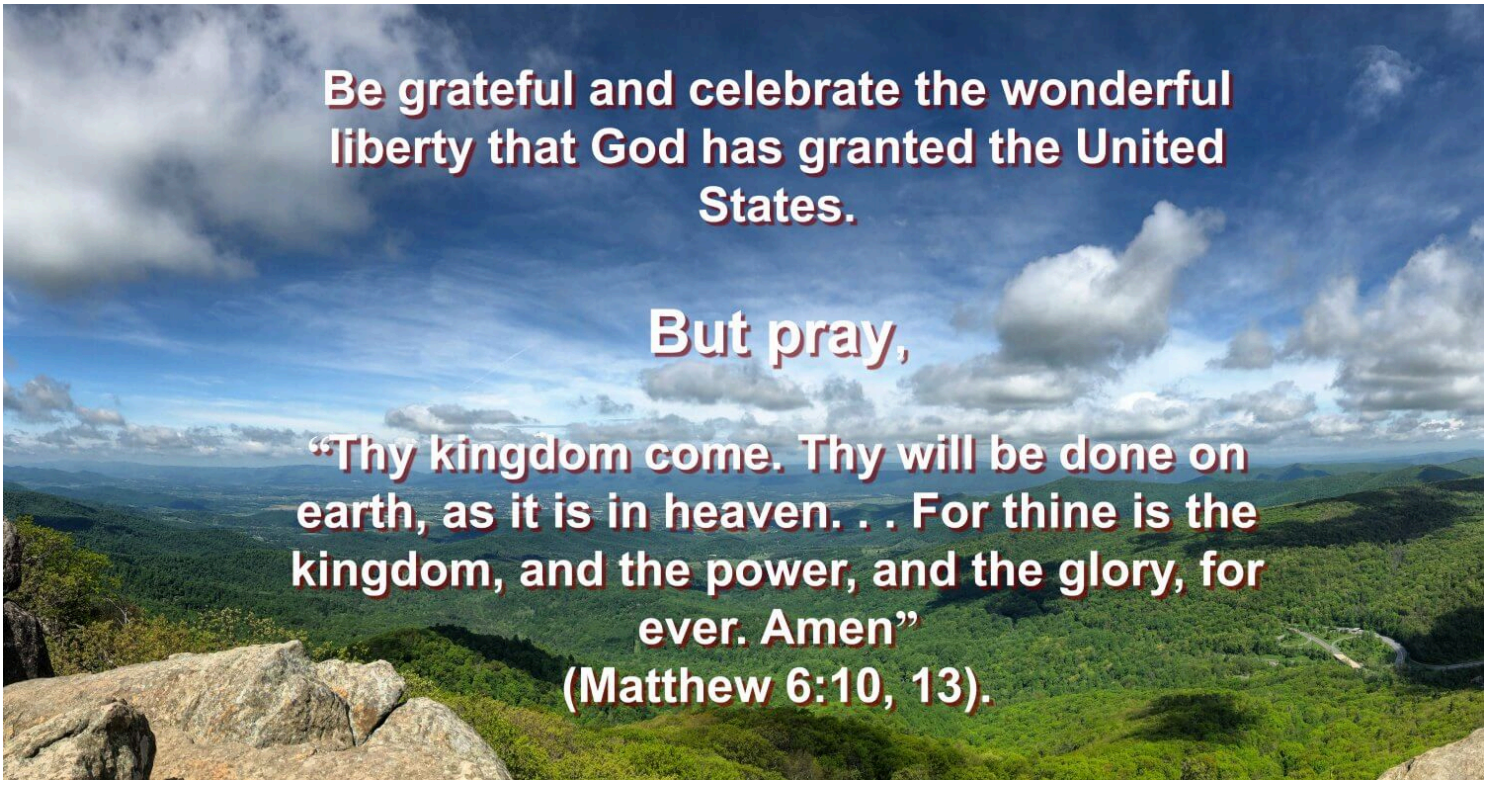
Of the Red and Green factions, there is bound to be a battle for sole domination of the rest of us, and there's no telling what the globalists will be – a choice between poisons – but neither bodes well.

Tabitha Korol

https://tinyurl.com/y7e6z63d

Ceremony Becoming the Occasion

JULY 4, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



We recommend this podcast to our VCA readers and it can come to you daily

Days of Praise Podcast is a podcast based on the Institute for Creation Research quarterly print devotional, *Days of Praise*. Start your day with devotional readings written by Dr. Henry Morris, Dr. Henry Morris III, and Dr. John Morris to strengthen and encourage you in your Christian faith.

Today's Podcast for July 4th, 2019

Ceremony Becoming the Occasion

*"The LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (**Isaiah 61:1**)*

"Philadelphia, July 5, 1777. My dear Daughter: Yesterday being the anniversary of American Independence, was celebrated here with a festivity and ceremony becoming the occasion . . . The thought of taking any notice of this day was not conceived until the second of this month, and it was not mentioned until the third.

It was too late to have a sermon, as every one wished, so this must be deferred another year" (John Adams, from *Adams Family Correspondence: June 1776–March 1778*, 274). John Adams made two observations that should be remembered today. First, the idea of "taking any notice" of the significance of the day was "not conceived" for some time, and second, **"every one wished" to hear a sermon rather than hold a celebration**. We have come far!

But note the Creator's idea of independence. The text in Isaiah 61 is what the Lord Jesus quoted in the synagogue in Nazareth as He assumed His public ministry. "This day," Jesus declared, "is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (**Luke 4:21**).

God's great liberty is of the spirit and of the mind, not merely of the land and the national population. The independence of Christ will heal the brokenhearted. It grants deliverance to the "captives" and new sight to the blind. The liberty of the King of kings and the Creator of the ends of the earth will set at liberty the bruised.

Be grateful and celebrate the wonderful liberty that God has granted the United States. But pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. . . . For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (**Matthew 6:10**, 13). HMM III

The Sludge Sisters

JUNE 9, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

By Joan Swirsky | CFP **(Bio and Archives)**

Throughout the ages, Jews have been the targets of genocidal forces both large and small, educated and ignorant, liberal and conservative, pagan and religious.

Other small sects and religions have never inspired the particular psychotic animus that Jews have because they never threatened the larger populace as Jews have with blazing green-eyed jealousy–the most powerful emotion of the human species. In fact, Proverb 14 states: "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy makes the bones rot."

After all, Jews were the first people in history to:

- Introduce monotheism to the world.
- Introduce the seven-day week––after the six days of creation and the seventh day on which God rested.
- Reject child sacrifice.
- Establish the world's ultimate Code of Ethics––the Ten Commandments.

- Introduce a strict legal system of blind justice.
- Enshrine the value of lifelong education.
- Produce a Bible in which God pronounced the Jews His "chosen people."
- Resurrect a 2,000 year old language, Hebrew, the language of Israel.
- Transform the deserts of Israel into flourishing orchards, farms, and gardens.
- Pioneer some of the greatest technological, scientific and medical advances in the modern world.
- Witness the fall of massive and powerful civilizations, nations, empires and regimes that tried to destroy the Jews such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Romans, Philistines, Assyrians, Greeks, Crusaders, Nazis, et al, and––to this day––still try to destroy them, i.e., the Iranians, the people who call themselves Palestinians, Islamic radicals, and not to omit the crazed, worldwide anti-Semites whose preoccupation with Jews obsesses them night and day!

And yet the Jews of the world are still here, still flourishing wherever they live, and still driving anti-Semites to the brink of clinical insanity as they try to cope with their utter and abject failure to do what Hitler and all the others also failed to do––destroy the Jewish people.

Don't these idiots know that will never happen? Only if they converted to Judaism would they appreciate that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob insured repeatedly it would never happen. And it never has…and it never will!

Yet, the Jew haters plod ahead, as we can see by the new Sludge Sisters in the U.S. Congress––Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI)––and their sycophantic supporters, including the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, who is so intimidated by these far-left racists that she has rewarded them with influential positions on House committees.

She even gave the **vulgar** Rep. Tlaib the distinct honor of becoming the first Muslim woman to preside over the House floor. This is exactly what panderers like Pelosi do when they fear being displaced by more powerful pimps.

As writer, lawyer and Rabbi Dov Fischer **notes**: "And now the winds of Jew-hate have come to America's Democrat Party… rooted in the core of the party…Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer have counted the tea leaves and…determined that it is bad Democrat politics to call out the Jew haters and Nazis in their party for what they are: Jew haters and Nazis."

YUCK…WHY SLUDGE?

In a recent article, I offered a definition of sludge: a muddy mixture of dirt, muck, dregs, contaminants, filth. We're all familiar with this ugly slime, which often contains human and animal feces, toxic drugs, nuclear waste, et al. Big yuck!

In that article, I also stated my Vessel Theory of human behavior, which is simply that no matter how fancy or decorative a vessel appears to be, the real measure of its value is its contents. A beautiful crystal vase, for instance, might contain urine; a ceramic creation, vomit; while a plain vessel might pour out pure spring water.

Lesson: what's inside is the real thing!

Perfect examples are Ms. Omar, Ms. Tlaib, and their sympatico Jew haters––Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Women's March organizers Tamika Mallory and Linda Sarsour, and Rasha Mubarak, an Islamist anti-Semite of the **Florida Democrat Party**, who believes Israel has no right to exist––the list of repulsive racists is shockingly long.

And under the Sludge Sister umbrella are like-minded men like the longtime leader of anti-Israel groups **James Zogby**, as well as ole reliables like "Rev." Jesse Jackson, "Rev." Al Sharpton, "Rev." Louis Farrakhan, too many Democrat members Congress to list here….again the list is long.

We are witnessing yet another grotesque mutation of anti-Semitism, propounded exclusively by Democrats––who get millions upon millions of dollars from Arab nations and who apparently imbibed their hatred with mother's milk, who conveniently ignore the reality of or––for all we know––silently applaud jihadist children wrapped and strapped in suicide vests, who subscribe not to the U.S. Constitution but to Sharia Law––a law that subjugates women, endorses wife-beating, murders homosexuals, embraces **honor killings**, and widely practices female genital mutilation as **described here** in gruesome detail by professor/author Phyllis Chesler. And that's the short list!

According to Mychal Massie, an ordained minister and founder and chairman of the think-tank The **Racial Policy Center** (RPC), Reps. Omar and Rashida "are rabid anti-Semite Muslim bigots and haters of America…uncouth, common, contumacious daughters of evil, who find America and Israel objectionable but somehow overlook the treatment of Islamic women and female children.

"There have been 34,925 terrorist attacks worldwide since the deadly American attacks on 9/11, Rev. Massie continues, "Where is their compassion for the people those of their religion have slaughtered?"

MEDIA WHORES

But why is this a subject in 21st century America? If our "culture" really believed that rank racists like Reps. Omar and Tlaib should be condemned and marginalized––the way singer Kate Smith's performance of God Bless America during the seventh-inning stretch at Yankee Stadium was banned after almost 20 years because she supposedly sang a song with a racist lyric over 70 years ago––the Sludge Sisters would already have been relegated to eternal ignominy.

Writer Daniel Greenfield **explains** that "Americans don't have an anti-Semitism problem. American politics has an anti-Semitism problem."

Exactly! And our politics is fueled by leftwing media whores, all of whom take their marching orders from their globalist bosses––honchos who have been deeply complicit in the hate-Trump mania for the past three years and have purposefully––and malevolently––concealed the astounding accomplishments of the most pro-American and pro-Israel president in American history because of their vast international investments which are now threatened by an America-First president.

While they try to blame the president for the shootings of innocent Jews attending synagogue services, it is they themselves who scapegoat and vilify Jews for the good of the Party, which requires them to embrace the Sludge Sisters and their ilk. In fact, the Clarion Project credibly accuses "many mainstream media newspapers The New York Times in **shilling for the Muslim Brotherhood**.

As Greenfield notes: "American politics….is full of politically active people who will defend anti-Semites against charges of anti-Semitism because they agree with them on the rest of their political agenda."

Translation: Democrats are guilty of collusion––real collusion––with Jew-hating and Israel-loathing radicals because those radicals support their fetishes for wide-open borders, parasitical Sanctuary Cities, strangulating regulations, a weak military, the hoax of climate change, and infanticide! Lovely.

ROT

Not that proof is needed beyond watching the Sludge Sisters in action, but writer David Catron **describes** the deeply vile nature of Rep. Tlaib at a C-SPAN presentation this month, where she told the audience that "There's always kind of a calming feeling, I tell folks, when I think of the Holocaust, and the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the fact that it was my ancestors––

Palestinians––who lost their land and some lost their lives, their livelihood, their human dignity, their existence in many ways, have been wiped out, and some people's passports."

According to Catron, "Every semi-coherent syllable of Tlaib's word salad is pure fiction," a fact expanded upon by Abe Greenwald in **Commentary Magazine**.

"Disease is reversible—rot isn't," Greenwald writes. Reps. Omar and Tlaib brought the disease of anti-Semitism into the upper echelons of the Democratic Party when they were elected in November. The party could have fought the disease. It chose instead to nurture it. And that's when the irreversible rot set in."

Greenwald also corrects Tlaib's egregious historical-revisionist fantasy about her "ancestors." At the time, he says, "Haj Amin al-Husseini, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, was a supporter and ally of Hitler. **When the two met**, al-Husseini told Hitler that they shared the same enemies: `the English, the Jews, and the Communists.' The two went on to scheme about how best to set upon and destroy the Jews of the Middle East. What's more, the Arabs regularly massacred Jews in Mandatory Palestine."

"Lies," Greenwald explains, "are the lifeblood of anti-Semitism…it depends on lies because its very motive is to hide the truth of one's own failings and lay blame on the Jews."

Writer Ari Lieberman **adds** that "Tlaib's ancestors, the so-called champions of safe haven for the Jews, rejected outright the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, sparking a conflict which resulted in their defeat. Far from benevolence, the Palestinians exhibited hate, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the extreme, and likely would have perpetrated mass ethnic cleansing and a second Holocaust had they won the war. The anti-Semitic attitudes exhibited by the Palestinians in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s are no different than they are today."

No surprise. One of the arch tenets of Islam is taqiyyah, which approves of and indeed encourages Muslims to lie in the service of their larger goal––to establish a worldwide caliphate under Sharia Law. As Americans have already witnessed, the Muslim invasion of Europe and the Scandinavian countries has already overtaken those countries…and now their target is America the Beautiful.

THE REAL PROBLEM(S)

As Dov Fischer stated: "It is not just about Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. They are two blips of time, two mistakes that will be ignored by future American historians." Rather, the problem for all decent non-racist people (the majority of Americans, I believe) is multifold.

It is about the Democrat House that **recently defeated** a resolution to condemn the Boycott-Divest-and-Sanction (BDS) movement designed to strangle Israel economically?

It is about the significant number of Jewish Democrats––many in positions of great power in the U.S. Congress (like Senate Minority Leader Schumer)––who have remained thunderously mute over these last many months as the anti-Semites in their Party spewed hatred of Jews and Israel on a daily basis.

These are the cowardly Jewish DEMOCRATS in the 116th Senate and House who have said NOTHING as the new flock of anti-Semites have, in essence, vowed to destroy them and all of world Jewry and Israel itself! The two Republicans––David Kutsoff (R-TN) and Lee Zeldin (R-NY) are the only exceptions of this list to speak out forcefully against the Sludges out there and anti-Semitism in general.

Senate
(8 Democrats, 1 Independent)

Michael Bennet (D-CO)#
Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)
Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
Jacky Rosen (D-NV)*
Brian Schatz (D-HI)
Bernard Sanders (I-VT)
Charles Schumer (D-NY)
Ron Wyden (D-OR)

House
(25 Democrats, 2 Republican)

David Cicilline (D-RI)
Stephen Cohen (D-TN)
Susan Davis (D-CA)
Ted Deutch (D-FL)
Eliot Engel (D-NY)
Lois Frankel (D-FL)
Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ)
David Kutsoff (R-TN)
Andy Levin (D-MI)*
Mike Levin (D-CA)*
Alan Lowenthal (D-CA)
Nita Lowey (D-NY)
Elaine Luria (D-VA)*
Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)
Dean Phillips (D-MI)*
Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Max Rose (D-NY)*
Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Adam Schiff (D-CA)
Kim Schrier (D-WA)*
Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)
Brad Sherman (D-CA)
Brad Schneider (D-IL)
Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)*
Susan Wild (D-PA)*
John Yarmuth (D-KY)
Lee Zeldin (R-NY)

Never has it been more true that SILENCE IS CONSENT! And this is not only consent, not only approval and reward, this is collaboration!

Writer Karen McQuillan knows this species well. In her **stunning article**, "Democrats Rally Around Their Anti-Semites, she writes: The Democrats' embrace of multicultural **anti-Semites** such as

Tlaib, Omar, and Ocasio-Cortez poses a danger to our country—both morally and politically. No nation has ever embraced anti-Semitism and remained a decent country for its own citizens. This is a path we do not want to go down, because down it leads."

And most significantly, to my mind, it is about the large number of Jewish Americans:

- Who continue to cling stubbornly and blindly to the Democrat Party, which voted twice for Barack Obama whose entire regime was stacked with career anti-Semites and which made a deal with Iran to help that terrorist state obtain the nuclear weapons capable of wiping Israel off the map, as the Mullahs promise to do this very day,

- Who inherited from their parents and grandparents a Democrat gene going back to FDR, who sadistically **turned away** the straggling remnants of the Holocaust (including 20,000 Jewish children) from coming to America by ship,

- And who have also decided that there is nothing quite as important in life as abortion on-demand....and now infanticide, thanks to the **New York State legislature** (watch them applaud).

And most relevant, the above-mentioned elected Democrat legislators have made a deal with the devil because all of them are about to be exposed and possibly jailed as complicit in the greatest scandal in American history––the bogus collusion-and-obstruction hoax that they hoped would deflect attention from the vast corruption and criminality of the Obama regime for which they shilled.

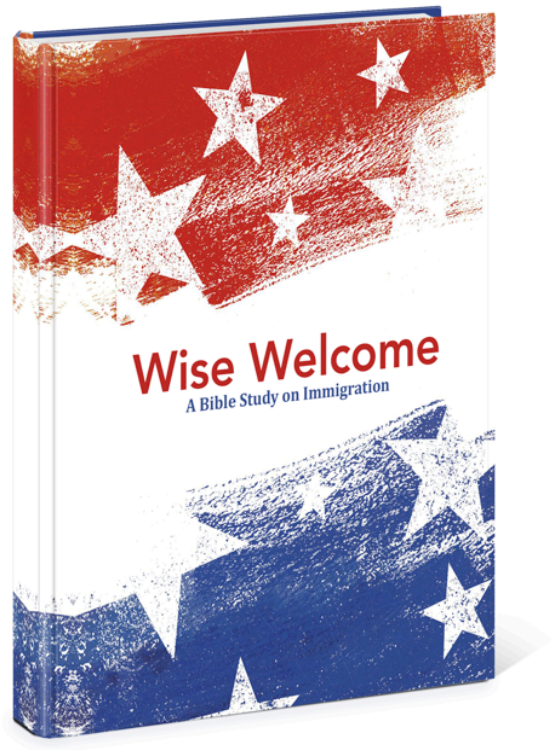
Yoo Hoo, you Democrat Jews out there––the 24 candidates running for your Party's presidency are not your friends...they loathe you! They support every anti-Semitic statement and anti-Israel initiative coming down the line.

It is well past the time for you to vote for the candidate who loves America, who is a passionate stalwart for Israel (in deeds, not words), and who has made life better for all the constituencies––black, Hispanic, women, youth––you claim to represent.

And very far past time that you manned up and womanned up and spoke out in opposition to the Sludge Sisters and their male counterparts in the Democrat Party!

How Should Christians Think about Immigration Amnesty?

MAY 2, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



While the Bible teaches us to be kind to the sojourner or "resident alien," it also teaches that kindness to the sojourner ought not to be injustice to local citizens and their unique culture.

***Free E-Book* DOWNLOAD NOW**

Kelly Monroe Kullberg
Sanctuary cities. Caravans. Children without adults. Asylum seekers. DACA "dreamers." Travel bans. Voter fraud. Escalating drugs, crime and murder. No single issue is dividing America, including Christians, more than immigration.

How tragic, and how unnecessary when a biblical understanding of a wise welcome could heal both the Church and nation.

Receive future updates from American Association of Evangelicals (AAE) and a FREE download of ***"Wise Welcome: A Bible Study on Immigration"*** delivered to your inbox.

In an early 2014 Pulse Opinion **poll**, 78 percent of 1,000 evangelicals surveyed believed that the biblical command to "**love the stranger**" means "to treat the stranger humanely while applying the rule of law." Only 11 percent felt that the biblical command to "love the stranger" means to offer work permits or citizenship.

Does this imply that evangelicals are unkind? No, to the contrary this implies that they are thinking of the whole counsel of Scripture for cultural stewardship.

The **Bible** teaches wise welcome, not blanket amnesty. Biblical teaching would give first consideration to foreigners applying to come to America as blessing, and lawfully (4 million have

applied and are waiting). I believe blanket amnesty of many millions more is unwise. Amnesty is unkind to nearly 20 million Americans who are currently looking but cannot find a job. Wisdom and kindness would bring millions of jobs to America before more competition for scare jobs. Biblical wisdom would protect Americans from open borders and the risks associated with amnesty; illegal entry into the country by violent Islamists, narco gangs and those who knowingly enter with dangerous diseases like Ebola. Our goal is not hostility, but hospitality.

Economist Thomas Sowell puts it **this way**:

Not only the United States, but the Western world in general, has been discovering the hard way that admitting people with incompatible cultures is an irreversible decision with incalculable consequences. If we do not see that after recent terrorist attacks on the streets of Boston and London, when will we see it? 'Comprehensive immigration reform' means doing everything all together in a rush, without time to look before we leap, and basing ourselves on abstract notions about abstract people.

God loves us all and yet nowhere in Scripture do we find support in God's teaching for blanket amnesty. Rather, we see the respect of boundaries, borders and admonitions to remember and to advance the teachings of Godly wisdom for human and cultural thriving. We see welcome of the lawful immigrant who comes as blessing, such as Ruth and the **Good Samaritan**. And we see Ezra and Nehemiah leading a nation in the rebuilding of walls for cultural healing and renewal.

While the Bible teaches us to be kind to the sojourner or "resident alien," it also teaches that kindness to the sojourner ought not to be injustice to local citizens and their unique culture. To steward and cultivate, whether a garden or a nation, involves wisdom and discernment. We, like our Founders, want to conserve what is true, good and beautiful. We want to nurture a nation that would welcome our children as well as the well-intended sojourner. That would mean making distinctions. Lawlessness with escalating violence and incivility cannot yield peace. Freedom for one is not slavery for another unless one chooses that sacrifice for oneself. It is unkind to force the debt of servitude on millions of Americans. We should secure our borders, pay off our national debt, give jobs to millions of unemployed Americans, and become a productive nation, once again, in order to sustain voluntary generosity to our neighbors and to the world. This goodness was once America's greatness.

Many are confused by a progressive-funded "evangelical" media campaign to advance open borders and "comprehensive immigration reform." Whether they know it or not, these evangelicals are serving to grow a decidedly non-Christian progressive political majority through demographics. Atheist billionaire, George Soros, has been **funding Sojourners** and others to do this, for some time. In fact the Soros-funded and Alinsky-inspired group, ThinkProgress, admits to "using" an evangelical **"grass-tops strategy"** for amnesty. Their term, "grass-tops," is an admission that amnesty is not a grassroots majority desire of evangelicals. Indeed.

I offer my thoughts as a Christian and as one who worked at various times alongside the very poor in North, Central and South Americas, and with orphans in Russia, and who seeks the whole counsel of Scripture. God loves the "sojourner." No question. Amen. God also loves the citizen. He is a God of love and of order, peace, freedom from debt, wise boundaries, and of nations. In some contexts Scripture teaches us to welcome. In other contexts it teaches us to be distinct, set apart, and, at times, to build walls. I am learning to see through political slogans and emotional appeals that sometimes feel like manipulation, and to focus on the breadth and balance of biblical teaching which could help us recover a wisdom tradition that is adequate for the real world and for the renewal of the unique American experiment.

Kelly Monroe Kullberg *is the author of the best-seller* ***Finding God at Harvard*** *and founder of the Veritas Forum in many universities. She is currently developing The America Conservancy, to inspire and accelerate American renewal. Follow her on Twitter* ***@kellykullberg****.*

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March 19th Event: Rise Up and Support Israel, Fight Antisemitism NOW!

MARCH 18, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Christ In Culture/salt & Light Meeting- March 19

@ 6:30 @ Fairmount Christian Church

6502 Creighton Rd. Mechanicsville, VA

The above creation was unveiled Sunday, March 3, 2019 at Belgium's most celebrated carnival of Aalst.

The parade featured these two huge puppets depicting pink-clad Haredi Orthodox Jews. One of them leers while smoking a cigar, a rat perched on his shoulder.

Against a synagogue facade, the puppets have money bags at their feet. A platform following the float carried other puppets that danced to a song about "bulging coffers" and "Jews getting extra fat."

First they came for the Socialists, and **I did not speak out**—Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and **I did not speak out—**
Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and **I did not speak out**—
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me. Words spoken by Martin Niemöller, a prominent Protestant pastor who opposed the Nazi regime and spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in German concentration camps.

The Anti-Semitic sentiment displayed in Belgium last week and the familiar words of Martin Niemöller spoken during WWII (both copied above), set the stage for our most important March and April meetings.

There's absolutely no doubt. We're living in an age of Global Anti-Semitism that's on the march. This destructive sentiment thrives in America – and, as Niemöller observes, that should be perceived as bad news by Christians on several levels.

Sadly, destructive attitudes of Anti-Semitism have pervaded much of Church history. Persecution of the Jews must be regarded as foundationless and outside of God's Will. But Christians must also begin to recognize the resurgence of Jew Hatred as their own "canary in the coal mine."

Last week's action in the US House of Representatives to denounce the anti-Israeli rhetoric of one of its Member was most instructive. The deliberations began as an effort to condemn the Anti-Semitic statements of freshman Congresswoman, Ilhan Omar.

They ended with passage of a watered down Bill condemning ambiguously generic acts of "hatred". Dr. Michael Brown, Messianic Jewish cultural commentator reacted, "This was the moment to confront the insidious, rising tide of Anti-Semitism in America, not to group it together with other hateful and dangerous attitudes. Other forms of bigotry and racism can be addressed another day."

The complete lack of Congressional will needed to repel the Anti-Jewish element of the House (that now enjoys a significant prominence in that legislative body) should send an ominous signal to

Evangelical Christians. The House's impotence points to a pathology that we must candidly appreciate as Niemöller did, albeit belatedly, in his time.

Refusal by the Congress to single out Anti-Semitism for condemnation must be assessed as particularly threatening when considered in combination with recent legally sanctioned instances of Christian persecution (e.g., the celebration of violet killings of infants, both pre-born and recently born; **Lawfare** against bakers, photographers and florists who decline to serve patrons demanding their participation in un-Biblical ceremonies).

Clearly, there's more at stake here than Anti-Semitism.

The persecutors of today see Christianity as a mere extension of the Judaic code expressed in the Old Testament (which they despise). Had sufficient reason not existed before; there is now good cause to sound an alarm highlighting the very real and rising tide of hatred being demonstrated against Bible-believing Christians in America (i.e., those who some have very publicly referred to as "Deplorables").

To support this contention, note that the House action against "hatred" did not include a direct word about Christianity yet it repeatedly addressed "Islamophobia". Anti-Christian sentiment in America represents a clear and present danger as documented in the recent book,

So Many Christians, So Few Lions by George Yancey and David A. Williamson.

I say all of the above to, hopefully, get your attention and to tell you that we'll consider the first of the issues I've raised during our March 19 meeting – that is, Growing Anti-Semitism. This topic is most relevant to Christians yet it is seldom addressed in the Church today. It's ascendency should, by itself disturb all Christians. But it is Niemöller's chilling comment; his inability to perceive persecution until too late (when it directly affected him), that prompts study of the second issue we'll consider in our April meeting – specifically, Religious Freedom in America and Abroad.

We'll begin this very important two-part series on March 19 by watching I Am Israel, a 30 minute documentary.

This multi-award winning film will not only reveal the beauty of the Land to which God is regathering His Chosen People (the Aliyah) but it will also help you understand the important and continuing linkage between Jews, Israel and Judaism, on the one hand, and Christianity on the other. I'll following our screening of the film with short discussions of the (a) Jewishness of Christianity and (b) Several Political Myths concerning Israel.

In April, we'll continue our recognition of the sage wisdom expressed by Niemöller. As previously announced, on April 16, Dr. Glenn J. Kimber and Sam Kakhem, former U. S. Ambassador to Bahrain

will present “Attacks on Religious Liberty – Home and Abroad”. I’ve attached a flyer providing additional information concerning next month’s meeting.

I hope you’ll be able to attend both of these significantly important events. My intent will be to clearly demonstrate the existential attacks upon Christ in Culture.

Antisemitism on Parade–Everything Old is New Again

MARCH 14, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PANDEMIC

By Joan Swirsky | CFP **(Bio and Archives)**

"…the Democrats have become an anti-Israel party. They've become an anti-Jewish party." —President Donald J. Trump

"…the chickens of the Democratic Party are coming home to roost…maybe then they will also realize that anti-Semitism, like most cancers, is fatal unless it's removed." —**Michael Goodwin, NY Post**

Most people thought antisemitism had been relegated to the trash bin of history after Hitler and millions of his willing German-Polish-Austrian-French-Swiss-Belgium executioners—with savage premeditation—murdered six-million Jews in the 1930s and '40s, and the world—significantly after the fact—seemed to wake up to the psychotic, irrational, obsessed nature of Jew hatred.

But today, less than 75 years after the founding of Israel, Jew hatred has emerged from the cesspool in which it festers. The maniacal obsession with Jews is on the rise, not only throughout the Middle East and Europe—**France**, **England**, **Germany**, **Ireland**, **Scandinavia**, **Belgium**, et al—but it is also contaminating America the Beautiful!

Why? One reason is that Jew hatred didn't really disappear after World War II. It simply went underground because people were chastened enough by the sight of crematoria-charred remains and cadaverous survivors to hold their tongues.

Jew haters never rest. While they abstained from vicious stereotypes and outright physical attacks until they could make their dreamed-about comeback, they were driven stark raving mad when Israel was declared a state in 1948 and the straggling remnants of the Holocaust joined their brethren in the land God promised to the Jews in the Bible thousands of years ago.

Even then, the Jew haters held back, certain that on the day of Israel's founding, the five massive Arab nations that attacked her on land and by air—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt—would annihilate the fledgling state.

Instead, in its War of Independence, tiny Israel—outnumbered by millions in dollars and manpower—defeated her aggressors, increased the size of her borders and captured much of her attackers' land.

Many wars ensued: the Sinai-Suez War in 1956, the Six-Day War in 1967, the War of Attrition in 1967-1970, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973—with Arabs attacking Israel, and Israel either holding its own or winning (in spite of catastrophic losses). And after all those wars, the Arabs engaged in not one but two protracted armed-uprising intifadas—in 1987 and 2000—neither of which stopped Israel from flourishing. In fact, every encounter with Israel drove both Arabs and liberals everywhere into paroxysms of rage.

Arabs because of the humiliation…how could 300-million Arabs go down to defeat to five or six million Jews? And liberals because they only identify with losers—er, victims. It is irrelevant to this leftwing species that Arab nations include in their mission statements that their goal is to kill all

Jews and wipe Israel off the map! If Israel wins a war, they are the bad guys. Such is the liberal mentality—to this day!

WHY THIS RESURGENCE?

The religious-political-supremacist system of Islam was invented in the seventh century and has since led a relentless drive to literally take over the world, establish a caliphate ruled by sharia law—the law that mandates cutting off the clitorises of five-year-old girls, throwing homosexuals off roofs to their deaths, engaging in "honor killings" of teenage girls whose behavior they disapprove of, and killing all Jews. *That* sharia law.

It is no surprise that this megalomaniacal goal captured the imagination of leftists worldwide, including in our country, who share Islam's goals, particularly of destroying America—the "Big Satan," and Israel—the "Little Satan."

While Islam's biggest competition is Christianity and the billions of people who love Jesus, their chief target has always been the Jews of the world (who today number 14 million) who they've despised for thousands of years—since Abraham's second-born son Isaac prevailed over his first-born Ishmael. Believe me, that's it in a nutshell.

In order to gain a foothold in America, many Arab countries have donated multimillions of dollars to colleges and universities across the U.S. for decades, giving them de facto license to endow chairs and dictate curricula, most of which militate against Israel and paint a rosy picture of the 22 Arab nations—all of them dictatorships—that surround the tiny Jewish state.

In addition, the lobbyist groups of what Pres. George W. Bush called "the religion of peace," have been very effective in insinuating themselves into our body politic, even reaching the highest reaches of power—in the State Department, Homeland Security, the IRS, all intelligence agencies, and even the Oval Office—especially during the Barack Obama regime. Among the many that operate openly is The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)—an offshoot of the terrorist-founded Muslim Brotherhood—which is a notorious neo-Jihadi group in the United States that pretends to be a civil rights organization.

Islamists have also poured multimillions into lobbyists and public-relations efforts to convince the world that the religion of peace is not behind the worldwide pandemic of terrorism that, as only one example, is happening today on a **horrifyingly massive scale in Germany**, as documented in sordid and graphic detail by Soeren Kern, a Senior Fellow at the New York-based Gatestone Institute. Equal data exist in England, Sweden, Belgium, et al.

Any surprise, then, that the florid metastasis of anti-Semitism has come to our shores?

THE SLUDGE SISTERS

I've already written about the latest Jew haters to contaminate the public discourse—the newly-elected U.S. Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), and their ardent admirer Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)—all of them young, attractive, articulate, and seasoned in the kind of rabble-rousing that comes with training (or observing) the **community-organizing tactics** of Karl Marx, Saul Alinsky, and Barack Obama.

What is striking is their commonness, their utter lack of originality. When I listen to their compulsive antisemitism—kind of like watching the regurgitation of untreated acid reflux—there is not one word that hasn't been leveled toward the Jews for the past 5,000 years. C'mon, girls, besides your jealous rants, is there even one original grievance in your arsenal?

What comes to mind whenever I see or read about this echo-chamber triumvirate is the Vessel Theory I developed a couple of decades ago and wrote about in my book, **All About Love**. Basically, it says that whatever comes out of a person is what's inside of a person. But I used vessels—specifically vases—to demonstrate that point.

Let's say you come into a room and see 10 vases on a shelf. One is very ornate and beautiful, another plain and unadorned, yet another made of clay, the fourth is ceramic with elaborate artwork, a fifth is crystal, the sixth is made of Chinaware, and the seventh of woven reeds, et al.

But when the plainest vase was turned on its side, pure spring water poured forth, and when the most beautiful vase was emptied, pure sludge! You're familiar with sludge—that muddy mixture of dirt, muck, slime, dregs, contaminants, filth.

While writer David Catron of The American Spectator calls this triumvirate a "fractious coven" and **"the weird sisters,"** I think they can more accurately be labeled The Sludge Sisters!

- Omar: Israel has "hypnotized the world" and I pray that "Allah awaken the people and help them see evil doings …" Also that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) buys off Congressmen/women to support Israel, among almost daily regurgitations of Jew-and-Israel-hating memes. Sludge!
- Tlaib: those who supported the bill *against* the Boycott-Divest-Sanction (BDS) movement—which seeks to strangle Israel economically—were torn by their "dual loyalty" to both Israel and the United States, and the bill's supporters "forgot what country they represent." And she **supports**a global economic, academic and cultural boycott against Israel. Sludge!
- Ocasio-Cortez: supports BDS and falsely and maliciously**condemned**Israel last July for committing a "massacre" against Gaza "protesters" when in fact the Arabs (who call themselves "Palestinians") were violent rioters trying to infiltrate Israel to murder Jews. And who was standing right behind her at her election victory party? A longtime **vicious hater of both Jews and blacks**. Sludge!

POWER POLITICS AT WORK

Meanwhile, when a brouhaha arose demanding that Democrats condemn the rank racism of their new members, particularly Rep. Omar, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi couldn't quite make that happen.

According to journalist and author **Kurt Schlicter**:

> "She could only get her caucus to agree to condemning all prejudice, sort of, including the tsunami of prejudice against Pacific Islanders that we all see around us so much in our daily lives. Of course, the Democrats never named the actual bigot because the Democrat base is affirmatively pro-bigotry. They hate Jews, Christians, white people, dissident non-white people, men, women who like men, and people who blaspheme against the creepy climate cult, among others."

To add insult to injury, another Sludge Sister, Linda Sarsour, a Women's March co-chair who believes **Israel doesn't have a right to exist**, denounced Speaker Pelosi as a **"typical white feminist"** who **does the dirty work** of powerful white men, and castigated her for pushing the anti-Semitism resolution.

Not so fast, girls! All of a sudden, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is being investigated by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) for running **a gigantic slush fund** with her campaign's Chief of Staff, Saikat Chakrabarti, for funnelling more than $1 million in political donations into two of his own private companies.

Questions are being asked about Rep. Rashida Tlaib's **failure to disclose** her financial ties to George Soros—to the tune of thousands of dollars that were not reported on financial disclosure forms—as required by the House ethics committee. This while she announces to the world her upcoming plan to introduce articles of impeachment toward President Trump!

Rep. Omar has Laurie Cardoza-Moore, an Evangelical leader and president of Proclaiming Justice to the Nations (PJTN) **calling on the US Justice Department** "to launch a full and thorough investigation" into the congresswoman's "possible connections to the Muslim Brotherhood" and "fundraising for two Muslim Brotherhood charities that seek to destroy America."

Now really, do these freshman congresswomen—does anyone—believe that Ms. Pelosi is not behind these "coincidental" investigations? And further, that it is a coincidence that she proclaimed "NO IMPEACHMENT" for President Trump?

And did they think they had defeated the opposition when the weakling Democrats in the House and Senate caved to their racism by offering a watered-down, toothless resolution?

If so, they should all go back to kindergarten!

FIGHTING BACK

As journalist and author Bruce Bawer **spells out**, it may be time for Jewish Americans and the Democrat Party to part ways.

Just as Candace Owens has spearheaded the "Blexit" movement, Bawer writes, inspiring "black Americans to recognize the damage done to them by the Great Society and its aftermath leave the Democratic plantation, so has Brandon Straka led other gays to see that they've been "served a bill of goods by the mainstream media and Democratic Party and is now heading his WalkAway campaign." But what about the Jews?

Well, whaddaya know? Here comes Elizabeth Pipko, a 23-year-old Jewish figure skater-turned-model who, in an effort to aid a "mass Jewish exodus from the Democratic party," has popularized the "JEXODUS" movement" initiated by Republican activist Jeff Ballabon.

"Right now," Ms. Pipko said, "as a Jewish person, you cannot support the Democratic Party and support the Jewish people at the same time." The first JEXODUS rallies are scheduled for April in New York and Florida.

But even before those marches, the National Conference of Jewish Affairs, headed by Rabbi Aryeh Spero and his wife Beth Gilinsky, have organized a "sit-in" at the office of Speaker Pelosi at her office in Washington, D.C. at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 14th.

If you miss the rally, call Rep. Pelosi's office at 202-225-4965.Each phone call represents 50 votes.

The message is simple:

- Rep. Ilhan Omar's history of anti-Semitic slurs and comments demonizing Israel make her unfit to serve on the Foreign Relations Committee.
- Moreover, she is unfit to represent the interests of the United States on the Foreign Relations Committee.

It is wise to **hearken to the words** of Abraham Miller, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Cincinnati and a distinguished fellow at the Haym Salomon Center:

"While parallels to Nazi Germany are often overdrawn on one hand and too conveniently dismissed on the other, the recent decision by the Democrat Party to stand with Congresswoman Ilhan Omar

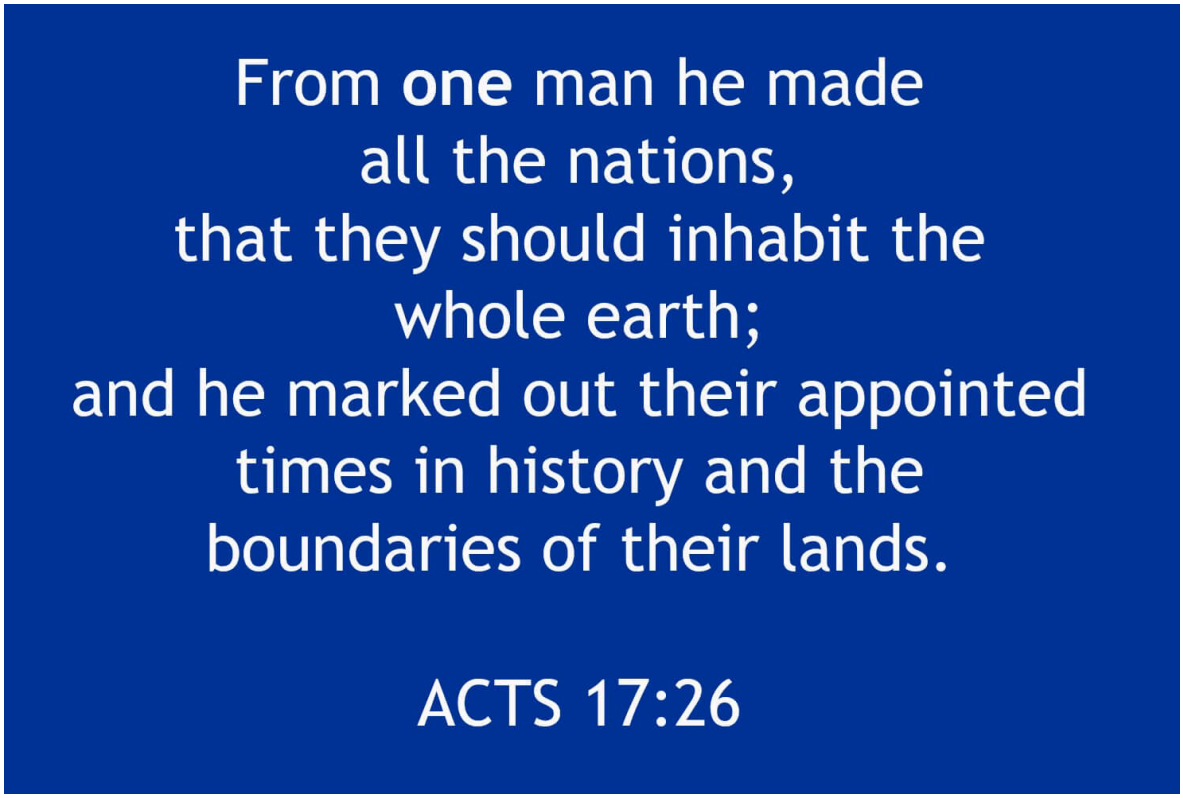
and refuse to issue a resolution condemning anti-Semitism is very much like the Nazi removal of the protection of Jews in the legal system.

"The Democrat Party," Prof. Miller continues, "has institutionalized anti-Semitism and it has once-again, as it did during the Holocaust,**abandoned the Jews.**"

Heads-up, sane Jews! Leave the Democrat Party of Hate today, before you too find yourselves in the 21st century's version of the cattle cars of the Holocaust!

What does the Bible say about racism?

MARCH 10, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Question: “What does the Bible say about racism?”

Answer: The first thing to understand in this discussion is that there is only one race—the human race. Caucasians, Africans, Asians, Indians, Arabs, and Jews are not different races.

Many-Skin-Tones-One-Race Answers in Genesis
https://youtube.com/watch?v=-Hn7UIvD7TY

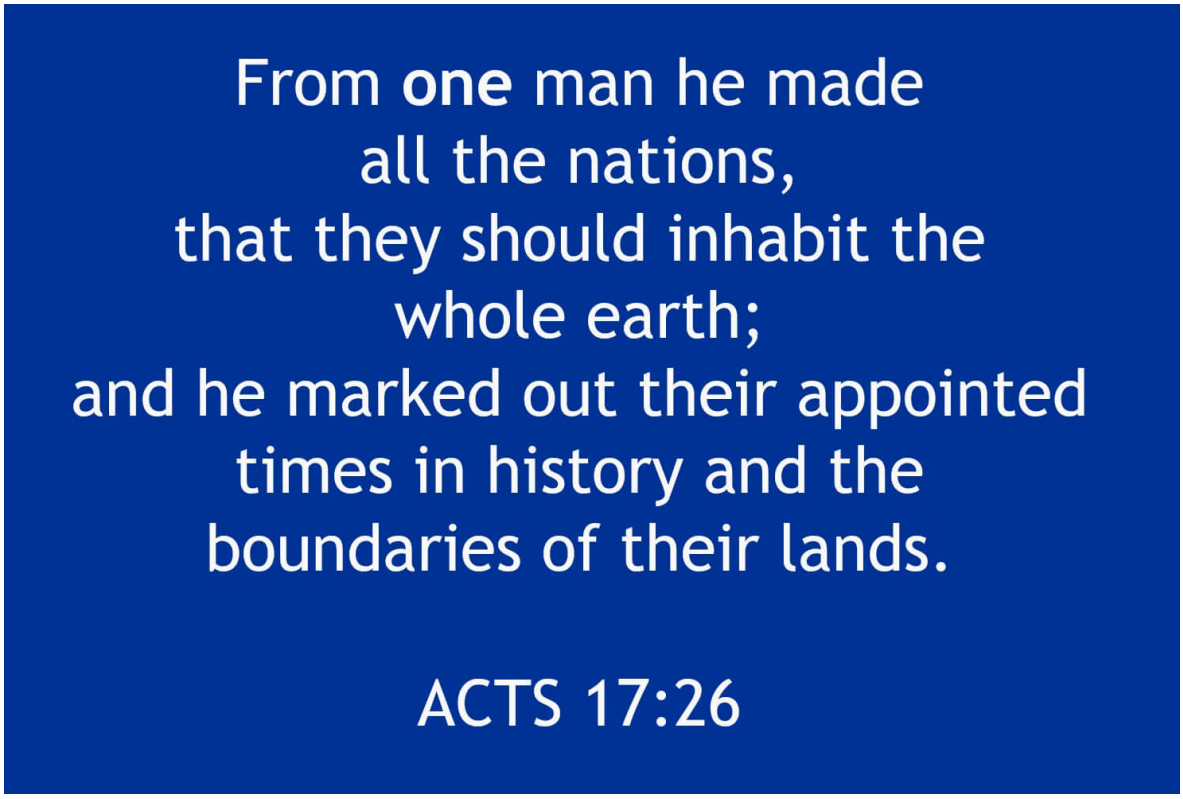
Rather, they are different ethnicities of the human race.

All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations, of course). More importantly, all human beings are equally created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus to lay down His life for us (John 3:16). The "world" obviously includes all ethnic groups.

God does not show partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9), and neither should we.

James 2:4 describes those who discriminate as "judges with evil thoughts." Instead, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (James 2:8).



In the Old Testament, God divided humanity into two "racial" groups: Jews and Gentiles. God's intent was for the Jews to be a kingdom of priests, ministering to the Gentile nations. Instead, for the most part, the Jews became proud of their status and despised the Gentiles.

Jesus Christ put an end to this, destroying the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14).

All forms of racism, prejudice, and discrimination are affronts to the work of Christ on the cross.

Jesus commands us to love one another as He loves us (John 13:34). If God is impartial and loves us with impartiality, then we need to love others with that same high standard.

Jesus teaches in Matthew 25 that whatever we do to the least of His brothers, we do to Him.

If we treat a person with contempt, we are mistreating a person created in God's image; we are hurting somebody whom God loves and for whom Jesus died.

Racism, in varying forms and to various degrees, has been a plague on humanity for thousands of years. Brothers and sisters of all ethnicities, this should not be.

Victims of racism, prejudice, and discrimination need to forgive. Ephesians 4:32 declares, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Racists may not deserve your forgiveness, but we deserved God's forgiveness far less.

Those who practice racism, prejudice, and discrimination need to repent. "Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:13). May Galatians 3:28 be completely realized, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

SOURCE FOR ARTICLE: **GOT QUESTIONS**

SOURCE FOR VIDEO: **ANSWERS IN GENESIS**

Related Topics:

What does the Bible say about discrimination?

What does the Bible say about prejudice?

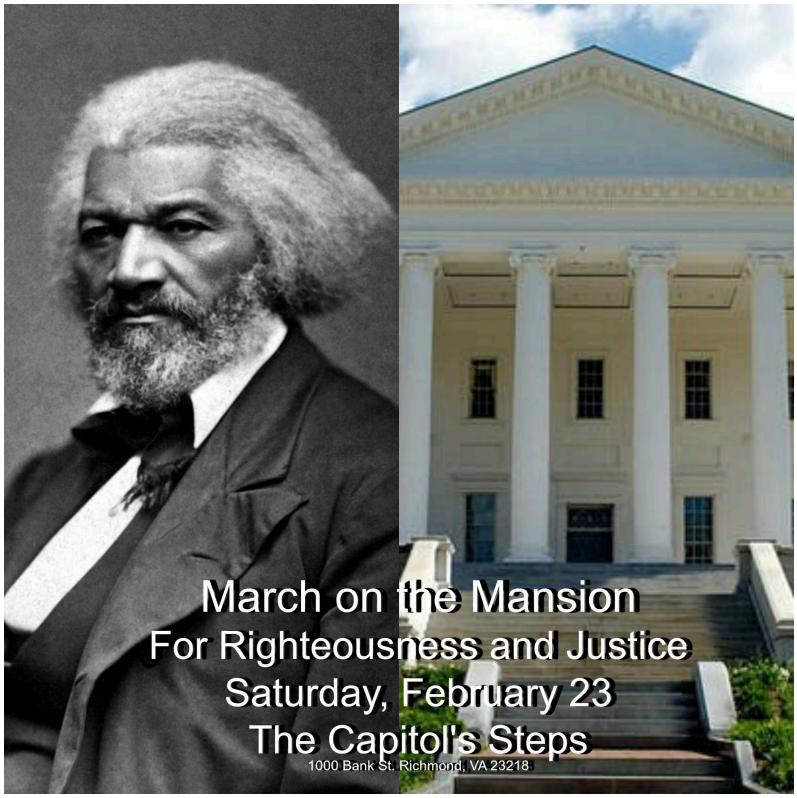
What does the Bible say about ethnocentrism?

What is intersectionality, and is it biblical?

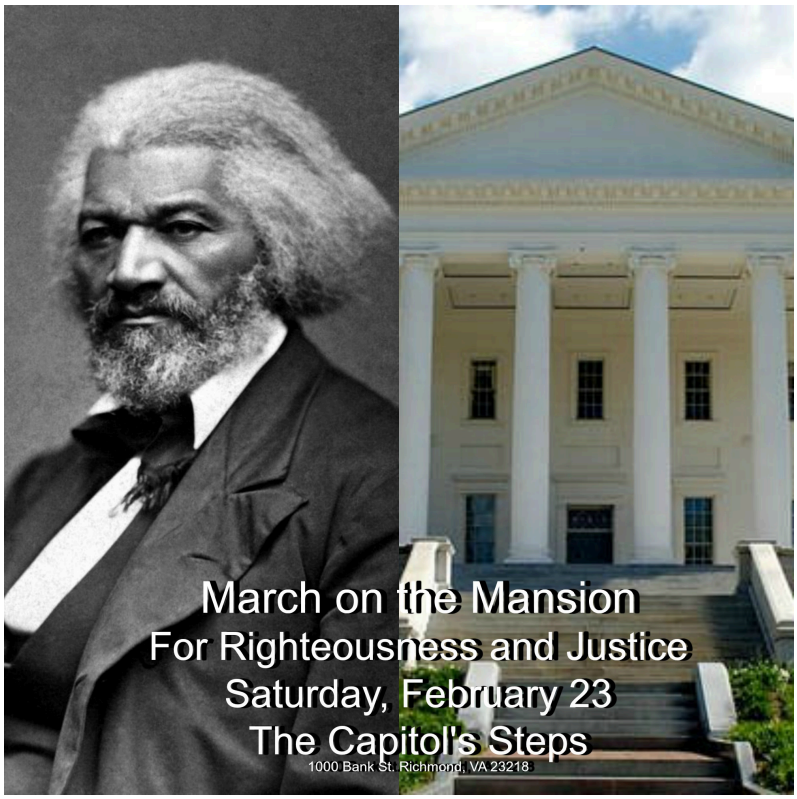
How should Christians view the Black Lives Matter movement?

March on the Mansion for Righteousness and Justice!

FEBRUARY 19, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DEAN NELSON, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Calling for an end to racism and infanticide and a call to return to values of Dr. Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass.



- Unity Rally and March for Righteousness and Justice calling for an end to racism, and infanticide and a return to values of Dr. Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass.
- Free bus transportation available!

March On the Mansion
Saturday, February 23rd
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
The Capitol's Steps
1000 Bank St
Richmond, VA

Free Tickets

SPEAKERS:
Rev. Dean Nelson, Chairman of Douglass Leadership Institute (DLI) and Chairman of the Frederick Douglass Foundation (FDF)

Rev. William Keen, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Virginia President

Kevin Chandler, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Virginia President

Following the march will be a Strengthening the Black Family event at Mount Olivet Church, 1223 North 25th Street, Richmond, VA 23221 from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM (EST).

Strengthening the Black Family is a forum that celebrates the importance of family in the black community while highlighting the challenges facing many of our children due to single parent households, divorce and poverty. Coming from the political and policy world, this leadership training is transforming the lives of participants as they work in the business and political world.

GET ON THE BUS!

Greetings:

The Andrew Shannon Gospel Music Celebration will be providing passenger buses for professional transportation services for passengers in the Suffolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Danville, Pittsylvania County, and Halifax County areas for the "March On The Mansion" on Saturday, February 23, 2019.

GET ON THE BUS TO RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
** FREE BUS RIDE**

"MARCH ON THE MANSION!"
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS & JUSTICE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019

WHERE: PATRICK HENRY MALL IN THE DILLARD STORE PARKING LOT ADJACENT TO THE OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE RESTAURANT IN NEWPORT NEWS, VA

WHEN: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019

BUS LOADING TIME: 9:15 AM

DEPARTURE TIME: 9:30 AM

ARRIVAL RICHMOND, VA 11:00 AM

DEPART RICHMOND, VA 2:00 PM

ARRIVAL NEWPORT NEWS 6:00 PM

ADDITIONAL PICK-UP LOCATIONS:

Lowe’s At Victory Crossing Shopping Center Portsmouth, VA

Saturday, February 23, 2019

Loading Time: 8:30 AM

Departure Time: 9:00 AM

ADDITIONAL PICK-UP LOCATIONS:

Pick-up Date: Saturday, 02/23/2019

Pick-up Time: 07:00 AM

Vehicle Type: 55 Passenger Bus

Routing Details: Pick Up: Walmart Super Center, 515 Mt. Cross Road, Danville VA, 24540

ST: Riverdale Food Lion Shopping Center, 1020 Bill Tuck Hwy #1000, South Boston VA, 24592

ST: , Capitiol Square, 1000 Banks Street, Richmond VA,

Drop Off: Walmart Super Center, 515 Mt. Cross Road, Danville VA, 24540

For more information, contact (757) 877-0792; (757) 218-8157; (757) 842-2746

or (434) 489-3114.

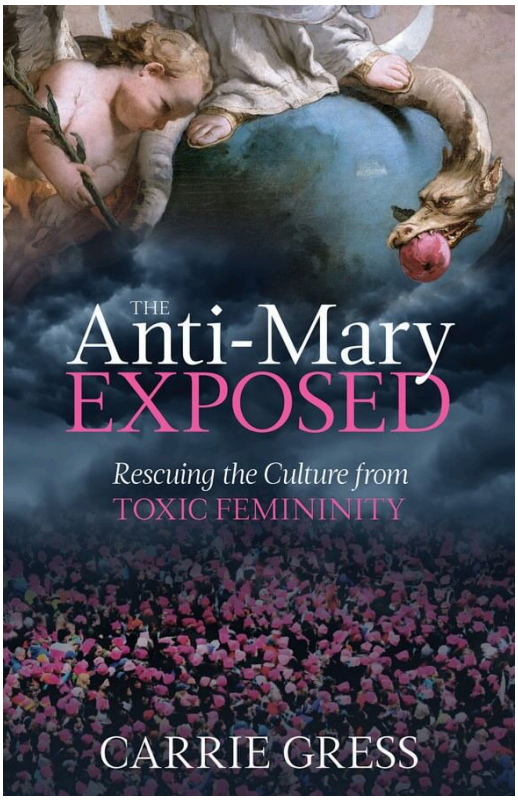
Thank you for your assistance and consideration.

With kindest regards.

Andrew Shannon

The Anti-Mary Exposed: Rescuing the Culture from Toxic Femininity

JANUARY 24, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



The Demonic Influence on Women Today

In the late ’60s, a small group of elite American women convinced an overwhelming majority of the country that destroying the most fundamental of relationships—that of mother and child—was necessary for women to have productive and happy lives.

From the spoiling of this relationship followed the decay of the entire family, and almost overnight, our once pro-life culture became pro-lifestyle, embracing everything that felt good.

Sixty million abortions later, women aren’t showing signs of health, happiness, and fulfillment. Increased numbers of divorce, depression, anxiety, sexually transmitted disease, and drug abuse all point to the reality that women aren’t happier, just more medicated.

Huge cultural shifts led to a rethinking of womanhood, but could there be more behind it than just culture, politics, and rhetoric?

Building off the scriptural foundations of the anti-Christ, Carrie Gress makes an in-depth investigation into the idea of an anti-Mary—as a spirit, not an individual—that has plagued the West since the ’60s. Misleading generations of women, this anti-Marian spirit has led to the toxic femininity that has destroyed the lives of countless men, women, and children.

Also in The Anti-Mary Exposed:

- How radical feminism is connected to the errors of Russia, spoken of by Our Lady of Fatima.
- The involvement and influence of the goddess movement and the occult.
- The influence of “female” demons, such as Lilith and Jezebel.
- The repulsive underbelly of radical feminism’s chief architects.
- A look at the matriarchy, a cabal of elite women committed to abortion, who control the thinking of most women through media, politics, Hollywood, fashion, and universities.

The antidote to the anti-Mary is, of course, Mary, the Mother of God, known widely as the most powerful woman in the world and the source of the belief that women ought to be treated with dignity. She is a beacon of all the virtues and qualities—purity, humility, kindness, beauty—that oppose this sinister force that has cast its spell upon so many women. Mary’s influence is unparalleled by any woman in history. She is the perfect model of Christian femininity, who desires to be a spiritual mother to us all, leading us to her Son, and to the fulfillment of our heart’s deepest desires.

PRE-ORDER THE BOOK on TAN-BOOKS

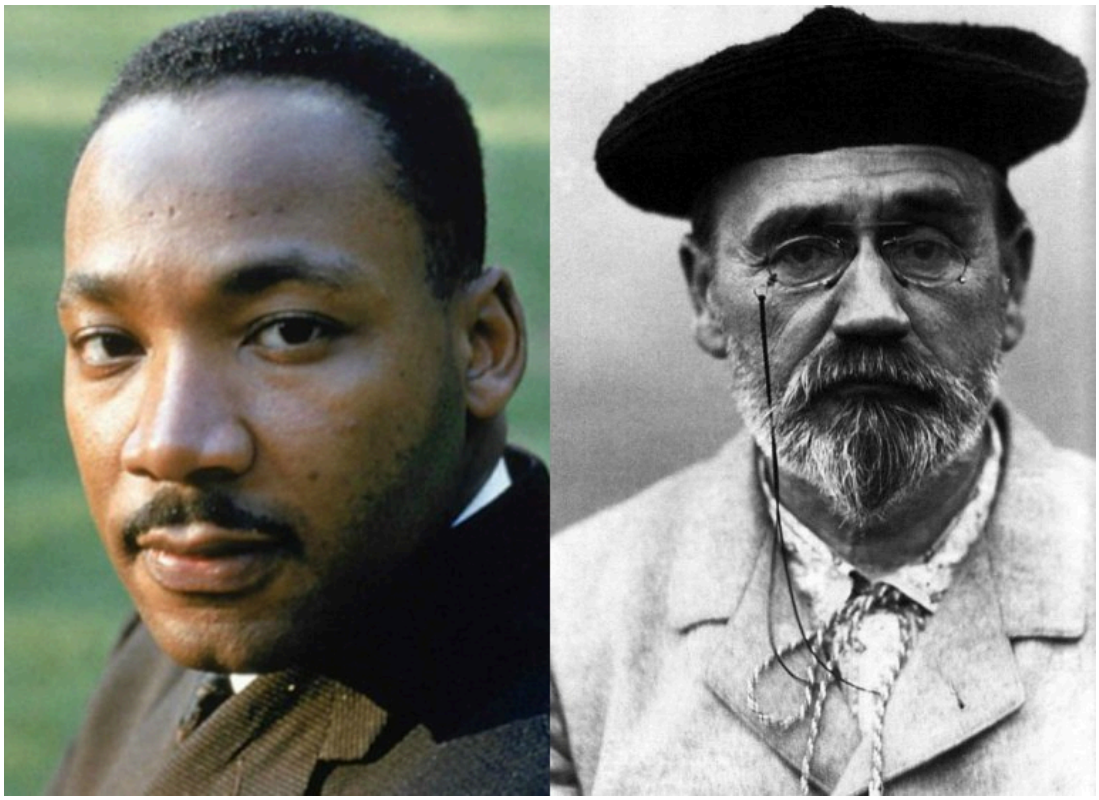
About the Author

Carrie Gress has a PhD from the Catholic University of America and is a faculty member at Pontifex University. Her work has appeared at Aleteia, Catholic Vote, Catholic World Report, The National Catholic Register, New Advent, Real Clear Religion, Reddit, Zenit, EWTN Radio, Relevant Radio, BBC and CBC television. She has lived and worked professionally in Washington, DC and Rome, Italy, and her work has been translated into seven languages. Dr. Gress is the author of Nudging Conversions: A Practical Guide to Bringing Those You Love Back to the Church, Ultimate Makeover: The Transforming Power of Motherhood, and co-author with George Weigel of City of Saints: A Pilgrim’s Guide to John Paul II’s Krakow. A mother of four, she and her family live in Virginia.

SOURCE: **TAN-BOOKS**

When Anniversaries Collide: Dr. Martin Luther King and Emile Zola

JANUARY 20, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

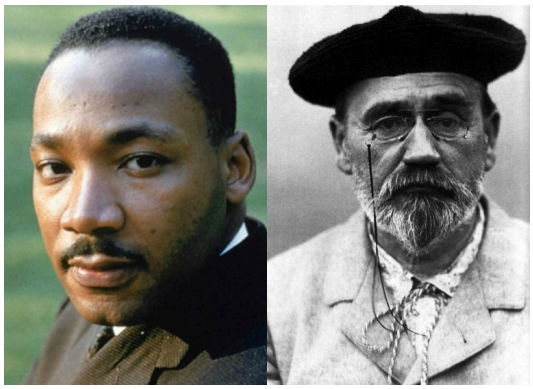


By Craig Johnson

This weekend marks the 90th anniversary of the birth of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929). It also marks the 121th anniversary of the famous letter, "J'accuse!" It was written by the influential French writer, Emile Zola, and published in the French newspaper, L'Aurore, on January 13, 1898.

Zola wrote the open letter to Felix Faure, President of France. "J'accuse" is French for "I accuse". Zola accused President Faure of antisemitism in the unfair charging and convicting of French Army staff officer Alfred Dreyfus. The charge was espionage, which carried a sentence of life in prison on the infamous South American penal colony, Devil's Island. Since the letter's publication, even in English speaking nations, "J'accuse!" has become synonymous with expressing outrage and accusation against the powerful.

My pronouncement of "J'accuse" is against the many "poverty pimp politicians" and "pulpit pimp preachers" who this weekend will lionize Dr. King with their lips while their actions are counter to all that Dr. King stood for.


Dr. Martin Luther King and Emile Zola

These speakers will wax eloquently about the greatness of Dr. King and of their great love for him. But, in Dr. King's April 9, 1967 speech in Chicago, titled "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life", he spoke of the first dimension being a concern for one's own welfare that could turn from a healthy self-interest to an ugly selfishness.

A love of others only when others proved to have a utilitarian purpose. Let's examine some of the positions several prominent "Negro leaders" of today espouse and determine if they are "using" the King legacy or are truly in sync with Dr. King's vision.

"I accuse" these people of cynically using Dr. King, and the cause he fought for his entire life, to cement themselves in power at the expense of other Americans, especially (but not only) Black Americans.

There's an old saying, "Conquerors divide; but leaders unite." Dr. King sought to bring Americans together. He often cited Paul in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". But, all we hear from Obama, Jackson, Sharpton, Farrakhan, and other Negro leaders is "hyphenated-Americanism," and "whitey is greedy, racist, sexist, and a devil." And, when they ran out of skin tones to hyphenate over, they invented a dozen ways to hyphenate over sexuality.

Dr. King spoke eloquently in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, declaring:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

"I accuse" these poverty pimps of turning every critique of Obama into a false charge that it is not about character, but about skin color. I accuse them of making college admission not about character (grades) but about skin color. I accuse them of denying advancement and learning to inner city Blacks because every institution that seeks to teach them discipline and character, i.e., the family, the church, schools, and coaches, has had governmental pressure applied to forsake character in favor of skin color; and the newest dividing line, change your sexual identity.

Pity the child, of any race, who has to be taught by these government monsters, without a strong father and mother, who are anchored in truth. The men who have replaced Dr. King will certainly not lead them in the ways of righteousness. Dr. King would be appalled at the teaching and government force used to promote a dozen different types of homosexuality, or give your daughter an abortion, or give your son a sex change – without parental notification. But not Obama, not Sharpton, not Jackson (let's give Farrakhan credit for holding out on that one).

But, perhaps worst of all is the total absence of any prominent Democrat leader (black or white) giving any semblance of even a mention to today's Blacks, of one of the key attributes that Dr. King, and men of his era always taught — self-discipline. Again, from "I Have A Dream":

> But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

In today's world, where the Oxford Dictionary recently announced that the 2016 "word of the year" was "post-truth"; the type of truth that Dr. King taught has no place with these race hustlers. Again, "I accuse!" Wrongful deeds are not corrected but excused.

The cup of bitterness and hatred is not frowned upon but encouraged. Dignity and discipline? "Why you must be a Republican! Get outta here!" And, as for meeting physical force with soul force, today it is turned around. The police officers, school teachers, job providers, etc., who bring "soul force" to the equation are increasingly being met with physical force from thugs who are juiced up on the hatred being spewed by these wicked preachers and politicians, who have 25% of Black America on a literal and spiritual plantation.

Teacher beatings and police officer assassinations have skyrocketed and increasing or record-breaking murder rates are in many of our major cities. Whenever a major incident occurs, there is no balm put on the wounds, the way Dr. King would attempt to do; but only salt.

You won't hear very much talk like this as the usual suspects will misappropriate Dr. King, and go on their annual hate-fest, as though all of America is run by Democrat Lester Maddox, circa 1950. And the 10,000 young black men that Farrakhan asked to be ready to give their lives; many of them have a very big chip on their shoulders, and no active father to protect them from Obama and company whispering hatefulness in their young ears.

I pray that the true spirit of Dr. King: loving, compassionate, wise, thoughtful, disciplined, and determined; is still resonate enough to shine in our hearts in spite of who will be delivering most of the speeches.

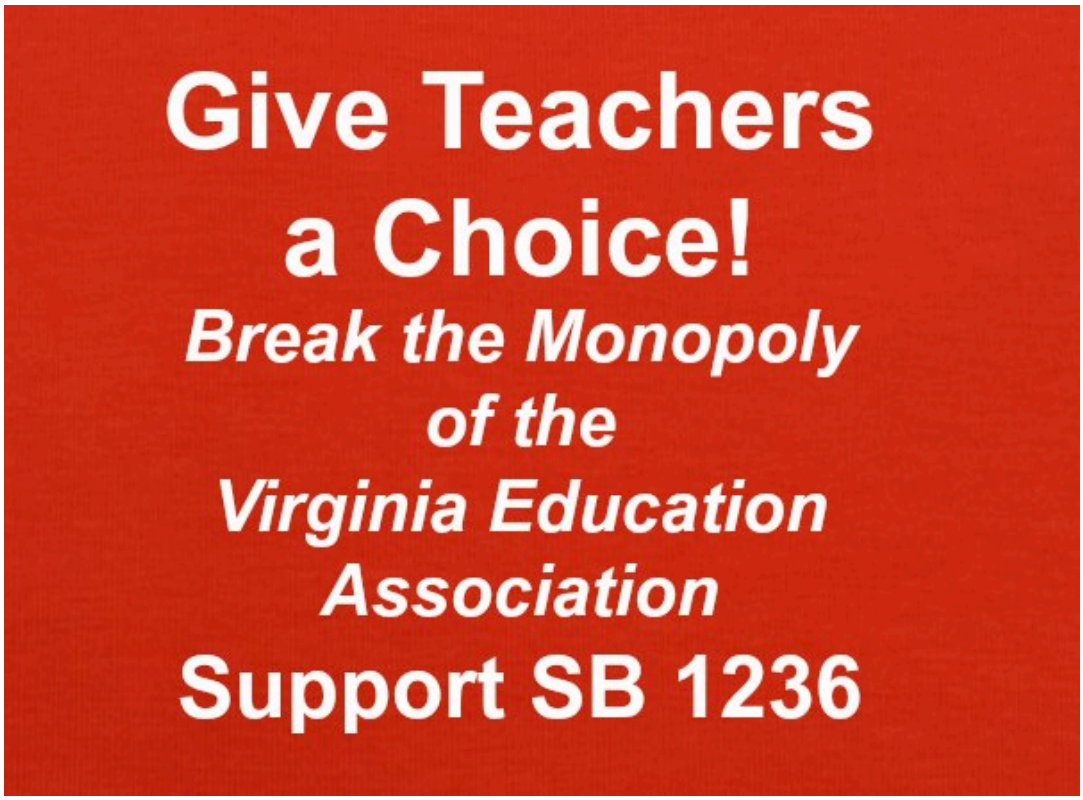
Craig Johnson can be heard on "The REALLY, Real, Deal, with Brother Craig The Hatchet Man," Saturdays from 10am to 12pm, EST., at ***www.820theanswer.com****. Brother Craig's Dr. King broadcast from Saturday, January 14, 2017 can be heard by following or pasting this link into your browser,*

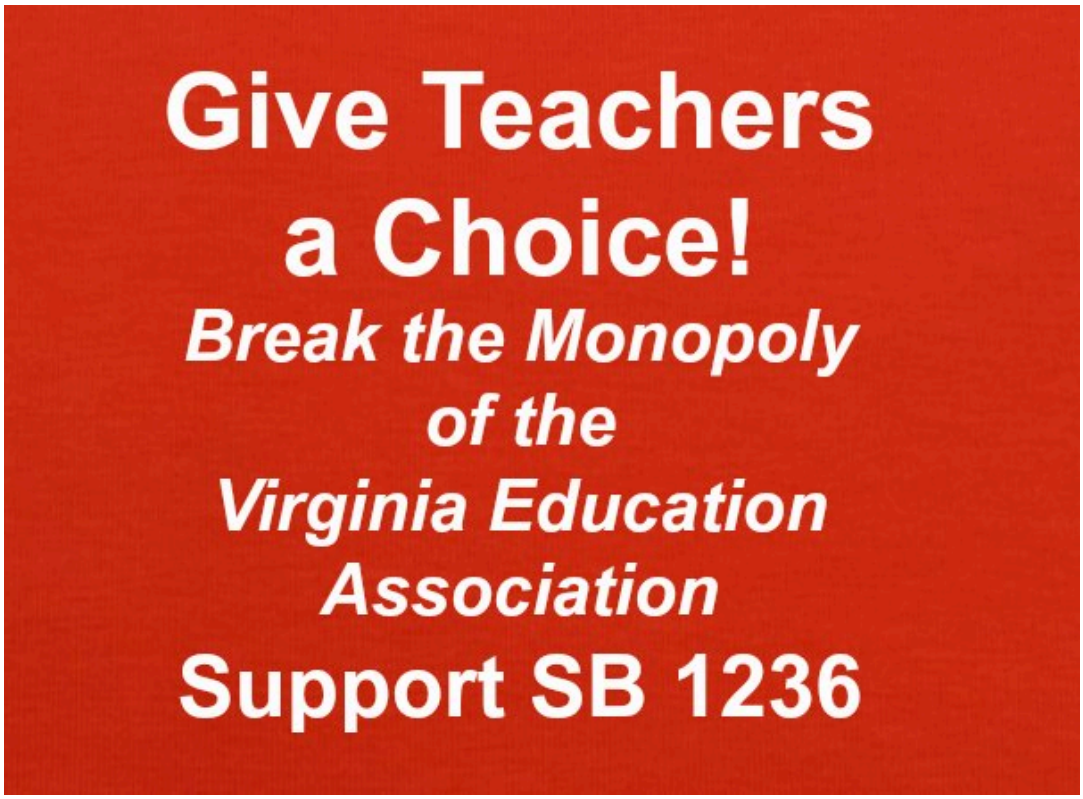
DROPBOX LINK. *For media inquiries or speaker engagements, contact Kimberly@agencyforthearts.com*.

First Published in the Virginia Free Citizen

Give Virginia Teachers a Choice: Break the Monopoly of the Virginia Education Association

JANUARY 13, 2019
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS





In Virginia, Teachers have only one choice for a professional organization to represent them – the Virginia Education Association (a subsidiary of the National Education Association). The VEA has a monopoly on school divisions. It is time Teachers are given a choice of professional organizations and SB1236 gives them that choice! Please contact the following committee members and tell them to support teachers' rights and vote yes on SB1236.

This week, **Senate Bill 1236** (Equal Access; Education Employee Associations and Professional Educator Liability) was referred by the Senate Committee on Education and Health to the Public Education Subcommittee. Following last year's precedent set in the United States Supreme Court decision (**Janus v. AFSCME**), this bill requires that teachers must be provided with education association membership options and costs that align with their need for educational services, professional liability insurance, and are congruent with their values.

The bill will be heard 30 minutes after adjournment of the Senate, on Thursday, January 17th, 2019, in Subcommitee Room 2, 5th Floor, Pocahontas Building, Richmond, VA. Please express your support for this bill by contacting the following committee members:

- Senator Carrico (Chairman): (804) 698-7540, **district40@senat.virginia.gov**
- Senator Dunnavant: (804) 698-7512, **district12@senate.virginia.gov**
- Senator Peake: (804) 698-7522, **district22@senate.virginia.gov**

Sen. Bill DeSteph (R-08), working with the Middle Resolution and Virginia Beach SPARK Education Association, introduced Senate Bill 1236, which:

- prohibits preferential treatment to or the endorsement of one education employee association over another through procedures, policies, or any other means;
- provides all education employee associations the same opportunity to attend new teacher or employee orientations in an effort to recruit new members, if any such attendance is permitted;
- provides equal access to employee mailboxes or email addresses to all employee education associations, if any such access is given; and
- requires school boards to adopt and implement policies that ensure employees have equal access to professional educator liability insurance, across a broad range of policy providers and not just the Virginia Education Association.

The Advent Series: Hope

DECEMBER 9, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

from **Bible Project**

Four key biblical themes came to their fulfillment in the arrival of Jesus: Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love and our relationship to God through these.

HOPE

So let's say you want to describe the feeling of anticipating a future that's better than the present. You might be giddy or excited or maybe unsure, but most of us know that experience. We call it "hope." It's a state of anticipation, and it's crucial for healthy human existence, and it's a really important concept in the Bible. In fact, there are many words for "hope" in the ancient languages of the Bible, and they're all fascinating.

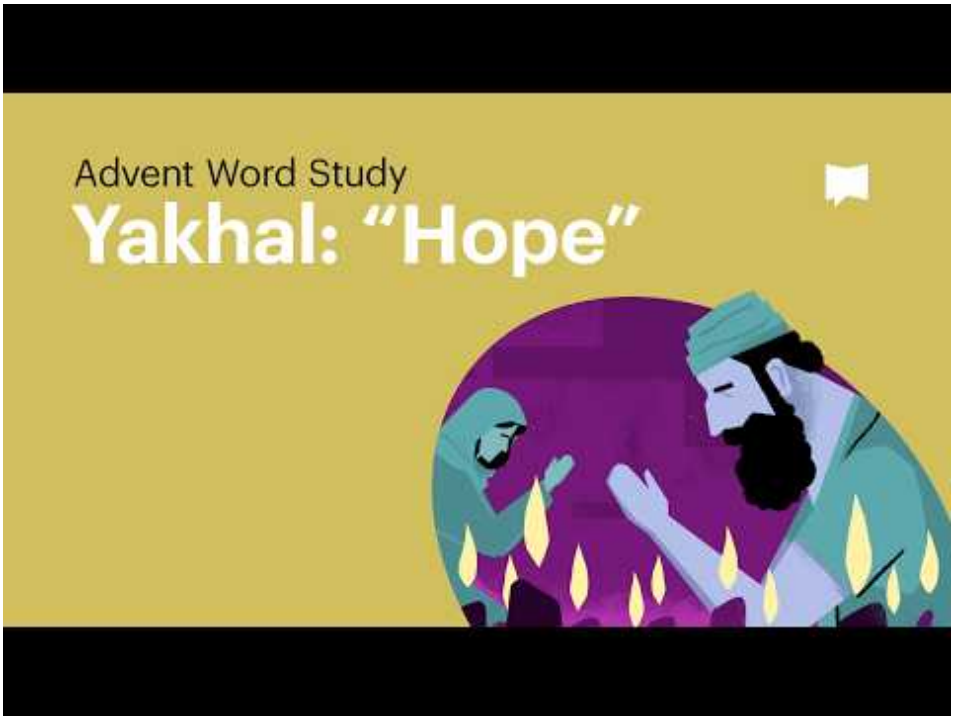
In the Old Testament, there are two main Hebrew words translated as "hope." The first is yakhal, which means simply "to wait for." Like in the story of Noah and the ark, as the flood waters recede, Noah had to yakhal for weeks.

The other Hebrew word is qavah, which also means "to wait." It's related to the Hebrew word qav, which means "cord." When you pull a qav tight, you produce a state of tension until there's release.

That’s qavah: the feeling of tension and expectation while you wait for something to happen. The prophet Isaiah depicts God as a farmer who plants vines and qavahs for good grapes.2 Or the prophet Micah talks about farmers who both3 qavah and yakhal for morning dew to give moisture to the land.

Read the Scripture Sheet for more **HERE**

Hope
https://youtube.com/watch?v=4WYNBjJSYvE



CLICK ON POSTER FOR HIGH RES PNG FROM BIBLE PROJECT

Catholic Abuse Crisis No accident, Strategy to 'Destroy Church from Within'

NOVEMBER 17, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

> "In the 1930s, we put eleven hundred men into the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within. The idea was for these men to be ordained, and then climb the ladder of influence and authority as Monsignors and Bishops." *Former Communist Bella Dodd (see more in-depth **here**)*

Published September 17, 2018 (**LifeSiteNews**) – The shocking accusation by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò that Pope Francis helped cover up sexual misconduct — an accusation the Pope has so far declined to answer — as well as the litany of sexual abuse cases among clerics, force any Catholic to ask the question: how could this possibly take place in the moral institution that is the Roman Catholic Church?

One possible — little known, but very important — answer dates back to the Bolsheviks and their Communist leader Joseph Stalin.

Recently, I came across **a video on Youtube** of a presentation by former Soviet KGB propagandist Yuri Bezmenov, *aka* Tomas Schuman, who worked for the Soviet Union's *Novosti Press Agency* until

he defected in 1970. In this 1983 video, he claimed that the West was slowly being subverted into Marxism by the methods of “ideological subversion,” a form of warfare the KGB used against America.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Bezmenov explains that the main effort of the KGB was not conventional intelligence at all. Only some 15 percent of resources were spent on James-Bond-style espionage, while 85 percent was devoted to a slow process called “ideological subversion” or “active measures.”

The main methods used by Marxists in the West, Bezmenov explains, were to “corrupt the young, get them interested in sex, take them away from religion. Make them superficial and enfeebled destroy people’s faith in their national leaders by holding the latter up for contempt, ridicule and disgrace cause breakdown of the old moral virtues: honesty, sobriety, self-restraint, faith in the pledged word.”

The main targets were — and remain — institutions of religious faith, education, media and culture, the targets also of the hippie movement of that day. Although to all appearances America firmly rejected Soviet Communism during the Cold War, Bezmenov correctly observes that there was a massive undercurrent of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination at many, if not most, universities and institutions of learning, in the media and artistic communities in the West throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This indoctrination was never challenged or counterbalanced by fundamental American patriotic values. This was especially true of the entertainment industry. According to Bezmenov, a group of rock or pop-musicians with a message of 'social-justice' sugar-coated in popular 'spiritual' tunes were actually more helpful to the KGB than someone standing in the pulpit preaching Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

The 1983 video shows Bezmenov explaining that the demoralization process in the US had already been completed to a degree beyond the wildest dreams of the top leadership in the Kremlin.

"This process was done by Americans to Americans thanks to a lack of morals. Most of the people educated in the 1960s, intellectuals are now occupying the positions of power in the government, civil service, mass media and the education system. You are stuck with them," Bezmenov points out.

However, Bezmenov omitted mentioning that the Catholic Church was one of the main targets of the Communists.

Former Communist Bella Dodd spoke on the Communist infiltration of the Catholic Church. Dodd, an important Communist party lawyer, teacher and activist, converted to Catholicism in April 1952 under the tutelage of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. Stating that the Communist infiltration was so extensive that in the future "you will not recognize the Catholic Church," Dodd testified before the U.S. **House Un-American Activities Committee** (HUAC). She said, "In the 1930s, we put eleven hundred men into the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within. The idea was for these men to be ordained, and then climb the ladder of influence and authority as Monsignors and Bishops."

According to Catholic philosopher and professor **Alice von Hildebrand**, who was a friend of Dodd, she told her that "when she was an active party member, she had dealt with no fewer than four cardinals within the Vatican who were working for us, ."

In her public affidavit Dodd stated, among other things, "In the late 1920s and 1930s, directives were sent from Moscow to all Communist Party organizations. In order to destroy the Catholic Church from within, party members were to be planted in seminaries and within diocesan organizations… I, myself, put some 1,200 men in Catholic seminaries."

Alice von Hildebrand confirmed that Dodd had publicly stated the same things to which she attested in her public affidavit.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Dodd came to the venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen, heartbroken and finally realizing the terrible irreparable harm she had done by faithfully and effectively following an order of Stalin, namely to recruit men distinguished by their complete lack of faith and moral virtue, and engage them to "infiltrate Catholic seminaries and religious orders." Given her talents, her eloquence, her charisma, she was successful beyond all expectations. When her eyes were opened to what she had done, she was tortured by guilt that only God's infinite mercy could assuage.

Dodd's testimony – that infiltration of Catholic seminaries went back for many decades sheds some light on the abominable priestly scandal that has plagued the Church in recent years. Horrified by what she had done so successfully, Bella Dodd told Archbishop Sheen that she wanted to enter the most severe penitential order in the Church to try, in some modest way, to pay her crushing debt. She was told by this venerable prelate that her mission was to remain in the world and open the eyes of blind U.S. citizens to the horror of Communism. She obeyed, and from the early 1950s until

her death in 1969 she crisscrossed the country giving talks to shake her fellow citizens and open the Americans' sleepy eyes to the horror of atheistic Communism.

What we are witnessing today in the Church may very well be the horrifying harvest of this infiltration. Obviously "the agents" have made it their mission to admit more men devoid of morals and Christian faith into the seminaries for decades. Keep in mind that many cases of abuse took place already back in the 1960s. It seems that the abuse never was (and remains) a mere matter of priests giving in to temptation, but a comprehensive and pervasive attack on Christian morality and faith by a cunning and profoundly evil enemy.

Alice von Hildebrand writes, in **a piece published on Catholic News Agency's website**in 2016:

> The facts on infiltration are not meant to deny that some bishops, some heads of religious orders and some priests have not fallen into the very grave sin of either closing their eyes to the horrible sins committed by people under their authority, but to make us aware of the fact that a key factor hardly ever mentioned, or mentioned at all, is that many of the worst culprits were not Catholic priests who had fallen prey to "unbridled lust" but infiltrators who had obtained false baptismal certificates and were plainly agents of Communism and demoralization. (…) I heard from Bella Dodd that these evil men had even infiltrated the Vatican – for the Catholic Church is the arch enemy of Communism: and they know it.

Sexual abuse of minors and the practice of homosexuality is the perfect way to demoralize the Church and cause it to lose its moral authority in the eyes of the public and among believers, and cause people to abandon the faith. Thus, the Stalinist anti-Christian mission is now about to reach its goal two generations after Stalin, at a time when the West is facing the second coming of Marxism. With a weakened and demoralized Church, a new Soviet era will face little if any resistance in the West as it begins to take control and subvert the remains of Christian culture. We can already observe the signs: the suppression of free speech, the tyranny of political correctness, and vicious political and psychological persecution of Christians. Only a purified Church is able to stand up to this kind of diabolical regime.

Most of the priests, bishops and cardinals who have been committing the horrid crimes reported now were very likely at no point true and honest followers of Christ, but planted infiltrators and deliberate enemies of the Church. For this reason, the lay people of the Church must now insist on a total purging of imposters from within the Church.

SOURCE: **LIFESITE NEWS**

Who is Ripping Families and Friends Apart this Midterm Election?

OCTOBER 26, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Patti J. Smith and Leslie Davis Blackwel | **Where's the Outrage**

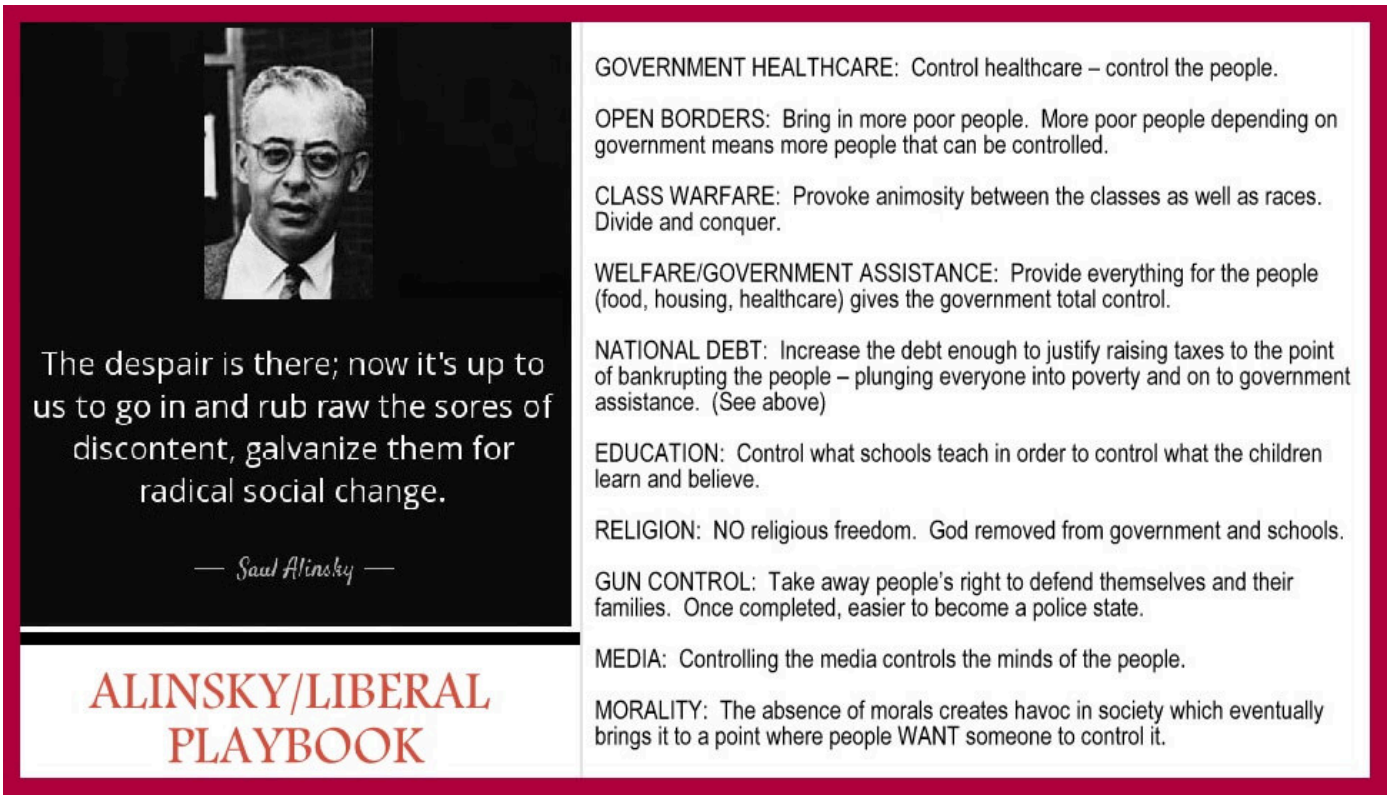
As elections get closer, all over the country we see division … millennial kids estranged from their parents and lifelong friendships in tatters. What gives? If you are wondering why so many families and friends are divided over this election you have come to the right place.

Are you ready for the truth? Not a watered-down, namby-pamby version of the truth, but the plain, ugly truth? It's anger perpetuated by the left which aims to divide and conquer. Yes, the tactics of Saul Alinsky (and the red man).

The fear-mongering, rumor-spreading, race-baiting press – in alliance with the Soros-funded politicos, have pulled out all the stops.Not only are they inciting violence against anyone daring to even LOOK like a conservative, they are encouraging not calm, respectful debate, but instead, promoting brow-beating, shaming and degrading in an effort to silence us. Not with facts, mind

you, facts are not important … lies work so much better. They expect their followers to do all they can to bring others to the dark side at all costs. They don't care if it tears apart families or diminishes friendships…in fact they count on it.

If you honestly care about our country …. take a look below at the typical Saul Alinsky playbook. Compare it to what you see today … in your community … in your family. Is this what you want your life to be? Your children's lives? Your grandchildren's?



> **The balloon of angst is swelling to the point where even the most insignificant situation brushing alongside the bulging latex threatens detonation of our society. Let's not let it pop!**

The American Library Association (ALA) Plunges Deeper Into the Drag Queen Cesspool

AUGUST 22, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Laurie Higgins | **Illinois Family Insitute**

The American Library Association (ALA) has revealed that it has not yet reached the nadir of ethical corruption. Through its Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) division, the Intellectual Freedom Committee, which promotes "continuing education programs" for children, just **wrote this** (you better be sitting down):

> Interested in bringing Drag Queen Storytime to your library? ALSC Committee Members received tips for optimizing success from library pioneers who have already done it. We also had the chance to meet a Drag Queen who talked about the value of offering this program, including fostering empathy, tolerance, creativity, imagination and fun.

I kid you not. Librarians who have brought in deviant entertainers to captivate the innocent imaginations of toddlers are "pioneers"? Think "brood of vipers."

This feckless ALA statement raises questions: *Should* we foster in children empathy for those who choose to engage in transvestism? *Should* we tolerate adults who expose children to transvestism? *Should* we encourage children to view men who masquerade as women as "fun"?

Every year, the ALA sponsors the laughably named "Banned Books Week" (this year, Sept. 23-29, 2018) during which self-righteous, dissembling librarians foment "book-banning" paranoia. The ALA fancies itself a bastion of liberty and arch-defender of the free exchange of ideas. In reality, the ALA is most notable for being a censorious, partisan purveyor of perverse leftist ideas about sexuality. The ALA can't seem to find an idea too perverse for children and can't discern an age too young to be exposed to perversion.

The ALA pursues its hysteria-fomenting goal chiefly by ridiculing parents who, for example, don't want their five-year-olds seeing books about children or anthropomorphized animals being raised by parents in homoerotic relationships. Scorn will be heaped on parents who hold the unpopular belief that homoeroticism and cross-dressing—even when presented in whitewashed, water-colored images—don't belong in the picture books section of public libraries.

Most taxpayers have no idea how purchasing decisions in publicly subsidized libraries are made, but they should, because the policy librarians follow serves as a de facto book-banning mechanism.

Libraries use Collection Development Policies (CDP's) to determine which books they will purchase with their limited budgets. CDP's maintain that librarians should purchase only books that have been positively reviewed by two "professionally recognized" review journals. Guess what folks, the "professionally recognized" review journals are dominated by ideological "progressives." Publishing companies too are dominated by ideological "progressives," so getting books published that espouse conservative ideas (particularly on the topics of homosexuality and gender dysphoria) is nigh unto impossible.

If librarians *really* cared about the full and free exchange of ideas and if they *really* believed that "book-banning" is dangerous to society, they would direct their rage and ridicule at the powerful publishing companies, professionally-recognized review journals, and their own profession, all of which do far more "book-banning" than does a handful of powerless parents seeking to have a picture book removed (or sometimes just moved).

The American Library Association has a goddess they revere. Their goddess, now deceased, is **Judith Krug**, past president of the portentously named **Office of Intellectual Freedom** (or is it the "Ministry of Truth"?) of the American Library Association. In a 1995 **interview**, she said this:

> We have to serve the information needs of ***all the community*** and for so long "the community" that we served was the visible community.... And so, if we didn't see those people, then we didn't have to include them in our service arena. The truth is, we ***do*** have to....
>
> We never served the gay community. Now, we didn't serve the gay community, because there weren't materials to serve them. You can't buy materials if they're not there. But ***part of our responsibility is to identify what we need and then to begin to ask for it. Another thing we have to be real careful about is that even though the materials that come out initially aren't wonderful, it's still incumbent upon us to have that voice represented in the collection***. This was exactly what happened in the early days of the women's movement, and as the black community became more visible and began to demand more materials that fulfilled their particular information needs. ***We can't sit back and say, "Well, they're not the high-quality materials I'm used to buying." They're probably not, but if they are the only thing available, then I believe we have to get them into the library***. (emphasis added)

I wonder if librarians heed Krug's words when it comes to resources that espouse conservative views on homosexuality and gender dysphoria. Are the anti-book-banning soldiers fighting to fill the gaping lacuna in their picture books and Young Adult (YA) literature collections on these topics? Are they fulfilling their responsibility to fill that hole if necessary with materials that are less than "wonderful"—which is to say, with materials that their "professionally recognized review journals" may not review positively or at all?

Here are some children's book ideas that librarians *could* request to fill gaps in their collections. These are *not* book ideas I want to see in libraries. Rather, they're topics ALA members would request if they were truly committed to the principles they espouse:

- Books for children and teens that challenge "progressive" beliefs about homosexuality and gender dysphoria—you know, pro-heterosexuality/pro-heteronormativity/pro-cisgender books
- YA novels about teens who feel sadness and resentment about being intentionally deprived of a mother or father and who seek to find their missing biological parents

- Dark, angsty novels about teens who are damaged by the promiscuity of their "gay" "fathers" who hold sexual monogamy in disdain
- Novels about young adults who are consumed by a sense of loss and bitterness that their parents allowed them during the entirety of their childhood to cross-dress, change their names, and take chemicals to prevent puberty followed by cross-sex hormones, thus irreversibly altering their psycho-social development and deforming their bodies
- Novels about young girls who suffer grievously because their fathers adopted female personas
- Novels about teens who suffer because of the harrowing fights and serial relationships of their lesbian mothers
- A picture book that shows the joy a baby bird experiences when, after the tragic West Nile virus deaths of her two beloved daddies, she's finally adopted by a daddy ***and*** mommy? (For those "progressives" who struggle with analogies and reading comprehension, please note, the joy the baby bird experiences is *not* about her daddies' deaths but about her adoption by a father and a mother.)

I listed several of these story ideas four years ago in an article that so enraged "progressives" that some homosexuality-affirming websites, including Huffington Post, took me to the woodshed. In doing so, they (not surprisingly) misrepresented my thesis. I was wondering whether librarians would request and include stories in their book collections with which some children may identify but that convey ideas "progressives" don't like. I was suggesting that "progressives" engage in a more absolute form of "book-banning" than the kind of which they accuse conservatives.

The anger of "progressives" on these websites demonstrated that they are far more, shall we say, "passionate" in their opposition to books they don't like—including even book *ideas*—than are conservatives. "Progressives" become enraged in the presence of a story *idea*—including book ideas that haven't even a hint of hatred.

Their anger confirmed my point. When conservative parents challenge an occasional book, "progressives" ridicule them (which includes librarians ridiculing their own patrons). When I merely describe *hypothetical* storylines, "progressives" go ballistic. How dare I even *propose* a story that suggests some child somewhere may want a mother *and* a father or that a teen may not like the promiscuity of her fathers or the emotional and relational instability of his mothers. If this is how homosexuals respond to a story *idea*, imagine if such a story were published and purchased and displayed in a library? If that were to happen, librarians better be ready for the jackbooted, anti-censorship change-agents who will storm-troop in demanding that some book-banning take place pronto. They might even sue.

While conservatives are forced to subsidize multiple homosexuality-affirming picture books and drag queen story hours, "progressives" aren't forced to subsidize any resources that dissent from partisan, "progressive" dogma on sexuality.

And the ALA claims to be all about intellectual freedom. Yeah, right. And the emperor's new clothes are *fab*ulous.

The ALA is plunging deep into the "drag" cesspool, pulling children down with them.

It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck
and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.
(Luke 17:2)

SOURCE: **The Illinois Family Institute (IFI)**

Meet Rev. Dean Nelson – Building Bridges with African-American Churches

FEBRUARY 4, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: DEAN NELSON, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Bryan Fisher | **Human Coalition**

As a young man attending the University of Virginia, Dean Nelson had given little thought to abortion, until a conversation with a fellow Christian opened his eyes.

"A young woman asked for my opinion on abortion. At the time I was pretty ambivalent. Abortion was legal, so I figured there wasn't much debate about it."

Then the student asked him a question that would change the trajectory of his life. "I remember her saying to me, 'Wasn't slavery legal?'"

That single question, in tandem with Dean's growing relationship with the Lord, transformed his worldview. "I began to realize the abortion issue did not reside outside of my faith."

Following graduation, as Dean became more involved in the political arena, the issue of abortion continued to resurface. "I soon realized there were many platforms to help raise awareness about the abortion crisis."

"One thing led to another, and I ended up serving with organizations like Care Net, which eventually connected me with Human Coalition."

Continue Reading…

Dean Nelson is one of Virginia Christian Alliance's founding board members.

The Epitome Of Racism

JANUARY 22, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
—Matthew 7:12

Joseph Parker | **Urban Family Talk**

This verse from the Word of God is known as the Golden Rule, and if everyone lived by it, **Matthew 7:12** would solve a lot of problems in our world — including racism.

Racism – We hear the word every day, all over the place, it seems — This leader, that politician, this celebrity, that group is racist! In this day and time, "racist" is one of the ultimate tags that is to be avoided like the plague.

What is the definition of "racism"? Well, Webster calls it "a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race." Another definition from Merriam-Webster states that racism is "racial prejudice or discrimination."

Meanwhile, abortion is the number-one cause of African-American deaths in the United States. Is this deliberate and massive slaughter of a single race not a clear demonstration of the epitome of racism? This is not the enslavement of black people; it includes an attempt to exterminate African-Americans. It's genocide!

Well who is the number-one provider of abortions in the United States? It's the organization Planned Parenthood. No other group provides more abortions in our nation than they do.

So where is the outrage toward Planned Parenthood, at who they are and what they stand for? Where are the angry cries of racism? Where is the cultural and media attention, and why is no one labelling this genuinely racist group as what it is to its core?

Planned Parenthood has a large number of abortion clinics throughout the nation, 2/3 of which are in minority neighborhoods. Planned Parenthood kills more black babies through abortion in four weeks than the KKK killed over the span of 150 years. Yet for some reason, many in our culture and many in the media consistently give them a pass when it comes to the designation of racism.

In her published article titled "Woman, Morality, and Birth Control," Margaret Sanger (the founder of Planned Parenthood) states the following:

"We should hire three or four colored ministers, preferably with social-service backgrounds and with engaging personalities. The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We don't want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

I don't believe it would be difficult to classify such remarks as racist. Not only was Margaret Sanger a racist, but she was passionately zealous about this cause.

Planned Parenthood and those who support the organization to this day continue to lift up Margaret Sanger as a heroine and honor her legacy. What a tragedy. If ever there was an organization that had thoroughly earned the designation of being racist, Planned Parenthood is in the running for the number-one spot.

Think long and hard about the following story in which Mr. KKK and Mr. PP meet one day and have a long discussion:

Mr. PP*: Mr. KKK, you've been around a long time, and you have quite a legacy of fighting and getting rid of black folks. But I need to inform you — You've been going about it all wrong.*

Mr. KKK*: How so? I think I've been pretty successful. We have gotten rid of a lot of black folks in our time.*

Mr. PP*: Let me educate you. Your perspective is ok; your methodology is the problem. You're going about it all wrong.*

Mr. KKK*: Ok, Mr. PP, educate me.*

Mr. PP*: I'll do just that. You have been opposing black folks and getting rid of them for more than 150 years. You don't like them, and they don't like you. Look at me and my associates. Black folks don't like you, but they love us. They like us and consider us their friends. We've managed to encourage them to think that we both like them and want what is best for them.*

Mr. KKK*: Hmm. You've got a point there.*

***Mr. PP**: There are laws against getting rid of black folks the way you've done it — by lynching, murder, etc. We were wise and cunning enough to make it legal to get rid of black folks by our methodology: Abortion. You and your associates can potentially go to jail for using your methods. Me and my associates, we are heralded as compassionate heroes and heroines for using our methods.*

***Mr. KKK**: You know, you've got a point.*

***Mr. PP**: You and your associates have to chase and capture your victims. We, on the other hand, have persuaded these folks to bring their little ones to us and let us get rid of them for them. And they pay us to do it!*

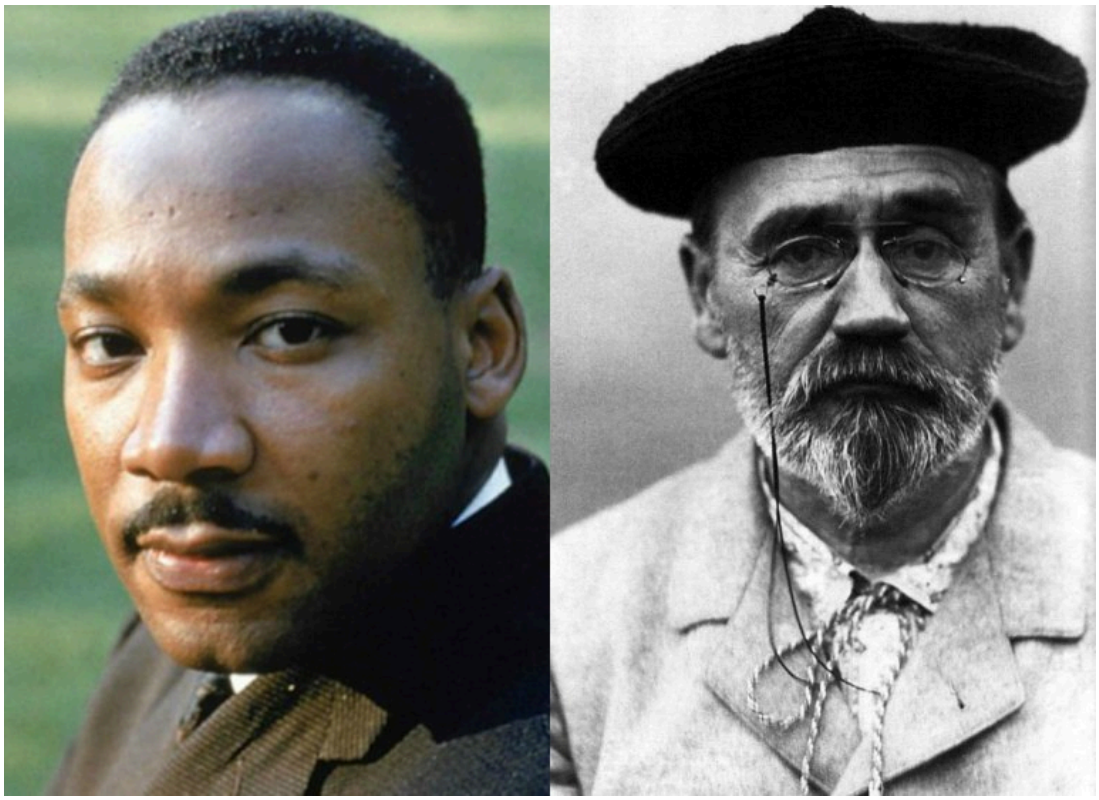
***Mr. KKK**: Man, I would have never thought of such a plan! You guys make us look like amateurs!*

SOURCE: **URBAN FAMILY TALK**

Joseph Parker
DIRECTOR OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER
Joseph Parker is a pastor and leader in his community. He is the Director of Intercessory Prayer for Urban Family and a radio host. He hosts Hour of Intercession, a weekly radio show that focuses on topics of prayer and intercession in the family, home, community and body of Christ. He also hosts a weekend show, Focus on the Family. Focus on the Family is designed to teach and share very Biblical and practical truths that any and all families can take and put to work in their lives. A key goal of the program is to help both single persons and couples, married couples and families with children learn very simply how to put the Word of God to work in their lives.

When Anniversaries Collide: Dr. Martin Luther King and Emile Zola.

JANUARY 9, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

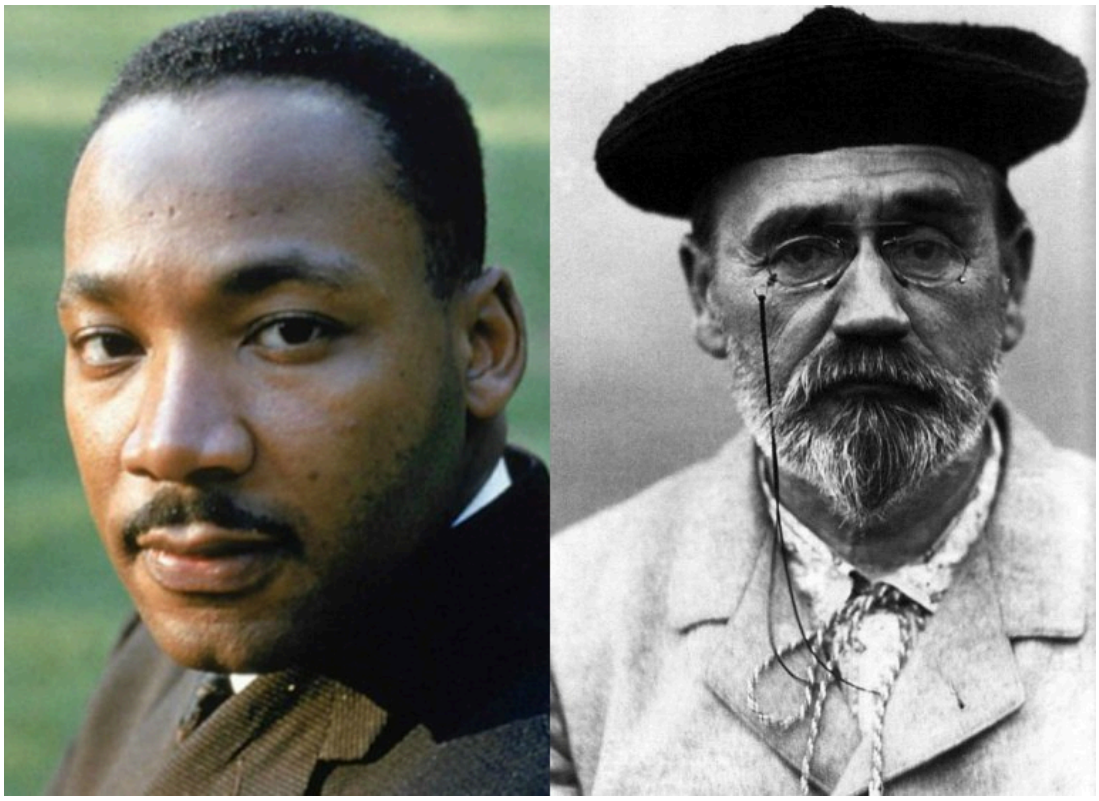


By Craig Johnson

Monday marks the 89th anniversary of the birth of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929). It also marks the 120th anniversary of the famous letter, "J'accuse!" It was written by influential French writer, Emile Zola, and published in the French newspaper, L'Aurore, on January 13, 1898.

Zola wrote the open letter to Felix Faure, President of France. "J'accuse" is French for "I accuse". Zola accused President Faure of antisemitism in the unfair charging and convicting of French Army staff officer Alfed Dreyfus. The charge was espionage, which carried a sentence of life in prison on the infamous South American penal colony, Devil's Island. Since the letter's publication, even in English speaking nations, "J'accuse!" has become synonymous with expressing outrage and accusation against the powerful.

My pronouncement of "J'accuse" is against the many "poverty pimp politicians" and "pulpit pimp preachers" who this weekend will lionize Dr. King with their lips while their actions are counter to all that Dr. King stood for.



Dr. Martin Luther King and Emile Zola

These speakers will wax eloquently about the greatness of Dr. King and of their great love for him. But, in Dr. King's April 9, 1967 speech in Chicago, titled "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life", he spoke of the first dimension being a concern for one's own welfare that could turn from a healthy self-interest to an ugly selfishness.

A love of others only when others proved to have a utilitarian purpose. Let's examine some of the positions several prominent "Negro leaders" of today espouse and determine if they are "using" the King legacy or are truly in synch with Dr. King's vision.

"I accuse" these people of cynically using Dr. King, and the cause he fought for his entire life, to cement themselves in power at the expense of other Americans, especially (but not only) Black Americans.

There's an old saying, "Conquerors divide; but leaders unite." Dr. King sought to bring Americans together. He often cited Paul in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". But, all we hear from Obama, Jackson, Sharpton, Farrakhan, and other Negro leaders is "hyphenated-Americanism," and "whitey is greedy, racist, sexist, and a devil." And, when they ran out of skin tones to hyphenate over, they invented a dozen ways to hyphenate over sexuality.

Dr. King spoke eloquently in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, declaring:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

"I accuse" these poverty pimps of turning every critique of Obama into a false charge that it is not about character, but about skin color. I accuse them of making college admission not about character (grades) but about skin color. I accuse them of denying advancement and learning to inner city Blacks because every institution that seeks to teach them discipline and character, i.e., the family, the church, schools, and coaches, has had governmental pressure applied to forsake character in favor of skin color; and the newest dividing line, change your sexual identity.

Pity the child, of any race, who has to be taught by these government monsters, without a strong father and mother, who are anchored in truth. The men who have replaced Dr. King will certainly not lead them in the ways of righteousness. Dr. King would be appalled at the teaching and government force used to promote a dozen different types of homosexuality, or give your daughter an abortion, or give your son a sex change – without parental notification. But not Obama, not Sharpton, not Jackson (let's give Farrakhan credit for holding out on that one).

But, perhaps worst of all is the total absence of any prominent Democrat leader (black or white) giving any semblance of even a mention to today's Blacks, of one of the key attributes that Dr. King, and men of his era always taught — self-discipline. Again, from "I Have A Dream":

> But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

In today's world, where the Oxford Dictionary recently announced that the 2016 "word of the year" was "post-truth"; the type of truth that Dr. King taught has no place with these race hustlers. Again, "I accuse!" Wrongful deeds are not corrected but excused. The cup of bitterness and hatred is not frowned upon but encouraged. Dignity and discipline? "Why you must be a Republican! Get outta here!" And, as for meeting physical force with soul force, today it is turned around. The police officers, school teachers, job providers, etc., who bring "soul force" to the equation are increasingly being met with physical force from thugs who are juiced up on the hatred being spewed by these wicked preachers and politicians, who have 25% of Black America on a literal and spiritual plantation. Teacher beatings and police officer assassinations have skyrocketed and increasing or record breaking murder rates are in many of our major cities. Whenever a major incident occurs, there is no balm put on the wounds, the way Dr. King would attempt to do; but only salt.

You won't hear very much talk like this as the usual suspects will misappropriate Dr. King, and go on their annual hate-fest, as though all of America is run by Democrat Lester Maddox, circa 1950. And the 10,000 young black men that Farrakhan asked to be ready to give their lives; many of them have a very big chip on their shoulders, and no active father to protect them from Obama and company whispering hatefulness in their young ears.

I pray that the true spirit of Dr. King: loving, compassionate, wise, thoughtful, disciplined, and determined; is still resonate enough to shine in our hearts in spite of who will be delivering most of the speeches.

Craig Johnson can be heard on "The REALLY, Real, Deal, with Brother Craig The Hatchet Man," Saturdays from 10am to 12pm, EST., at ***www.820theanswer.com****. Brother Craig's Dr. King broadcast from Saturday, January 14, 2017 can be heard by following or pasting this link into your browser,* ***DROPBOX LINK****. For media inquiries or speaker engagements, contact* ***Kimberly@agencyforthearts.com****.*

First Published in the ***Virginia Free Citizen***

He Hated Everything White. From Black Panther to Conservative Activist.

JANUARY 6, 2018
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Terry Beatley | **America OUT LOUD!**
VCA Board Member

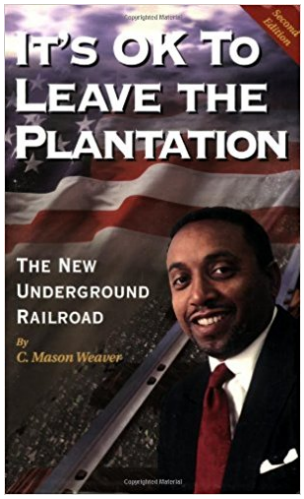
After approximately 2800 pounds of steel and iron plates fell on him, while on active naval duty in San Diego, California, the Navy classified him disabled and discharged him. Mason found himself unskilled and disabled…

From Black Panther to conservative activist, Mason Weaver is blazing across America teaching how the slave mentality is keeping many people in bondage and he uncovers who benefits when men choose shackles.

Author of ***It's OK to Leave the Plantation***, Mason explains what it was like to grow up experiencing racism and how it made him want to succeed all the more. First, though, he takes us on his journey of sheer hatred of anything white after 2,800 pounds of steel crushed his body. . . and then God knit his heart and body back together again.

LISTEN:

Mason's distinctive point of view is a direct result of a past tragedy that has produced a present day triumph. After approximately 2800 pounds of steel and iron plates fell on him, while on active naval duty in San Diego, California, the Navy classified him disabled and discharged him. Mason found himself unskilled and disabled. He had to discover a new way of earning a living.



Mason Weaver is the author of It's OK to Leave the Plantation, The Rope, Diamond in the Rough, and Polishing the Diamond in the Rough which discusses the social issues that affect us all and that bind us together. Noted for his quick wit, vigorous debate and forceful oratory, Mason is a challenge to the opposition and an instructive persuasive counselor to allies.

For Further Insight:
Website: **http://www.clarenceamason.com/**
Follow on Twitter: **https://twitter.com/masonweaver**

BUY THE BOOK: **It's OK to Leave the Plantation : The New Underground Railroad**

Terry Beatley
http://www.hosea4you.org
Terry looks at both sides and then filters through a biblical worldview lens. President of Hosea

Initiative and author of What If We've Been Wrong? She says the #1 problem facing women: they've been duped my the lies, myths and propaganda of the "sexual revolution". Three words describe Terry: Tenacious, Christ follower, Pro-life.

SOURCE: **AMERICA** OUTLOUD

Christmas Returns to Mosul After Islamic State Defeat

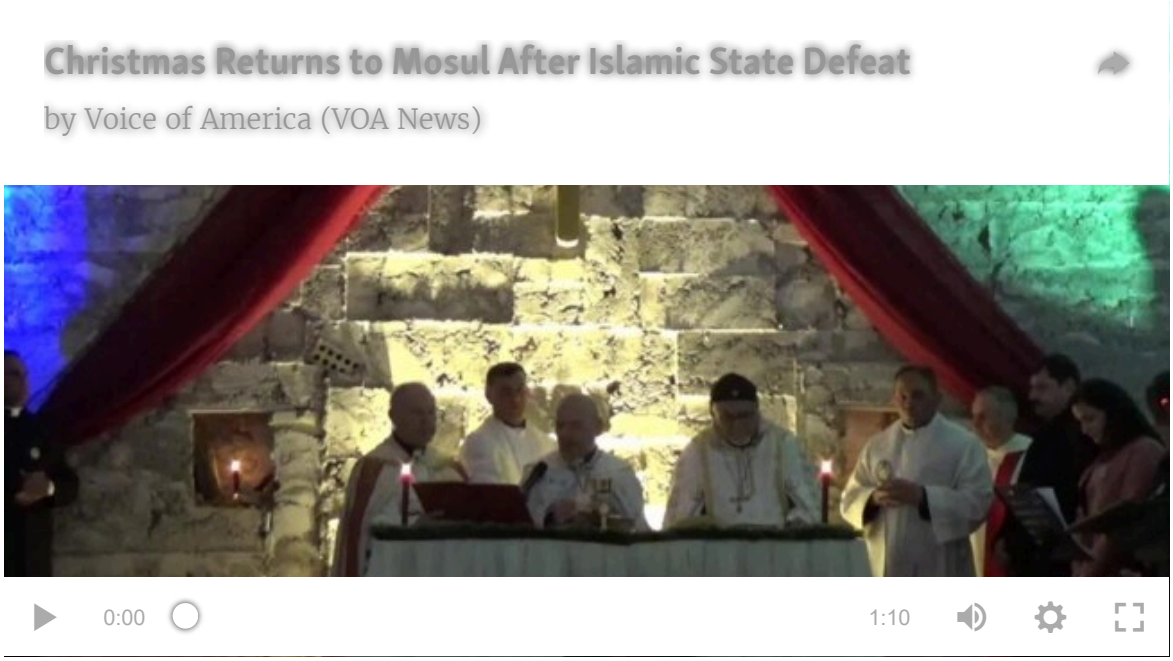
DECEMBER 24, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Voice of America News | MOSUL, IRAQ — (Video)

For the first time in the more than three years since Islamic State militants took over vast swaths of Iraq and Syria, Iraqi Christians have gone to church to celebrate Christmas in Mosul — a former militant stronghold. Worshipers and Muslim activists say they are hoping the holidays may bring some healing.

During the time Islamic State militants ruled Mosul, this church was a prison.

Today, worshipers celebrate Christmas here for the first time since Islamic State militants took over the city in 2014, forcing the entire Christian population — about 200,000 people — to flee.



“The situation made us so sad. This is our city, our grandparents’ city. We lived here, we grew up here. We built our schools, universities, churches families and friends here,” said Fadi, a worshipper.

During the nine months Iraqi and Coalition forces battled to take back Mosul, another million people fled their homes, nearly all Muslims.

Worshipers at this church say they hope to go home if or when they are more confident Mosul is safe, but so far, less than a dozen Christian families have returned.

Both Christians and Muslims attended the service today hoping that once again Mosul will start to re-grow its diversity.

Christmas Returns to Mosul After Islamic State Defeat
VOA

Digital Cocaine Seminar at Bon Air Baptist Church Recap

NOVEMBER 12, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Digital Cocaine Seminar on Thursday, November 9th was incredible!

What an incredible and powerful meeting we had at Bon Air Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. I am honored to be an Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance (**www.vachristian.org**), sponsor of last night's Digital Cocaine Seminar.

A huge thank you to VCA President Don Blake and Founder Greene Hollowell for their continued support and encouragement. Thank you all so much for your fervent prayers.

The research on the impact of technology on the brain is astounding, even shocking," Huddleston said. "When people learn about the real effects of their phones, games or tablets, they can either bury their head in the sand and hope for the best or make impactful changes in the way they consume tech. I'm all about the latter."

Left: Brad Huddleston , Upper Right: Don Blake, VCA President, Bottom Right: Seminar held at Bon Air Baptist Church, Richmond, VA

Whether it's gaming, pornography, cyberbullying, or the decline in grades, Digital Cocaine provides a look into the God-designed brain to understand how it interacts with the exploding world of digital communication and how the user can stay safe. The seminar is designed for parents, teens, teachers, students, pastors and their church members.

Check out the BOOK and DVD HERE, trailer below

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

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Walking with God through the Forest of Technology

NOVEMBER 10, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Brad Huddleston | **Vision Christian Radio**

To Be an Overcomer in the Digital Age

CONTINUE TO FULL ARTICLE WITH PODCAST AUDIO

Sexual robot development

"They've spent an enormous amount of money on skin texture to match human texture genitalia and emotional response with mechanics on the inside."

"The technology is such that you can basically order a custom made sexual partner now, based on what your preferences are in terms of a sex partner."

i-Phone addiction

ADHD is up 800 percent, depression is up 70 percent and much of that caused by overstimulation through technology.

Pornography in the church

> "The same statistics we find in the secular realm regarding pornography, you would think that the church would be less but unfortunately it is not."

Brad Huddleston is no stranger to Vision Radio.

CONTINUE TO FULL ARTICLE WITH PODCAST AUDIO

Facebook Founder Warns “God Only Knows What It’s Doing To Kids’ Brains”

NOVEMBER 10, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Tyler Durden
Zero Hedge

38-year-old founding president of Facebook, Sean Parker, was uncharacteristically frank about his creation in **an interview with Axios**. So much so in fact that he concluded, **Mark Zuckerberg will probably block his account after reading this.**

Confirming every ‘big brother’ conspiracy there is about the social media giant, **Parker explained how social networks purposely hook users and potentially hurt our brains**…

“When Facebook was getting going, I had these people who would come up to me and they would say, ‘I’m not on social media.’ And I would say, ‘OK. You know, you will be.’ And then they would say, ‘No, no, no. I value my real-life interactions. I value the moment. I value presence. I value intimacy.’ **And I would say, … ‘We’ll get you eventually.'”**

“I don’t know if I really understood the consequences of what I was saying, because **the unintended consequences of a network when it grows to a billion or 2 billion people and … it literally changes your relationship with society, with each other** … It probably interferes with productivity in weird ways. **God only knows what it’s doing to our children’s brains**.”

“The thought process that went into building these applications, Facebook being the first of them, … was all about: **‘How do we consume as much of your time and conscious attention as possible?'”**

“And that **means that we need to sort of give you a little dopamine hit every once in a while**, because someone liked or commented on a photo or a post or whatever. And that’s going to get you to contribute more content, and that’s going to get you … more likes and comments.”

“**It’s a social-validation feedback loop** … exactly the kind of thing that a hacker like myself would come up with, because you’re **exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology.**”

“The inventors, creators — it’s me, it’s Mark , it’s Kevin Systrom on Instagram, it’s **all of these people — understood this consciously. And we did it anyway**.”

In this ‘confessional’, it appears Parker has become “something of a conscientious objector” on social media.

Howeever , as Axios notes, Parker ends with just enough crazy to make you wonder…

> “Because I’m a billionaire, I’m going to have access to better health care so … **I’m going to be like 160 and I’m going to be part of this, like, class of immortal overlords.**
>
> Because, you know the expression about compound interest. … **ive us billionaires an extra hundred years and you’ll know what … wealth disparity looks like.**“

DEMOCRATS are the party of RACISM and DIVISION

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Patti & Leslie | **Where's the Outrage**

We usually don't read lib rags like Huffington post; however, an **article** was brought to our attention and needless to say, we have quite a bit to say about it.

In this divisive article, Jesse Benn writes, "If white athletes cannot fathom kneeling because they feel soldiers fought for their rights and blah blah blah patriotism, it is because they are treated as full citizens and afforded those rights they imagine soldiers fought for. Interpreting their own experience as something more universal, they struggle to understand why anyone should kneel. Indeed, for them, the anthem and American flag represent promises fulfilled."

Before going on our tirade, let it be known … we are NOT racists. We both enjoy close relationships with people of all races, in fact, both of us are blessed being in multi-racial families.

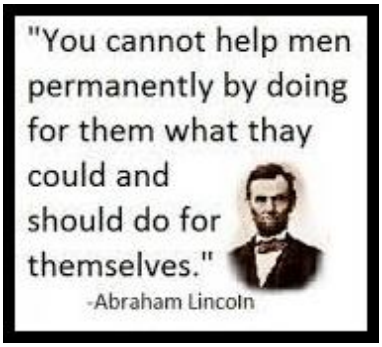
This self-serving and race-baiting article alleges people of color are oppressed and not treated as full citizens. Typical Saul Alinsky tactics used by liberal Democrats to incite the masses and divide our country. We find it quite interesting that when a Democratic, Black President was in power, there were no kneeling athletes, tearing down of statues, etc., and the words "White Supremacy" never uttered. ***All of a sudden***, when Donald Trump, a white Republican, enters the White House, people of color miraculously become oppressed.

It is important to remember that since its founding in 1829, the Democratic Party has fought against every major civil rights initiative, and has a long history of discrimination. The Democratic Party defended slavery, started the Civil War, opposed Reconstruction, founded the Ku Klux Klan, imposed segregation, perpetrated lynchings, and fought against the civil rights acts of the 1950s and 1960s.

It is true there are too many minorities living in poverty. Moreover, if you look at some major cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Philadelphia and New York, rife with crime and poverty, they are led by Democratic mayors. Chicago is by far the worst of them all, with crime and poverty rising every year. Don't you find it odd that former President Obama hails from Chicago and no progress was made during his Illinois political career or presidency? Didn't he notice? Didn't he care?

Democratic leaders are not doing anything to improve the situation. In fact, they are doing all they can to keep the minorities where they are by making them dependent on the government instead of themselves. A prime example is when the Obama Administration rewrote the welfare reform law of 1996 (TANF). The original law included work requirements and five years following passage, we saw welfare rolls decrease by approximately 50%. Under Obama's revision, states were allowed to waive the work requirement which encouraged the poor, black and white, to be slaves once more to the government.

Democrats would much rather have minorities under their thumb by convincing them they are "less-than" and "oppressed," rather than encouraging them to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and take advantage of the opportunities available to all citizens of this great nation .... scholarships, grants, work programs, etc.



Professional sports are a perfect example. People of all races are professional athletes, and they got there because they searched out the opportunities, worked hard and refused to let ANYONE tell them they could not succeed. Most **do not** believe the liberal rhetoric, and those who do are slapping the face of the country that made it possible for them to live a lavish life-style, in their multi-million-dollar homes.

Mr. Benn also addresses the race disparity as it pertains to arrests and incarcerations. Well, there may be disparity, but so-called "white supremacy" is not the cause. People make their own choices and thus must accept the consequences. Are there false arrests? Yes, and it is wrong, but it is not as common as the liberals want you to believe. Are there black kids killed by white cops? Yes, but there are also white kids killed by black cops – but those cases are not reported in the liberal media because it does not fit with the racist commentary; therefore ignored.

We need to stop looking at the history of slavery as an excuse for today's problems. The past should be a reminder of how far we have come. Look at the football fields, the basketball courts, golf courses, tennis courts, the music/television/movie industry, the Olympics, colleges, school faculty, corporate America, State Houses, Capitol Hill and the White House. All are a melting pot of success … those who believed in the promise of America and did something about it.

If Mr. Benn wants to talk about disparity…. maybe he should address the disparity in **abortions**. According to a **CDC report**, the rate of abortion among African-American women is far higher than among white American women. While black women make up only six percent of the U.S. population, they account for 35 percent of abortions reported. Planned Parenthood specifically targets minorities, in fact, its founder Margaret Sanger started "The Negro Project" in 1939 to, as she said, discourage "the defective and diseased elements of humanity" from their "reckless and irresponsible swarming and spawning." Even Jesse Jackson, in the March 1973 issue of *Jet*magazine, stated, "Abortion is genocide."

The only slavery today comes from the liberal Democratic party. They are the ones that are holding back people of color by convincing them they are oppressed and have no opportunities; keeping them bound by government assistance rather than providing incentives to reach their full potential. They are the ones telling all people of color there is no hope and future generations should be aborted.

When the National Anthem plays, and the flag passes, it is the time to stand united. ALL OF US. To show our pride in the greatest country on earth, to honor ALL people who have fought and died for our country and shout out our disgust towards, and rejection of, the Democratic liberal rhetoric that is doing nothing but promoting division and hate.

SOURCE: **WHERES THE OUTRAGE**

RESPECT

Standing For Those who Stood For Us

“America Under Siege: Antifa”

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Editor’s Note: Woody Kaine, son of Senator Kaine is a member of Antifa and had his first court appearance last week as Kaine, 24, was charged by prosecutors in St. Paul with fleeing on foot, concealing identity in a public place, and obstructing the legal process by interfering with a peace officer after a Trump rally on March 4th

Antifa is the third episode in the ***America Under Siege*** film series from Dangerous Documentaries (a project of the Capital Research Center) and Cohesion Films. Each episode profiles the influence of radical Marxists on various segments of American society.

The communist movement known as Antifa (short for Anti-Fascist Action) has sparked violence across the nation. In the wake of their battling despicable white supremacist in Charlottesville, Antifa has begun to gain mainstream popularity. But unbeknownst to much of the public, the vast majority of Antifa violence isn’t targeted at genuine fascists, but mainstream conservatives and civilians.

With help from those who have encountered Antifa, including Milo Yiannopoulos, Gavin McInnes, Lauren Southern, Jack Posobiec, and Steve Deace, conservative author Trevor Loudon guides us through the history and ideas behind the Antifa movement, starting with Leon Trotsky and going all the way through the events in Berkeley, CA and Charlottesville, VA.

The film will also air on One America News Network, Tuesday, September 26th at 10:30pm ET / 7:30pm PT.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Originally set to premiere at Milo Yiannopoulos's "**Free Speech Week**", the screening of *Antifa* was canceled by UC Berkley in part due to security concerns from Antifa themselves.

Jake Klein, the film's producer, issued the following statement:

“We are extremely disappointed by the cancellation of this screening and of ‘Free Speech Week’ as a whole. This is a major blow to the First Amendment, which we hope will be remedied in court. The fear of violence at this event, which was key to its cancellation, does not stem from anything we have done, nor from the actions of anyone else involved in organizing Free Speech Week. That fear is the fault of those who would use and have used violence to silence those with whom they disagree. *Let’s be clear: Antifa shut down a film screening criticizing Antifa through fear.*”

The film was written by and stars conservative author Trevor Loudon, directed by Judd Saul, produced by Jake (Joseph) Klein and Victoria Loudon, and executive produced by Capital Research Center’s Scott Walter and Matthew Vadum. You can view previous episodes of *America Under Siege* at **DangerousDocumentaries.com**.

vvvvv

Democrats, Richmond and the Culture of Death

SEPTEMBER 26, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Sixty years ago I came to Richmond to help build Whitcomb Court, a sister community like Gilpin Court where 4 were recently killed. I sensed we were building a new ghetto with concrete floors and ceilings, cinder block walls and facilities jammed together, developed only for poor people.

Seeing the picture of the black children impacted by the killings is so sad, a scene repeated over and over in Richmond. What goes through the minds of these children? They not only see the day to day killing in their homes, usually drug and sex related, but knowing their mothers could have easily killed them before being born- their life not worth a plug nickel.

What hope do they have?

Richmond is truly a city with a culture of death.

A Democrat majority city government and people that supports 3 abortion clinics and VCU & HCA hospitals that do late term abortions.

A Democrat majority that will eventually legalize recreational drugs like other states. A police chief whose solution is fewer guns and more people to speak up, who apparently is ignoring the root causes of the killing culture.

What chance is there for a safe, normal life?

Hopefully, some day the African-Americans will realize the devastation the Democrat Party has brought on them, from the chains of slavery, the Civil War, through segregation and massive

resistance and family destructive welfare that forced the fathers from the household. 200 years later the chains are still there, maybe not visible, but still as destructive and controlling as before.

Greene Hollowell

Richmond, VA.

Democrats Support Pro Death policies of Planned Parenthood, which is the killing of the unborn child.

Screen shot of the Video Below

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Southern Poverty Law Center – Pointing Fingers the Wrong Way

SEPTEMBER 9, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Patty and Leslie | **Where's the Outrage**

The SPLC was way off base designating the Ruth Institute as a hate group. How can an organization that encourages Christian living, family cohesiveness and morality be considered hateful?

Because of that designation, their donation processing service, Vanco, dropped them without advance notice even though the service didn't drop all their other Christian customers. Did you know Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, founder of the Ruth Institute, penned four books? If the SPLC has their way, her books will be deemed manuals of hate and protests will erupt demanding their removal from libraries and bookstores.

The SPLC points fingers of hate coast to coast towards many other Christian organizations, such as the **Virginia Christian Alliance**, whose mission is "to promote moral, social and scientific issues we face today from a Biblical point of view." And, "…refute and oppose, not with hate, but with facts and humor, the secular cultural abuses that have overridden laws and standards of conduct of the past." *Be afraid, people, be very afraid*. We don't want a Biblical point of view interfering with the continued leftist-guided downfall of society.

And why the absence of Black Lives Matter and Antifa on the list. If you get right down to it, where is Planned Parenthood? It's obvious they hate babies, especially babies of color – why else would they be putting their abortion clinics in minority neighborhoods? Dan Wolf of the Virginia Christian Alliance said it perfectly, "We are truly defined by the actions we take, and taking no action is in itself an action. The Southern Poverty Law Center's inaction defines who they really are and where they stand; with the fascists, communists, socialists, progressives, and others who seek division, envy, and hate."

The more we think about it, SPLC should be on top of their own list….. They are the ones that arbitrarily decide haters – and because the misled leftist minions consider the SPLC as experts in hate, act accordingly without batting an eye – condemning organizations that do wonderful things for our communities.

Source: **Where's the Outrage**

Confederate Memorials and Racism

AUGUST 25, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: EUGENICS, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

> Racism will finally die when we believe and act on the basis of what the Scriptures teach – that every person is of "one blood" (Acts 17:26) and that Christ's blood was shed to redeem all persons from their sins.

By Dr. Mark Creech | **Christian Action League**

Following close on the heels of the mayhem in Charlottesville, Virginia, upheavals over statues associated with the Confederacy in North Carolina have taken center-stage.

Earlier this month, a group of protesters gathered outside of the Old Durham Courthouse and toppled a 15-foot monument dedicated to "the boys who wore the gray."

Shortly thereafter, vandals struck the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee near the entrance of Duke Chapel, which prompted the administration at Duke University to remove it.

“Silent Sam,” a statue located on the North Campus at the University of North Carolina has been a place of intense protests by those demanding that the statue be removed.

Governor Roy Cooper has said Confederate statues in North Carolina should be taken down. He wants the state’s lawmakers to repeal a 2015 law that says none of these monuments belonging to the state may be taken down without the approval of the legislature and the North Carolina Historical Commission.

Of course, at the crux of this conflict, is the claim that such monuments perpetuate racism.

But wait a minute, is it really that simple?

Abraham Lincoln said in his fourth debate with Stephen Douglas:

> “I will say that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races from living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

Though abolitionists largely voted for Lincoln to become President, they struggled to some degree because they knew him not to be a candidate in favor of full equality. Black abolitionist and Illinoisan, Hezekiah Ford Douglas said of Lincoln, “I do not believe in the anti-slavery of Abraham Lincoln. He is on the side of this Slave Power of which I am speaking, that has possession of the Federal Government…. I went through the State of Illinois for the purpose of getting signers to a petition, asking the Legislature to repeal the Testimony Law, so as to permit colored men to testify against white men. I went to prominent Republicans, and among others to Abraham Lincoln and Lyman Trumbull, and neither of them dared to sign that petition to give me the right to testify in a court of justice! If we sent our children to school, Abraham Lincoln would kick them out, in the name of Republicanism and anti-slavery!…I care nothing about that anti-slavery which wants to make the Territories free, while it is unwilling to extend to me, as a man, in the free states, all the rights of a man.”

As President, Lincoln supported the colonization and deportation of blacks, even after the Emancipation Proclamation. He pressed the possibilities of settling them in places such as the British Honduras.

Lincoln told Horace Greely, founder, and editor of the *New York Tribune,* that if he could save the Union by freeing the slaves he would, if he could save the Union by freeing no slaves he would, and if he could save the Union by freeing some slaves while leaving others in bondage, he would.

Lincoln may have been the "Great Emancipator," but he was no paragon of anti-racism.

Neither was Ulysses S. Grant, leader of the Union Army, who allegedly said, "If I thought this war was to abolish slavery, I would resign my commission and offer my sword to the other side." The quote is in dispute and said to have been conjured up by Grant's opponents. But in a letter to Elihu Washburne, a congressman from Illinois who served during the Civil War, Grant clearly demonstrated his views were similar to Lincoln's, saying, "I never was an abolitionist, not even what could be called anti-slavery, but I try to judge fairly and honestly and it became patent in my mind early in the rebellion that the North and South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without slavery."

Grant was hardly descriptive of a hard-liner against a racist point of view. In contrast, General Robert E. Lee said that he was opposed to the institution of slavery but sided with the Confederacy because he couldn't bear the sword against his native Virginia.

Lincoln, Grant, and Lee opposed slavery. Still, all three were willing to sacrifice the dignity of their fellow man with full equality for political reasons. So, with respect to racism, how are Lincoln and Grant so much morally better than Lee?

Shall we, therefore, throw down the busts and statues in honor of both Lincoln and Grant?

James McPherson, in his 1997 book, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* researched numerous primary sources to determine the reason soldiers from both sides of the war fought. Thomas E. Woods Jr., a Harvard Alumnus, and American historian noted that in two-thirds of McPherson's sources, he found patriotism was their purpose.

Union soldiers wanted to preserve the vision of the Union as bequeathed to them by the Founders, more specifically, liberty for all men. Confederates saw their struggle against the Federal government much like the colonists who fought against Great Britain. In their view, the Revolutionary War was an act of secession like their own, and, therefore, meant to preserve the right of self-government with its wide scope of implications. Both sides were struggling for core American values, one in which interpreters will say liberty advanced, but so did the prospect for an ever advancing federal tyranny.

No individual who has studied the Civil War can honestly say that it wasn't about slavery, but neither can one accurately argue that it was a war against racism. Racism in the North and the South stretched far beyond the War Between the States. Blacks continued to be locked into a rigid caste system of race etiquette that kept them down.

In fact, in *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn,* Jason Sokol eloquently states, "As the nation gazed at southern whites' resistance to the civil rights movement – at the Klansman and demagogues, attack dogs and cattle prods – many recoiled in horror. Northerners told themselves that such scenes emanated from a backward land, a dying region, a place apart. Yet rampant segregation in cities across the country rendered racial inequality a national trait more than a southern aberration. When black migrants streamed north during and after World War II, James Baldwin reflected, 'they do not escape Jim Crow: they merely encounter another, not-less-deadly variety.'"

The point is whether we are talking about Lee, Lincoln, the boys in gray or the boys in blue, they were, just as most people in every generation, products of their own times. This is not an excuse. It's just saying that blanket judgments rarely serve our history well. Moreover, paying tribute to historical figures should never be seen as an endorsement of their actions altogether.

We cannot extricate ourselves from our national sins by tearing down Confederate monuments.

Confederate Memorial, Capitol Grounds, Raleigh NC
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AConfederate_Monument%2C_Raleigh%2C_NC_-_DSC05873.JPG

Although I cannot say Russell Moore, current president of the *Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission* would agree with the premise of this article, I agree with him, when he writes, "Yes, Lee fought for slavery, but so did the American Founders, in writing in allowances for it into the

American Constitution. Does the picture of Thomas Jefferson I have in my study endorse his theological liberalism and his slave-holding or does it recognize his far sighted commitments to human dignity and religious liberty? Does the bust of Theodore Roosevelt endorse his Darwinism or his awful views on eugenics?"

Moore goes on the say that "one of us is free from a sketchy background, and none of our backgrounds are wholly evil." He adds, "The gospel…frees us to give honor to whom honor is due

(**Rom. 13:7**, without the pretense that any human being is without sin or dishonor."

The fight against racism should continue! Nevertheless, the perpetuation of racist views will not stop because we crucified our history between the two thieves of white supremacists and radical leftists.

Neither will it end, because we heeded the call of a Governor who capitalizes on current events for political gain, just as he did on HB 2 (the bathroom bill which sought to ban men from women's restrooms), in order to erroneously label his political opponents in the Republican Party, and elsewhere as bigots.

Racism will finally die when we believe and act on the basis of what the Scriptures teach – that every person is of "one blood" (**Acts 17:26**) and that Christ's blood was shed to redeem all persons from their sins.

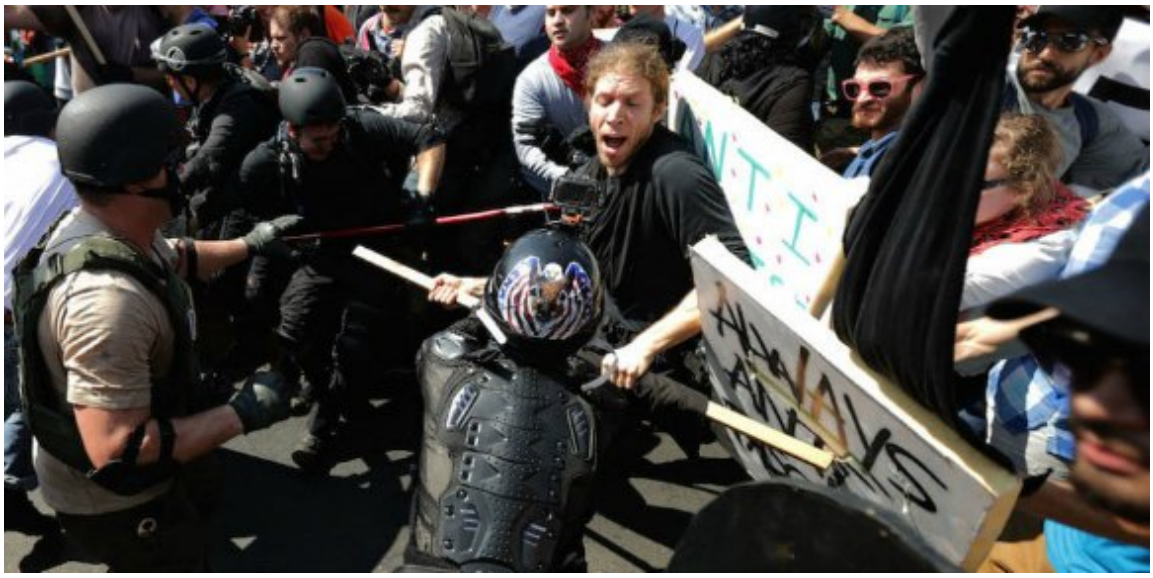
Racism will finally die when we live out the simplest of Christian creeds:

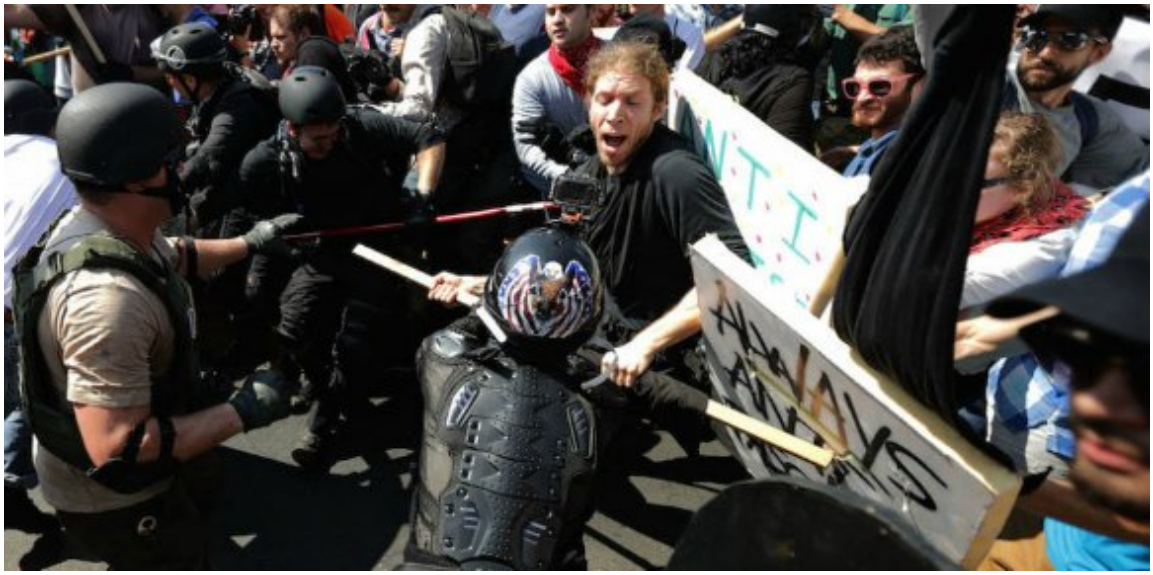
Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in his sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

First published in the Christian Action League

Dinesh D'souza On "the Big Lie About Charlottesville" — Glazov Gang

AUGUST 23, 2017
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS





"D'Souza correctly sees the resistance to Trump as a grave threat designed to undo America's constitutional system and to institute a progressive conformity of thought and action throughout the country."

This is a direct affront to Christians and the moral fabric of our country and impacts **Godly relationships, civility, stokes racism, violence and elevates vulgar and obsene behavior** between American citizens. Militant leftist groups, godless in nature, are rising up across the nation and this interview is a must see for all concerned Americans. Jamie Glazov interviews

Dinsesh D’souza on the BIG LIE ABOUT CHARLOTTESVILLE. The mainstream media is reporting only one side of the story and that has critical flaws and as President Trump as stated, they are FAKE NEWS and this interview proves it.

Dinesh D’Souza predicted the destruction of our national monuments in his 2014 film America. Now in The Big Lie, he shows how we can defeat the fascism of the Left and stop them from tearing down America.

Dinesh D’Souza joined The Glazov Gang with Jamie Glazov to discuss what progressives and their friends in the media are covering up about the unrest in Charlottesville and around the country this week. What is the Left’s “big lie?”

https://youtube.com/watch?v=

Poverty Pimps and White Guilt: Dividing “American” and “Black” History

FEBRUARY 21, 2016
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Craig Johnson | **Virginia Free Citizen**

Last Monday, my good friend, Don Blake, asked me to participate in a local television interview with him about a racial video, entitled “**Structural Discrimination**,” which upset his granddaughter and other students at Glen Allen High School. Having handled hot topics in talk radio for years, I was happy to oblige.

After providing additional commentary on Fox News, the story gained national attention, and the video is now a worldwide viral sensation, which has been discussed on nearly every news program, throughout social media, and within many major publications

The sad thing is that most of the news outlets that have carried this story are missing the point. The nation’s poverty pimps, who personally benefit from the anger and ignorance of the poor, claim that the video is a truthful justification for more race based government set asides (which do not benefit the poor as much as they benefit those who “manage” poverty).

The middle class and upper-middle class citizens of Glen Allen, whose children live within excellent, integrated neighborhoods and attend excellent integrated schools, feel that once again they are being cast as having unjust success. Many of these people have worked two and three jobs, postponed gratification while educating themselves, and have been givers to help the less fortunate; and, some have even voted for Obama, just to prove that they are not racist. They must be thinking, “When is this ever- ready, false charge of racism going to end?”

I say, that as long as there is a high percentage of the educated, elite blacks, who benefit from never-ending cries of racism, and who continue to intimidate the white majority, fewer of these elites will aim for the more competitive, and less certain free market. And, why should they? Well-meaning whites, who have been guilt-tripped over supposed actions of their forbearers, enable

Black elite hustlers with meaningless degrees, and who sometimes lack mastery of the English language, to live in luxury with television shows, elected and appointed offices, tenured professorships, no-bid government contracts, etc.

Please don't think this elitism is a Black thing only. The Democrat Party is a grievance party. If you lack the character and/or capacity to succeed meritocratically, just tout your skin color, tribe, gender, etc., and justify your deception by citing how the "old boy club" has been doing the same. As long as you sell out the less fortunate of your group to the idea that God-given rights are "Trumped" (pun intended) by government ordained rights, then you can take your seat at the table of "leadership".

This "African-American Studies" nonsense is really a subset of socialism. For 100 years, the "educators" have been trying to produce a generation of "little communists." Vladimir Illiich Lenin stated, "The purpose of Socialism is Communism." In order to cement themselves and their families into permanent power, by eliminating competition, the elites must destroy God, family, and the free market, leaving only the government for the proletariat to turn to for all of their needs.

The "educators" now have produced a millennial generation that mostly thinks that they prefer Socialism to Free Enterprise. That is no coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that for decades, there has been a separation between "American History" and "Black History". Nor is it a coincidence that this video was financed by George Soros' Open Society Foundation. The One World Government/Communism crowd needs to make the masses fight each other in order to continue their assault on God, family, national sovereignty, and Free Enterprise.

Billionaire oligarchs like Soros, Trump, Gates and Bloomberg, pretend to help the "little guy," but do they help or hurt the tensions between: young versus old (death panels for the 75-plus); male versus female (universal draft for women and internal destruction of armies); family creators versus homosexuals (abortion on-demand to be followed by limits on children; attack on scouts); wealth creators versus wage earners (see Soviets, Maoists, etc.);and the ever present cry of racism? Contrary to popular belief, not all billionaires continue to support the free enterprise and social norms that created an orderly environment where they could thrive to the point of becoming the new elite.

The racial, religious, ethnic and class differences have been mostly overcome in the world's greatest meritocracy, the USA. People who call themselves "Watchmen on the Wall" had better wake up. It's not about hurt feelings over a video, as Henrico County seems to think, as they declared the video banned. They may as well declare this cold weather banned. The students all have devices, such as smart phones, so the genie is already out of the bottle.

I suggest we air the video again but with explanations as to why it is good or bad, accurate or inaccurate, from both sides of the political divide. I challenge Rev. Tyrone Nelson, Ravi Perry, and video creator, Kimberle' Crenshaw, to come to Glen Allen High School to debate me and two other

Black Conservatives on this issue. That is how you develop critical thinking within students. Expose them to both sides of an issue rather than worry about hurt feelings or cowardly butt covering.

Our nation is entering its 4th season of "ekpyrosis", the ending of one saeculum and the beginning of another, which occurs every 4 generations. A nation does not dissolve in the "spring time" of the cycle; nor the "summer" or "autumn". It is the "winter" of the cycle where it becomes questionable whether people of various races, classes, religions, and political viewpoints, can resist the forces trying to tear society apart with divide and conquer tactics in order to control the destiny of the coming new age.

The question then becomes, how do you view yourself, and our collective history? Are "American History" and "Black History" two separate and distinct things? Are you a "Black-American, "Hispanic-American, "Asian-American", White-American"; or just an American?

The same applies to other types of divisions that elites engender among the masses. Watchmen on the wall, like me, are praying that Americans of all stripes will toss out the hyphen. George Soros and his paid brown-shirts are hoping that envy, hatred, and covetousness will continue to fracture a society that is teetering on the edge of disaster – so they can "rescue" us with a solution.

SOURCE: **VIRGINIA FREE CITIZEN**

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Marriage: Whose Plan Is It?

OCTOBER 3, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Is it unrealistic or unreasonable to think that professing Christians, reading the same passage of Scripture from the same translation, should come up with the same interpretation as to what is implied from that verse or passage?

In seminary I learned there are many translations of Scripture, but there is only one interpretation. I was taught words not only have a meaning they also have a usage.

Illustration:

> What is the opposite of darkness? Light.
> What is the opposite of heavy? Light.
> A word picture: I saw a bird light on a tree branch.

Other than spelling, and being descriptive, what do these three words have in common? Useage.

Following is the text of Genesis 2:24 taken from four translations in common use today.

New American Standard Bible:

> For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

King James Version:

> Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

New International Version:

> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Revised Standard Version:

> "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."

It dawned on me while transcribing these translations when the Holy Spirit imparted this information there were no human fathers and mothers. This was before God gave the command for Adam and Eve to "replenish" the earth thereby becoming the first father and mother.

This was a pronouncement – an authoritative announcement. Whose plan is marriage? Who has the right to set the guidelines? The answer to both questions is God.

Note the phrase one flesh is used in all four translations. There is no other one-flesh relationship mentioned in Scripture. This one flesh relationship is unique between a man and a woman the instant they are pronounced husband (male) and wife (female). This is ordained of God not by the religious or civil official performing the wedding ceremony.

I liken this as a miracle second only to our salvation experience. II Corinthians 5:17 reads: "Therefore if any man (generic) be in Christ, he is a new creature (**Greek**: original formation): old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

In Christ we become new creatures; in a God-ordained marriage between one male and one female they become one flesh.

From 1 John 3:2 we learn:

> "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like* (Also see Ps. 17:15) him for we shall see him as he is."

**Greek*: Like: similar (in appearance or character)

> Psalm 17:15, A Psalm of David: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness*."

**Hebrew*: Likeness: to portion out, a sort i.e. species; a part of from or out of; something portioned i.e. fashioned out of.

At that time, for the first time, we will see ourselves as we are as Christians. We will look like Jesus no matter the state of His being.

Before continuing, I have heard seekers of biblical truth describe word studies as boring; but the absence of accurate, in depth word studies sets the stage for teaching error.

To reiterate, words have a meaning and a usage. It takes language experts to precisely define the meaning and usage of words to point out to those of us less informed as to what the Bible is actually teaching.

At this point I researched the definition of marriage in the oldest dictionary I have and the newest. Here are the results.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language ©1969:

1. The state of being husband and wife; wedlock.
2. The legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife.

Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary 11th Edition ©2003:

1. the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law
2. the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage.

Without a change in law between 1969 and 2003, it is interesting to see that the word marriage re-defined itself 12 years ahead of the recent Supreme Court ruling.

This begs the question: Was the recent Supreme Court ruling based solely upon law?

Moving right along.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

God is the common denominator in Scripture. John 1:1 boldly declares: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Among Christians this should not be debated or doubted.

Human authors, under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, had to use the languages in place in their day. Neither the Holy Spirit nor the writers could coin new words.

Second Timothy 2:15 reads: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Biblical mathematics is different from the science of numbers and their operations, but that does not mean biblical math is not an accurate summation.

Illustration: From Genesis 2:24 we glean 1 + 1 = 1. In II Timothy 2:15 to rightly divide the word of truth you do not have a divisor by which a dividend is divided.

To rightly divide the Word of God you subtract all that the Bible reports on any given subject using a Topical Bible as a guide; then add all those verses together into one concise statement. This rightly divides (separates and compiles) the truth regarding any subject.

The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy that God's Word, the Bible, admonishes those of us called to teach and preach to be approved of God for what we teach, i.e. many translations but only one interpretation.

In my studies I employ three tools – two of which will be familiar to Bible students. First, a current version of a collegiate-level English Dictionary, and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with the Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament and the Greek Dictionary of the New Testament. Additionally, add to your library any outdated dictionaries you can find. Many contain definitions of words no longer in use today but were popular yester-year.

The Eight Rules of Interpretation, my third source, may be new to some; but it is a very vital tool for discerning word meanings and usages. I suggest a quick Google search of this tool to see why it is so highly recommended for biblical research.
The link is: **http://www.gcfchurch.net/library/current/8rules.htm**

An excerpt from Google: "These Eight Rules were developed by specialists in the "science of meaning" over the past 2500 years dating from Socrates to the present day. They apply equally to legislative or theological language. Critical analysis is impossible without them. Interpretive scholarship accepts them."

In researching, start with the Rule of Context, then Definition and Usage. One of the primary culprits regarding false teaching is quoting verses taken out of context. This is called proof-texting.

In our focus verse, Genesis 2:24, The Context is God's Creation, Genesis 1:1- 2:25.

God, the Creator, was talking directly to one male, Adam, and one female, Eve, being the only humans He created directly. Adam from the earth itself and Eve from the flesh of Adam. There

should be no confusion as to who was speaking and the genders of those receiving these instructions.

Dr. Ed Wheat in his book, Love Life for Every Married Couple, writes: "These twenty-two words (KJV) sum up the entire teaching of Scripture on marriage. All else that is said emphasizes or amplifies the three fundamental principles originated here, but (This Author's note: future references to marriage) never changes them in the slightest."

In applying the Rule of Definition we must look at the primary words in this verse as follows:

Man: *English*: An individual human, especially an adult male human.
Man: *Hebrew*: Ruddy, i.e. a human being (an individual or the species, mankind, etc.)

Note the preceding verse, Genesis 2:23: "And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of by flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'"

Rule of Usage: It is essential to note in Verse 23 the genders are capitalized in the KJV. Why? In the Hebrew language this changed the definition of man, as noted in Verse 24, from a general classification to Man in Verse 23 as a specific classification.

Man: *Hebrew*: a man as an individual or male person (underscored for emphasis by this Author) often used as an adjunct to a more definite term (and in such cases frequently not expressed in translation). See Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, Word 376.

Wife: *English*: A female partner in a marriage
Hebrew: Feminine of man (376), i.e. female person

One: *English*: being a single unit or thing
Hebrew: a primary root: to unify (Note how this usage of the word one solidifies the definition of flesh in the Hebrew language)

Flesh: *English*: The physical nature of human beings
Hebrew: Flesh (from its freshness) by extension body, person, also by (euphemism – the expression so substituted) the pudendum* of mankind.

***Pudendum** – The pudendum is a word meaning the human external genitalia, especially of the female.

This overlooked, or seldom if ever pointed out fact, unequivocally concludes that in God's Mind marriage was to be between a male and female since that is the way He created them.

God knew beforehand that His purpose for creating them was for procreation as stated in Genesis 1:27-28: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and

female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (Hebrew: a primary root: to fill) the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

God wanted His Image preserved throughout the generations of humans. Therefore it stands to reason (Rule of Logic) why God placed severe prohibitions against sexual acts that would not or could not preserve His Image in any way other than through the legitimate offspring of a man and woman, united in Holy Matrimony, as created by Him.

The Bible is replete with illustrations of God's sexual prohibitions.

> Leviticus 18:22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind (Hebrew: a male, as of man or animals as being the most noteworthy sex) as with womankind (Hebrew: a woman, (used in the same wide general sense as a male): it is abomination."
>
> Romans 1:26-27: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one to another, men with men working (*Greek*: performing) that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense (*Greek*: requital: to make retaliation for) of their error which was meet."

Individuals (individually and collectively) are free to do whatever they want to do provided there is no one to stop them. But they are never free to choose the consequences of their choices. And often, in the decision-making process (individually and collectively), they rationalize to the point of compromise.

Bottom Line: Biblically speaking, there is no right way to do the wrong thing.

At the outset of this presentation I noted there are professing Christians who see this matter differently. I am open to hear biblical support upon which your opposing viewpoint(s) may be built.

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How to Maintain the Proper Balance of Security and Significance in Marriage

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Part 3: Know What Makes Your Wife Tick Not What Ticks Your Wife

Part 1 What Makes Your Spouse TICK not What Ticks Your Spouse
Part 2 The Two Elements of Personal Worth

Earlier in this study we acknowledged the fact stated in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

It was also noted this newly God-created *one flesh relationship* was unique in that, except through marriage, no other such relationship exists among mankind.

It stands to reason, therefor, in marriage the male and female security and significance needs take on a new dimension. The husband and wife now must be equal supporters of each other's needs.

In essence, the mechanics are simple to follow, however, there are factors that inter into marriage that may not be expected. A father said it to his son in these words, "The girl you date is not the girl you marry."

In Chapter One of my book, *The Tie That Binds* ©1997, I tackle the issue this way in pre-marital counseling:

Love may be blind; but very often, It begins to see – after marriage.

I quote from my book referencing the value of pre-marital counseling:

"One could not invest too much time or effort in (quoting the title of an old, old love song) *Getting to Know You,* to take the shock out of getting married.

"'What do you mean, shock?' you might be saying. 'But, we really love each other; and we are excited about getting married.'

"This might be very true, but rather than debate the issue, let us look at issues that are already known to produce some of the most difficult communication breakdowns in marriages, and six primary areas from which just about all marriage crises stem.

"It is commonly stated, that in marriage, opposites attract. Why is it them incompatibility is among the leading stated reasons for divorce?

" For many years we were told that the three problem areas in marriage were money, sex and in-laws. Studyt, personal observations, and years of counseling marraiges in rouble, howver, have added three categories to this original infamous trie: husband/wife role reversal, religion and lif-dominating sin."

Through pre-marital and marriage counseling couples can learn how tyo stop these six areas from destroyuing their marriage.

The following episode plays itself out in the lives of many newly-weds. It is told through the bride's perspective – but it is true of the groom also.

Three thoughts capture a future bride's mind as she plans for her special day: The aisle she will walk down to marry; the altar where she will be married, ad the hymn to be sung at the ceremony.

It is said these three thoughts occupy her mind as she walks back up the aisle on the arm of her husband: I'll alter him. Likewise, he is thinking I'll alter her.

Words are the most effective way to meet the needs of both the husband and the wife in every level of communication but especially in areas of security and significance.

Much has been said about words; much needs to be learned about words especially by newly-weds.

Emily Dickenson says in her limerick *Words:*

A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day.

Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr. in his book *The Marriage builder* ©1982, makes this three-fold appraisal of words: "Words do one of three thiings: Words can give life; they can lay their and do nothing, or they can weild death.

In closing out this session, let me outline briefly the Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D. approach from their book *The language of Love* ©1988.

They list five ways of communicating love they term as Emotional Love Language: Words, Gifts, Physical Touch, Acts of Service and Quality Time.

Completing this exercise will tell you how to best communicate your love to your spouse. After completing this exercise you will always know how best to show your love to your spouse when fulfilling their expectations.

Here's how.

First discuss and define what each words mean to each of you.

List how your needs can best be met through each one of these areas. One being the best; five being the least.

This article first published: Sept 17, 2014

Next Time: God's Marriage Triangle

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Digital Cocaine

AUGUST 11, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

It would be rational to expect anxiety, emotional outbursts, restlessness and memory loss in someone dealing with a drug addiction. But disturbing new research reveals that extended screen use – tablets, computers and smartphones – could rewire the brain, causing similar brain pathologies and psychiatric conditions in children and adults.

Carte Blanche meets tech expert Brad Huddleston, who appeals for balance in a rapidly-changing digital world.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=2FKepNvkL7g

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Letter to the Editor: The Bible, not justices, should define marriage

MAY 10, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Published in the **Free Lance Star**

William E. Nowers

The Bible, not justices, should define marriageCommenting on a recent letter to the Free Lance-Star by Michael Strobl , and other uninformed opinions concerning the pending Supreme Court ruling on same sex marriages.

The Supreme Court reveals an unbelievable arrogance in even considering same sex marriage. The Bible clearly establishes marriage in Genesis. God revealed that a man will leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh. Every civilized nation since humans walked on the earth recognized the marriage of one man and one woman. We were founded as a Christian nation and for over 300 years it was widely accepted by American citizens.

In 1962 the Supreme Court, in a bloodless coup, threw the Bible out of schools and all Christian evidence, icons, and relics referring to Jesus Christ and the Christian religion were banned in all public areas. The justices set themselves up as the new gods of the nation. As such they ignored the Constitution by saying, “the Constitution says what we say it says.” They used combinations and permutations to change the obvious meanings of words. They thought nothing of completely rewriting new laws. They lied with impunity because who can challenge god?

In 1973 the Roe vs. Wade decision that led to over 55 million human babies killed in the womb, and still counting, was based on a lie. The Court said they didn’t know when a new human life started. But every intelligent person had known for decades, that a new human life started at conception. But you can’t challenge god.

We are now waiting for the Court to rule on same sex marriage. It is almost unbelievable that one or two, unelected judges, have the capability of changing the very backbone of Christianity that

has existed in every civilized society since man first walked the earth. But we have quietly accepted the bloodless coup that has already made the Supreme Court god. Will Christians accept another disgraceful insult by the Court?

William E. Nowers, East Lee County

William E. Nowers, *Creation & Evolution Studies Ministry, and on the Virginia Christian Alliance Board of Advisors*

The New Challenge for Blacks: Maintaining our Dignity to Preserve the Virtue and Legacy of the Civil Rights Struggle

APRIL 28, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, RACISM, RIGHT TO VOTE

Hate speech does not come from those who tell the truth. It comes from those who hate the truth and love a lie.

Using the civil rights struggle to promote the sexual appetites of the homosexual agenda is an affront to the dignity of black people. No other group in America has had to suffer the wicked injustices as did African blacks who were forced to provide hard labor with no compensation, and their American descendants.

Blacks from Africa were put in chains and imported to America packed on slave ships like *La Amistad*. Homosexual groups were not. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

The right to own, buy or sell a black man was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Decision. The right to own, buy or sell a homosexual was not. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

After the United States Civil War, black people were denied the right to vote. Homosexuals were never denied the right to vote. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

During the days of segregation, there were public schools where black children were not allowed to attend. Homosexuals were never turned away from a public school. That is not a hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

During the early struggle for civil rights, there were state colleges where qualified black applicants were not welcomed to pursue a degree. Homosexuals were never denied the right to pursue a

degree from a state college. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

Population controllers like Planned Parenthood have set up offices in the zip codes of minority communities that are predominantly black or Hispanic under the guise of helping the poor. No population control group has set up in the zip codes in predominantly homosexual communities under the guise of helping the poor. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

To this day, the descendants of African slaves have not been compensated for the misery, toil and slashes on the backs of their ancestors by large corporations who profited from the slave trade in America. There are no descendants of homosexual relationships from the slave trade, and since no corporation profited from cheap homosexual labor, there is no call for compensation. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

As blacks, we have our faults, for all have sinned, but we never insist that God approve of our wrongdoings. Many sins are done in secret because of the shame experienced. In fact, we hold revivals to repent of our shortcomings, and shout in appreciation for the unmerited blessings God has bestowed upon us. Homosexuals want ministers to approve of their unholy unions regardless what God thinks. They know no shame and flaunt their behavior with public parades boasting their pride. There is no repentance for those who know no shame. So, God resists the

proud. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

Therefore, it time for blacks to regain the dignity of the civil rights struggle and take back the mantle stolen from the legacy of the foot soldiers and leaders. An unnatural sexual appetite is not the same as being black. It never was! This is not hate speech; it's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

This is why there are those who hate me. I don't mind. Because if someone loves a lie, I do not want to be loved by them. If someone loves a lie, let them love the apostate ministers that will approve of their sins. If someone loves a lie, let them love the corporations and organizations that want to see fewer black children. If someone loves a lie, let them love the black poverty pimps they can fool with their rhetoric of tolerance. But, if someone loves a lie, be glad if they do not even like you – because if someone who loves a lie loves you, then you know you are on the wrong side.

Dr. Johnny M. Hunter is an advisor to the Virginia Christian Allians and is the President of Global Life & Family Mission, a ministrydedicated to promoting traditional family values, racial harmony, and the survival ofchildren around the world. He is also the National Director of Life Education

AndResource Network (LEARN, Inc.), a consortium of life affirming pro-family advocates,which is a prominent African-American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States. Website: **LEARN**

VCA News: New Sign, Come See Us!

APRIL 17, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

VCA News – New Sign Goes Up!

At the end of October, 2014, VCA moved into its new office at 8659 Staples Mill Road in Richmond. It took awhile for the landlord to have a new sign made and installed. Three of the original founders stand in front of the new sign. Reverend Joe Ellison, VCA Founder Greene Hollowell, and VCA Chairman, Don Blake.

The new VCA office is about 100 yards from the original office location of six years. The new space has a larger, more private conference room, a full-size kitchen, and a meeting room that will seat at least 50 people very comfortably. The new space has already been used for group meetings, and plans are to make it available for other like-minded groups and church use.

If you are in the area, stop by for a visit!

Virginia Christian Alliance
8659 Staples Mill Road,
Henrico, Virginia 23228
Office: (804) 261-1570

Reverend Joe Ellison, VCA Founder Greene Hollowell, and VCA Chairman, Don Blake

Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Reason 6: Life-dominating Sin

MARCH 3, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Unfortunately, these may not be evident even in a close, long term dating relationship. Life-dominating sins can cause a person to adopt two or more private life styles which might very be successfully disguised even from the most observant.

Drinking, doing drugs and a fixation on pornography all have been discovered only after marriage.

As a Christian counselor I am often asked, “What are the most difficult issues you deal with in counseling?”

The most difficult issue is surprising to many who think Number One would be pornography. Pornography is the most insidious sin I deal with because it becomes so deeply controlling and those who indulge in this sin work *overtime* to disguise their involvement.

The Number One, i.e. the most difficult problem I encounter, is teaching against false teaching. And unless, during the process of premarital counseling, Religion is dealt with the lack of religion can be a life-dominating sin also.

What then are the safe guards?

Don’t become too close too soon. Meet in groups. Date in groups. This will allow you to be a casual observer of other’s behaviors, and from this vantage point you can meet people who perhaps know the person you are dating and getting to know and observe them functioning openly.

Read books on what a good husband should be and what a good wife should be. Then look for those characteristics in the person you would like to date. Genesis 24 is an outline of what to look for in a spouse if you are looking.

It is not too late to do this even in the premarital counseling stages of any relationship.

In this series, Six Reasons Marriage Fail, we spoke first about Role Models and role reversals. If you, or the person of interest to you, did not have good role models then you both definitely need to learn what the attributes of a good role model are. This may best be done through studying Scripture and reading books built upon Scripture. Role Reversal definitely falls into the category of life-dominating sin that is practiced openly.

Are there any unaccountable or unexplained blocks of time in your *date's* schedule or calendar?

Observe habits. Would you like to live with the obvious ones you observe in him or her for the rest of your life together? Gossip is not a biblical trait, but a good listener may pick up clues about a person's public and/or *hidden behavior* habits and patterns.

As a minister I do not give advice. As close as I come to doing so is suggesting, in the face of any decision-making is this, listen to your inner voice. If in doubt – don't. This is not to say you never will, but I see that as the work of the Holy Spirit holding us up until the doubt is gone.

People who have nothing to hide, i.e. hidden life-dominating sins, are usually very open to being questioned by those they themselves are interested in knowing better.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

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Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Number 5: Religion

FEBRUARY 25, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

As noted in previous articles, Religion appearing as Reason 5 in this list of 6 Reasons Marriage Fail, does not pre-conclude it is the next to last reason marriages fail.

If there are any constant themes in Scripture, one of them is to marry someone of the same belief. This does not mean, however, that a Baptist should only marry a Baptist or a Methodist a Methodist. The culmination of this teaching is found in 2nd Corinthians 6:14 which simply says:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"

The Greek word *yoked* means literally to yoke up differently, that is, figuratively to associate discordantly.

It has been said evangelistic dating is the worst kind of evangelism and the worst kind of dating. There are better ways of winning the lost.

It is disappointing to find out after marriage that, while you and your beloved were dating, attending church for him (or her) was just an occasion to *be together,* and now you learn your spouse has no real Spiritual interests.

This opens one's thinking to such a thoughts as, What else has been disguised in our dating relationship? Do I really know them? Who is this person I have married?

The following true story is not a spiritual illustration, but it does well to communicate this point.

A pretty young teen-ager, age 15, was *swept off her feet* by a tall, handsome young man of eighteen.

Other than being interested in girls, his favorite pastime was fishing. On any given Saturday morning, weather permitting, you would find him at a favorite stream, lake or river – wetting a line.

So during their dating relationship she developed *a real interest* in going fishing on Saturday mornings. Or so he thought.

She especially liked it when they went out in his boat. She had the best of two worlds: She could get a good tan. She had him all to herself.

This went on for years. The budding romance grew into steady dating, engagement, and finally a proposal for marriage which she eagerly accepted.

After marriage the tide turned.

Shortly after marriage, on a bright and beautiful Saturday morning, the new husband woke his wife and said, "Hey, the fish ought to be biting. How would you like to go fishing?"

She answered sleepily, "No, I'd rather sleep."

Bewildered, he asked, "Why?"

She mumbled sleepily, "Because I don't like to fish."

Numb, shocked, and not understanding at all, he got his gear together and went fishing – for the first time in a long time – alone.

Sadly, he spent many hours that Saturday going through the motions of fishing; but he was really asking himself, Do I really know my wife? What else is it she might have been doing just to be with me?

It took many years for him to work through her *hidden agendas*.

This illustration can be applied to many different areas of a developing relationship – not just religion. Doing so might reveal and thus eliminate some surprises on the other side of the altar.

A primary reason for an extended dating period is to get to know one another better before creating a "*…one flesh relationship…"* as noted in Genesis 2:24.

The book *Too Close Too Soon* by Jim Talley and Bobbie Reed gives a lot of good information on certain time requirements for developing relationships and getting to know one another better. The title alone speaks volumes.

Genesis 24 can be titled: *What To Look for If You Are Looking* or more precisely *Have Predetermined Biblical Prerequisites For Marriage.*

So the above story will have a happy ending, my wife and I were pleased to help this couple celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary – several years ago.

Let their story be an illustration that problems in marriage are fixable.

Next time: Six Reasons Marriage Fail: Reason 6: Life Dominating Sins

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Reason 4: In-laws

FEBRUARY 13, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

It was stated earlier in listing six reasons marriages fail each failing marriage has its Number One reason. Listing in-laws as the fourth reason doesn't mean it ranks in fourth place. It could be Number One in some marriages.

I'll launch this study with a question: In-laws or Out-laws?

The answer: That depends on several things not the least of which is how long the couple has known each other, and do they know each other's families?

It is a sobering thought when engaged couples realize when they marry they are also marrying *the entire family*. Well, not exactly, but nevertheless a new relationship is entered into that encompasses more than just the couple.

Through in-law relationships the intendeds get their first real look at how they can expect the obfect of their affections to function in the family setting.

This can be reassuring or upsetting depending on the quality of family life his or her future mate grew up in.

This is most essential when considering the first area discussed: Role Models and Role Reversal.

It is a proven fact men and women carry into their marriage the best role model they have for their gender – best does not always equal good.

In the dating relationship it is wise to observe how each person treats the primary men and women in their family. This is an early indicator as to how your future spouse will treat you.

Realize that in the dating process a person would naturally be "on their best behavior" when you are around but might not hesitate to be "their normal selves" with family members – even in your presence.

In this reasoning, this author does not intend to explore the implications of marriages brought together through on-line dating services.

Whether this is good or bad, biblical or un-biblical or minimally affects marriages in general one way or the other, I think it is too early to determine.

Future in-laws may be turned into out-laws if the man does not ask her father for her hand in marriage. Many think this is an outdated custom and many men may not do so. It is biblical however.

Answer this question: At what age does one cease to be the child of one's parents? The answer is – never.

Colossians 3:20 plainly states:

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Not asking could set up a barrier in the in-law relationship that may never come down.

"But," asks the stammering couple, "suppose they say, No.?"

This ought to give serious couples reason to think through their relationship, and prompt them to ask the parents to explain their specific objections.

Saying "No," initially does not mean they will not say, "Yes," when the parents see their realistic objections resolved.

It is far easier to deal with in-law objections on this side of the altar than after the couple says, "I do."

Next time: Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Number 5: Religion

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

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Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Reason 3: Sex

FEBRUARY 6, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

As previously mentioned, this section of our discussion pertains to behavior within the realm of marriage. In pre-marital counseling I teach that engaged couples can practice all the aspects of marriage while dating – except living together and/or having a sexual relationship.

Overall we are looking at Six Reasons Marriages Fail. Thus far we have examined Role Reversal, Money and now Sex. We will conclude with In-laws, Religion and Life Dominating Sin.

Like money, sex is not the most important aspect of the marriage relationship; but it is a barometer concerning what is going on in a marriage relationship.

Sex, or rather the lack thereof, shows that there is a communication breakdown elsewhere that might be showing up in the bedroom.

Sex sometimes becomes a weapon or a tool for bargaining. This should not be. The sex act is designed by God to unite the male and the female when practiced within the bonds of matrimony.

For the benefit of those who do not hold to the Biblical teaching that sex is designed only for marriage I share the following statistics taken from our records here at New Hope Counseling Service.

Note: This is not I telling you what is going on in these marriages. Rather, it is those in counseling telling of their plight.

While listening to couples in marriage crisis counseling presenting their problems as they see them, my wife and I are attuned to such statements as:

“We don’t love each other any more.”

“We don’t seem to have anything in common any more.”

“We don’t trust each other.”

Regarding the latter, we never respond to this statement the first time we hear it.

As a counseling technique we nod slightly to each other as a cue we heard what was said. We do, however, interrupt when we hear this said a second time. At that point I take the lead saying:

“This is the second time my wife and I have heard you say, or indicate, you do not trust each other. Are we hearing you correctly?”

Since we do not ask too many questions in any session, this question usually catches the couple quite off guard.

In every case where we have made this ascertain both husband and wife have acknowledged that this is true of their marriage relationship.

The *trust-factor* had been damaged or destroyed in their marriage relationship.

With careful calculation I ask, “May I ask you a very personal question?”

After receiving permission, I ask, “Were you involved in pre-marital sex?”

In 100% of the cases the answer has been, “Yes.”

Pre-marital sex from our observation damages or destroys the *bond of trust* in a marriage relationship.

Because the *world-view* says, “If it feels good, do it,” at first the couple does not believe that this is the reason they “no longer love each other.”

I like what the Rev. Dr. Vander Warner, Jr. says, “If it feels good that might be the best reason not to do it.”

In relating this to couples they do not realize they had substituted the word *love* with the word *trust*. They said originally, “We don’t love each other any more.”

The fact of the matter is they do not trust each other any more.

As you read this you may be asking, “Tom, why are you going into so much detail about this matter?’

My answer is simple: If you do not give the problem the correct diagnosis you will never solve the problem.

If you see nothing wrong with a major taboo, pre-marital sex, God has set forth you can never *cure* this problem in a marriage.

When a couple sees this, they must then acknowledge they have contributed equally to each other's downfall in the marriage.

No longer can they point an accusing finger at their spouse.

Next time: Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Reason 4: In-laws or Out-laws

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Six Reasons Marriages Fail: Reason 2 Money

JANUARY 30, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The mere mention of the word *money* evokes a variety of thoughts and emotions in many individuals.

The Bible is perhaps one of the most quoted and *misquoted* books ever written. For instance, it is often stated the Bible says *money is the root of all evil* – but not so.

Actually, First Timothy 6:10a reads: "For the *love* of money is the root of all evil."

Regardless of how money affects any person's mind and emotions, money is one of the six reasons marriages fail.

Money can be problematical in other types of relationships, but our focus on money is how it can affect marriages.

Many agree money in not everything, but inwardly they might deny these words. Some marriages make it on very little money; some will not make it on very much money.

So the question arises, is money itself the problem? Problems in marriage might stem from the mismanagement of money whether there is a little or a lot.

If a couple begins a marriage that is debt-laden immediate financial counseling is a *must*. In fact, money and/or money management should be a major issue in all premarital counseling.

The adage *plan your work and work your plan* is as important in money matters as any other area of life. Following are several areas money matters have created problems in marriages.

Debts brought into a marriage may be legitimate obligations such as educational loans debt or debt from an unavoidable catastrophe.

A major break-sown revolving around this set of circumstances is maintaining the above as "your debt' and "my debt."

Marriage was designed by God to be the only one-flesh relationship known to human beings which includes their finances. The your/my concept of handling issues might develop into his and hers habits of thinking. Thus the trust factor is greatly reduced in a budding marriage relationship.

If these matters were not discussed in premarital counseling immediate financial counseling is a *must.*

Financial shockwaves are among the most unsettling situations revolving around money issues. These can arise if one spouse, or the other, makes a large purchase or a "good investment" without confiding in the other.

This creates a serious breach of trust, not to mention it could plunge both parties into long-term debt obligations or a loss of family savings.

A good rule for a new family to adopt is always say, "No," when immediate answers must be given regarding financial matters. Unless, of course, the matter has been fully discussed and agreed upon beforehand – always say, "No."

Do what the salesperson doesn't want you to do. Go home and *sleep on it* before rendering a decision.

As a matter of extra precaution a couple might want to delay the decision and pray the matter through one more time before signing on the dotted line.

A prudent person will seldom lose out on a great deal.

No, money is not everything, but the mismanagement of money is often the undoing of a stable marriage relationship.

Next time:

Another Source of Marriage Problems – Sex

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Husband and Wife Role Reversal

JANUARY 25, 2015
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

For many years we were told the three problem areas in marriage were money, sex and in-laws.

Study, personal observation and many years counseling has caused me to add three categories to this infamous trio: Husband/Wife Role Reversal, Religion and Life-dominating Sin.

When creating a list there must be a first item a last and those in between. Starting with Role Reversal and ending with Life-dominating Sin does not mean they rank in that order. Each marriage would have to be evaluated to determine the Number One problem area. Any one of these six might be at the top of a list.

We will begin this discussion with Role Reversal and over the next several sessions we will cover them in the order listed above.

Role Reversal

First and foremost in some marriages we observe the pattern commonly referred to as the male passive and female aggressive form of Role Reversal. This description, however, does not accurately describe the situation in many marriages.

At first glance this might appear to be a domineering wife trying to *boss* her weak husband, but the key factor in this scenario is the *passive attitude* of the husband.

Through his passive behavior he could purposely or unintentionally cast his wife in the role of being in charge.

This, then, would not the case of a husband calling on his wife to do things she might be better equipped to do; if it is his general attitude of not wanting to be in a leadership role.

Believe it or not, the majority of wives this ministry has served do not want to be in charge – they want their husbands to be true spiritual leaders.

In looking at husband/wife role model responsibilities we can establish a clear-cut understanding of responsibility, fault and authority.

In an earlier study it was stated God has set forth four areas of responsibility for the husband.

Briefly stated these are: Provider, Teacher, Protector and Leader/Guide. Husbands who neglect to perform these duties in effect put their wife in charge.

God holds husbands responsible as the head of the household set forth in Genesis 3:16: "…and he shall rule over her."

Understand, however, this does not set up a dictatorship. A synonym for *rule* in this context is to govern.

The husband must be involved in all decision-making or at least be informed as to what is going on.

In a counseling situation I pause and ask the husband a seemingly *dumb question*: "Did you ask to be born a male? It is not a dumb question my point is well taken.

Since you did not ask to be born a male, you live under God-assigned responsibilities. God determined someone had to be directly responsible to Him. He chose the man. This teaching is not an equality passage – it is a God-ordained responsibility passage.

The equality verse is Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them."

A wife must realize that just as she did not ask to be born a woman it was God who assigned gender and the corresponding gender role responsibilities.

The partners of a successful marriage will recognize this, and will work toward a united effort which will utilize the talents and Spiritual Gifts of both husband and wife, but he will realize that the final responsibility – not necessarily the final word – is always on the husband.

As noted in a previous lesson, the final word in any dispute always rests in God's Word as directed by Scripture.

The husband cannot transfer responsibility, but he can and should grant authority to his wife. She brings talents and Spiritual Gifts into the marriage usable for the best interests of both husband and wife.

Because she is a female she is better equipped to handle many situations in the family a husband – because of his maleness – cannot perform well or at all. God knew what he was doing when He created genders.

One of the most telling statements of Role Reversal a husband makes is, "It's not my problem."

In truth, it might not be his direct fault, but it is always his problem – responsibility.

We learned in the session Attack the Problem and Not the Person it is always the husband's responsibility to take the initiative to resolve every problem that *visits* his household. It is his because of his God-given gender responsibilities regardless of the modern trends to alter roles in the family.

Husbands don't be overwhelmed by all of this. Remember, the God that gave husbands this position also gave these promises: I will never leave you nor forsake you; I will never slumber nor sleep; cast your cares upon Me because I care for you.

Another contributor to Role Reversal is this universal fact: A husband or a wife will take into the marriage relationship the best role model they have for their gender – best does not always equal *good*.

Role model sources are many and varied. Your role model could have come from your biological parents, adoptive parents, stepparents, grandparents or an influential male of female role model in your life. Any person(s) you look up to can be your role model, but best does not always equal good.

There are many good books on building a successful marriage, including mine: The Tie That Binds; but the best book written on the subject is the Holy Bible. I recommend the King James Version.

Next time: Money

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

The Number One Source of Our Problems

DECEMBER 30, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

We are the Number One source of our own problems – and this is the good news!

If God were the Number One source of my problems I would not want to contend with an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Being on a daily basis to ward off problems.

If Satan was the Number One source of my problems I would not want to contend with an un-seen adversary who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Yes, other people's poor choices vitally affect us, but even so, I would not want to contend with every one around me who is trying to control me and fit me into their mold.

However, since I am the Number One source of my problems all I have to do is learn to make better choices in life.

We often hear it said, it is my body I can do with it what I choose. This is a half-truth.

We are free to do what we want to do provided no one is there to stop us, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choices.

During my 12-year involvement in jail and prison ministry I met thousands of men and women behind bars who espoused this philosophy.

Since I create most of the problems in my life by making poor choices, if I learn to make better choices I will avoid having to work through the consequences.

As the New Year is upon us, this is an ideal time to *turn over a new leaf.*

Earlier in this study we stated the three levels of change as superficial, situational and substantial.

Superficial Change, you may recall, we related to a New Year's Eve resolution type of change which we determined is usually a temporary change.

Situational Change, we determined was also a temporary change.

To make better choices we need to examine our *attitude* toward matters that confront us in every area of our daily life.

One rule to follow is: If in doubt – don't.

Allow God's Holy Spirit time to help us weigh matters out before making decisions.

Next time: Six Reasons Marriage Fail

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

The Third Least Source of Our Problems

DECEMBER 24, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In review, we have seen in two previous articles (**here** and **here**) that God is the least source of our problems; Satan is the second least source.

This flies in the face of those who ask, in the face of problems and difficulties, "Why did God let this happen to me?"

The response to this accusation against God is that He is the solution: Christ is the answer.

Blaming Satan by saying, "The Devil made me do it," is easily denied by James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefor to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee."

In this verse God is shown as the solution if we resist the devil. God can't be both the problem and the solution.

Other people's poor choices affect us. No, this is not opening the door to blame- shifting. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is an illustration of this principle.

You may recall a drunk driver ran through a school-bus safety zone killing several children. The children were where they were supposed to be doing what they were supposed to do. The drunk driver's poor choice, i.e. driving while intoxicated, vitally affected them.

We are all subject, from time to time, to decisions made and actions taken by others, on our behalf or otherwise, having profound and sometimes detrimental effects upon us.

When I drank my first beer December 31, 1951, at age 17, I did not know I was vitally affecting the lives of six people who were not known to me at that time. They would be my wife whom I

married when I was 22 years of age and the five children that marriage produced. In fact, that poor choice affected my entire family until January 16, 1969.

As critical as this is, other people's poor choices affecting us is the third least source of our problems.

Next time: The Number One Source of Our Problems

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth

DECEMBER 21, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

You may recognize this as the title of a book written by Hal Lindsay in 1977. It is. But the same arena is alive today as then – in fact ever since we were introduced to Satan in Genesis 3:1:

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he (the serpent) said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Since Satan cannot be overlook as a potential source of problems, let's look at the impact of this brief introduction to the most devious force known to mankind.

The *Life Application Study Bible* informs us: "Disguised as a crafty serpent, Satan came to temp Eve. Satan at one time was an angelic being who rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven.

"As a created being, Satan has definite limitations. Although he is trying to tempt everyone away from God, he will not be the final victor.

"Why does Satan tempt us?

"Temptation is Satan's invitation for us to give up on God's kind of life."

First Peter 5:8 warns: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

From the standpoint of creating problems in a person's life, the devil is limited in what he can do, but he is very persistent.

First John 4:4 states the devil's scope of influence: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Satan is a defeated foe who has not been put away yet. He cannot have any authority over you and I unless we allow him to.

Realistically speaking, "What should you expect if you put the enemy in charge?" In one word – problems.

Satan, as active as he is, is perhaps the second least source of problems in your life and mine.

God, the least source of our problems, will ultimately be our Source of Help over Satan who is the second least source of our problems.

Next time: The Third Least Source of Problems, Other People's Poor Choices Affect Us

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Every Problem Has a Source and a Solution

DECEMBER 6, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

We will never be without problems yet we need never be without a solution.

Shakespeare said it this way: "Sorrows (*problems*) come not single spies, but in battalions." Another truism attests: The harder I try the *behinder* I get. And a still familiar lament from a past television series puts these words to verse: "If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all."

Needless to say, perhaps we have all been there at one time or another; but we need never be without a solution.

All problems come from one of four sources. We will look at these over the next several sessions because knowing the source of the problem will point us to the solution.

First. Let's look at something new I apply to problem solving. I call it:

The Rule of Proportion

This rule directs attention to the number of times an event occurs in Scripture. That is, how many times do we see this type of thing being the source of problems?

This study is an eye-opener in that it leads us to the real source of problems. By knowing this we will ultimately spend less fruitless, frustrating time trying to solve *shadow* problems.

A shadow problem is a problem that exists due to a false idea as to what the problem may be. This comes about when tying a problem to a wrong *assumption* as to the cause of the problem.

The Four Sources of Problems

Source One

Yes, God can be the source of some of our problems; but how many times in the Bible do we find God actually *causing* our problems?

In attempting to answer many people first suggest Job, but this is not an illustration of God personally touching Job with these afflictions. True, there is a fine line here, but God did not touch him directly as we see Job's plight unfold. Note that in the following episode God was instrumental in this man's plight – but for a reason.

Following is the only incident I am aware of, and I am open for correction, and is found in John 9:1-3:

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of god should be made manifest in him."

The balance of this passage tells how Jesus anointed the man's eyes, sent him to the pool to wash them, and after which that he gained his sight.

According to the *Rule of Proportion*, there are no other recorded incidences (I am aware of) where God directly brought a problem upon a person – except in this unusual incident before the man was born – for His own purpose.

God then, I conclude, is the least source of our problems.

Scripture does speak frequently of God *chastening* those He loves, but this is more the consequence of our own actions and not His unprovoked initiative.

If we are not being built up by a trial or testing we need to look elsewhere for the source of the problem.

Rest assured, if God did *put something on us* – so to speak; it would be consistent with His desire to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus the Christ not as an undeserved punishment or hardship.

Problems are often made more difficult because we immediately blame God as the Source of problem rather than the Source of our help and deliverance.

Next time: **Source Two | Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth**

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

First Biblical Ground Rule for the Family

NOVEMBER 26, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

During the next six lessons we will look at the detail supporting these Biblical Ground Rules. We will begin with a brief review of the following:

If we cannot agree we will not be disagreeable.

Granted, this is sometimes easier said than done. We should expect a man and a woman to bring different perspectives into a marriage relationship. To be different is not necessarily to be wrong. Different can mean to be better.

A husband's perspective combined with his wife's perspective can ultimately become their perspective. Genesis 2:24 re-enforces this conclusion: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." That is to imply to be of one perspective.

Some maintain that for marriages to succeed couples most continually negotiate a series of compromises.

Let's look at this more closely before adopting this principle. In a compromise each person usually must give up *something*.

In most compromises the dominant personality usually wins out over the passive personality. But does that prove the passive perspective is not as valid as that of the dominant personality's perspective? Certainly not!

An interesting observation can be made at this point: *They* (who ever *they* are) also say opposites attract yet one of the leading causes of divorce is incompatibility.

Before the fall of man the only thing God saw that was not good was that man should be alone. God's remedy was to create the woman.

As much as this might bother some men to hear this – creation was not complete until the woman was created.

Creating the male first did not establish his superiority, rather it established his need: "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.'"

Creating the woman second did not establish her inferiority, rather it established her mission: "I will make a help meet for him.

To understand that the man and the woman are both *different* but *equal* in value requires further explanation.

Liberty Bible Commentary states:

> "When God finished His creation (Gen. 1:31), He noted that everything was very good. Thus, until Eve was created the creative activity of God was not complete. This is the first time in the history of creation that God said, 'It is not good….' Man needs a wife who is a helper. If man is to achieve his objectives in life, he needs the help of his mate in every way. Her position is further defined by the expression, 'like him,' literally, 'as agreeing to him or his counterpart.' She is the kind of help man needs, agreeing with him mentally, physically, spiritually; but she is not an inferior being."

God has programed four areas of responsibility into men. The husband is to be a provider, teacher, protector and leader.

He has programed into the woman the reality that the wife is to be a companion, helper, to bear life and a creator of beauty i.e. home-making instincts.

This does not pre-conclude she cannot, or should not, work outside the home as evidenced by Proverbs 31:10-31.

Collectively, in marriage, blending these areas of responsibility becomes the process of *cooperation* not *compromise*.

Let's look at the mechanics of this process in a Bible-based marriage relationship.

If the husband is to help his wife to develop her full potential then she is better equipped to complete him.

Therefore, the more complete he is the better he is able to help her to develop.

In marriage the only argument then would be: Who can best serve, and best agree.

Next time:

We will never be without problems, but we should never be without a solution.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Six Biblical Ground Rules for the Family

NOVEMBER 21, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Number-one reason married couples come to New Hope Counseling Service simply stated is: "We have a breakdown in communication."

Unless you are out of touch with the community around you, it is a known that the break down in the family structure has reached epidemic proportions.

Although not playing the *blame game* through the following reminder, Scripture is clear that the husband/father is the Spiritual leader in the family structure. He, of course, is to be supported fully by his wife the mother of their children. Often times she is the primary parent exercising direct supervision over the children.

Bible-based ground rules are antidotes for these ailments, needless to say, when properly applied by each family member. It is also a known fact that *attitudes* filter down from the top.

My father taught this by laying down basic ground rules to govern our household. Two of his primary rules were: (1) Peace at home is peace with Jesus. (2) There will be peace in my house.

While expounding on this in counseling, I often get the response, "You must have been reared in the Cleaver-household."

"No, we were a real family, and this can happen in your family also if you adopt the following rules."

Six Biblical Ground Rules for the Family

If we cannot agree we will not be disagreeable.

Granted, this is sometimes easier said than done, but remember the adage: Practice makes perfect.

We should expect a man and a woman to bring different perspectives into a marriage relationship. One of the most obvious and exciting facts about the male and the female is that they are *different*.

To be different is not necessarily to be wrong or to be in opposition to another. Different can mean to be better.

A husband's perspective combined with his wife's perspective can ultimately become their perspective. Genesis 2:24 re-enforces this conclusion: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." That is to imply to be of one perspective.

(Over the next several weeks we will learn how to apply these six ground rules. Here in we will state the principles.)

We will never be without problems but we need never be without a solution,

Shakespeare said it this way: "Sorrows (*problems*) come not single spies, but in battalions." Another truism attests: the harder I try the *behinder* I get. A still familiar lament from a past television series puts these words to verse: "If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all."

Needless to say, perhaps we have all been there; and in ad0pting the unique One Flesh marriage relationship couples will experience new challenges in the area of problem solving.

But we need never be without a solution. (More on this later.)

There is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue.

Understanding and applying this rule will greatly reduce arguments in any relationship more especially between husbands and their wife which ultimately trickles down to other family members.

Usually fierce verbal battles revolve around the issue of who is most right and who is most wrong. (More on this later.)

Problems are solutions in disguise.

Whether you are a counselor, whether you are single, a newly-wed, married for years or have attained many years of experiences in your lifetime, you face in life one ultimate truth: You will

never be without problems, yet you never need to be without a solution to your problem(s).

A definite plan for dealing with problems can insure a happier more sound marriage relationship and other relationships also. (More on this later.)

The hardest thing to give is IN.

Giving in is not giving up. Giving in is not reaching a compromise. Giving in is taking the first step to reconciliation – cooperating with these Six Biblical Ground Rules for the Family. (More on this later.)

Don’t build divorce into your marriage

In divorce there are no winners. In reconciliation there are no losers. (More on this later.)

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

God's Plan for the Family

NOVEMBER 14, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Without a doubt, today perhaps more so than ever, the family unit is under severe attack. The Christian family, in particular, is under attack at times by so-called religious- based groups who ignore God's plan for the family.

The foundation of the family, as Christians know it to be, was laid in the Garden of Eden. We learn this from Genesis 2:24:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Dr. Ed Wheat in his book, *Love Life: For Every Married Couple,* says, "These twenty-two words sum up God's entire teaching on marriage. All else that is said emphasizes or amplifies these three fundamental principles originated here, *but never changes them in the slightest."*

The *Life Application Study Bible (KJV)* by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., says, "God gave marriage as a gift to Adam and Eve. Marriage was not just for convenience, nor was it brought about by any culture. It was instituted by God and has three basic aspects: The man leaves his parents, and in a public act, promises himself to his wife; (2) the man and woman are joined together by taking responsibility for each other's welfare and by loving the mate above all others; (3) the two become one flesh in the intimacy and commitment of sexual union, which is reserved for marriage. Strong marriages today include all three of these aspects."

We *cannot know* what the family would be like today if Adam and Eve had not, *"eaten of the tree of which I* (God) *commanded thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat of it…'"*

We can, however, see the condition of the family today due to man's legislation. Society, as a whole, is suffering from the lack of Bible-based leadership today. Leading from behind and destroying the sanctity of life and marriage is taking a severe toll on all families today.

The solution? Get back to the basics.

Bill Gothard, through the teachings of his Institute of Basic Youth Conflicts, lays out a premise and Bible-based plan this ministry has taught for over 30 years: Ephesians 5:22-28, 6:1-4.

(In a previous session on Biblical Submission I expanded the general teaching on this subject to include verse 5:21 which makes this passage compatible with Genesis 2:24.)

Ephesians 5:21-28:

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth his own body."

Ephesians 6:1-4:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

God's Plan for the Family

To convert this teaching to a visual, picture an open umbrella bearing the inscription:

Obedience to God = Guaranteed Protection

Under the opened umbrella picture the following arrangement:

Eph. 5:21 Husbands and Wives

Eph. 5:25-28 Husbands

Eph. 5:22-24 Wives

Eph. 6:1-4 Children

Any time anyone gets out from under the umbrella they are out from under the line of the line of human authority and from God's Authority.

If you were not reared in a Christian household, this might be a totally foreign concept to you; but this doesn't mean you can't learn it. There are many Bible-based books on the subject in Christian bookstores.

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Biblical Submission

OCTOBER 31, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Today "**submission"** is often viewed as a curse word making the following biblical principle difficult to grasp.

Why? The hurdles to understanding are due to a misapplication of definitions, usage and context.

This biblical principle, or tool, states:

Submission

If you *submit,* God is in control.
If you *resist,* others are in control.

Note: The words wife and husband do not appear in this biblical principle.

This is a general principle set forth to guide everyone's role in life. Taking the true meaning of submission out of context destroys God's purpose in this arena.

The Law of First Use

Following this rule sets the stage for understanding biblical submission. Submit is first used in Genesis 16:9: "And the angel of the Lord said unto her (*Hagar*), 'Return to thy mistress (*Sarai*), and submit* thyself under her hands.'"

***Submit**: Hebrew: to heed, i.e. pay attention

Verses 10-11 explains God reward to her for obeying (*submitting)* to His command.

It is essential to note this word is used only one time in the Old Testament. God's teaching is simple: take heed, pay attention. As adherents of God's Word this means this principle remains altered. God got it right the first time.

Generally, studies in submission stem from a breakdown in communication between husbands and wives. Context becomes a vital factor in understanding what Scripture really teaches regarding submission.

This error is often generated through improper teaching from Ephesians when starting at 5:22 instead of 5:21.

Ephesians 5:22:

"Wives, *submit* yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

Although verse 21 is the concluding phrase of the sentence started in 5:18 (KJV), it connects directly with 5:22.

Ephesians 5:21:

"*Submitting* yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

In this passage *submit* and *submitting* are the same Greek words. In context, before a wife is admonished to submit to her husband, the husband and wife are admonished to submit to each other *in the fear of God.*

In context, this study on *submission* is a study on responsibility not equality. It was pointed out previously that equality between a male and female is spelled out succinctly In Genesis 2:27 which bears repeating:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The discipline of mathematics proves this biblical equation: Quantities equal to the same quanity are equal to each other.

Before concluding this session I want to quote from the Life Application Bible (KJV) by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.:

"Although some people have distorted Paul's teaching on submission by giving unlimited authority to husbands, we cannot get around it – Paul told wives to submit to their husbands.

“The fact that a teaching is not popular is no reason to discard it.

“According to the Bible the man is the spiritual head of the family and his wife should acknowledge his leadership, But real spiritual leadership involves service.

“Just as Christ served the disciples, even to the point of washing their feet, so the wise husband is to serve his wife.

“A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his role, and a wise and Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband’s leadership.

“Either approach causes disunity and friction in marriage.”

In teaching biblical submission it is almost always necessary to deal with the breakdown in communication in marriage before getting to the *punch line* of this valuable principle: If you submit God is in control. If you resist *others* are in control.

Who are the *others?*

The answer is simple: Any one but God.

Joshua stated the solution simply as he was about to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land as recorded in Joshua 24:15: “…choose you this day whom ye will serve…but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

As you meditate on that meditate on this also: What Christian would abuse another when following the Word of God?

If you do not know who God is or have forgotten Him;

you will never consider what He wants you to do!

Next Time: God’s Plan for the Family

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Marriage: Learning and Doing the Will of God

OCTOBER 27, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

A continuing theme in this series has been: An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure.

This lesson logically follows that which was taught regarding a breakdown in communication in any relationship but here specifically in marriages.

When a couple reaches a point in communicating where they say literally or figuratively I don't, can't or won't they must return to a point where they can say "I do."

We couple this time-tested truth with the following question: What Christian would abuse another when practicing the Word of God? The answer is obvious.

To teach this principle we will look at First Peter 3:1,2 and 7. This passage sounds harsh, but it illustrates biblical balance in a marriage relationship.

For each command God issues His Word gives a reward for following that command.

I Peter 3:1: "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation* of the wives;…"

*Conversation: (Greek: anastrophe) behavior.

Verse 2 & 7: "While they (*husbands*) behold your chaste conversation (*behavior*) coupled with (*their*) fear." (Greek: phobos: fright)

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to *knowledge*, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the *weaker* vessel, and as being *heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not*

hindered."

Knowledge in the Word of God always means at least understanding what the Word of God is saying. Here it also means knowing who she is as an individual and how she is to function as a wife.

Weaker vessel, in this verse, describes her as more delicate – without detracting from her womanhood she is more vulnerable.

Heirs together of the grace of life can be stated that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. In God's view wives are equal to their husbands in worth and value.

Verse 7 concludes with these very plain, easy to understand words. There are no hidden meanings here.

That your prayers be not hindered is a very harsh warning to husbands who neglect this teaching.

Therefor not following this biblical admonition is a lose/lose situation while following it is a win/win situation.

Next time: Biblical Submission

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Learning to Say “I do” Again

OCTOBER 22, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Recently we have been looking into several aspects of communication breakdown that is the Number One reason people come to New Hope for instruction and counseling.

What do we, as a counseling ministry, when two people who once said, “I do,” now say: I don’t, I can’t or I won’t?

Before embarking on the *mechanics* of the solution two parties at odds with each other need to examine their commitment to healing the here-to-fore unresolved issue(s).

To help them arrive at their individual level of commitment to their marriage we give them a piece of paper on which is written four words in this configuration

CAN CAN’T

WILL WON’T

Before they have a chance to respond they are told we can help them with three out of the four.

If either one or both say they *won’t* it is not feasible to continue. Counseling is of no effect unless people ask for it.

This may seem an abrupt measure, but if only one says they won’t, during the silence in time that seems to always follow such a declaration, most often statement is recanted and the session continues. Yes, the person saying they won’t loses some *face,* but most marriages make it beyond that point. The one who did not say they won’t is happy that the marriage has a chance of being repaired.

From a counseling perspective, the solution is simple – take them back to a place where they can say, “I do.” That is, help them re-establish their common interests that brought them together in the beginning.

Also help them find ways to stay in that *zone* while rebuilding the dating relationship in their marriage and rebuilding any damaged trust factors.

Early on it was established the best way to defeat any *enemy* was to make a friend of them.

Next Time: Marriage; Learning and Doing the Will of God

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

The A, B, Cs of a Negative Approach to a Positive Response

OCTOBER 7, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

This is a calculated approach that must have total commitment in order for it to succeed.

Although the word *calculate* doesn't appear in the KJV of the Bible the principle is taught plainly by Jesus as recorded in Luke 14:28:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth (Greek: psephizo: generally, to compute) the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"

Building relationships is not unlike building high-rise buildings in that both need a strong foundation in order to stand – especially during the storms of life.

In our last lesson we learned God wants us to heal any breakdown in communication. Now we will learn an effective, God-guided, plan to do so.

The A, B, Cs of a Negative Approach To a Positive Response

A. State the case with specifics relative to the issue in a non-accusatory manner. Example: "I don't know what it is I have done wr to cause this misunderstanding.

B. Assume 100% of the responsibility for the breakdown in communication. Why?

In an earlier lesson we learned: There is always a certain amount of right and a creation amount of wrong on both sides of every issue.

You may be 99% right and only 1% wrong or you may be 1% right and 99% wrong. In either case God wants you to give up 100% of your wrong regardless of the percentage you own.

The foundation of this reasoning is based on Romans 3:10b that is more often than not stated incorrectly. The proper rendering is: "There is none righteous, no, not one."

This verse is often misquoted as: "There is none *perfect*, no, not one."

Follow the mechanics of this teaching. It is impossible for a person to be either 100% right or 100% wrong

Misquoting the verse destroys the foundation of this verse. The Greek word righteous is dikalos: (by implication *innocent*), right.

So state the case by assuming 100% of your percentage of wrong no matter how minute it may be.

C. Ask: What can I do to make things right between us?

Do not tell them what you think they need to do to make things right.

Upon hearing this teaching some have said, "If I say that they will plow me under!"

Biblically speaking there is protection for the one seeking to make things right by healing a relationship. Here it is.

I will do whatever it takes to make this matter right as long as it is not illegal, immoral, unethical or un-biblical. Remember the lesson: There is no right way to do the wrong thing.

You can expect one of three responses;

1. You are right; you are wrong. If your sincere effort is rebuffed drop the matter. You have followed biblical principles the other party does not entertain.

2. You are not totally wrong. This response opens the door to discussion, mediation or counseling. Proceed carefully along the best path to reconciliation.

3. You are not wrong; it is me. Of course, this is the response we want to hear, but don't take advantage of the matter.

Through discussion, mediation or counseling seek to determine why the matter got out of hand in the first place, and what steps can be taken so this doesn't happen again.

Evaluation

If you have done the best you can to resolve a matter, but the other party is unwilling to discuss it – know this. You do the best you can with what you have and the angels cannot do any better.

Ask yourself these three question:

1. Whose problem is it?

After taking these steps you still do not know whose problem it is.

2. Did I cause it?

Without a response – positive or negative – you cannot determine where you stand in the matter.

3. How can I help?

Unless they allow you to you can't help. Don't force the issue. Leave it to prayer.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Communication Breakdown

OCTOBER 5, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Number One reason married couples come to New Hope Counseling Service is, "We have a breakdown in communication."

Communication breakdown is not confined to marriage relationships. If you can talk you have the potential for a communication breakdown.

Politeness and civility take a backseat when two or more disagree on any given subject at any given time in any given arena.

Early in this study we learned, we can change our actions faster than we can change our feelings. The following scenario will resonate with most who are reading this piece.

Two people are in a heated discussion – feuding, fussing and verbally fighting – and the telephone rings. One person answers the call with a calm, quiet voice saying, "Hello."

If you have ever done this or witnessed this, you have proven my point.

The A, B, Cs for Handling Communication Breakdowns

First we will look at how people try to handle communication breakdowns that do not work.

In Psalm 55:6-8 we read: "And I said, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.'"

King David said, in essence, "I'll handle this by *avoidance.*"

In Genesis 3:12 we read: "And the man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'"

Adam sought to handle this matter by *blame shifting*.

A = avoidance, **B** = blame shifting – neither approach is effective.

How would God handle a communication breakdown? **C** = Confront. Confrontation is not always a *knock down drag out* event.

First, it must be determined who is responsible for initiating reconciliation i.e., confrontation? Regarding this step it has been said: The hardest thing to give is IN. Giving IN, however, is not giving up; it is taking the first step to resolving any matter.

What do you do when you might have offended someone? Matthew 5:23-24 sheds light on this scenario: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought* against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Broken relationships can hinder our relationship with God. If we have a problem or grievance with a friend we should resolve the problem as soon as possible. We are hypocrites if we claim to love God while there is *ought* between us and another person.

*Ought: (Greek: tis) *some or any* person or object: any thing at all.

It is note-worthy this Greek word is vague. In context, the one making the sacrifice could be guilty of an offense or innocent; the other party could be guilty or innocent.

The teaching, however, is not vague: The party realizing a relationship is fractured for any reason is compelled to take the first step to reconciliation. But this is only half the equation taught in the Bible. In the following passage it is very clear who is the innocent party and who is the guilty.

The following passage, Matthew 18:15-17, are Jesus' guidelines for dealing with those who have sinned against us. They are meant for (1) Christians not unbelievers, (2) Sins against *you* and not others. They are designed to reconcile those who disagree so that all Christians can live in harmony.

For this illustration we will focus on 18:15: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

God's '**C**' is confront; but confront in love.

The biblical admonition is plain. No matter who is at fault, the one first realizing it is admonished to take the first step toward reconciliation.

But, how do you approach them?

Next time: A Negative Approach to a Positive Response

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Have Predetermined Prerequisites for Marriage

SEPTEMBER 24, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Last time we asked this question: **How do you maintain the proper balance of the normal security and significance needs of the husband and wife after marriage** – know what these needs are before getting married?

This statement begs one further question: Suppose you did not get premarital counseling?

More than half the couples coming to us for counseling did not go through premarital counseling. Over the past 30 years this ministry has proven putting married couples through premarital counseling is most productive.

As taught earlier: There is no right way to do the wrong thing. Likewise: It is never too late to learn how to do the right thing.

Following are excerpts from my book, *The Tie That Binds: For Those Who Are Dating – For Those Planning Marriage – For Those Who Are Married:*

"Genesis, as the book of beginnings, is rich in knowledge, and Chapter 24 is no exception. Abraham had reached old age, and expressed his concern about finding the right wife for his son of promise, Isaac.

"In studying this chapter, we find Abraham's explicit instructions are laid out for his servant to follow in looking for this suitable wife. This list of instructions given to Abraham's trusted servant is a list of Bible-based attributes any one should look for in a marriage partner – before or after marriage.

“Thus, the list is worth considering by any couple contemplating marriage, and as noted above, by those who missed this study prior to marriage.

“From the New International Version we read the following from Genesis 24:1-4:

“Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, ‘Put you hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.’

(This author’s commentary): There are at least five note-worthy pieces of information spelling out prerequisites for marriage to be gleaned from these four verses. I neither advocate the first arrangement, nor do I totally discourage following this process.)

1. “Arranged Marriages: Although this is not widely practiced in our culture, it is still practiced in many cultures around the world. So, before passing judgment on this practice too quickly, or too strongly; let us note that sociologist’s statistical records show that even in modern times these marriages have a better *track record* than those created by many other methods of bringing one man and one woman together in marriage. It is perhaps too early to evaluate the longevity of marriages growing out of social-media dating.

“This concept is not totally foreign to what this study advocates as I covered in Chapter Two under the caption *In-laws or Out-laws,* wherein men were advised to ask her parents for her hand in marriage. Getting their permission to marry her gives them an opportunity to agree on her choice of a marriage partner even though they did not take part in the selection process.

2. “Nationality: This is perhaps more of an issue in America than in some other parts of the world, however, the Bible says what the Bible says whether we agree or disagree.

“Abraham told his servant very specifically, ‘*…that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Cananites.’*

(Although I have decided not to perform interracial marriages because of the prohibition as stated in this passage, I have counseled couples that had entered into interracial marriage.

The rationale for counseling them is this, although, in this passage interracial marriages are not supported; God’s Word teaches, in principle, if two people of a different race have chosen to marry, this act does not invalidate marriage. God wants marriage between a man (born a male) and a woman (born a female) to work.

3. “Religion: If there are themes in Scripture regarding marriage, one of them is to marry someone of the same belief. This does not mean that a Baptist should only marry a Baptist or a

Methodist a Methodist. The culmination of this teaching is found in II Corinthians 6:14: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with un-righteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?'

"Paul urges believers not to form binding relationships with nonbelievers because this might weaken their Christian commitment, integrity, or standards. This is further support for my electing not to perform interracial marriages.

4. "Life-dominating Sin: Unfortunately, these may not be evident even in a close dating relationship. Life-dominating sins cause a person to adopt two or more private life styles, which may be very successfully disguised even from the most observant. Consuming beverage alcohol, doing drugs and a fixation with pornography has all been discovered only after marriage."

In closing this segment, suffice it to say if you are married and are only now discovering life-dominating sins in your spouse, find a Bible-based counselor to get a biblical perspective to your best options for dealing with these critical areas. Divorce may not be your best option.

5. "Social Class: We are not a Cast Society as practiced by some cultures, but even so, the wider the gap in age, education, sophistication, intelligence, personality, language and communication skills, manners, life goals and expectations, the greater the probability the marriage will not produce all it could if these characteristics were more compatible in each marriage partner.

"Remember, it was observed earlier that *they say,* 'Opposites attract while also having to acknowledge that one of the leading causes of divorce is incompatibility.

As incompatibility is a leading cause for divorce, next time we'll look at the Number One reason people come to New Hope for counseling. Communication Breakdown

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Know What Makes Your Spouse Tick Not What Ticks Your Spouse: The Two Elements of Personal Worth

AUGUST 30, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In the **last session** we learned males and females are equal but that they are different. They are equal because both were created in the image of God according to Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.

In this session we will begin to look at how, although equal, they arte different in so many aspects. The first of the differences we will observe is their differences in human personal worth.

Personal worth is made up primarily of two elements: Security and Significance. Although there are elements of both in females and males proportionally they are different. Follow this simple illustration.

If we could weigh a woman's personal worth on a set of balance scales we would see she weighs heavier on the Security side and lighter on the Significant side. Although, as a female, she needs an element of Significance she needs a greater amount of Security to balance her female profile.

If we could weigh a man's personal worth on a set of balance scales we would see he weighs heavier on the Significance side and lighter on the Security side. Although, as a male, he needs an element of Security he needs a greater amount of Significance to balance his male profile.

When we look at the four areas of responsibility God appointed to the male and female we will see the Wisdom God applied in striking a balance in these factors of male and female personal worth.

In a brief review, God assigned to the male these responsibilities: Protector, Teacher, Provider and Leader/Guide. To the woman these responsibilities: Companion, Helper, Create Life and Home Maker.

Immediately we see she is more vulnerable in her life-roles partnership with her husband than he is. Thus her greater need is security while his is significance. In balance these are compatible not competitive roles.

Reaching back further in our studies, we learned through First Corinthians 11:7b: "…for as much as he is the image and glory of God." That is, as the male and female see their earthly father that is where they get their image of God who is the Ultimate Image of our significance and security. Separately, a married woman's image of God also comes to her through her husband.

As an illustration, I quote the title Chuck Swindol applies to one of his husband/wife lessons: "To Strike the Perfect Match." God did this for us at the time of mankind's creation.

Lest I be misunderstood, to be properly balanced regarding one's personal worth, the female needs a certain amount of significance and the male needs a certain amount of security.

You might ask, "If it is this *cut and dried* where is the problem?"

The Problem: A wrong belief as to what makes us Secure and what makes us Significant will lead us to do wrong things to become Secure or Significant – in our view of ourselves.

Illustration: If I believed that having a "River-Road-Address" would make me Significant – and felt driven to do so; but because I do not have the where-with-all to live in that prestigious neighborhood, I would do something wrong to attain that *Significance*.

The false security I would attain with a River-Road-Address would be to self-inflate my Significance. A man may try to become more significant through an illicit relationship.

Illustration: If a woman feels insecure, as a single woman or a married woman, she would do something wrong to enhance her need for the security she feels she lacks. She may seek Security by increasing her view of her Significance. She may do this in the market place, in the sports arena or she may do this through an illicit relationship.

In an earlier lesson we learned: There is no right way to do the wrong thing.

Next time;Know What Makes Your Wife Tick Not What Ticks Your Wife: How to Maintain the Proper Balance of Security and Significance in Marriage

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

What Makes Your Spouse TICK not What Ticks Your Spouse

AUGUST 24, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In this session we learn males and females are equal but they are different. This is not new information for most people, although I do not recall hearing a sermon on this aspect of marriage. But what is new is how this plays out in the realm of problem solving between a husband and his wife.

Someone said there are no marriage problems; there are singles problems carried into marriages. In counseling, I deal with this in premarital counseling so they don't affect the marriage.

Know What Makes Your Spouse Tick Not What Ticks Your Spouse

The above caption will be a continuing theme for the next several lessons.

This title evokes many thoughts – some positive and some negative.

This statement may be deemed purely salesmanship on my part. As a Christian writer, teacher and Bible-based counselor it is designed to attract the curious and set the stage for teaching vital lessons in understanding the dynamics of a man and woman becoming husband and wife.

In a previous lesson **I quoted Dr. Ed Wheat, M.D**., from his book, **Love Life for Every Married Couple** ©1980:

"The twenty-two words of Genesis 2:24 sum up the entire teaching of Scripture on marriage." But these words do not explain the changes marriage crates or the role changes brought about through marriage.

Genesis 2:23-24 states: “And Adam said, ‘this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one* flesh.

Don’t miss the vital point of this brief word study. Knowing this teaching has restored many troubled marriages. These two verses, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, defines what happens instantly when one man and one woman say, “I do” and establish their marriage bond.

*One flesh: properly united, i.e. one, or (as an ordinal), i.e. of or pertaining to an order. (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)

The connotation of this word one is of profound importance. It explains how God has, by Divine Authority, ordained when one man (born a man) and one woman (born a woman) merge into a one-flesh relationship through marriage.

What is so significant about this?

Just as connoted in II Corinthians 5:17 that we become a new creature in Christ; in a God-sanctioned marriage the man and woman become a new creature through their God-ordained one-flesh relationship.

Outside of a God-sanctioned marriage there is no other one-flesh relationship that exists – only after marriage between one mand and one woman does this newly ordained relationship exist.

To my way of thinking, this union is a miracle second only to the salvation experience because it is invoked by God.

When a couple exchanges marriage vows, in the name of God, they walk away from the altar as a new couple and also as new individuals.

They enter a new state of being that requires new rules for living and need a new understanding of their roles as husband and wife.

Deuteronomy 23:21 states, I believe, unequivocally: “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.”

To lay that foundation, this ministry endeavors to explain these changes by showing the differences between males and females and their supporting characteristics. Although some are different and some are opposites they are all complimentary.

That the male and female are equal is irrefutable. Genesis 1:27 states: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.”

Many of us learned this principle early in mathematics: Quantities equal to the same quantity are equal to each other.

Although equal in every respect, the male husband and female wife are different in many respects – by Divine Design – from the ground up so to speak.

Genesis 2:7 states: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Genesis 2:21-22 states; "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

How more different can the male and female be? **Adam was literally made from dirt while Eve was literally made from living flesh.**

As we follow the development of Adam and Eve through Chapters 2 and 3 we find each was given at least four separate areas of responsibility:

Adam's Responsibilities

1. Provider
2. Teacher
3. Protector
4. Leader/guide

Eve's Responsiblities

1. Companion
2. Helper
3. Child Bearing
4. Home Maker

*(In a properly managed marriage performing these areas of responsibility does not prevent a wife from being a Proverbs 31:10-31 Wife.)

Listed below are commonly accepted male and female characteristics that aid each in performing their God-assigned areas of responsibility – all of which are opposites (different) – all of which are positive in their proper use.

As you appraise the characteristics you will see how appropriately they fit the males and females needs in accomplishing their husband and wife areas of responsibility.

The sum total of this teaching will be applied to problem prevention and problem solving in marriages as the next several lessons are taught.

Commonly accepted Male and Female

Traits

Thought processes:

Men think logically whereas women think with their emotions. Men normally look at the big picture while women look at the immediate needs. Coupled together these traits give them the proper perspective in meeting needs and for problem solving.

Physical & Emotional attributes:

Normally men are deemed stronger than women. The phrase weaker vessel in 1 Peter 3:7 doesn't imply physical weakness applied to women, but rather it denotes females as being more delicate than men – not weak.

Providers & Companions

To perform as providers and protectors men demonstrate aggressiveness and may tend to be risk takers, whereas women in offsetting roles as companions and child bearing are more careful and cautious.

To be effective providers men must be insensitive to be competitive in the market place. This attribute, if it can be called that, is certainly necessary to be a protector.

To fulfill their responsibilities women by nature are more sensitive. Men must be suspicious to stay alert, whereas women to be alert must be more trusting.

In closing this lesson, realize these are generalities that become specifics to be applied properly to maintain a Godly family atmosphere.

Next Time: The Two Elements of Personal Worth

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Practicing Living Principles from the Living Word in Marriage

AUGUST 6, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

All we have learned thus far regarding problem solving and dealing with communication breakdowns are applicable between husbands and wives. However, the arena in the marriage relationship is different from any other arena of human relationships.

Dr. Ed Wheat, M.D. in his classic book, *Love Life, for Every Married Couple* © 1980, makes a most declarative statement regarding marriage:

"Marriage must begin with a leaving of all other relationships in order to establish a permanent relationship between one man and one woman.

"'Therefor shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh' ' (Genesis 2:24).

"God gave this three-part commandment at the beginning as He ordained the institution of marriage. It remains the most concise and comprehensive counseling session ever presented on marriage. If you will notice, the words are almost all one-syllable words in the English – plain words, easily understood, in spite of their infinite depth of meaning.

"These twenty-two words sum up the entire teaching of Scripture on marriage."

And sadly, verse 25 does not say, "And they both lived happily ever after." In fact, immediately following was the first communication breakdown problem between a husband and his wife.

To support the thesis of this lesson, problem solving is different between husband and wife, a brief word study of key words in this verse is warranted.

"Therefore shall a *man*…;" a *man* as an individual or a male person.

"…and shall cleave unto his *wife*…;" a *woman*.

"…and they shall be *one* flesh…;" to unify. properly *united,* i.e. *one.*

All this is stated to say that after saying, "I do," in a marriage between a man (born a male) and a woman (born a female) there is created by God a one-flesh relationship that is totally unique.

Under these conditions, this is the only one flesh relationship that can exist between two human beings. This is the reason it can be said problem solving is different in marriage than in any other relationship.

To set the stage for this phase of teaching, several statements will be enlightening as to why the husband and the wife are different.

While going through my teen years, my dad used to tell me this:

The girl you date is not the girl you marry.

Teen years are confusing enough, and I really did not think this was great *counsel* coming from my father to his son. But, as usual, he was right. And after marrying my wife I discovered early on that the guy she dated was not the guy she married. And here is why:

Love may be blind, but very often

Love begins to see – after marriage.

Next Time: Know what makes your spouse TICK not what Ticks your spouse.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service and on the Board of Advisors of the Virginia Christian Alliance

A Negative Approach to a Positive Response

JULY 21, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The title of this tool is a play-on-words. It is built upon the last tool we learned. We looked at 12 words that can heel relationships: I am wrong. I am sorry. Please forgive me. I love you.

In our last lesson we concluded this is what to do. Now we will learn how to put this together for an effective delivery. Remember, the best way to defeat the enemy is to make a friend of them.

The A, B, Cs for Handling Communication Breakdowns

These are the two primary ways people handle communication breakdowns.:

Avoidance. Psalm 55:6-8, was a plan devised by King David:

> "And I said, Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from he windy storm and tempest."

Blame shifting. This is the oldest form of problem solving. We find our first example in Scripture in Genesis 3:12-13:

> "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat."

Both avoidance and blame shifting are ineffective ways of dealing with unresolved issues. Neither will delay the inevitable but will make resolution more difficult to attain.

Adam, and all mankind, has paid a severe penalty for blame shifting. The Apostle Paul points this out as recorded in Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

However, as we follow the narrative of David in Psalm 55, we see he learned a better way as recorded in verses 16 and 22:

> "As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me."

This is not a salvation passage. In this verse the Hebrew word, *yaw-shah* means to be *open, wide* or *free* (by implication) to *be safe*. There is safety in not avoiding resolution – at least with God.

In verses 6 through 8, David was plagued with the Big "I". Note he used this first person personal pronoun five times. But in verse 22, after giving the matter to "the Lord" he is now speaking in the third person personal pronoun: "Cast *thy* burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain *thee:* he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

How would God have us handle a breakdown In communication?

The C of the A, B, C's is Confront. But who makes the first move?

Biblically speaking, two Christians at odds with one another should literally bump into each other on the way to reconciling. We are thus admonished to do so in II Corinthian 5:18: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

If a Believer is at odds with a non-believer, it is always the Believers responsibility to take the first step to reconciliation. Review our previous lesson wherein we expounded on Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-18.

A Negative Approach to A Positive Response

This is a calculated, that is, a well-planned approach that must be under girded with prayer. If appropriate, this should have prayer support from others if in doing so does not constitute a violation of the other person's privacy.

Step One: State the case in a non-accusing manner. This is where the term *a negative approach* enters this approach. Example: "I do not know what I have done to create this problem between

us."

Step Two: In this statement you are accepting your percent of wrong in this matter. Remember, no one can be 100% right or wrong.

Step Three: Ask, "What can I do to make things right between us?"

This is an essential part in moving toward reconciliation. Do not tell the other person what they must do to make things better.

Many have balked at this approach saying, "I would get slaughtered if I put myself at the other person's mercy." No so. There are safe guards in this Bible-based method of settling matters. Two mindsets protect the one seeking to reconcile.

First, there is no right way to do the wrong thing. Don't commit to doing wrong. Second, as a Believer I will not do anything illegal, immoral, unethical or un-biblical. If the person with whom you seek reconciliation requires you violate these principles decline to do so, but you can still continue this plan.

There are at least three responses you can expect. Knowing these will help you maintain your composure and press toward reconciliation.

1. You're right; you're wrong. If this is your response, simply follow up with the question, "How so?" or "Why so?" Either question can lead to gaining further information on which to continue a discussion.

2. You are not totally wrong. From this response, the same two questions, "How so?" or "Why so?" can advance the conversation in a positive direction.

3. It isn't you; it is me." Obviously this is the response we want to hear. However, this isn't the end of the conversation. It is an opportunity to fine tune the relationship, but not with a haughty spirit.

Remember the biblical admonition found in Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

In review, this is a positive approach in restoring relationships. Be convicted this is the step for you to take. Pray. Write your statements to be certain you are saying exactly what you need/want to say. Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare you to deliver the message and for the intended receiver to hear you out.

Next Time:Practicing Living Principles from the Living Word in Marriage

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

The Hardest Thing to Give is IN

JULY 14, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Giving in is not giving up. Biblically speaking, giving in is giving over to God's way toward resolution and reconciliation. As a jail chaplain I often taught a lesson I entitled: How is the Best Way to Defeat Your Enemies.

As you might imagine, occasionally an inmate would blurt out, "Kill him."

Because I got that answer from time to time, I would respond with this question, "What are you in for?" More often than not they were in for a violent crime against an individual – even murder.

To move the lesson along in a positive direction, I would ask, "How would you like to learn how to defeat an enemy without incurring negative consequences – make a friend of them."

It has been said, humans live life on three levels that dictate three levels of action which are broadly defined below:

Satanic Level Action: Evil for Good

Human Level Action: Evil for Evil

Action: God for Good

Divine Level Action: Good for Evil

How do we turn this around? Twelve words, sincerely spoken, can restore a damaged or broken relationship.

I am wrong.

This is the most difficult of these four three-word statements to utter; but remember this lesson: There is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue. Allow me to clear up some confusion that often accompanies applying this principle to this lesson.

Last time we looked at two passages of Scripture that required action on our part. Matthew 5:23 admonished us to go to anyone who had *ought* against us.

Matthew 18:15 said if someone had sinned against us *we* were to go to *them* and take the initiative to be reconciled. This illustration is a clear-cut case where they were wrong and we were right – mostly right that is.

Even if the other person is 99% wrong and only 1% right – meaning you are 99% right and only 1% wrong, God requires we give up 100% of our 1% wrong. Again, the hardest thing to give is in. However, to be in favor with God, and His command to us, we must take that first step.

Consider these two thoughts:

If we do not know who God is, or if we have forgotten His teachings we will never consider doing what God wants us to do. Further more, what Christian would abuse another (even if just 1% wrong) when doing (following) the Word of God?

I am sorry.

Don't say this until you have prayed the matter trough and are truly convinced, or convicted in your heart, you are sorry to God for disobedience to Him, and to the one with whom you seek reconciliation. Saying, I am sorry, is agreeing with God. It is the right thing to do.

Truly having God's Mind in the matter begins the healing process within ones self even before expressing our sorrows to the individual. We feel better when we please God.

Please forgive me.

We have learned previously we can forgive without forgetting. In asking forgiveness we grant forgiveness. Forgiveness is a three-lane, two-way street allowing uninhibited travel for God, our self and those from whom we ask forgiveness.

I love you.

God is our primary example that we can love someone appropriately without liking what they have done are may continue to do. Isn't this a picture of God's Grace extended to us as

Believers?

Jesus explained how God regarded love in Matthew 22:36-40:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and all the prophets."

I often say, "It is funny how two people see the same thing differently – funny *peculiar* not funny *haha*.

Next time: Communication Breakdown: A Negative Approach to a Positive Response

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Whose problem is it? Did I cause it? Can I help?

JULY 12, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Breaking down our walls of resentments is an on going, almost daily, process for several reasons.

Last time we introduced the process of listing our unresolved anger and resentments in the categories that affect us most adversely. As we work through this process, the mind will release them over a period of time – sometimes individually, sometimes in lump sum or collective clusters and sometimes in a *mixed bag* of both earlier and recent issues. And at each juncture we will have to deal with hurtful and sometimes *forgotten memories*.

Caution: As you are mentally and emotionally working through this process, do not try to make amends immediately upon recognizing a need or urge to do so.. Give yourself time to heal. Remember the lesson: Attack the problem and not the person.

Evaluation is an important part of the healing process from breaking down the walls of resentments. To facilitate this process we will need to apply the answers to these questions:

- Whose Problem Is It?
- Did I Cause It?
- Can I Help?

If we neglect to follow the process of breaking down walls of resentments, that is, by not allowing the Holy Spirit to perform His task in the process; it will probably be concluded it is the other person's problem.

As humans, we seem to have the knack of exonerating ourselves if we have a choice to do so. This thinking opens the door to blame shifting.

Even so this is a legitimate question that needs answering.

Initially there may not be enough recall or information to draw a conclusion as to whose problem an incident may be. Remember learning earlier there is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue? But this does not pre-conclude that one person or another may *own the problem*.

Did I cause it?

To answer this question the Holy Spirit must also have full sway to draw the proper conclusion. And it may be that because of that certain amount of right and wrong on both sides of every equation there may not be a *clear-cut* conclusion as to ones guilt or innocence.

Regardless of the vagueness of concluding a definite answer to either or both of the above questions, however, the following question should be considered:

Can I help?

We cannot know if we can help until a matter has been fully dealt with and resolved.

Offering to help may open the door to allow one to do so. Offering to help may temporarily, or in extreme cases, permanently close the door to a relationship. In either case we can move on and consider the matter closed.

Offering to help is a biblical mandate according to two passages of Scripture: Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-17.

The first passage admonishes us: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

The second passage admonishes us unequivocally: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

The balance of this passage, verses 16 and 17, states if he does not hear you take two witnesses and then take him before the *church*. These steps sometimes are necessary, but in this teaching we will only pursue the first step of this passage.

Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15 are similar, but are also significantly different. A brief word study will shed more light on these teachings:

English: Ought: *auxiliary verb.* 1. (used to express duty or moral obligation), (Authors note: While this is a mandate, it does not state specifically what prompts action. It is a command "to go.")

Greek: Ought (Gr. *tis*): indefinite pronoun; *some* or *any* person or object: – a (kind of), and (man, thing, anything at all).

It is not reading too much into this verse by this author to interpret this verse as a mandate to go and become reconciled no matter what the matter and/or who is most right or most wrong. Whereas in the latter verse (18:15) this is definitely a case where someone has sinned against another.

A prevailing attitude in this instance, that is, someone has sinned against another, would be to say, "They sinned against me; let them come to me." However true that may be, whenever there is "ought" between two people, the person carrying the burden of awareness is admonished by Scripture "to go."

Combining these two teachings it must be concluded that whether a person is right or wrong i.e., innocent or guilty it is incumbent on them to take the first step to reconciliation. This is why we must allow the Holy Spirit to be the leader in breaking down walls of resentments.

Next time: The Hardest Thing to Give is ___!

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Breaking Down the Walls of Resentments

JULY 6, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

We could subtitle this tool: Managing My Memories.

In an earlier lesson we learned we can forgive even though we cannot forget. It was pointed out that through prompting or provocation we will recall almost all that our five senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting, have stored in our memory banks.

It is a good thing we can do this because by this means we mature. But if we keep recalling unresolved anger and resentments we will remain in an unsettled state of frustration.

At this juncture in the problem solving process we must exercise a high level of maturity by facing the fact our life cannot be made better by getting all the people around us, and all the circumstances facing us, to do right and be right. We built our own walls of resentment; therefore, we are the only one who can take them down i.e., exercise personal responsibility.

The only person Tom Lacy can change is Tom Lacy. The only way I can change my circumstances is to make better choices. Tom Lacy is free to do whatever he chooses provided there is no one to stop him. But, Tom Lacy is not free to choose the consequences of his choices. We must learn to make better choices.

If you followed the lesson plan you have before you a list of your unresolved anger and resentments in the following categories: father, mother, childhood experiences, family, marriage (yours or marriage in general), school or job, and God. . You are now ready to manage your memories.

Step One: Consider your entire list of resentments in all categories. As you reflect on your list decide which one is your #1 Resentment out of all the categories. Out of your list what upsets you

most?

After making this selection ask yourself, "Am I transferring this resentment to others." Remember, we learned that anger wants someone else to pay. Anger has an agenda, and we perpetuate that agenda by transferring our anger to others.

Step Two: As you consider your #1 Resentment does it carry over to other resentments you harbor? Make a list of those patterns. If there is a carry over from one person to another or from one circumstance to another this process lays the foundation for developing patterns of behavior. To break a behavior-controlling pattern one must recognize it exists.

We say, "If it isn't broke don't fix it." The opposite is true: If it is broke fix yourself." I often quote Pogo who said, "We have met the enemy, and it is us!"

Step Three: After completing this examination you have before you a list of behavior patterns. Answer this question: Is your unresolved anger and resentment provoked by individuals or circumstances? We project anger toward people whereas circumstances test our endurance and often foster our frustrations.

Anger is the Number One feeling out of control in people who have a difficult time controlling their feelings. The Number One resentment is Performance Based Acceptance; that is to say, *they say,* if you perform the way I want you to I'll accept you; but if you don't I won't.

Step Four. Resentments provoked by an individual must first be reconciled within one's self. Earlier we learned the tool: Attack the Problem and Not the Person. This is not easy to do, but it is doable. We need to develop a clear mind-set that will allow us to do so.

Here is a mind-changing, mood-altering exercise.

As a Believer, think of the worst thing you have ever done. No doubt, God would probably see it as sin. First John 1:9 states plainly: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Since God has forgiven me how can I not forgive another? Forgiving is the first step to reconciliation between God and man and between man and man.

Circumstances are what they are. Sometimes we can change them; sometimes we cannot. Sometimes we can avoid them; sometimes we cannot. Again, we need to develop a clear mind-set that will allow us to take circumstances as they come. This is a doable test of fortitude that God is able to supplement.

Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches God needs to be actively involved in our lives at this point of the problem-solving process: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto thine own

understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

It is difficult, at best, to change others or our circumstances in general. It is easier to change our self by understanding the patterns controlling us. As we recognize patterns from our personally developed inventory of unresolved anger and resentments commit that pattern to God in prayer and let Him direct your path and break it.

As a counselor, I have always maintained, it is not up to me to tell a counselee what is wrong with them. It is up to them to tell me what they are struggling with. They do so by writing their resentments out in an organized To Do List, analyzing it and following a Bible-based plan toward resolution. I teach the plan. They practice the plan.

With this as a background, next time we'll answer three questions:

1. Whose problem is it?
2. Did I cause it?
3. Can I help?

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Defining Walls of Resentments

JUNE 21, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

As we go through life we build walls of resentments that are designed to protect us from hurt, rejection, fear, loneliness and other circumstance related issues. However, in time, we realize we are imprisoned by our own walls of protection; but are afraid to get out from behind them for fear of experiencing the unpleasant things that caused us to build them in the first place.

I'll resort to a silly illustration to teach this complicated dilemma. From the *mug-shot* accompanying this article you see I am bald. This doesn't bother me, but it is a major issue for many. For the sake of illustration, let's say I am bothered by this condition.

What do I do? I see at least three options.

I could wear a wig or get a hair transplant. I haven't checked but imagine both are rather expensive. Or, I could wear a baseball cap, but this is only limited or partial protection from those making fun of my appearance.

Theoretically, when I remove the hat, that is, step out from behind my self-built wall of resentment people will see I am bald. That is, I expose my hurt, rejection, fear, loneliness and other circumstance related issues.

With this as a backdrop, let's look at the process of defining and our walls of resentment.

GOOD NEWS! We can be free of resentments even if the people around us do not change. John 8:32 assures us through these words: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." This is a two-way street.

If you are not free you do not know the truth. If you are free you know the truth. Knowing the truth – about your self – is a sure path to personal freedom from any type or source of bondage.

We cannot undo our past, but we can undo its hold on our present and future. Earlier we defined unresolved anger and unresolved resentment as *junk in your trunk,* Now, let's define resentment.

Resentment is anything that brings about a negative feeling, thought or action. To say that you resent something someone has done to you does not imply you do not like or love that person. It simply says you resent what they have said or done to you.

Harboring resentments causes patterns to develop that will control our behavior as we build our defenses against our hurts, rejections, fears, loneliness and other circumstance related issues. To break controlling patterns we need only to expose the resentment by giving it a name. In a previous lesson we saw if we could give the (problem) resentment a name the Bible would give us the tool to solve it.

To accomplish this we need to look at our resentments in seven areas of relationships. These are the areas that have the greatest impact upon us.

To complete this assignment, pray God's Holy Spirit will search your heart and mind and reveal to you these buried resentments. Let His Spirit have the full freedom He needs to perform this life-changing work in you.

As the Holy Spirit reveals the unresolved anger and unresolved resentments to you *don't qualify them*.

This is to say, do not try to decide whether or not the resentment is important or un-important. Do not think you are *knit-picking* by listing it. The Holy Spirit is looking for details that are establishing behavior patterns that are controlling you. By not recording them you may omit information that will allow Him to identify these controlling patterns.

If it comes to mind write it down.

List your resentments in the following areas that apply to you:

Things I resent about my: Father, Mother, Childhood experiences, Family, Marriage (yours or in general), Job or School (which ever is applicable), and God.

Even if the persons whose behavior you resent is deceased, write them down. You are not hurting them by doing so. You are simply saying you resent what they said or did.

Some do not want to list their resentments against God, but be realistic. All our resentments ultimately go back to God. He already knows what they are. And who do you think will be the first to forgive you? God!

This is not an easy assignment. Physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually you will be ripping scabs off old sores and making them bleed all over again. But this process is as necessary as lancing a skin boil. If the puss is not drained infection sets in. Unresolved anger and unresolved resentments are poisoning to one's behavior systems.

As you become aware of your unresolved anger and resentments write as much as you want to write or as little as you need to write to *get it out*. Take as much time as you need to express the pain of your pent up feelings and emotions. Follow the list as best you can, but always be ready to jot down a thought when it comes to mind. This is the Holy Spriit a work.

Do not share this list with anyone unless you are doing this exercise under the supervision of a Bible-based counselor. In the first instance, this is a matter between you and the Holy Spirit. In the second instance, this is a matter between you, the Holy Spirit and the counselor.

As you write your list review it periodically. You will begin to detect behavior patterns.

Next time, Breaking Down Our Walls of Resentments.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

Part Two: How To Identify Unresolved Anger and Resentments

JUNE 15, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In my seminary course on sermon preparation the author of the book made an interesting statement in his introduction. He said, "Words do not have a meaning – they have a usage."

Of course they have a meaning and a definition, but he was pointing out a valuable lesson to would-be Bible teachers and preachers. You need not only know the definition of the words you use, but you must know the full range of their usage.
Although my grammar is not always A+, I work overtime to extract the full meaning/usage of key words in my statements – more especially in this lesson.
My closing statement last time was: "Maybe these words – image and glory – have a different connotation in Greek than they do in English." I was trying to get out from under the full responsibility of being a male. I didn't ask to be born a male, but having been selected by God to be one I had the responsibility to live as He intended all men to live.

I researched *image* and *glory* in my Greek dictionary upon arriving at home that night. Those combined definitions gave me no relief. In fact, they did the opposite. The Greek words not only duplicated the English, they enhanced them.
Learning this biblical truth brought greater emphasis on my failures as a husband and father – but they brought me to my knees and put me on the path of a needed change.
Greek: Image: ikone: a likeness i.e. (literally) statute, profile. English: icon: (Definition 2) an image of Christ, a saint, etc
Greek: Glory: doxa: glory (as very apparent) **English**: Glory: (Definition 1) very great praise, honor, or distinction bestowed by common consent, renown

With these definitions as a backdrop we will further explore the meaning of this passage.

Verse 11: “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head,…” Why?

In verse 4 we read: “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.” We learned in verse 3 his “head” is Christ.

Now, the head covering in that day was normally a turban. Turbans could be stylish if so desired, but many were primarily utilitarian. Most had veils, that, when drawn about the head, provided protection from the sun, wind and sand. In effect, a man wearing a fully drawn turban may not be recognizable even by his family and people who knew him.

If he were not recognizable would he be the “image and glory of God” to his family and those hearing him pray or prophesying? The obvious answer is, no.

Verse 7 concludes: “…but the woman is the glory of the man.” She is equal to the male, but she has a different roll in God’s line of authority.

By now you are probably asking, but how does this relate to dealing with unresolved anger and resentments. This foregoing explanation is the pathway unresolved anger and unresolved resentments travel. All of our resentments ultimately are transferred to God through our earthly image of Him.

Next time we will define resentments.

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Part One: How To Identify Unresolved Anger and Resentments

JUNE 6, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Unresolved anger and unresolved resentments are two major sources of unresolvable problems. In the previous article we labeled them as junk in our trunk. Unless we empty this trunk the contents spill over into many of our relationships. In a previous article we learned to forgive without forgetting. In this tool we will pull all of this together.

We've examined the five levels of anger, namely; mild irritation, indignation, wrath, fury and rage as defined by Dr. James Dobson. It was noted indignation was a major obstacle in that it plays itself out as a slow burn or un-forgiveness.

Resentments are not that acutely defined. Resentments align themselves with seven levels of relationships. Before defining them we need to understand God's divine line of authority as spelled out in 1st Corinthians 11:7.

Establishing a biblical doctrine based on one verse requires teaching the verse in context. False teaching comes when verses are taught out of context. This is a passage I rarely hear preached or taught, but it has positively impacted our counselling ministry since learning this in 1986.

This is, in a sense, complicated because it is not often taught. In fact, it is often taught incorrectly. But it is clear to those seeking to know the truth regarding God's divine line of authority and the male role of responsibility as a Christian Believer who is the head of a household.

First and foremost, 1st Corinthians is a letter of correction. Romans, and many other letters to churches and individuals, are primarily letters of instruction. Yes, we can take instruction from a

letter of correction, but the tone of the letter sets the purpose of its intent or message.

The tone of Paul's letter is set in Chapter 1: 11: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chlo'e, that there are contentions among you." Paul then names the specific contentions and divisions needing correcting.

In Chapter 7:1 Paul addresses the immediate situation i.e., the reason this group from the church at Corinth sought his answers to their questions: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me…"

(This is not a passage on equality. The Bible addresses equality in Genesis 2:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." In mathematics, quantities equal to the same quantity are equal to each other. A pound of cotton weighs as much as a pound of lead regardless of their appearance. In God's sight males and females are equal in value even if not exact in their appearance.)

It is a passage (in context) on responsibility and authority. This is an illustration of Paul correcting error in the church at Corinth. Paul spells this out clearly in Chapter 11:3: "But I would have you know, the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

God as the head of Christ is not a dictator of Christ. The man (husband) as the head of the woman (wife) is not a dictator of the woman. This is a passage defining responsibility and, among other things, shows how this affects transferring resentments. Our focus verse is Chapter 11:7.

This is a biblical explanation of the active line of authority within the family. It is complicated in one sense, but it gives clear vision to those who can see the full truth and thus apply it. I can best explain this in the first-person voice.

In 1986 I learned a lesson at age 52 I should have learned at age 22 when my first child was born. I was one of about 125 men attending a workshop, The Role of the Man in the Family, taught by David McLaughlin. (David has given me permission to teach this material exactly as he teaches it.)

When David recited 1st Corinthians 11:7: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man," I thought, David, what are you telling me? Are you telling that the way my family sees me is the way they see God? Each man in that room must have asked himself that same question, for David paused and said, "No men, I'm not telling you anything: God's Word is telling you this."

I didn't like what I was hearing. I had not always been the image of God to my family. I was looking for a way out. David was talking fast. My thoughts were preventing me from hearing his teaching. I decided to look up the words image and glory in my Greek dictionary. Maybe these words had a different connotation in Greek than in English. I did that upon arriving home. I got no relief.

Part Two next time.

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Life's Four Tires: Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual

JUNE 1, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Like many vehicles human life, figuratively speaking, runs on four tires delineated as physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

To illustrate this principle consider a common occurrence – a vehicular flat tire. From this illustration we discern the human application.
If, while driving an automobile, a flat tire occurs one of two things follows:

1. The automobile becomes difficult to control
2. We slow down and stop – if possible.

In the worse case scenario, that is one cannot get out of the line of traffic, they must continue to keep pace with the flow of traffic. Continuing to run on a flat tire adds the risk of ruining other tires. One flat tire may ultimately become two or more flat tires.

Similarly, if we experience a *physical flat tire* i.e., a common cold, a strained muscle, a fracture or other non-incapacitating condition, and we do not slow down to deal with it, the ailment could eventually pull down the emotional, physical and/or Spiritual *tires*.
Upon hearing this illustration, some say, "Hey, that's me. All my tires are flat. Put air in any one of them and I'll be good to go."
"Not so," I respond. "If the right front tire on your automobile went flat, and you put air in the left rear tire will the vehicle handle smoothly?"
Life's Four Tires is a diagnostic tool to help us ascertain the root level of the problem. In an earlier lesson, we saw that precisely naming the problem allowed us to determine God's cure for that problem.

Through self-diagnosis, or counseling, it can be determined which *tire* went flat first because that *flat tire* pulled down one or more of the others. As a Bible-based counselor I employ examples Jesus established. From a study of Scripture, which *tire* do we see Him deal with first most often? The physical.

Many times, before dealing with Spiritual matters He dealt with physical conditions. He fed the hungry. He gave sight to the blind. He healed the leper, and the list continues.

If a person seeking problem-resolution is told to read the Book of John three times, memorize a verse a day and go to Sunday school and church every time the doors are opened – that is, putting air in the Spiritual tire instead of the physical tire – that would not solve a physical problem. In fact, after doing all those things tha person could suffer a Spiritual blowout. They may walk away sorrowful, even proclaiming, "Getting closer to God doesn't help."

As a counselor I learned early on most problems stem from guilt and/or resentment. Guilt has two sources. Resentment has many sources.

Guilt is the direct product of sin. If sin is evident two questions need to be answered:

What am I doing that I should not be doing?

What am I not doing that I should be doing?

These issues are commonly referred to as the sin of commission and the sin of omission. The solution to each is obvious. Stop doing what you shouldn't be doing and start doing what you haven't been doing.

Scripture reports in 1st John 1:9: "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

To remain inviolate, the half brother of Jesus gives this two-fold counsel as recorded in James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Relief from the guilt of sin is the easiest to acquire since Christ paid the price on the cross at Calvary. Repent.

The second form of guilt is commonly referred to as a guilt-trip. This guilt has a two sources:

1. We put ourselves on a guilt-trip
2. We allow others to put us on a guilt-trip.

Only one inquiry question is necessary to work through this form of guilt – Why?

Why do you put yourself on a guilt-trip? Why do you allow others to put you on a guilt trip? Asking these questions often opens Pandora's Box that reveals a cache of un-resolved anger and resentments.

I describe this phase of the counseling process as getting the junk out of your trunk. This is a delicate, sometimes painful and is often a protracted process. In this process the counselor is asking the counselee to figuratively rip the scabs off their old wounds by digging into their painful past.*

In the next session we will learn how to expose un-resolved anger and un-resolved resentment. In the meantime, please review **Article Eleven: Anger Management – God's Way.**

*(Allow me to offer a word of caution. There is no stigma attached to getting counseling. Proverbs 11:14 gives legitimacy to this ministry: "Where no counsel is the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Caution: But, keep it to yourself. Seek counseling from those who are

trained, accredited or certified in using biblical counseling techniques. Competent, trained, professional counselors do not share case histories. What you say is kept private. This ministry does not perform group counseling. Why? Predators attend group-counseling sessions. This could make those in attendance vulnerable to further abuse. A word to the wise should be sufficient.)

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Words Set In Motion Those Things Which Are Spoken

MAY 24, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Editor's Note: This is Part 9 of Reverend Lacy's ongoing series of Godly relationships and you can find the **entire series under his page here**.

Proverbs 23:7a teaches:

> "For as he (Hebrew: a primary word, 3rd person pronoun, singular, he (she or it) thinketh in his heart, so is he:...."

This Proverb is Literal

A psychology professor expressed it this way: "Words set in motion those things which are spoken." My forty years of teaching/counseling has proven this to be true whether we think this "in our heart" about our selves and others or express it verbally.

A life-lesson to Learn

This came home to me in my early years as a jail chaplain.
Shorty was serving two years for petty larceny. His size and lack of education did not equipment him very well for life inside or outside of jail. He was quiet and kept to himself. One day he asked to talk with me.

I opened with my usual question: "Shorty, what's going on that I ought to know about?"

He immediately went to the heart of the matter. “They always said I would grow up to be like Uncle Willie.”

“Tell me about Uncle Willie.”

He dropped out of school and started hanging out on the street with the wrong people. He couldn’t keep a job. He was always in trouble. He was in and out of jail. Uncle Willie was no good.”

“Tell me about your life.”
“Ditto Uncle Willie.”

I am not a blame-shifting counselor, but his direction in life had been cast, in part, by the words spoken to him. Shorty did the crime; Shorty was doing the time. However, a factor in his depression was his sense of hopelessness – he was destined to become “…just like Uncle Willie.”

Comparison is Spelled k-i-l-l-e-r!

Every time we make a comparison we could be putting something or someone to death. Comparison is the heart of the advertising industry. The lesser product is usually called Brand X, which is never a complimentary term.

Often one person’s attributes are pointed out to some one to encourage them to be better or do better. This is not always a bad thing. However, those being encouraged this way may think of themselves as Brand X. They think, as Shorty thought, I’m no good. I’ve never been any good. I’ll never be any good.

We learned in a previous lesson to attack the problem and not the person. This prevents problems from developing. This same admonition applies to making comparisons.

We are still following the general prescription: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

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What Is On the Inside of You Makes a Difference in What You Hear

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TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

What is on the inside of you makes a difference in what you hear. What you just read you are processing through what you know regarding this statement.

As you read what I have written you will evaluate my knowledge on this subject. As you continue to read you will ultimately decide whether or not you can believe me, or more especially, whether or not you can trust me.

There is nothing wrong with doing so. In fact, this is what should do.

During thirty plus years of Bible-based counseling many have asked what have been my most difficult cases? My answer is simple: Teaching biblical truth to those who have been indoctrinated with biblical untruth.

Every truth I teach they filter through untruth. It is difficult, and for some impossible, to appropriate that which is true because untruth has become so deeply imbedded in their belief systems.

John 8:32 is a hallmark verse with dual ramifications: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

If you do not know the truth you are not free. If you know the truth you are free. This biblical principle extends into every-day life. Knowing the truth in any area sets people free from the harmful effects of ruminating on untruth.

My father taught me this principle as he dealt with issues arising in rearing his three children. I still hear him say, “I want to hear every side to this story even if all sides of the story are the same.” As a counselor I adhere to this approach to problem solving.

In a previous lesson we supported the statement: It is funny how two people hear the same thing differently – funny-peculiar not funny ha-ha. This is because we filter every thing we hear through what is on the inside of us whether true or false. Two people hearing the same thing at the same time are possibly processing the information through something different within themselves.

To mediate under these conditions and restore communication Ground Rules need to be established. We suggest the following:

1. If we cannot agree, we will not be disagreeable. Thai is to say, if we cannot agree we will not get ugly with each other. Remember the biblical admonition to *love one another*.
2. Remember this truism: We will never be without problems yet we need never to be without a solution.
3. Realize that there is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue. Trying to determine who is most right and who is most wrong will never resolve the problem it will only drive the wedge of separation deeper.
4. As previously established, problems are solutions in disguise.
5. The hardest thing to give is *in*.

Giving in is not *giving up*. Giving in is actually taking the first step to reconciliation. Different from some ministry approaches to reconciliation, we do not teach compromise. Compromise is the act of each person giving up something they value. In doing so neither party may be willing to compromise. We teach cooperation. There is a biblical difference between compromise and cooperation.

In getting to the truth in any issue contenders must be allowed to state their perspective (case) without reprisal. They need to state the *truth as they believe it to be*. After each has done so they must commit to cooperating with the truth gleaned from Scripture.

As a process, Scripture is to be consulted by means of an exhaustive topical Bible to see where they stand compared to the teaching of God’s Word. The contenders would then commit to cooperate with God’s Truth forsaking their views that differ from His revealed Truth.

This is how Giving In becomes the first step toward reconciliation.

Next Time

God Holds Us Responsible for What We Think, Say and Do

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Blame Keeps Wounds Open – Only Forgiveness Heals

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This tool, coupled with the two preceding tools: Anger Wants Someone Else to Pay; and The Bowl that Holds the Acid (Anger) is Eaten by the Acid (Anger) creates a tremendous trio for those intent on solving problems and conquering anger.

We must understand how blame keeps wounds open. Blame, like anger, operates on a continuum. Anger wants someone to pay. Blame is the continuation of extracting payments by playing the *blame-game*.

It is said the oldest form of problem solving is blame shifting. Follow this account from Genesis 3:11-13:

> "And he (God) said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?"
>
> "And the man (Adam) said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."
>
> "And the Lord God said unto the woman (Eve), What is this thou has done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

The process of blaming is like ripping the scab off old wounds. The wound continues to fester and bleed. Animosity continues to infect one's heart and mind. Truly, this is a downward spiral, but it has a solution.

During the counseling process, I note three things:

1. Counseling is not always fun.
2. Counseling is not always easy.
3. Counseling is **always** worth it.

There's only one antidote to blame shifting – forgiveness.

Forgiveness is one of the most misunderstood words in the English language. To understand the meaning of this word let's look first at two things forgiveness is not.

To say, I forgive you, is not saying you are right and I am wrong. In a previous lesson we learned there is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue. Trying to determine who is most right and who is most wrong will never resolve the issue – it will only drive the wedge of separation deeper.

A statement accompanying the phrase, I'll forgive you, is the emphasis placed on the conclusion – but I'll never forget. This retort is usually met with the tart response: If you don't forget you are not forgiving. This accusation is neither a true statement nor is this possible to accomplish.

We can forgive without forgetting. If fact, it is almost impossible to forget anything. Let's examine the human factors involved in our inability to forget.

To illustrate this I compare our God-created brain to an old General Electric clock/radio/recorder/player I keep in my office for this teaching purpose. The discussion follows these lines:

Did you know G. E. has produced a tape player that can do something our God-created brain/recorder cannot do?

Illustration: By inserting a blank tape and selecting *record,* this clock/radio records anything it can *hear*.

Through the five senses of human nature: hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting our brain records everything our senses detect without our conscious thought or effort.

If we recorded something on our G. E. unit, and later decided we did not want to keep it, we simply tape over it and the original recording is automatically erased. Not so with our brain.

Our brain never erases previous *recordings* – it only records new messages.

The old message remains stored in our memory banks. Generally speaking, through prompting or provocation we can recall things we may have thought we had forgotten.

Repressed memory is our most extreme effort to not remember painful past events, but through proper approaches even these dark caverns of our memory can be opened.

How do we forgive without forgetting? Whenever or however, through prompting or provocation, a troublesome thought surfaces from our memory bank we can *choose* not to utter it or dwell on it. Forgiveness is an act of our will.

Remember the cliché: A closed mouth gathers no feet!

Next time: What is on the inside of you makes the difference in what you hear.

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Communication: A Two-way Street

APRIL 2, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

It has long been stated opposites attract. The Number One reason for divorce is incompatibility. The Number One reason people come to New Hope Counseling Service, simply stated, is: We have a breakdown in communication.

These scattered letters I, L, E, N, T, S are emblematic of two aspects of conversation. Unscrambled they spell Silent and Listen. In the realm of verbal communication what is said often comes across garbled. Hence we hear such responses as: "What did you say?" "What do you mean?" "Why are you saying that *that* way?"

In an automobile sales training class I learned a valuable lesson applicable and beneficial in all areas of life – personal, social and professional.

In the context of selling the lesson was: If you listen carefully the prospect will tell you how to sell them an automobile.

Listening carefully pays.

I learned this sales tool in September 1968. In 1970 I was the Number One salesman for Chrysler/Plymouth, Group C dealerships in Virginia and Number Two in the Washington D. C. District. Listening carefully paid me big bucks.

At New Hope this tool has helped 70% of our counselees effectively deal with communications problems needing to be resolved. Listening carefully can keep relationships and families together.

A breakdown in communication can develop between any two or more people growing out of almost any conceivable circumstance or situation.

Because communication is such a volatile issue we couple this teaching with two previously introduced tools: An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure and Attack the Problem and Not the Person.

Unresolved Anger – Unresolved Resentment

Unresolved anger and unresolved resentment are hotbeds for sparking a breakdown in communication. I refer to these issues as *junk in our trunk*.

Although there are no easy answers to this type of dilemma there are solutions to every problem.

Facing continuing and/or impending communication confrontations should serve as an alert to be prepared – not to argue but to listen. If you will endure the verbal onslaught (listen) you will actually hear the underlying complaint. Until you know the *name* of the problem, as we learned earlier, you'll never be able to determine the solution.

To completely resolve a breakdown in communication we need to employ the tenets of our next problem-solving tool:

We can change our actions faster than we can change our feelings.

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Anger Management – God's Way

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TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

We can change our actions faster than we can change our feelings. Love is not just feelings it is also actions. John 3:16 does not say, For God so loved the world that He felt good about us. God so loved the world He went into action regarding our need by giving.

John 3:17, perhaps not as well known as 3:16 supports this problem-solving tool. "For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

The following scenario illustrates changing actions faster than feelings and may have been experienced by some reading the following illustration:

Feuding, fussing and verbally fighting

Two people are in a heated conversation – feuding, fussing and verbally fighting. The telephone rings. The party answering the telephone says calmly, "Hello."

Changing our feelings faster than our actions is possible if we master God's solution as stated in Ephesians 4:26: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." To which many protest, "Easier said than done."

True. But God does not command we do something He will not make us sufficient to perform. Then why is His admonition so difficult to enact?

There is a dynamic aspect to anger that renders us seemingly powerless to conquer anger. Identifying this aspect gives us the upper hand in our human struggle to practice God's precept. Before explaining it, let's examine anger as a subject defining it intellectually and operationally.

Anger defined

Webster defines anger as a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a real or supposed wrong; wrath.

Dr. James Dobson describes five levels of anger: mild irritation, a dripping faucet; indignation, reaction to something unfair or unreasonable; wrath, never goes unexpressed; fury, suggests violence, strikes out against another; rage, most intense level of anger, brutal acts committed some times without conscious thought.

The sleeper in Dr. Dobson's list is indignation. In 35 plus years of counseling, including 12 years in the correctional chaplaincy field, I see this level highly operative in the form of unresolved anger. Simply defined, these are anger and resentment issues people choose to hold on to.

All the above definitions, elements and actions attached to anger miss the reason anger is difficult to control. Note, I did not say eliminate.

Anger is present in our life-experiences in the range Dobson states. Our manner of handling anger has been an element of human behavior immediately following the fall of mankind.

However, as noted above, God gives us the where-with-all to channel anger – His grace sufficient for our needs. Knowing the dynamic of this one inherent factor in anger allows us to control our anger. Here it is:

Angers hidden agenda

Anger has an agenda; anger wants someone else to pay!

To illustrate this I offer the following description: If anger could be removed surgically, as many of our internal organs can be, and placed on a tray it would be in constant motion.

Anger figuratively says, "There is a debt due and payable to me; I will not subside until I am paid in full – plus interest."

This is why I see it as unresolved anger. No payment will suffice as long as anger is allowed to run it's insatiable course. Anger is never satisfied. If it is active it is operative.

Webster's defining of the word also gives valuable insight wherein it states "…anger is sometimes aroused by a real or supposed wrong. Regarding this aspect of solving anger as an issue, I say, "It is funny how two people see the same thing differently – funny peculiar not funny ha-ha."

Think back several lessons when we learned there is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue.

The negative effects we feel physically, mentally, emotionally and Spiritually regarding unresolved anger should be motivation for controlling anger. Following is a truism both biblically and medically speaking: A bowl holding acid (anger), is eaten by the acid (anger).

Warning about anger

Hebrews 12:15 warns: "Looking diligently lest any fail (Greek: to be inferior, i.e. lacking God's grace because we do not appropriate it) of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness* springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."**

*Webster: …aroused by a real or supposed wrong characterized by or showing intense hostility.

**Life Application Bible Commentary, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: "Like a small root that grows into a great tree, bitterness springs up in our hearts and overshadows even our deepest Christian relationships. Bitterness comes when we allow disappointment to grow into resentment, or when we nurse grudges over past hurts. Bitterness brings with it jealousy, dissension and immorality. When the Holy Spirit fills our lives, however, He can heal the hurt that causes bitterness (TCL: anger)."

Find the complete series under Reverend Lacy's archive on his page.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service.

How to Attack the Problem and Not the Person, Part II

FEBRUARY 28, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Counselees, former and current, say this is the most valuable problem-solving tool in my problem-solving-tool-kit. And I agree. This tool is built on the time tested proven axiom: ***An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*** If we prevent problems from developing we do not need to seek a cure. This tool is easiest taught in the context of husbands and wives. From these illustrations the tool can be adapted to fit many other areas where problems occur.

STAGE ONE: WHEN A PROBLEM DEVELOPS

Husband attacks his wife and/or wife attacks her husband

When – not if – a problem presents itself, husbands and wives often attack each other. Note: We will never be without problems; yet, we need never be without a solution. If any humor accompanies problems, I say it is at this stage: While the husband and wife attack each other the problem is not being *attacked,* i.e., resolved.

STAGE TWO: WHEN A PROBLEM DEVELOPS

The Husband attacks the problem as he sees it. The Wife attacks the problem as she sees it.

As the husband and wife attack the problem as they see it, there seems to be progress. Why? They stop directly attacking each other. But the sarcastic humor still exists: The problem is not being *attacked* i.e., resolved.

After a while the husband may figuratively think: The harder I try the *behinder* I get. I cannot seem to satisfy my wife.

Likewise, she may figuratively think: My husband is clueless. I'm not asking him to jump through hoops. Why can't he see I just want him to pay more attention to me – like when we were dating?

So what do they do? The only thing they know how to do – go back to attacking each other. The more they repeat this cycle the more they attack each other.

A CENTRAL TRUTH: There is a biblical solution to resolve problems regardless of the source. Before getting to that there is a central truth that must be recognized regarding who is most right or who is most wrong.

Truth: No one can be 100% right or 100% wrong. Biblical support is found in Romans 3:10: "…as it is written, There is none righteous. No not one:…" The Greek definition of *righteous* confirms this conclusion. Dikaios: equitable (in character or action) by implication innocent, holy (absolutely, relatively): – just, meet, right (eous).

Fact: Contenders in a matter must understand and accept that there is always a certain amount of right and a certain amount of wrong on both sides of every issue. By dis-regarding this, the problem takes on a dynamic that often becomes bigger than the initial problem as each may gather their supporters to back them up their feud grows.

STAGE THREE: WHEN A PROBLEM DEVELOPS

The Husband unites with his Wife and together they attack the problem

In stating this principle, in real time counseling, I get *pushback*.

"Tom, between us that would launch World War III. If we could do it we wouldn't have problems we couldn't resolve."

NEEDED: AN ALTERED MINDSET

To resolve a problem between any two people the mindset they bring to the *table* must be altered. The primary mindset to alter is that of trying to determine who is most right or most wrong. The biblical answer is it doesn't make any difference from God's perspective.

Follow this Bible-based reasoning.

Theoretically, if the husband is 75% wrong he is 25% right. If the wife is 99% right she is 1% wrong. What does God require from each? God requires him to give up 100% of his 75% wrong. God requires her to give up 100% of her 1% wrong. So what difference does it make as to who is most right and who is most wrong? It doesn't.

Civility is a key ingredient in problem solving.

Before a problem develops, whether first recognized by the wife or the husband, there should be a plan to dismantle it immediately. First be prayed up before sitting down in a neutral place to discuss their differences. Next they must agree if they cannot agree they will not be dis-agreeable i.e., get ugly with each other.

If they agree on the nature of the problem, they go to a topical Bible for direction for attaining resolution. If they cannot agree they cease discussion, set a time to come back to the *table* after further prayer and soul-searching and take up the matter again. This phase is repeated until resolution is reached. Remember, God wants marriages to work.

Practice makes perfect.

Couples normally learn quickly so this tool is not usually employed too many times before they can quickly resolve their differences.

The Litmus Test:

Was this incident worth more than our relationship?

Next time: How to avoid self-fulfilling prophecy.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy, Advisory Board Member of the Virginia Christian Alliance and Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service and on the Board of Advisors of the Virginia Christian Alliance

How to Attack the Problem and Not the Person, Part I

FEBRUARY 26, 2014
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

As previously stated, every impact statement is a tool. This tool, however, is the first of three primary tools in this overall study on problem solving. It is built on the age-old premise: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
The best way to solve a problem is to prevent it from occurring. This approach is best applied when we understand the four primary sources of problems.
Author's Note: In Bible research I developed a tracking method I call The Rule of Proportion, i.e. how many times does a particular incident occur in Scripture. The Rule of Proportion gives an idea of the probability of similar events re-occuring. This is vital to understand in counseling as many often ask, "God, why did you let this happen to me?"

Following is my answer to such inquiries.
First, as much as we would like to think not, God could be the source of a problem. Following my Rule of Proportion, how many times do we read in Scripture of God directly inflicting something on someone for His own purpose?
Answer: Very few.
Because I teach this *emphatically* I research any inference of God routinely and/or indiscriminately doing so. The most direct example I have found is John 9:1-3:
And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.
And his disciples asked him, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
Yes, Jesus said God did this to this innocent man.
True, God could be the source of a problem. But, how many times do we read of God doing this to others? Based on The Rule of Proportion, I submit God is the least source of our problems.

To solve a problem, we learned, we must give it a name. Naming it leads us to God's biblical solution. To name God as being the source of a problem prevents finding His workable solution to that problem.

Second, Satan could be the source of problems. Simply defining *Satan* could eliminate him as a source of problems. In English he is defined as the chief evil spirit and adversary of God and humanity. In Hebrew he is defined as an archenemy of good. In Greek he is defined as accuser, foe and enemy. Are these the attributes of a sound leader? No.

Scripture is replete with warnings about Satan. First Peter 5:8-9a is one of many admonishments:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith…

James 4:7 states this plan simply:

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee.

Had I known and heeded Proverbs 20:1: *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise,* I would not have drank my first bottle of beer on December 31, 1951, which plunged me into 17 years of alcoholism.

Knowing and heeding the definitions of Satan and acknowledging him as a source of our problems, directs me to ask one question, "What can I expect if I put the enemy in charge of my life – problems?"

The cure for Satan-induced problems lies in preventing them from happening through personal choices guided by God's teaching.

Third, other peoples' poor choices (pardon the crass expression) *slop over on us*. Although this dilemma in life is enormous in its scope and impact upon us it is not untenable. All problems have solutions no matter the source. But God, Satan and others poor choices, added together, are not the causes of most of our problems.

Fourth and @1 is, most problems stem from the poor choices we make. No one stated this truth more succinctly than the cartoon character, Pogo, in his classic statement, "We have met the enemy and they are us." And this is the good news relative to problem solving. How so?

Realistically, I would not try to out wit God to avoid experiencing problems on a daily basis. He is not the primary source of my problems. I would not contend with an invisible Adversary on a daily basis. I do not have to since Satan is a defeated foe. He is not the primary source of my problems. Likewise I could not change all the people who are daily trying to change me. They are not the primary source of my problems either.

But, the good news in all of this is, by the Grace of God I can learn to change myself by making better choices thereby reducing my share of the problems I bring upon myself.

Next time we will look at the *mechanics* of how to Attack the Problem and Not the Person as the best method of preventing problems.

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Three Things People Do To Solve Problems That Do Not Work And Why They Do Not Work

DECEMBER 26, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In the problem solving process a person's objectivity is often based on their most recent experience. Don't disregard all past experiences, for in doing so, we put an axe to the axiom *experience is the best teacher*. However, what worked in the past might not be workable for the present or the future. Past experiences could be elements of current problems.

Where is objectivity if one is facing something they have never faced before and their objectivity is based solely on past experiences?

Well-meaning people, and some counseling techniques, try to comfort the problem-laden telling them they must learn to cope with their situation. As a problem solving approach, *cope* is a four-letter word. The definition of the word is depressing and offers no certain hope of victory.

Cope: (Webster) To struggle especially on fairly even terms or with some degree of success. This dictionary adds the following phrase to the definition: (usually followed by *with*). To me, this connotes coping is a continuing process not a concluding act.

Defining *cope* by using the word as an acrostic the true definition surfaces: Cover Over Problems Effectively. Not only is it not possible to cover over problems effectively this is not a biblical truism. We have seen in our study that for every problem God has provided a solution. John 8:32 promises, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

At New Hope Counseling Service our objectivity is always and only based on the Word of God. The tools we teach give the problem a name. A thorough topical Bible provides the biblical solution for

the problem.

Finally, when a problem presents itself: Don't Try To Make It Make Sense Right Now. If we had enough information to make it make sense, up front, we wouldn't have a problem. As we work through the problem deal in facts only.

God taught me this vital tool during a painful experience our family had to endure. This is a most valuable lesson pertaining to problem solving and a difficult lesson to learn.

The telephone rang. It was 7:45 a.m., January 13, 1981. I asked myself out loud, "Who would be calling me when I am getting ready to leave for work?" (This was before I had caller I.D.)

Before I could speak I heard a hysterical voice screaming in my ear. It sounded as if someone was saying, "She's dead! She's dead!"

My thoughts raced. Was this my sister saying Mother had died? Mother was 75 and in great health, but 75 year olds die suddenly. I didn't want to assume anything so I asked firmly, "Who is this? Who is dead?"

The voice quieted and said, "This is Terri, Deidra is dead." Terri is my daughter. Deidra was my 10-week old granddaughter.

As I warmed the automobile and scrapped the windows, I was crying and asking through my tears, "God, why did this have to happen?" Yes, in times of extreme stress even ministers might ask this questions also.

Pulling into the rush hour traffic, I asked God, "What am I going to say when I get there? I've got to be a father, grandfather and minister. I don't feel like being any of these. What am I going to say?"

In my mind's voice God gave me the last portion of Job 1:21: "…the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Again speaking out loud, I said, "Yes, Lord, but what am I going to say to them?"

In a voice different from my mind's voice I heard, "Tell them, don't try to make it make sense right now."

As I received that message I was pulling into the apartment parking lot. It looked like a scene from a movie. The rescue squad vehicle was there with emergency lights flashing. Some equipment was on the side walk. I parked my automobile and walked through the open apartment door.

Rescue squad workers were huddled over the bassinet. I couldn't see Diedra. Izzie, my son-in-law's mother who is a registered nurse, was trying to revive Diedra. I didn't see Dave, my son-in-law

either. It flashed through my mind they had called Izzie before they called me.

Knowing there was nothing I could do to help them, I went to the kitchen where Terri and grandson, David, were. He was 18 months old.

As we embraced and cried in each other's arms we heard muffled talking from the living room. A moment later their talking ceased. We both watched as a rescue squad member carried a small bundle out the door. As Izzie followed him she said, "I am going to order an autopsy."

Dave suddenly appeared in the doorway vehemently scolding himself. "It is all my fault. I should have heard she was not breathing during the night when I got up. It is all my fault."

Hearing that, I said firmly, but kindly, "Dave, stop it! It is not all your fault. You ran with the rescue squad for years. Your training would have alerted you if something was happening out of the ordinary. You guys instinctively sense when something is not right."

I continued, "Don't try to make it make sense right now. We don't have enough information to make what has happened make sense. Wait and see what the autopsy reveals"

This is the essence of this tool. When a problem first presents itself we do not have enough information to make it make sense. Deal in facts not in feelings.

The autopsy showed Diedra was born with a very small hole in her heart, and as she grew the whole grew larger. Since this was undetected her death was inevitable. Dave was not to blame – nor was anyone else.

> "That is what I mother always said," a counselee remarked when I taught her this tool.
>
> I asked, "Your Mother always said don't try to make it make sense reight now?"
>
> "No, she said, 'You are always trying to make sense out of non-sense.'"

Next time: Attack the Problem and Not the Person.

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Problem Solving 101

DECEMBER 22, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The three levels of a problem are the Presentation, Performance and Preconditioning. Knowing these predictable stages expedites problem solving. Remember, we will never be without problems yet we need never be without a solution.

Problems come from many sources that initially we process internally. We acknowledge them first by giving them thought then by giving them a name or assigning them to someone or something. As the thought germinates we state it verbally to someone. That someone could be the person we believe to be directly involved in the problem as we see it or someone selected to be a sounding board.

The presentation level overlaps the performance level. The performance level is literally what we think, say and do relative to what we believe the problem to be. Thought precedes action. Action is based on our determination as to what it will require on our part to resolve the problem. Actions can range from mild conversation to violent action.

Over forty years of various teaching/counseling ministries have shown me unresolved anger and unresolved resentment are primary elements in many problems. To illustrate the performance level I'll describe the five levels of anger outlined by Dr. James M. Dobson: Mild irritation, Indignation, Wrath, Fury and Rage.

1. Mild irritation can be prompted hearing a dripping faucet, elevated levels of noise or by bothersome lighting for instance. All are usually easily correctible. Mild irritation might come from annoying things others have done to us or act out in our presence – these also may be easily correctible.

2. Indignation is reaction to something deemed unfair or unreasonable. This level of anger is often outwardly unexpressed. I likened indignation to a slow burn. I'll illustrate indignation in the Preconditioning Level of a problem.

3. Wrath never goes unexpressed. Wrath may be expressed through body language, verbally and/or by striking inanimate objects.

4. Fury suggests violence and is usually acted out against another.

5. Rage is the most intense level of anger. In a fit of rage, brutal acts are committed sometimes without conscious thought. I've observed many charged with acts of rage in twelve years of jail chaplaincy ministry.

All of the above have been proven to stem primarily from unresolved anger and unresolved resentments.

The Preconditioning Level of a problem is the root level of the problem. Root Level is not new terminology, but often Root Level is seen as the Performance Level of a problem. Depression is a classic illustration.

Barring mental illnesses, chemical imbalances and other medical contributors (I am not a medical doctor) depression is often the results of the problem not the problem itself. Problem-wise, it is best dealt with at the Performance Level. Medicating the results of a problem will never cure the problem.

In dealing in the realm of the Root Level consider this reasoning: What is on the inside of us makes the difference in what we hear. This prompts the following observation: It is funny how two people hear the same thing differently; funny-peculiar not funny has-ha. The reasoning is we process everything we hear through what is on the inside of us – literally what we know about what we are hearing or observing. Two people with different experiences and backgrounds will see things differently.

What one hears, sees, or feels, is greatly determined by unresolved anger or unresolved resentment through which it is processed. The Presentation Level affects the Performance Level. The Performance Level is affected by the Preconditioning Level. This tool must we considered, in the problem solving process, as one tool.

Understanding and applying this information will put us on track to more quickly resolving our problems. But, before we can apply new tools we need to remember where we started in this study: Up Until Now Every Thing We Have Done Has Not Worked.

As a reminder, this is not saying every thing have done has been wrong. No, it just hasn't worked. I am a firm believer in that before we can do something different, ,eamomg better, we must stop doing things that do not work then start doing things that will work.

Next time:

Three Things People Do To Solve Their Problems That Do Not Work And Why They Do Not Work

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Problems Are Solutions in Disguise

DECEMBER 11, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

This may seem an over simplification of all you have struggled with for perhaps too long – but it is not. For every problem God has a solution. The first step in solving problems is giving the problem the correct name.

As a Bible-based teacher/counselor it is not my calling to name people's problems. It is up to them to tell me what they are experiencing. From their descriptions the problems will actually name themselves.

In the medical field we give the doctor a list of symptoms. The combined symptoms in turn name the malady – then the doctor can prescribe treatment. Likewise, the problem-laden state their symptoms then a search of God's Word prescribes the solution – not the counselor.

To start the quest for a solution one must first fill in this blank: The Problem Is: _____. This is not as simple as it may seem. The problem is often buried deeply within.

Depression, for example, is more often the result of the problem rather than the problem itself. To give an anti-depressant to relieve this type of depression will mask the problem not cure it. Likewise a wrong labeling of the problem by a counselor will deflect God's Solution.

It is interesting to note that primary attempts to fill in this blank renders a list of results of the problem (symptoms} not the name of the problem itself. Just as the doctor must be trained in diagnosing the illness from a list of symptoms, a Bible-based counselor must be able to name the problem by listening to the results of the problem. To do so, they must be trained in employing God's Word in the problem solving process.

A brief exegesis of the four-part verse, I Corinthians 10:13, supports this Bible-based tool:

Problems Are Solutions In Disguise. (I'll write it the way I teach it in a counseling session.)

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man…"

First we will deal with the word *temptation*. By implication the Greek word *periasmos* means *adversity,* thus, no adversity has taken you but such as is common to others. You are not the first person to experience what you are now going through.

William Shakespeare described adversity as "…being tossed on a deep troublesome sea." In our modern vernacular, many may espouse this exact feeling saying, "Been there; done that." The good news is others have successfully applied God's Word and solved their problems – so can you..

This next phrase is the most important thing I have to tell you relative to problem solving:

"…but God is faithful,…"

God is faithful to what? God is faithful in all things, but in this context, He is faithful to His Word. Scripture says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us…" John 1,2,14a.

In the best connotation of the word, if we employ God's Word in solving our problems we are employing God in our problem solving process. And in principle, God can do anything but fail!

"…who will not suffer (permit) you to be tempted (to suffer adversity) above that ye are able…"

God will not force His will on anyone. Even so, for our relief, He set up a Hotline in Jeremiah 33:3: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

In choosing not to employ Him and His Word in the problem solving process one is free to be tossed on a deep troublesome sea as long as they choose to do so. Following is God's promise that: Problems are solutions in disguise:

"…but will with the temptation (problem) make a way to escape (solution), that ye may be able to bear (*undergo* hardship) it."

Even after exposing the issues bringing on the problem and giving it a name one of two actions can follow: We can dwell on the problem, or we can dwell on the solution. The one we dwell upon grows.

If we focus on the problem the problem looms bigger.

If we focus on the solution (God's Word) the solution appears more attainable.

The one we focus on grows.

There is no change if there is no change. If you want tomorrow to be different from yesterday, we have just learned, you must do something different today – different meaning better.

Two Natures (Author Unknown)
Two natures beat within my breast.
One is foul: one is blest.
One I love; one I hate.
The one I feed will dominate!

Next time:

Problem Solving 101

The three levels of a problem are Presentation, Performance and Preconditioning. How knowing and applying this helps to expedite problem solving.

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You Can’t Steer a Parked Car

DECEMBER 6, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Earlier I stated every tool in this series is based on a verse, passage or biblical principle. When teaching this tool in a counseling setting many say upon seeing the flash card, “I’m not an expert on the Bible, but I have never read that verse in my King James Version.”

It is in the Bible, but stated differently; and just as succinctly. It is found in Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, *and He will steer your car*. (Actually) and he shall direct thy paths.”

Life is a constant state of motion – even when we sleep. But this problem solving principle is operative only in an awake state. Before you can steer a car it must be in motion. Before God can *steer our car* our car must be in motion.

Coupling this thought with a desire to make changes, theoretically we must put our life vehicle into motion to activate this biblical principle. One must pull away from the curb of life and get into the flow of life.

Notice I did not say, “Go with the flow.” I said, “Pull out into the flow.”

At this point two things must happen simultaneously: As one pulls out into the flow they must, in the same instant, put God behind the wheel of their life; and then must ride *shot gun*. The blessing is that if one is going in the wrong direction, God will steer them in the right direction.

Society says, “Go with the flow. If it feels good; do it. It’s your body. You can do with it as you want.”

This is a half-truth. Yes, it is your body. You may do with it as you choose, provided there is no one stopping you. But you are not free to choose the consequences of your choices. Poor choices many

times lead to long lasting or everlasting consequences.

Reflect on my testimony in the previous lesson. On December 31, 1951, I was free to drink my first beer. No one tried to stop me. In fact, they encouraged me to do so. I was not free, however, not to be an alcoholic for the next 17 years – that is, until I put God behind the wheel of my life.

According to I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." No biblical provisions are granted regarding the consequences generated as the result of our forgiven sins.

Rev. Dr. Vander Warner, Jr., former pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, repeated often the warning, "If it feels good, that might be the best reason not to do it."

Next time, Problems are Solutions in Disguise.

This may sound like an over simplification of all you have struggled with for perhaps too long – but it is not. For every problem God has a solution. This is the first step in identifying our problem, which is, giving it a name.

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The Is No Change If There Is No Change

NOVEMBER 30, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The following plan is simple to state. Like anything worthwhile it takes personal discipline; but half the battle is won if we have confidence in the plan. Here it is: Find a plan that works. Employ it as your plan. As you exercise the plan modify it to fit you. You then have your personal plan of problem solving that will lead to victory. This leads us to the third level of change.

Substantial Change. By substantial change I am talking about a change of attitude. Until we see things differently, for the most part, we do not change our thinking, feeling or behavior. There is a Spiritual Dynamic that accompanies this level of change that allows us to permanently alter our actions.

In brief statements, omitting the ugly, I'll summarize a 17-year period of my life.

On New Year's Eve, 1951, the teens I hung-out with got some beer and we drank it while walking downtown to a movie house. It was cold, and we did not feel the effects of the alcohol until we sat in the warm theater. I liked the smell and taste of beer. I liked the light-headed dizziness.

Unfortunately for us, we are free to do whatever we want to do as long as there is no one present to stop us. Worldliness confirms this and says: It is your body; you can do with it what you want. This is a half- truth. You may be free to do what you want to, but you are not free to choose the consequences of your choices.

Starting Tuesday, January 1, 1952, it became almost a daily quest to drink beer or something alcoholic. Yes, I became an alcoholic following my first night of drinking beer. For the next 17 years I was drunk, getting drunk or sobering up.

Even so, I've never been unemployed. Every job I've held I started at the bottom. When I left that job I was either at the top or my position was higher than the top when I began. I never had to ask for a raise in pay. I earned merit pay increases ahead of schedule.

(Note to reader: Let me interrupt my story. This is not the success story of Tom Lacy. A major point in telling segments of my life story is to show God's Hand on my life, first recognized by me, when I was 12. No, God did not condone my alcoholism. What I am revealing to you was a complete mystery to me as my life unfolded. Suffice it to say, for the sake of teaching this lesson, I started selling automobiles July 5, 1967, after leaving 13 1/2 years in the printing equipment and supply industry. Selling automobiles was my first big ticket, hard sell job. In fact, it was literally, no sell – no eat!)

In November 1968 I was walking across the showroom floor toward the sales manager's office to get a deal approved when a fellow salesman stepped in front of me, put his finger in the middle of my chest, looked me in the eyes and asked, "Tom Lacy, don't you think it's about time you do something worthwhile with your life?"

I brushed his hand aside saying, "I am doing something worthwhile with my life. I am selling lots of cars, making big buck, and taking better care of my family than ever before. This is the good life!"

His words, however, haunted me until January 16, 1969, when I attended a company sponsored Beef N' Booze dinner. The sales team I was on won the December selling contest and that was our reward.

I volunteered to set up the small dining area in a local restaurant – not because I was a nice guy – but so I could get into the booze an hour earlier than the other team members. Then a Miracle happened.

As I sat down my second double bourbon and water to lite a cigarette, God showed me my life as He was seeing it. Seventeen years of drinking events rolled through my mind's eye. As I viewed the scenes I said to myself (out loud), "This has got to be the ugliest sight I have ever seen; I do not want to live this way another day."

Although I did not grasp the fullness of that event, I went home sober that night for the first time in many years.

After having not consumed alcoholic beverages for six weeks, I said to my family, "I don't think I am going to drink anymore."

They said, not un-kindly, "Why should we believe you this time."

Time for me seemed to be in slow motion as I re-coiled from their remark. I thought, "*Don't they realize I haven't drank anything for six weeks?* But, quickly, my thinking came back to real-time:

“How many superficial changes had I made in 17 years. How many situational changes had I made during this time period. Plenty!”

My response came calmly, “I now have a new attitude. For the first time in 17 years I know that what I have been doing has been wrong.”

Readers: This is the moral to my story. Until we have a change in attitude we will not perfect effective change. There is no change if there is not change. If you want tomorrow to be different from yesterday you must do something different today. Different meaning better! In the vernacular: Same ‘ol same ‘ol doesn’t get it.

Ask God to show you your life as He views it. Ask God’s Holy Spirit to make you sufficient to change those things you do not like in your behavior.

Next time: You Can’t Steer a Parked Car!

Author’s Note: Next I will teach this tool and add additional problem solving tools to our growing list: Problems are Solutions in Disguise.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) C. Lacy is Founder and Director, of New Hope Counseling Service and on the Board of Advisors of the Virginia Christian Alliance

Words of Wisdom from Marriage Counselor

OCTOBER 31, 2013
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Problems Are Solutions In Disguise

Tool One: Up Until Now Everything You've Done Has Not Worked

"Tom, where do you start when people come to you for counseling? What is the first thing you say to them?"

My answer seems evasive, but it is not.

"I start at the beginning."

"I don't understand. The beginning can't be the same place for a couple who has been married for 29 years and are now contemplating divorce as it is for a 15 year old pregnant unwed teenager."

"You're correct in your premise, but my answer is true. The beginning for both is the same place. Up until now everything they have done has not worked. How do I know? They are sitting in my office asking for help. If they were satisfied with their circumstances they wouldn't ask for counseling."

In both cases we can use my premise to turn their problem into a solution: If up until now everything you have done has not worked, what do you do? Answer: Do something different – different meaning better.

So you see they are both at the same place. Both need to stop doing what has led them to the point of needing help and start doing something that will see them through their dilemma.

Note: My carefully worded appraisal of their situation does not say everything they have done is wrong. The word wrong does not appear in the statement. They came for help not condemnation. Whether they are right or wrong is secondary in the problem solving process. They need to be convinced that what they have done up to now hasn't worked.

More is not better; different is better.

Illustration: I drank my first beer, Monday, December 31, 1951, and for 17 years I was getting drunk, was drunk or was sobering up. My first beer plunged me into alcoholism. I had to stop what I was doing and start doing something different – meaning better.

I've coined an aphorism: There is no change if there is no change. Frankly, I wasn't impressed with this terse saying embodying this truth until God's Holy Spirit taught it to me through my own behavior. Once learning it I've been teaching it ever since.

The Holy Spirit convinced me, if I wanted tomorrow to be different from yesterday, I had to do something different today. Most often, when I use the word *different* I can readily substitute the word *better*. Let's not let this simply stated lesson slip by unheeded.

They, whoever *they* are, say more is better; God's Word teaches different is better. Change is difficult to bring about even if we pursue changing for the better.

To bring about change we must understand these three elements: Superficial, Situational and Substantial. The process of changing may not be as clean-cut as described, but always recognize which aspect of change you're working through.

I describe a Superficial Change as a New Year's Eve Resolution. By adding this descriptive phrase many people think they know where I am going with this. There is, however, more to this level than the obvious conclusion.

One of the most common mistakes made regarding new resolutions is telling others we're making them. Why? We would like to believe family and friends will be supportive of our efforts, but many not.

Once a verbal or written list is posted our words and deeds are monitored. As soon as we break a resolution or neglect to do something we committed to do, these would be friends become our accusers. This is difficult to weather. Worse than this is the conversation we have with ourselves.

"You know, they're right. I keep saying I'm going to change, and I'm really trying; but I can't break that habit or start that self-improvement program. Maybe something is wrong with me. Maybe I can't change. Maybe I'm broken or something. Maybe I can't be fixed. I'm hopeless. Why try."

Depression often sets in. Depression can be the result of a problem not the cause of the problem itself. Depression breeds depression.

Some begin to think maybe things will be better if I quit this job and move somewhere else.

Situational change is temporary change at best. I'm not putting down legitimate change. I don't live in the house where I was born, nor am I still carrying newspapers. However, those who attempt to change their lot in life by changing their job or address seldom achieve their goal if the primary reason for the change is to change their situation. Get problems under control then make a change if change is still warranted. Most often it isn't.

How do I do this since I've never been successful in doing so?

Author's Note: Next we will "flesh-out" the third level of change and add additional problem solving tools to Problems are Solutions in Disguise.

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The Bible and Interracial Marriage

NOVEMBER 13, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Creation Ministries

Even though the Bible makes it clear that all people are descended from Adam and Eve (so they must be very closely related),1 there are still misconceptions among some Christians surrounding 'race'. Surprisingly, perhaps, this can include concerns about the idea of marriage between two believers from different so-called races.

But these concerns have no basis in either science or the Bible. Science has finally caught up with God's Word in affirming how very closely related we all are at the genetic level. Evolutionary thinking has, historically, exacerbated racism dramatically. Darwin believed that some groups were less evolved toward humanity than others—with his own group, unsurprisingly, the most evolved. Darwin's ally in Germany, Haeckel, even attacked the Bible for its antiracism.2

It's not as if we can solve all society's problems with race by simply decreeing, on the basis of our close relatedness, that there is no such thing as race. If that were so, then there would be no such thing as racism, or discrimination by race. Nor would there even be the question of 'interracial marriage'. In short, the word 'race' still conveys everyday meaning; we recognize that some are more closely related to us (and hence look more similar to us) than others.

But what 'group differences' exist are trivial, as modern discoveries in human biology and genetics now confirm. Things such as skin, hair or eye colour involve no structures or functions unique to any group, just various amounts of the same stuff. All people have the same 'sunscreen' skin pigment melanin; those with more melanin, generally labelled 'black', are really more dark-brown. Those with less, called 'white', are really light brown—often pinkish, because of insufficient melanin to screen the redness of their small blood vessels. And there are many shades in between.

People with blue eyes have no unique colouring chemical; it's that same stuff, melanin. It's simply the way the light scatters from a lesser amount of melanin (just as the sky is blue because of the scattering of light from air molecules, enhanced by fine dust particles). Similarly, those genetically programmed to produce a lot of melanin in their hair will have brown or 'black' hair. And those with a little bit have blond hair.

Incidentally, it's easy to explain how groups of people with differing characteristics distributed variously across the world could have arisen very rapidly. The Bible describes an event at Babel that provides the right conditions—the breakup of a population into a few dozen smaller ones that became isolated from each other.

The world's population, having recently emerged from a 'near-extinction event',3 all spoke the same language. A small number of new languages (which form the 'roots' of today's language family 'trees') was suddenly and supernaturally imposed upon this group.4

The resultant confusion and likely hostilities meant that each group rapidly fulfilled God's stated purpose for this event, namely to spread people over all the earth. In effect, the event imposed a virtually instant social and then geographic (hence reproductive) isolation from each other. Each group carried a different subset of the total 'gene pool'. Chapter 18 of The Creation Answers Book explains in detail how this would have led to the sorts of genetic groupings (including visible traits) we see in human populations today. Thus, racial differences, though not the purpose of this Babel event, were a side-effect.

Desperate attempts have been made to use this and other portions of the Bible to justify the status quo in societies with slavery and/or segregation. However, following that fairly drastic initial divine 'nudge', humanity has long ago amply observed God's command to fill the earth. There is no suggestion in Scripture that God forbids either migration from one place to another, or marriage between one ethnic group and another.5

The Bible does counsel believers not to marry unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). And in Old Testament times, the Israelites were not to marry outsiders. But they were allowed to if the outsiders converted to faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—such as occurred for Rahab and Ruth, ancestors of Jesus (Matthew 1). This shows that the issue was religious, not racial or even cultural.

Culture matters

Common sense indicates that groups that have a longer history of isolation from each other, both geographically and linguistically, will have developed greater differences in their respective cultures. Interracial marriage will therefore often mean that one is marrying someone from a different culture. So, there are 'wisdom issues' to consider. Cultural differences can arise even when two people are of the same 'race', e.g. a typical English person marrying a typical Russian. Even

those speaking the same language, such as Americans and Australians,6 are often surprised at how great the cultural differences can be.

Cultural differences can greatly enrich both persons' lives, but they can also bring a unique set of problems. Couples wise enough to seek counselling7 on various matters prior to betrothal should consider such things, too. It helps to be able to anticipate the sorts of problems that may arise, and bring the issues out into the open. The intention is to try to minimize problems should the marriage proceed.

Dogs and the dogma of 'racial purity'

One of the issues in the way people see interracial marriage has, I think, to do with misconceptions about the idea of a so-called 'pure race'. I recall listening once to a talk by CMI colleague, Peter Sparrow. With his trademark wide grin and booming voice, Peter made a statement which even startled me (it certainly seemed to shock many in the audience). He said (emphasis his): "Adam and Eve were the ultimate mongrels!"

When you think about it, he was absolutely right. The problem is that we have been conditioned to think of genetically depleted populations as 'pure' in the sense of somehow 'better'. In fact, it is the 'mongrel' combinations in both animals and humans that have the greater genetic richness, more like the originals that God created directly.

A good illustration of this involves domestic dog breeds. Starting from a 'mongrel' dog population, breeders have been able to select out many different 'pure' breeds—varieties as different as, say, Great Danes are from Chihuahuas. But by isolating certain characteristics, breeders have had to ignore others. Thus, by breeding for 'Chihuahua-ness' (including 'tininess'), some of the genes for 'Great-Dane-ness' (such as 'hugeness') were lost in the process—and vice versa. So, if all dogs in the world ceased to exist apart from Chihuahuas, one could never breed something like a Great Dane again. To 'rebreed' a Great Dane, one would need the genetic richness and variety in that original mongrel population.8

So the 'pure' breeds are in fact thinned out and genetically depleted populations. They are more specialized, but also less able to vary and adapt further by selection. Similarly in human populations; Adam and Eve could not have been, as they are often depicted, pale-skinned with blue eyes and blond hair, or they could not have given rise to all of the different varieties of humans. They would likely have been 'middle of the road' in most characteristics, thus providing for the great range of variety observed in their offspring.

In such things as skin shade, hair and eye colouring, they were likely a medium brown. The descendants of people who have such a rich genetic endowment can then express a great range of variation as these genes recombine. Their skin shading can range from 'white' to 'black' and every shade in between.

This is beautifully illustrated in the 'two-tone twins' example (left) favoured by CMI speakers. The two beautiful twin 9 baby girls shown were able to express that amazing level of variety in one generation because their mother and father (pictured) are themselves the product of 'mixed' marriages. In short, when two people from different races intermarry, they gain a greater richness and variety in their genes, closer to the original.

Two-tone
TWINS

How sad that so many, inspired by evolution, or by others who have been, have put so much fanatical passion into preserving their particular 'pure race'. Many have killed, and even willingly died, for this 'cause'. Once one sees it for what it is—one's genetically depleted race—it doesn't sound like a cause worth wasting any breath on, let alone dying for.

The bottom line

When we start with the real history of mankind given in God's Word, we see why there are no biblical or biological barriers to interracial marriage. In fact, there are positive aspects to it. Since the spouses in such a marriage are generally going to be less closely related than two of the same ethnic group, they are likely introducing greater genetic variety into their offspring.10

SOURCE: **Creation Ministries**

1. See for example **Luke 3:23–38**, **Acts 17:26**, **1 Corinthians 15:45**. **Return to text**.
2. E. van Niekerk, **Ernst Haeckel: a hostile witness to the truth of the Bible**, creation.com/haeckel2, 3 March 2011. **Return to text**.
3. The Flood of Noah—8 people only survived. **Return to text**.
4. Genesis Chapters 10 and 11. The distribution of these new languages seems to have been along extended family lines. See also Wieland, C., **Towering change: Were all of today's thousands of languages separately created? And if not, have languages evolved?** *Creation* **22**(1):22–26, 1999; creation.com/babel. **Return to text**.
5. This is expounded and argued in detail in my book *One Human Family: The Bible, science, race and culture*. .
6. Well, sort of the same language.
7. E.g. from an experienced pastor with the appropriate level of godly common sense. **Return to text**.
8. 'Pure' lines in the world of show-breeding are, incidentally, also much more likely to suffer from the effects of accumulated mutational defects because of inbreeding. See Cosner, L., **A parade of mutants pedigree dogs and artificial selection**, *Creation* **32**(3):28–32, 2010; creation.com/pedigree. **Return to text**.
9. Heterozygous or non-identical twins, clearly. **Return to text**.

10. Also, the offspring are less likely to inherit genetic defects from their parents; see **creation.com/races**. **Return to text**.

The New Challenge for Blacks: Maintaining our Dignity to Preserve the Virtue tnd Legacy of the Civil Rights Struggle

OCTOBER 16, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, RACISM, RIGHT TO VOTE

Hate speech does not come from those who tell the truth. It comes from those who hate the truth and love a lie.

Using the civil rights struggle to promote the sexual appetites of the homosexual agenda is an affront to the dignity of black people. No other group in America has had to suffer the wicked injustices as did African blacks who were forced to provide hard labor with no compensation, and their American descendants.

Blacks from Africa were put in chains and imported to America packed on slave ships like *La Amistad*. Homosexual groups were not. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

The right to own, buy or sell a black man was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Decision. The right to own, buy or sell a homosexual was not. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

After the United States Civil War, black people were denied the right to vote. Homosexuals were never denied the right to vote. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

During the days of segregation, there were public schools where black children were not allowed to attend. Homosexuals were never turned away from a public school. That is not a hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

During the early struggle for civil rights, there were state colleges where qualified black applicants were not welcomed to pursue a degree. Homosexuals were never denied the right to pursue a

degree from a state college. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

Population controllers like Planned Parenthood have set up offices in the zip codes of minority communities that are predominantly black or Hispanic under the guise of helping the poor. No population control group has set up in the zip codes in predominantly homosexual communities under the guise of helping the poor. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

To this day, the descendants of African slaves have not been compensated for the misery, toil and slashes on the backs of their ancestors by large corporations who profited from the slave trade in America. There are no descendants of homosexual relationships from the slave trade, and since no corporation profited from cheap homosexual labor, there is no call for compensation. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

As blacks, we have our faults, for all have sinned, but we never insist that God approve of our wrongdoings. Many sins are done in secret because of the shame experienced. In fact, we hold revivals to repent of our shortcomings, and shout in appreciation for the unmerited blessings God has bestowed upon us. Homosexuals want ministers to approve of their unholy unions regardless what God thinks. They know no shame and flaunt their behavior with public parades boasting their pride. There is no repentance for those who know no shame. So, God resists the

proud. That is not hate speech; that's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

Therefore, it time for blacks to regain the dignity of the civil rights struggle and take back the mantle stolen from the legacy of the foot soldiers and leaders. An unnatural sexual appetite is not the same as being black. It never was! This is not hate speech; it's an undeniable fact. An undeniable fact is the truth. Those who hate truth love a lie.

This is why there are those who hate me. I don't mind. Because if someone loves a lie, I do not want to be loved by them. If someone loves a lie, let them love the apostate ministers that will approve of their sins. If someone loves a lie, let them love the corporations and organizations that want to see fewer black children. If someone loves a lie, let them love the black poverty pimps they can fool with their rhetoric of tolerance. But, if someone loves a lie, be glad if they do not even like you – because if someone who loves a lie loves you, then you know you are on the wrong side.

Dr. Johnny M. Hunter is an advisor to the Virginia Christian Allians and is the President of Global Life & Family Mission, a ministrydedicated to promoting traditional family values, racial harmony, and the survival ofchildren around the world. He is also the National Director of Life Education

AndResource Network (LEARN, Inc.), a consortium of life affirming pro-family advocates,which is a prominent African-American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States. Website: **LEARN**

Attacks on DOMA Threaten Marriage, Church-State Relations, Warns Archbishop Dolan in Letter to President

SEPTEMBER 25, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Seeks dialogue with President on definition of marriage as union of a man and a woman
Objects to Justice Department comparing support for marriage definition with racism
Archbishop to President: Push the reset button on approach to DOMA

WASHINGTON—The Obama Administration's fight against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as between one man and one woman, will undermine marriage and create a serious breach of Church-State relations, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote in a September 20 letter to President Barack Obama,

The Administration's assault on DOMA, Archbishop Dolan said, will "precipitate a national conflict between Church and State of enormous proportions and to the detriment of both institutions."

The letter with its accompanying analysis of the Administration's threats to marriage can be found at **http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/upload/dolan-to-obama-doma-letter-sept-20-2011.pdf**

Archbishop Dolan especially objected to the Justice Department's legal arguments that equate those in favor of DOMA to racists. It is "particularly upsetting," he said, when the Administration attributes to those who support DOMA "a motivation rooted in prejudice and bias.It is especially wrong and unfair to equate opposition to redefining marriage with either intentional or willfully ignorant racial discrimination, as your Administration insists on doing," he said.

He underscored the Church's position recognizing "the immeasurable personal dignity and equal worth of all individuals, including those with same-sex attraction" and said "we reject all hatred and unjust treatment against any person."

"Our profound regard for marriage as the complementary and fruitful union of a man and a woman does not negate our concern for the well-being of all people but reinforces it," he said. "While all persons merit our full respect, no other relationships provide for the common good what marriage between husband and wife provides.The law should reflect this reality."

Archbishop Dolan advised President Obama: "push the reset button on your Administration's approach to DOMA."

"Our federal government should not be presuming ill intent or moral blindness on the part of the overwhelming majority of its citizens, millions of whom have gone to the polls to directly support DOMAs in their states and have thereby endorsed marriage as the union of man and woman.Nor should a policy disagreement over the meaning of marriage be treated by federal officials as a federal offense—but this will happen if the Justice Department's latest constitutional theory prevails in court."

Archbishop Dolan asked President Obama to "end its campaign against DOMA, the institution of marriage it protects, and religious freedom."

"Please know that I am always ready to discuss with you the concerns raised here and to address any questions that you may have." he added. "I am convinced that the door to a dialogue that is strong enough to endure even serious and fundamental disagreements can and must remain open, and I believe that you desire the same."

FRC Urges Retailers to Resist Pressure to Discriminate Against Customers With Traditional, Biblical View of Marriage

AUGUST 27, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

WASHINGTON , D.C. – In recent weeks, online political activists have engaged in a misinformation campaign that seeks to bully retailers such as Walgreens, Petco, and Netflix into discriminating against customers and charities based on their religious beliefs, specifically the traditional and biblical view of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

The online activists are targeting CGBG, a charity support group with a mission and partner network that includes more than 170,000 charities representing a range of religious, non-religious, educational and other groups. The online service helps users support their favorite charities by shopping on the web; a portion of every online purchase is designated for a charity of the buyer's choice. Online activists opposed to a traditional and biblical view of marriage have pressured retailers to end their participation with the charity support group. In response, FRC is urging its supporters to contact these retailers urging that they resist pressure to discriminate against customers with a traditional, biblical view of marriage.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins issued the following statement in response:

"Retailers should beware of online activists who spread misinformation to pressure retailers to discriminate against customers and charities with Judeo-Christian moral views, including marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

"In response, FRC is joining a coalition of Christian groups in urging retailers to remain neutral in the current cultural battles**.** This will enable them to focus on growing their enterprises instead of forcing consumers to make purchasing choices based on corporate political agendas. Faith-based consumers should not face discriminatory actions by retailers simply because they are exercising their freedom of religion.

"Those companies which are easily swayed by this small but vocal group of activists risk alienating not only millions of consumers but also shareholders, charities, and churches.

"We are asking people of faith to contact these retailers and respectfully request that these companies demonstrate their respect for the religious freedom of their customers by maintaining neutrality on cultural issues and ignoring the demands of these online political activists," concluded Perkins.

Go to **www.frc.org/resistdiscrimination** for more information on this campaign to protect faith-based customers from discrimination.

Let The People Decide Marriage Issues

AUGUST 20, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Advocates for extending marriage rights to same-sex couples think they are on a roll with New York State's action. Lawmakers and lobbyists cut a midnight backroom deal to push a marriage bill through Albany. They would not dare to submit this issue to New York voters. Some of them remember how state voters turned back the ERA in the Empire State thirty years ago.

Of course, New York is home to our liberal media elites. They naturally think the Big Apple is the center of the world and shape of things to come. The heroes who defended marriage there were former New York Giant David Tyree, who is black, and Democratic state Sen. Ruben Diaz, a Pentecostal minister. The sellouts were Republicans.

It is a fine irony that New York and New England elites, who once prided themselves on being "progressive," now fear their own citizens. Not one state in New England that has tried to force acceptance of same-sex relationships as marriages has allowed the people to vote. New York joins five other states in overturning marriage laws.

Compare this with thirty-two states have put marriage protection on the ballot. In those thirty-two states, tens of millions of Americans have expressed their firm belief that marriage should continue to as a union between one man and one woman.

I'm especially proud of my home state of Ohio. In 2004, Buckeye voters approved a state constitutional amendment protecting marriage by a thumping 62%. As the Ohio secretary of state at that time, I had to fend off attempts by liberals to throw the measure off the ballot. They were desperate to prevent the people from speaking on this vital issue.

That's not surprising. Wherever the people speak, they vote *for* their civil right of marriage. Ohio's vote was critical. Political analysts can show how the marriage amendment pushed George W. Bush across the finish line in the presidential contest there. Carrying Ohio by more than 100,000 votes put Ohio's electoral votes in the Bush column, thereby gaining him a second term.

There is one region of the country where marriage is even more *strongly* supported: the South. In the ten states of the Old Confederacy where Americans have voted thus far, marriage initiatives have averaged a stunning 71.44% support. North Carolina has just advanced a marriage initiative. If we are successful there, Tarheel voters will give new meaning to the Solid South.

Look behind these numbers. What you see is clear: A black-white alliance. In addition, the South is increasingly welcoming Hispanic and Asian immigrants. You could not rack up 86% of Mississippi voters, 81% of Alabama voters, and 78% of South Carolina voters without considerable black and white backing.

This is because marriage is not a wedge issue. It's a *bridge* issue. That's why liberals fear it on the ballot. They know that the people do not want marriage abolished. They know it creates a formidable grassroots coalition. How else can we explain the Maryland legislature's last-minute decision? Lawmakers in Annapolis shelved a bill to force citizens of the Free State to recognize same-sex couples as just-marrieds.

The South was surely wrong on slavery and Jim Crow. For far too long, black Southerners had to endure oppression, violence, and discrimination. White Southerners, too, found their region held back by this historic injustice. It is certainly a hopeful sign when blacks and whites join hands to protect the most important of our civil institutions.

Marriage wins in liberal states, conservative states, and moderate states. It's not a red state/blue state issue. It's a red-white-and-blue issue and it wins all over. And that's not just whistlin' Dixie!

Ken Blackwell is Senior Fellow, Family Empowerment at the Family Research Council.

This article appeared in ***The American Thinker*** on August 8, 2011.

Racist Planned Parenthood: Number One Killer of Blacks

AUGUST 20, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Are Blacks Oblivious to Their Obvious Problem?

Many Blacks don't even think about their biggest problem. Many continue to send Democrats to Washington. But others know what is taking place, and refuse to bow down to dramatic culling, genocide, certain annihilation. They already see their population percentage decreasing in the America. Their numbers hacked away each year. They already know the culprits, the instigators, and the villains.

The **National Black Prolife Coalition** exposes the number one killer of Blacks: Planned Parenthood and urban abortion clinics. This coalition knows these organizations are responsible for abortions in the Black community that outnumber all other causes of death combined. This includes heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, homicides, and HIV/AIDS. Abortion is responsible for 363,705 black deaths per year. All the major causes above total 289,366 black deaths per year.

A talk show host in San Francisco spelled it out for all radical Blacks. **Sharon Hughes — African Americans the Target of Planned …**Parenthood, explains her views by revealing a black baby is 5 times more likely to be killed in the womb than a white baby.

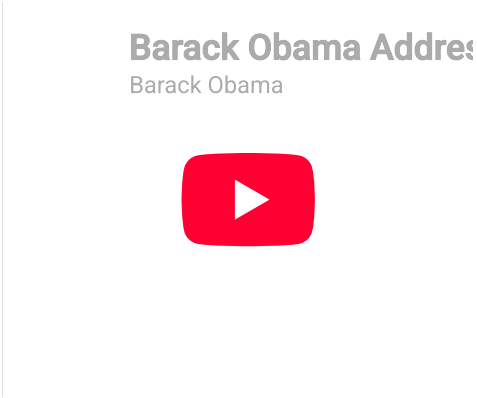
The CDC even found Black mothers get abortions at a 300 percent higher per capita rate than other races. The pro-life Blacks and the public knows their tax dollars are feeding PP's coffers and others for this attack, but they are temporarily helpless against this onslaught.

MLKJr never would have stood up to this unsurpassed forced death. No clear-thinking American could do this. Most Americans wouldn't have allowed this to happen in another country, much less ours. So many are hardened to the killing of life, and it is commonplace to value pleasure far over life. Something not written in the Constitution.

But this radical group of Blacks continue to vote for those who foster abortions. Democrats are still elected every election who continue to demand funding PP, continue to push Roe vs Wade, and continue to incorrectly advocate any abortion and/or contraception as legal and safe.

The **American Life League** was shocked that *"America's first black president drew a bizarre line in the sand declaring he would shut down the government of the United States to keep federal funding for Planned Parenthood, the organization that aborts over 125,000 black children nationwide each year."*

Obama's close relationship with PP is obvious on **YouTube – Barack Obama Addresses Planned Parenthood**.



"When will our black leaders take an honest look at these numbers, become outraged and do something to stop the abortion deaths of our beautiful black babies?" asked Rev. Arnold M. Culbreath . *"The numbers don't lie. Abortion takes a tremendous toll on our women, our men, our families and our future."*

The Case Against Abortion: Abortion and Race, shows how abortion and race are intertwined. Why have pro-abortion individuals linked the two? Some political figures are on-board for a major disparity in killing Blacks. Those include figures such as Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and *(president)* Barack Obama. We hope and pray that their skewed opinions will change, and more black citizens will be allowed to live.

> ***VCA ADDED NOTE: Obama Supports Infanticide and Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics are killing our unborn children – VCA ADDED VIDEO***

We fervently hope that the black views of Thomas Sowell, Bill Cosby, Condolezza Rice, Justice Clarence Thomas, Walter Williams, Rev. Clenard Childress *(BlackGenocide.org)*, Herman Cain *(presidential nominee)*, Booker T. Washington, Shelby Steele, Allen West *(House)*, Tim Scott *(House),*

Video unavailable

This video is unavailable

Alan Keyes, Lynn Swann, Larry Elder *(columnist)*, Ward Connerly, Joseph C. Phillips *(columnist)*, Karl Malone *(basketball)*, Star Parker, Ken Hamblin, Don King *(fight promoter)*, Alveda King *(niece of MLKJr),* etc., etc., will no longer go unheeded.

No doubt, some White, Latino, and other non-Black voters will also continue to vote for Obama the next presidential election. Much can be said about those who do not fear killing fellow Americans, and are happy if others vote that way. These people want pleasure, but no responsibility.

The next presidential election will be more telling about the American public than most realize. It will dictate the fall of the greatest nation on earth, or the rise of an insurmountable swelling of the greatest nation on earth.

For many, a famous quote seen on a passing bumper sticker seems quite applicable to the above arguments: "***Voting for someone because he's Black, is as racist as voting against someone because he's Black."***

——

Negro Project 2.0: Margaret Sanger's Abortion Legacy Lives On

JULY 30, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: EUGENICS, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

| Washington, DC | **LifeNews.com** | 7/25/11

More…Last week's NPR interview on **"Tell Me More"** really should be called "Tell Me Less". Their heavy editing of only **The Radiance Foundation's** perspective, while preserving every word spoken by Reverend Carlton Veazey,revealed NPR's typical liberal bias and uninformed defense of Planned Parenthood. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice CEO's closing remarks (nearly two minutes versus mine which were cut down to 15 seconds) were just a continuation of pro-abortion histrionics by the historically challenged.

Veazey was unwilling to address the epidemic of abortion in the black community, even denying Planned Parenthood's entire history rooted in the racist pseudoscience of eugenics. He played the role so clearly defined by Margaret Sanger's original **Negro Project** back in 1939, using black pastors to propagandize on her behalf. **Margaret Higgins Sanger Slee** was a grand manipulator and strategist, with a veritable war chest from her second husband, Noah Slee, an oil tycoon.

Many of her aggressive and repulsive eugenics-based efforts were funded by organizations sympathetic with her Birth Control crusade. One of those population control entities was the Ford Foundation, which also funds the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) and pro-abortion activist groups like SisterSong, both staunch defenders of Planned Parenthood. Money was never an obstacle for Sanger and her fellow eugenicists. However, ideological resistance, rooted in Christian faith, was.

Continue reading on **LifeNews.com** | 7/25/11

Use of Alcohol, Tobacco & Drugs and Scripture

JULY 9, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

The Assemblies of God, USA – This document reflects commonly held beliefs based on scripture which have been endorsed by the church's Commission on Doctrinal Purity and the Executive Presbytery.

Why have holiness and Pentecostal churches advocated abstinence concerning the use of alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics (drugs)? Why not allow moderation?

First Corinthians 6:19,20 has historically been held in high regard by holiness and Pentecostal Christians. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." This and other passages warning against drunkenness have been considered sufficient reason for advocating complete abstinence from the use of alcohol, tobacco, or narcotics.

Not only is the human body the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is not to be defiled; but there are other reasons for complete abstinence: (1) contemporary society is plagued with the destructive consequences of these three addictive substances and (2)even moderate use of the substances, especially alcohol and drugs, leads too often to destructive addictive habits.

Alcohol. The Scriptures speak often of the destructive power of alcohol. Noah's drunkenness brought shame to his family (Gen. 9:20-27). Lot's drunkenness resulted in an incestuous relationship with his two daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). An inebriated Xerxes sought to humiliate

Queen Vashti publicly (Est. 1:9-22). The consumption of alcohol impairs judgment, inflames passions, and invites violence (Lev. 10:8-11; Prov. 20:1, 23:29-35, 31:4,5).

Alcoholism and the depression associated with it often leads to a breakdown of moral inhibitions, indiscreet or violent behavior, or loss of consciousness (drunkenness). Long-term drinking can terminally damage liver, pancreas, brain, or heart. Binge drinking on university campuses has caused instant death. It is estimated there are 14 million problem drinkers in the United States. Half of the fatal automobile accidents are caused by alcohol-impaired drivers. The annual cost of alcohol-related accidents, illness, violent crime, and loss of work time is estimated to exceed 100 billion dollars.

Illegal Drugs. Though drug use is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, its impact on the drug user and on society far exceeds the evil results of alcohol abuse. The addictive nature of certain drugs is so powerful that a single episode can hook an individual for life. Furthermore, the irreversible physical damage to one's organs and mental capacities makes drugs extremely dangerous. The greatest danger is the all-consuming control of one's life, constantly interrupting one's focus on work and destroying personal relationships and spiritual well-being. Beyond the personal toll of drug addiction is the disastrous burden placed on families and society.

Alcohol and illegal drug use are well documented factors in domestic violence, road and work rage, child abuse, suicide, and a variety of other socially destructive behaviors. Alcoholism and drug addiction present a national crisis threatening to destroy the fabric of our society.

Tobacco. While smoking and chewing tobacco does not impair one's judgment nor carry many of the relational side effects of alcohol and illegal drugs, tobacco has now proved to be a primary health concern. Yet young people year after year are becoming hooked on the habit through effective ad campaigns that deceptively associate smoking with maturity and popularity.

For many years the surgeon general of the United States has warned society of the dangers of smoking, even to the point of forcing tobacco companies to place the warning on their products. But not until the casualties of mouth and lung cancer and addiction to tobacco began to increase did people take the warning seriously. When it became evident that non-smokers were becoming victims of diseases caused by inhaling second-hand tobacco smoke, then society began mounting major opposition to the use of tobacco. While medical studies in recent years have shown conclusively that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer, the church has opposed the use of tobacco because it is a habit that is harmful to a Christian's testimony as well as to a Christian's body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

With these realities about alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, the argument for abstinence is well established. The Christian is called to a higher standard of self-control and self-denial concerning those things not beneficial to his physical and spiritual well being. To argue for any level of "moderate use" of alcohol, narcotics, or tobacco is to be insensitive to the weight of Scripture and

the present perils of our society. Christians realize the pressing need for a pure testimony before our world. As the apostle Paul said, “I urge you . . . in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:1,2).

CONCERNS:

The use of alcohol, narcotics, and tobacco mentioned above exact a heavy toll, not only on the addicted person, but also on all of society. Drug abuse can make an addict incapable of being a productive individual in the larger society, thus increasing the financial burden on the rest of society. Medical treatment for injuries and illnesses caused by the addictions further consumes resources that could be put to much better use. And as drug abuse often leads to criminal activity, society pays a double cost in added insurance and law enforcement costs. We call upon all of society to fight these addictive substances used by Satan to keep individuals in bondage to his power over their lives.

SOURCE: **Asemblies of God USA**

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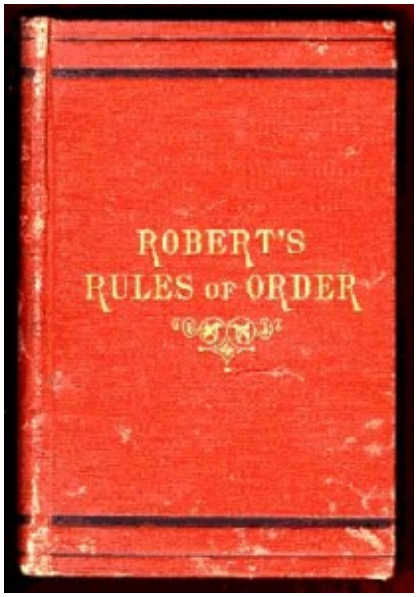
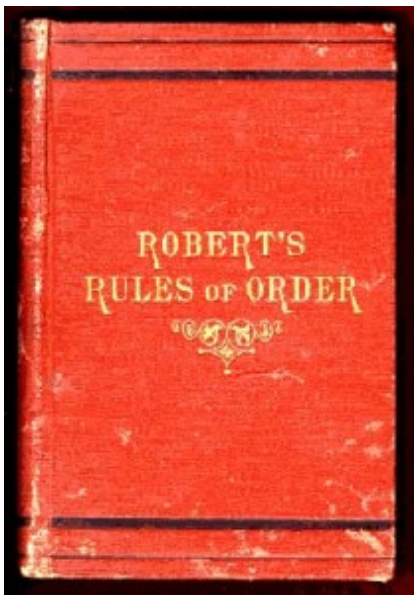
On Christian Civility

MAY 7, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS



Brigadier General Henry Martyn Robert published a book in 1876. That book would later go on to become the standard rule book for procedure in organized assemblies in the United States and beyond. That book is called **Robert's Rules of Order**.

Christians like things like order because we believe we have been fashioned by and after a Creator who desires order. The Creator God established the foundations of the heavens and the earth and all that lives in the air, on the land, and in the waters in a specific order.



God ordered creation to climax with the creation of those bearing the image of God, man and woman. God orders the history of Israel it could be argued to follow a cycle of relational covenant established, covenant broken, punishment/oppression, crying out for God, covenant renewed, and the cycle continues.

It is a cycle perhaps most apparent in the book of Judges, however, I believe it is apparent entire Old Testament and perhaps even in the New Testament though much of the New Testament isn't as much a history of a people in the same way that the Old Testament is, but more a bearing witness to Jesus, the Kingdom of God, and how this promised New Covenant community advances and adheres to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, in the personal relationships that people have with God through Jesus the Son of God and second person

of the Holy Trinity, there is often a similar cycle, isn't there? At one point, a person enters into relationship with God after confessing sins and repenting.

Then, there is a joy and celebratory mood which follows and lasts… for a time. Then, there is a slip here or there, and the individual finds that they have not been made perfect the instant they entered into that relationship with God and perhaps there could be a minor rebellion at one point even in their relationship even if on a small scale. Then, if their relationship was true, they cry out for forgiveness while confessing to God and perhaps to another if it is necessary and perhaps after some consequence to their action/s, they enter back in.

Though, as a Christian it is not that one has left the covenant relationship entirely, but simply given in to the desires of the flesh or sinful nature of the old life as opposed to the new life in the Spirit. Needless to say there is an order and a cycle in it. In fact, as Protestant Christians we even refer to salvation itself as an order in the classic formula of the ***ordo salutis***, order of salvation.

Now, I think we can all agree that not only do a lot of people like order, but most Christians desire order too. **However, what if the desire for order in everyday life became idolatrous, what would that look like?**

Often times, Christians will formulate their theology as they grow in Christ and learn from God's Word and other Christians who are like-minded, however, there has to be an order even in their theology. This order can easily be disrupted by others who hold to a different order of theology as Christians. Perhaps it is simply a matter of one Christian saying we should baptize infants and another saying we should baptize those who believe the faith. Both claim passages in the Bible for their evidence and support, however, a small wrench has just been tossed into their system of theology and how they apply the Bible to their lives.

The two then continue to debate the issue with one claiming the other is unbiblical and the other saying the same in the other direction. When the theological dust settles over the debate, the two part ways and decide it is better that they don't talk to one another as much because they are simply too different and they decide to join different churches where the theologies of the churches they join are on par with their theological system.

What has just happened here is not all that different from what has happened in the forming of many Protestant denominations. One Christian or a group decide a particular point of Christian theology is more important than another, and a new Protestant denomination forms. Now, the point of this post is not to bash denominations of Protestant Christianity.

They serve a purpose and there is a lot of good in many of them even though I believe they do divide the Body of Christ to an extent, and this a division that won't be reconciled until the new heavens and new earth of Revelation come to pass. That's besides the point.

My point is that many Christians simply do not know how to get along with one another. How do you treat someone with different views than you whether Christian or of some other faith or agnostic or atheist, etc.?

Continue to read

In history, there have been some radically extreme reactions to people who hold different views than Christians on issues and I am rather thankful that most Christians have come a long way from that place, and are treating others much better. Though, I will not leave out that some Christians have beaten others, imprisoned others, exiled others, humiliated others, and even killed others simply because they had different views than themselves whether Christian views or some other views.

I think it is important, then, to speak of Christian civility. There has been a great rise of Christian hate over the years against other Christians and other people in the world. Now, this is not saying I want people to be tolerant of everything. No, you are missing the point if you are reading that into this. ***I am saying that when I read the Bible about a God of love (1 John) who commands people to obey the commandments of the Old Testament which Jesus summarized in 'love God and love others,' then I see Christians shouting at funerals, standing on the street with signs that say 'God Hates Fags,' being associated more with an American political party than Jesus, and writing all kinds of cruel things about any given author in existence on Facebook; I feel there might just be a problem.***

This is not only something that exists on the streets, but this exists in the Christian academy. This exists in seminary. Some seminaries have been running various professors out of their seminaries because they all of a sudden have become heretical despite many of these same professors holding to the theological views of these institutions. In the academy it has been Bruce Waltke, Peter Enns, Scott Hafemann, and others who have been victim of this lack of Christian civility today. Though, it is perhaps most apparent in literature, especially Christian literature. Dan Brown's 'Da Vinci Code' became popular because so many Christians were against it. Journalists and writers today have made note of how books like Brown's associated with Christianity say something remotely controversial sell like $1 Margaritas on Cinco de Mayo. The book The Shack received similar popularity in large part because many found the theology skewed and felt a need to tell everyone they know about it to the point that nearly everyone was reading it. With things like this, perhaps it would be better to simply say nothing about these things for the sake of not supporting them or saying something about them only when an opportunity to share the Gospel is revealed.

This lack of Christian civility has been exacerbated by the existence of such social platforms as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. Recently, famous preacher/author Rob Bell wrote a book called 'Love Wins' which has stirred the Christian theological tension soup once again to a near boil. Bell asks an intriguing question which many might ask and that is, 'If God is good and if God is a God of grace and love, would he really send people to burn in fire and brimstone for all eternity and only send a handful he chooses to heaven?' The controversy is over not only his honesty to ask such a

bold and challenging question, but also over where many feel he answers that question which they believe to be universalism. During the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin affirmed perhaps as Paul affirmed the stoning of Stephen, the burning at the stake of Michael Servetus. Servetus was declared a heretic by Protestants and Catholics of the day because he held to a non-Trinitarian theology and promoted it. Both Calvin and Paul are some of the more respected Christian theologian-preachers in history, but had a personal experience of disagreeing with others to the point that the only way to make things right was for the other person to die. Now, it could be argued that Paul wasn't a Christian at the time and was persecuting a Christian while Calvin was a Christian persecuting a non-Christian. The point here is that Paul was grieved by the persecution of God's church and was told he would suffer greatly for what he'd done throughout his life which he clearly did (Read Acts). Calvin I am less familiar with, but I would like to think by reading Calvin's writings that he would rather be known for preaching the Gospel of Jesus and seeking to imitate God in his life as opposed to having killed a man. Yes, Calvin had a responsibility over a flock as a pastor, but was he really the shepherd or is Christ the shepherd? Were those really his sheep or are they God's sheep? This is not to shirk responsibility, but a matter of seeing oneself as a pastor under the leadership of our Lord Jesus and not seeing ourselves higher than we are.

Christians, thankfully, are not burning Rob Bell at the stake unless you count the content spoken on Twitter and Facebook as reality. That is the thing. It is not reality, it is merely the internet and an anonymous means of voicing an opinion on any given issue to the public. So, in one sense you can have this alternate reality on the internet, but in another sense you can have a completely normal or different life in the real world apart from the internet. The issue for us as Christians is that someone important, i.e. Jesus, said that doing something bad is not only a sin, but even thinking something bad about someone else is a sin. I'm grossly paraphrasing here, I know, but we are called as Christians to live godly lives and to be holy because God is holy. What does that look like? JESUS is what it looks like. We are called to imitate Jesus in our lives. How did he respond to those he didn't see eye to eye with or thought were not theologically on the same playing field?

Jesus responded with instruction, correction, provocative question, and occasionally a verbal face to face rebuke for the sake of bringing the one rebuked to a place of correction or edification. Jesus rebuked out of love and though he was angered at the scribes and Pharisees for perverting the Law to being about their own security and pride as opposed to being about God while revealing our sin, he sought out those he disagreed with if they weren't following him around already and ate with them while discussing what he was about and showing them by example how to treat others.

It is a sickening thing to think that Christians in America today are more often known for what they disagree with and don't like than what they believe in and how they live out their faith in love for God and others.

It is my prayer that Christians in this country and in the world and myself, would seek out God and desire to love more while praying for those we disagree with and speak the Truth in love. I pray that God gives us all a spirit of boldness to share the Gospel and to live by faith even when it is difficult, but also

that we don't do this at the expense of love for God and others in an effort to establish our order in the world as opposed to God's order in his New Creation, New Kingdom, and by his Spirit. May we seek to love more and aspire each to a measure of Christian civility that we might decrease and that He might increase in our hearts, in the hearts of others, and in all the world that He might be glorified. Amen

Matt Gladd isthe pastor of First Baptist Church of Kittery Point, Maine.He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA, about 30 minutes northeast of Boston. He was born in the Adirondacks of northern New York, but grew up in Kansas. **MORE**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Your Body, His Temple

APRIL 17, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

From **CARM**

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body," (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Introduction

1. This is a body conscious world.
    1. Many products to clean up, paint up, and fix-up.
        1. Great concern about physical shape.
            1. Diets abound: low fat this, low fat that. Diet pills.
            2. Exercise clubs, exercise machines, etc.
    2. Great concern about physical health.
        1. Watch that cholesterol, reduce that salt, eat more roughage.
        2. The Christian adds another dimension to concern for the body.
            1. The day you became a Christian, something happened to your body. Another dimension was added to your being.

——————

1. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
    1. "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?"
    2. This reminds us of the temple in the O.T.

1. What great care was given to its design.
2. What immense wealth was placed into its construction.
    1. "Then King David said to the whole assembly: My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. [2]With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God — gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble — all of these in large quantities. [3]Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: [4]three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, [5]for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?" (1 Chr. 29:1-5).
3. The people were to know that God dwelt there. That is why it was furnished with such greatness: because it was to be the house of God.

3. Note the day of dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 7:1-3 and 12-15).
    1. 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 "When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."
4. But there is no such place in the age of grace.
    1. This building we are in is not God's temple.
        1. This building is not even a church, just the place the church meets.
5. The eternal covenant, God's desire to fellowship with His creation, the walk in the garden, Exodus 25:8, John 1:14, 1 Cor. 1:9.
    1. THE CROSS
    2. "Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23).
    3. Your body is the temple of God.
        1. Be careful where it goes.
        2. Be careful what it does.
        3. Be careful what it ponders.
        4. Be careful how it reacts.

2. The Holy Spirit lives within you.
    1. "Who is in you"

1. A person is in you.

2. How can that be?
    1. We are not sure. It is a mystery.
3. See how clearly the Bible bears this truth.
    1. Jesus makes the promise (John 14:15-26)
        1. "If you love me, you will obey what I command. [16]And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — [17]the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).
    2. The Book of Acts describes it (Acts 2:1-4; 4:31).
        1. "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).
    3. The epistles explain it (Rom. 8:6-17; Gal. 3:1-5; Eph. 5:18-25).
        1. "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Romans 8:11).
4. The result: The Holy Spirit is with you where ever you go and whatever you do.
    1. His power is available when you need it. The Scriptures are full of references to the Spirit and power.
        1. Judges 14:19 "Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power…"
        2. 1 Samuel 10:6 "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person."
        3. Micah 3:8 "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin."
        4. Luke 4:14 "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside."
        5. Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
        6. Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
        7. Ephesians 3:16 "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being."
5. With the Spirit indwelling you, every word, every thought, and every deed is in His view.
    1. The Holy Spirit knows you. He knows your strengths and your weaknesses.
    2. He knows your sinful acts and your holy deeds.
    3. He knows you better than you do.

3. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to build you up in the body of Christ to the glory of God.

1. He regenerates (John 3:3-5).
2. He indwells (Rom. 8:11).
3. He anoints (1 John 2:27).
4. He baptizes (Acts 2:17-41).
5. He empowers (Micah 3:8).
6. He sanctifies (Rom. 15:16).
7. He comforts (John 14:16-26).
8. He gives joy (Rom. 14:17).
9. He gives discernment (1 Cor. 2:10-16).
10. He bears fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).
11. He gives gifts 1 Cor. 12:3-11).

Conclusion

Surrender your body to the Lord.

Glorify God in you daily life.

Girls' Ministry Forum Addresses Their Needs

APRIL 10, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

From the Baptist Press:

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)–No matter how godly a male student minister is, he will never be able to teach a teenage girl how to be a godly woman. She needs a godly woman to do that.

Given that truth, churches need to have ministry devoted specifically to teenage girls led by godly women of several generations, girls' ministry leaders say.

"Most churches have student ministries that are run by a man," said Pam Gibbs, director of girls' ministry at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. "Most of the programming is more masculine than feminine — camps, active events, loud things. That's not a criticism in any way. It's almost impossible to incorporate masculine and feminine activities in one group."

Gibbs wasn't saying that girls won't enjoy camp and the crazy activities that student groups sometimes do. But girls need more, she said. They need to form relationships with godly women, older than themselves, and learn from them.

That is where girls' ministry comes in.

To prepare women and girls for ministry, LifeWay offered its second Girls' Ministry Forum in February. About 300 women and girls attended, a 25 percent increase over last year's forum.

Jimmie Davis, considered a pioneer in girls' ministry, has been involved in girls' ministry for more than 25 years. Davis is from First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C.

"We, as women, have a responsibility to be involved in ministry to girls," she said. "It's unreasonable to expect men, no matter how well meaning, to do that."

She said that while she knows it is not her job as girls' ministry leader to be with every girl, it is her responsibility to see that every girl has a godly woman with whom she can have a relationship.

"Girls need the relationship with an older, godly woman," Davis said. "They need to see women who have stood the test of time in their marriages, as mothers and as women of God. They need to see that it is possible to succeed in these areas."

When ministering to girls, there will always be some drama, Davis said, but leaders can't let themselves be sucked into that.

"It's important that we put away our childish ways and put on the armor of God," she said. "Girls and drama will always go together, but as women leading them in our churches, we have to help them learn to channel that emotional power in positive ways."

Dealing with drama before it ever starts is the best way to keep issues from escalating, she said.

Gibbs said she was encouraged to see ministries specifically targeted for teenage girls as a growing trend in churches.

"I see girls' ministry at a place now where women's ministry was 15 years ago. It's growing."

Other speakers and conference leaders included Sissy Goff and Melissa Trevathan from Daystar Counseling Ministries in Nashville, Tenn.; Emily Cole, Cindy Lumpkin and Gibbs from LifeWay; Amy Pierson from Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas; and Leslie Hudson from First Baptist Church in Dickson, Tenn. The Sonflowerz, sisters Elissa and Becca Leander from Colorado Springs, Colo., led the music and worship times.

The next forum will be Feb. 24-25, 2012, at LifeWay in Nashville.
–30–
Polly House writes for LifeWay Christian Resources.

Visit **www.lifeway.com/girlsministry** for more information.

Gambling A Bigger Problem Than Alcohol Among U.S. Adults

MARCH 27, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

According to findings in a **new, first-of-its-kind study** "After age 21, problem gambling is considerably more common among U.S. adults than alcohol dependence, even though alcohol dependence has received much more attention, according to researchers at the *University at Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions*."

Several findings include:

- Gambling, frequent gambling and problem gambling increases in frequency during the teen years, reaches its highest level in the 20s and 30s and then fall off among those over 70.
- Professor John Welte claims, "No comparable analysis has been done previously and therefore none is available for a direct comparison of these results … But, given what we found about the persistence of frequent and problem gambling through adulthood, increased prevention and intervention efforts are warranted."
- Other results detailed in the article raise concern for college-aged students (late teens). Frequent gambling is twice as great among men (28 percent) as among women (13

percent). Men reach their highest gambling rates in the late teens, while females take longer to reach their highest rates.

- Frequent and problem gambling become more prevalent as socioeconomic status gets lower (more common among the poor). Professor Welte had previously suspected that poorer Americans may pursue gambling as a way to make money – not as recreation or "entertainment."

This is a landmark study, especially since most of us know at least one adult with a drinking problem. The gambling lobby has long minimized the extent of gambling addiction, even after the ***National Gambling Impact Study Commission*** estimated more than **15 million** adults and adolescents suffered from gambling addictions.

Here's my question: If more adults are addicted to gambling than to alcohol, should our states be expanding the **availability and accessibility** of gambling while zeroing out funding for gambling addiction programs? Can anyone else smell bad policy?

Source: **Citizen Link**

Moral Matters

MARCH 12, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW, CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW, FAMILY VALUES, GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Godly Relationships – It's Up To Us To Teach Our Kids

There's only one school that will teach your kids to live moral lives these days.

As turbulent as the late 1960s were when my children were in school, I'm almost glad I don't have to raise kids today. Yes, the sexual revolution, questioning authority, rolling around in the mud at Woodstock — all the hallmarks of '60s culture — were bad enough. But they were just the seeds of a sad harvest our culture is reaping right now. I don't believe it's a coincidence that many of today's political, academic, and media elites are products of the '60s and that they are in the vanguard of the assault on traditional marriage, traditional morality, and the traditional family.

Look around you. The courts are now routinely overturning the will of the people concerning marriage. The Administration refuses to defend the Defense of Marriage Act in court — and for specious reasons. And schools are constantly bombarding our kids with moral relativism and pro-gay propaganda. Students are now being taught that all like choices are equal, so you simply decide which one you choose, how you want to live any way you want. It's madness, as you'll hear me say on today's Two-Minute Warning.

The fact is we can't trust our institutions to teach our kids to live according to moral principles. That job has to fall to us. I cannot say this often enough. The first and most important school of instruction is the family. If we want our children to know how to behave prudently, how to delay gratification for a higher goal, how to look to the needs of others before pandering to their own passions, then we'll have to teach them in the context of family — best of all, of course, a loving, mom-and-dad family.

In the thousands of visits I've made to prisons, I've seen too clearly the results of broken, fatherless, or motherless families: men and women behind bars who never received moral instruction and guidance or, for that matter, the love of a mom or dad. This is why I get so alarmed

over the signs that our culture is weakening the millennia-old understanding of the function of family, its importance, its value in shaping character.

Take the assault on the traditional understanding of marriage. If the courts decide that marriage is just a contract between any kind or number of consenting adults, we will have in effect removed all restraints and social conventions surrounding not just sex and marriage but child rearing and training as well. If morality is anything we want it to be, if it serves only our passions and personal autonomy, we're doomed as a culture.

I talk about this more on this week's Two-Minute Warning, which I urge you to come and watch today at www.colsoncenter.org. And after you watch the Two-Minute Warning, I want you to read T. M. Moore's provocative Talking Points on how you can talk to your children about morality and how they can distinguish between their feelings and moral facts about right and wrong.

T. M. has also written another great installment in his daily ViewPoint column about our passions and affection and how we can guard our hearts to make sure they are in line with Scripture and the will of God. All of this you can find today when you visit www.colsoncenter.org.

In the end, the assault on morality, marriage, and the family is really an assault on our children and their futures. Waste no time. Get to work and teach our kids and grandkids. It's never too late.

Related: **Godly Relationships**

Chuck Colson – BreakPoint

BreakPoint is a Christian worldview ministry that seeks to build and resource a movement of Christians committed to living and defending Christian worldview in all areas of life.

Is It Okay for Christians to Use Marijuana (Cannabis) and Other Drugs?

MARCH 7, 2011
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

A number of young Christians these days seem to use marijuana and other recreational drugs. Some of them write to ask if this kind of behavior is okay for a Christian to engage in. If you are over 35 years old, you are probably thinking "that's a no-brainer." However, given the state of teaching in today's Christian churches, for many this question has never been answered adequately. This page answers the question from what the Bible says. Another page examines **medical aspects of marijuana use**.

(See related articles on **Godly Relationships**)

Bible verses about marijuana; NONE

Okay, so there are no verses that talk directly about marijuana. Is that surprising? Although the Bible mentions weed, it was the kind that interferes with agriculture (Genesis 3:18). Pot was something you cooked in (Numbers 11:18). The only smoking that was going on at the time the

Bible was written was caused by burning wood, houses, sacrifices, and ultimately, people (at the judgment). So, smoking of cigarettes and marijuana are not mentioned in the Bible.

Who is a Christian

At this point, we need to back up a little to examine the question from a more fundamental perspective. We originally asked if it was okay for a ***Christian*** to use marijuana and other drugs. The question we need to ask first is "Who is a Christian?" Many young people believe they are Christians because their parents are Christians or they aren't Jewish, so they must be Christians.

Aren't you a Christian if you go to church and at some point went up front in response to an alter call? Jesus said that people are Christians if they *believe* in Him.[1] Jesus also indicated that those who believed would hear His voice and follow Him.[2] Part of the process of following Jesus is to repent. Repentance is a fancy Christian word that means to turn from one's sins and go in the opposite direction (righteousness). Jesus said that those who do not repent will perish.[3] Jesus also indicated what kind of commitment one should make to be considered His disciple:

Then He said to them all: "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? (*Luke 9:23-25*)

So, Jesus made it quite clear that a casual confession of "faith" isn't going to cut it. One who *really* believes in Jesus will follow Him as their ultimate purpose in life. Now that we have a clear understanding of who is a Christian, we can go back to the original question.

The Bible's take on other mind-altering drugs

Although the Bible does not address marijuana directly, it does discuss other mind-altering drugs. Specifically, the Bible addresses the use of drugs in the book of Galatians:

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (*Galatians 5:19-21*)

So, where are the drugs mentioned in this verse? Actually, the word translated "sorcery" is the Greek word pharmakeia,[4] from which we get the English word "pharmacy." The primary meaning is "the use or the administering of drugs" (usually associated with sorcery or idolatry). Since this

verse comes from a list of things that if practiced would preclude one from heaven, this should be a reasonably strong suggestion that the Christian should not practice drug use. In addition, the book of Revelation lists drug use as one of the things for which the unrepentant will suffer the wrath of God.[5]

The Bible has a lot to say about alcohol. At the time, there was no hard (distilled) liquor, just wine and beer (which was more diluted at that time then it is now). Even so, the Bible has much to say about people who used wine to get drunk. One was Lot, who got drunk and slept with his daughters.[6] Others sold girls to get wine to get drunk.[7] The Bible warns about the bad effects of getting drunk – seeing strange sights and being confused, saying stupid things, making poor decisions, vomiting, getting involved in fights, and losing one's wealth.[8] We are warned not to join with those people.[9] The consequences of such behavior is judgment.[10] Jesus Himself used two examples of those who will be drunk when God comes to judge the world.[11] God's judgment of such behavior does not paint a pretty picture. The New Testament condemns drunkenness[12] and warns that those who engage in that behavior will not inherit the kingdom of God (i.e., heaven).[13]

The Old Testament warns the priests not to go into God's house drunk, or they will die.[14] In the New Testament, those who serve in the body of Christ are not to be addicted to wine or any other sordid thing.[15] Even those who do not directly serve in the church are warned not to be addicted to wine.[16] Finally, the New Testament commands us to not get drunk, but be filled with the Spirit of God:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (*Ephesians 5:18*)

Does marijuana get one intoxicated? Even proponents of marijuana usage encourage users never to drive a motor vehicle while using marijuana.[17] Why is this? Because when one use marijuana, one is legally intoxicated and incapable of clear thinking and reasonable reactions. Being intoxicated is clearly condemned in scripture. So, if one uses drugs or anything else to escape and get high, or is addicted to these substances, it is against the commands of scripture and inappropriate for Christian participation.

Breaking the law?

Besides the moral question, there is the legal question. Christians are commanded by the scriptures to be in subjection to governing authorities and submit to every human institution.[18]

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. (*Romans 13:1-2*)

The only exception to this command would be if those in authority directly contradicted the commands of God.[19] Since smoking marijuana was never a command of God, Christians should not smoke marijuana where doing so is illegal.

What about freedom in Christ?

We do have freedom in Christ, but that freedom is not to be used to sin:

- For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (*Galatians 5:13*)
- Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. (*1 Peter 2:16*)

The freedom of Christ is freedom to follow Him in service to others. We are not to use the law as an excuse for immorality (e.g., "I can't help that person because it is the Sabbath"[20]). Likewise, we are not to allow things (e.g., drugs) to bring us under their control:

- "Everything is permissible for me"–but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"–but I will not be mastered by anything. (*1 Corinthians 6:12*)
- For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (*2 Peter 2:18-19*)

We are not to be slaves of sin, engaging in fleshly desires and lusts, but we are to serve the living God.

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (*Romans 6:11-13*)

There are many who call themselves Christian, but basically serve their own desires. God will not be deceived by those who play the Christianity game. Jesus said that you will know them by their love for one another,[21] and not love of self.[22]

Seek first the kingdom...

Ultimately, the most important principle in the Christian life is to do what Jesus told us to do. When Jesus was asked what was the most important commandment, he answered:

And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment." (*Matthew 22:37-38*)

Obviously, smoking marijuana does nothing to fulfill this most important commandment. Along the same lines, Jesus said that people should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.[23] However, these days, it seems that many "Christians" seek first the kingdom of self and its attendant pleasures. The scriptures predicted as much when the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (*2 Timothy 3:1-5*)

Jesus indicated that people would respond in several ways to the gospel message. In one of His parables, He indicated that there were different kinds of soils. One of the soils was filled with thorns and weeds, which choked out the ability of the crop to produce fruit. The reason why these people produced no spiritual fruit is because they were more concerned with the "worries and riches and **pleasures** of this life"[24] than with the kingdom of God. There are many other verses[25] in the Bible that condemn those who seek pleasure first instead of God's kingdom.

God created herbs

Many Christians make the argument that God created the herbs (including marijuana) for us:

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (*Genesis 1:29, KJV*)

Marijuana smokers are especially fond of the King James version, since it uses the word "herb". However, the Hebrew word is much less specific, having the general meaning "plant," with the root word having the meaning "green." Further, the verse talks about fruit trees, indicating that the real meaning of the verse is about *edible* plants. So, the verse makes it clear that God created the plants for us for *eating*. It doesn't say anything about smoking them! Here is the more contemporary NASB translation:

Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; (*Genesis 1:29, NASB*)

Conclusion

The argument has been made that everything God created is good, and that this includes hemp. Everything God created is good,[26] but all these good things can be turned into evil. Sexual relations are good within marriage,[27] but adultery is evil.[28] It's all sex, which was created by God for good, but not all that men do with it is good. Poisonous mushrooms are good for breaking down dead wood, but bad for eating. Hemp is good for making rope, but **bad for smoking**. So, now you know. Do what's right!

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking , but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (***Romans 14:17***)

Promoting Godly Relationships, Civility, and Healthy Living

AUGUST 1, 2010
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PRINCIPLES

Introduction: While there isn't one "Christian" lifestyle, there are certain pathways a Christian should aspire towards in life. God asks this of us for His own glory and our own good. In this section, we will first discuss topics of daily life, such as our personal relationships and civility, looking to the Bible as our guide. Then, we will turn to characteristics of negative lifestyles, such as racist beliefs and behavior, vulgarity and obscenity, and body and mind abuse (smoking, alcohol, and drugs). We hope God will speak to you about His plan for your life and how that corresponds to living a healthy lifestyle as the Bible describes.

Godly Relationships

The way we interact with others is essential to a healthy lifestyle. The Bible offers incite into how we should conduct ourselves amongst our fellow believers and how our relationships should look. Through the story of Paul and the growing Church, God reveals His vision for community. Acts 4:32 states, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had." Christians are linked by a special bond, the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are charged to love one another in every sense of the word. By looking at Paul's ministry in Acts, we can see what this kind of fellowship looks like. Paul traveled all over the Middle East, spreading the Gospel and encouraging his brothers and sisters in foreign lands (Acts 20:1-2). By praying with each other and sharing struggles, they developed Godly relationships and a community of believers. Colossians 3:12-14 describes God's vision for relationships:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

This should be our definitive rulebook for Godly relationships. We must treat each other kindly, show patience with one another's shortcomings, and forgive just as Jesus did. But we must also be brave enough to rebuke our brothers and sisters when they sin, only we must do it in love rather than anger (Luke 17:3-4). We must also bear each other's burdens. One of the greatest reasons for our existence is to serve one another as we serve Christ (Galatians 6:2). After all, Jesus carried our burdens. Through Godly relationships, our Father shows us more about Himself and continually sanctifies us as we become more like Him.

Civility

Civility is also essential to the Christian lifestyle, because we are representing Christianity through our daily behavior. Today, one of the biggest barriers between non-believers and a life of faith is hypocrisy in the Church. Too often, people see those they know to be Christians acting out of line. And it is true that Christians today do not show enough love and compassion. As followers of Jesus Christ, we should continually look to Him as our guide (Philippians 2:5).

Jesus was kind and loving. He was polite and pleasant and those who actually knew Him, enjoyed His company. But His "civility" came with a few exceptions, like the story chronicled in John, chapter two, when Jesus drives people out of the temple for blaspheming God. Here, Jesus was acting entirely out of righteousness. One might call it "righteous fury." His outrage was more than called for, because the people had sinned against God by converting the Temple into a market place for their own greed. Jesus also butted heads with the Pharisees on a daily basis, because their viewpoints were blasphemous to God. Jesus was a warrior for His Father. He was civil, certainly, but

Jesus knew it was a sin to remain passive in the face of great sin. If we keep God in the forefront of our lives, in what we think, do, and say – civility will follow.

Racism in America

Even though the most blatant form of racial discrimination – slavery – was abolished at the end of the Civil War, racism in the United States is still a problem. In fact, racism and other forms of prejudice are most likely to remain problems, because the human race has been unable to defeat it over the course of thousands of years, but we must oppose it now, in our time, because it is in conflict with God's will for humanity. God does not support one race over another. Rather, He loves people from all nations (Revelation 5:9). Acts 10:34-35 states, "Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." Furthermore, the book of Revelation describes "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the lamb" (Revelation 7:9).

Racism is very much alive in the United States. For example, "Disparities in sentencing and incarceration have grown to such an extent that African-American men comprise 50% of the US prison population despite representing just six percent of the US population as a whole." In addition, the media mainly showed black perpetrators during the 2001 Mardi Gras violence in Seattle, "even though Seattle police said that white perpetrators significantly outnumbered Black perpetrators." And in a 2001 incident, an African-American, Washington D.C. police officer was mistaken as a carjacker and beaten by white, D.C. officers. And what better to indicate the prevailing racist attitudes in America than the crude jokes circulating about Mexicans, Muslims, African-Americans, and the Jewish population. Since September 11, 2001, Muslims have taken a harsh beating by Americans. The derogatory term, "Towel Head" is so common, it might as well be included in the Dictionary. And with recent debates over immigration laws, many individuals crack jokes about illegal aliens. Also, over the past several years, Anti-Semitism has seen rampant growth in the film industry; Jews are a constant source of mockery and entertainment.

We must strongly resist the urge to think of ourselves as better than any other race, for God does not show favoritism to certain races of people. God did not author the Gospel for middle-class, white Republicans. Nor did He author it for Africans or Hispanics. He has given the Gospel to the *world*. Earth is under God's mighty hand. The people of the world are His to judge as He sees fit. Acts 10:28 states, "But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean," and so, we must leave the judging to our Father.

Vulgarity and Obscenity – A Reflection of Character

Both vulgarity and obscenity have close ties to the idea behind civility: what we do and say is a reflection of our character, and as Christians, we must be careful to speak and act as Jesus would. Ephesians 4:29 states, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Furthermore, the Bible says, "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:4). As born again Christians, we no longer live in the flesh. We are no longer slaves to sin and worldly deeds. We have the Holy Spirit living within us, and the Holy Spirit, being God, is ultimately good. But good and evil cannot coexist. Therefore, we must refrain from using vulgar language that is sinful in the eyes of God. Our talk should be rooted in love and humility, not anger and sexual innuendo. Colossians 3:5 proclaims, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." Several verses later, it continues, "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:9-10). We are created in the image of our Father, who beholds no vulgar language or obscenity. He is entirely good, and we must strive to be more like Him. For that reason, our talk should be wholesome and encouraging, rather than vile and slanderous.

Body & Mind Abuse – What's the Big Deal?

Lastly, we must refrain from abusing our bodies, because God has made each one of us uniquely to serve as a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. As it states in 1st Corinthians 3:16-17, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple." He lives inside us, so of course He doesn't want us trashing up the place! Our bodies do not belong to us, but to God, who gave them to us. We have no right to defile them.

People typically defile their bodies by smoking, drinking alcohol, or using body-altering drugs, like marijuana or cocaine, just to name a couple. According to the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Five hundred thousand Americans die each year because of their smoking habits, and "many more suffer from smoking-related illnesses caused by both direct smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke." Already, the effects of smoking on one's "temple" are obvious. Furthermore, when someone inhales tobacco smoke, approximately 4,000 toxins enter the bloodstream, and cigarette smoking, specifically, is the number one cause of lung cancer and pulmonary illness and death in the United States. Clearly, smoking does serious damage to our bodies, and self-abuse is not part of God's plan for our lives.

Alcohol also poses a threat to our lives. Even tobacco smoke affects our brains, but alcohol has a much stronger effect. In his book, Alcohol: The World's Favorite Drug, Griffith Edwards asserts, "… alcohol affects brain functioning by its capacity to interfere with the biological system of chemical messengers which is all the time regulating the balance between activity and inactivity in brain cells and brain circuitry." Obviously, it is interfering with our normal brain functioning. This often leads to impairment of reaction time and judgment, coordination and balance, and sometimes results in depression, misery, nausea, and vomiting. But Edwards sums it up best when he writes, "What we are seeing here is the capacity of a simple molecule to interfere with, or in some way hijack, the functioning of very complex brain systems." Indeed, our bodies are complex; God made them that way. When we alter our minds and the state of our sacred bodies, we cheapen God's creation. We spit on his handiwork or draw graffiti all over it. The Bible clearly refutes drunkenness. Ephesians 5:17-18 says, "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery." The other major problem with alcohol is its highly addictive nature. Addiction is basically another word for idolatry, and God says to have no idols before Him. In Acts, Paul continually encourages people to turn away from their idols (Acts 14:15).

Drugs also have an addictive nature. Over time, people become dependent on drugs, but God has told us to lean on Him alone. Aside from the obvious fact that drug use severely alters our normal functioning, drug use is often used as an escape from reality. In "Illegal Drugs Should Remain Illegal," James Inciardi and Duane McBride explain how many adult marijuana smokers believe it helps them function better, "improving their self-awareness and relationships with others." But they go on to write, "In reality, however, marijuana as a "buffer," so to speak, enabling users to tolerate problems rather than face them." God has always encouraged us to face our problems with His aid. In his book, The Silence of Adam, Dr. Larry Crabb promotes true manhood, which he defines as accepting one's fears and problems, but not running from them, rather, trusting God and moving forward in life. And it's pretty easy to identify this trait with Jesus, who was constantly moving forward. Even when He knew His death was imminent, He moved forward as planned. When we alter our mental states with drugs, we turn from God and rely on other means.

Conclusion

God's plans for our lives are far better than our own. Therefore, we should continue to place our faith and hope in Him, instead of worldly idols. He has also given the Gospel to the world. We are all His children and must live together in harmony, extending and accepting love in all places. We are new creations, unlike people of the world in that the Holy Spirit lives inside us. We must live accordingly (1st Peter 2:1-3).

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Triple-X domain being considered – why it's a bad idea

MAY 31, 2010
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PANDEMIC

May 31, 2010

SOURCE: American Family Association

No enforcement regulation means amount of adult material will explode.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, ICANN, (the governing board that controls the Internet) is ONCE AGAIN considering establishing an .XXX domain for pornography. This matter has been considered twice before but stopped because of overwhelming opposition in this country and abroad. An .XXX domain will increase the amount of porn on the internet and make it more available to adults and children.

ICANN would ask the pornographers to voluntarily move to the new .XXX domain which would contain nothing but pornography. **There would be NO LAW TO FORCE THEM to the new .XXX domain.**

Deadline for public comments is May 10. You can read the **complete background on the issue here**.

Here are reasons to oppose the .XXX domain, from our friends at PornHarms.com:

- **Neither ICANN nor the company urging the establishment of this new domain are arguing that the .XXX domain would clean up the .COM domain and require all pornographers to move to .XXX.** The .COM domain is a cash cow for pornographers and they are not leaving it. ICANN has no enforcement powers to make them leave and thus clean up .COM. Pornographers would simply expand to .XXX and maintain their current .COM sites, perhaps doubling the number of porn sites and doubling their menace to society.
- **The .XXX domain will NOT make it easier to filter porn**, even if all pornographers would voluntarily move there (and that will NOT happen). The problem with filtering is not that it is difficult but rather that too few parents care enough to employ filters for the home or laptop computers used by their children. Even if most parents did use filters on home computers, kids have access to the Internet outside the home. And it isn't just the kids that need filtering. Addiction to pornography by adults is rampant so everyone needs filtering but, sadly, few

bother. The new website Pornography Harms, **http://pornharms.com**, provides overwhelming evidence of harm from pornography and thus the need for protection from it.

- Since most families do not use effective filtering services, **the .XXX domain would merely make hardcore pornography even easier to find for children** seeking such material. Thus the argument that .XXX would benefit children by "cleaning up the Internet" is without any basis in fact.
- U.S. citizens should not believe claims by some that the U.S. Congress could merely pass a law requiring all porn companies to leave the .Com for the .XXX. **Any law attempting to force pornographers to relocate to .XXX would likely be declared unconstitutional** because under the First Amendment, all pornography is "presumptively protected" by the U.S. Constitution until it has been determined to be "obscene" or "child pornography." Just as the Department of Justice cannot force porn stores to move or go out of business because it believes that such stores are operating illegally, the Department cannot force pornographers on the .COM domain to move or go out of business without first charging them with a crime and having a court make a determination of illegality.
- **Hardcore pornography** (or "obscene material" as it is called in U.S. law) **on the Internet is ALREADY a violation of U.S law.** It is just not being prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice because those in charge are letting the public down. So for those who argue that by establishing a new .XXX domain AND then passing by a new law requiring porn companies to move (IF such a law was upheld after years of litigation) we can solve our Internet porn problem, we must ask why these two events will suddenly compel the Department to begin prosecuting porn companies. If the Department of Justice is not prosecuting Internet porn companies now for violating U.S. obscenity laws, it is not going to prosecute such companies for merely locating in the wrong address.
- **If somehow all porn sites providing obscene material would actually leave the .COM Domain for the .XXX Domain, they would STILL be violating U.S. obscenity law** which prohibits such material on the Internet regardless of location. We don't want the Department of Justice to say to illegal porn companies, in effect, that it is okay to violate U.S. law as long as you do it on .XXX. Men, women, and children are becoming addicted to pornography and I believe the rates of addiction are skyrocketing – this is a virtually untreated pandemic. Many who begin by viewing adult pornography deviate down to harder and harder material as they continue a steady consumption of material and many of these will deviate down to the point that they only become excited by child pornography. This is a significant factor in the growth of child pornography on the Internet. Countless marriages are breaking up because of pornography use. Violence against women, which is depicted in most porn films, is changing male attitudes toward girls and women in a very negative way. A more appropriate goal should be to STOP the distribution of this destructive material by prosecuting those responsible for it, NOT protect pornography on the triple X domain.

ICANN is considering options regarding the approval for a .XXX domain. **You can see them here.**

AFA supports option 3 and encourages you to email ICANN and ask them to adopt option 3.

Send Your Letter Now!

Darwin Popularized Racism

FEBRUARY 6, 2010
CATEGORIES: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS, PROMOTING GODLY RELATIONSHIPS
TAGS: GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

from Answers in Genesis

"Although racism did not begin with Darwinism, Darwin did more than any person to popularize it."

Discover the origin of people groups (there is only one race), the genetics of skin color, and biblical truths on "interracial" marriage. This fascinating book explores racism and its roots in the hearts and minds of millions.
Most people do not realize how intimately connected the popular idea of evolution and the worst racist ideology in history are. Ken Ham and Dr. Charles Ware reveal the compelling history of the effect of an evolution-based belief system on the history of the United States, including slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and abortion. They go beyond politically-correct speech to show the tragic global harvest of death and tragedy that stems from Darwin's controversial beliefs.

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- Uncover the the origin of the word race and the tragic legacy of Darwin's theory.
- Discover the disturbing connection between evolutionary thought and the most ruthless (and bloody) dictators in history.
- Join an eye-opening discussion on racism and its roots in the hearts and minds of millions.

- Step beyond the legal precedents to find the true solution in the Bible—one that resolves this issue in the hearts of mankind.

In chapter 1, "Darwin's Plantation," we examine the fruit of evolution with respect to racism. Racism has shown its ugly face throughout the ages—a consequence of sin and the Fall. From continent to continent, we see sad examples of what happens when man's thinking replaces biblical truth and how racism has been fertilized by the theory of evolution.

Chapter 2 brings racism into the 20th and 21st centuries. Dr. Ware will reveal the history of scriptural abuse and misuse that has been used to justify, support, and propagate racism while bringing light to the plight of minorities. Sadly, the discussion must also take an honest look at the Church, where evolutionary thinking and racism share common roots. These roots go deeper than you might think. Several years ago in Australia, I was having a conversation with a Bible college student. He declared that missionaries should not waste their time preaching to the Australian Aborigines. He believed they were not of Adam's race and, therefore, could not be saved. His attitude was not unusual. Over the centuries, some missionaries have not seen the need to take the gospel to "primitive" tribes because they are not considered sufficiently "human" on the evolutionary scale.

One professor in the 1880s wrote: "I consider the Negro to be a lower species of man and cannot make up my mind to look upon him as 'a man and a brother,' for the gorilla would then also have to be admitted into the family."[1] Too many in the Church have failed to take God at His word and have instead injected humanistic and evolutionary thinking into their worldview and morality. The seemingly insignificant seeds of Darwinism are now spreading across our land, multiplying themselves as they go.

> For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind (**Hosea 8:7**).

The scope and the intensity of the racism/Darwinism relationship are dark and discouraging. More than half a century has passed since the horrors of the Nazi racial extermination camps were revealed to a disbelieving world. Yet the battle against ethnic hatred and violence remains one of the burning issues of our time. Billions of dollars are spent fighting it. Oprah devotes entire programs to it. Presidents consult civic and religious leaders for answers. Everyone seems to be wrestling with the problems of racial prejudice . . . yet solutions evade us.

Is the continued spreading of Darwin's plantation unstoppable? I say no. In this book we will bring great hope and light through scientific and biblical fact. In the brilliant light of God's Word, the

roots of Darwinian evolution and racism will be exposed . . . and in that light, the roots will begin to shrivel.

In chapter 3, "The True Origin of Species," I'll give you an overview of genetics, natural selection, and the theory of evolution. You'll see how the scientific facts match up with biblical revelation, a revelation that destroys the possibility of Darwinian evolution and uproots the weeds of racism.

In chapter 4, "Humankind," we will apply biblical and scientific principles to humanity. You'll discover the genetic foundation behind the diversity that God has given us. It's not only a fascinating look at the way that God created us, but it also reveals the shallowness of Darwinian theory and evolutionary thinking in regard to racism.

In chapter 5, "One Blood," we'll reveal what the word *race* truly means. Are there really multiple races of humans? Where did this concept originate? The answers will change the way you look at yourself and those around you forever. By exploring the personal implications of the evidence on a heart level, you'll begin to experience the truth of God's Word in new ways.

In chapter 6, "One Flesh," we will apply biblical and scientific principles to marriage and dating relationships to reveal God's plan for families from differing cultural backgrounds.

In chapter 7, "Grace Relations," Dr. Ware begins to unveil a dream for the future—a vision for the Church and society built on grace and unity rather than on racial hatred and division. His vision is acute; his plan is reasonable.

In chapter 8, "New Seeds," he will show the way into a new relationship with each other that transcends race and embraces grace in a living reflection of the fact that we are all one in Jesus Christ.

Following this chapter, Dr. Ware presents several extremely useful appendices. In appendix A, Dr. Ware will show how the homosexual movement has hijacked the civil rights movement. By using similar rhetoric and strategies, they are attempting to draw false parallels between their struggles and those of African Americans. By building their case on evolutionary thinking, the homosexual movement has falsely aligned itself with the struggles of the civil rights movement. It is another consequence of the spread of Darwin's plantation, but under biblical scrutiny, Dr. Ware will pull these false parallels out by the roots.

In appendices B, C, and D, Dr. Ware will supply us with several highly practical tools for implementing a strategy to create multi-ethnic communities of worship and fellowship. By the time we are done, you'll not only know the history, theology, and science regarding evolution and racism, but you will also be equipped to *do* something about it in your own personal life, in your church, and in the world!

Ideas are like seeds, small and yet incalculably powerful. Darwin's plantation continues to grow, fertilizing the roots of racism. As believers in Jesus Christ, using the truth of His Word as our tools, we have the opportunity to root out the assumptions of Darwinism and plant new seeds of truth from God's Word and scientific fact. A new plantation can be planted and nurtured—but this time the fruit will not be racism; it will be love and unity in the name of Jesus Christ.

> Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to *all* people (**Gal. 6:9–10**; em- phasis mine).

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