

Truth

Magazine

*Taking His hand,
helping each other home.*



®


NOVEMBER 2022 | NO. 11 | VOLUME 66

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Do this, knowing the time,
that it is already the hour for
you to awaken from sleep;
for now salvation is nearer
to us than when we believed
(Rom. 13:11).**



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(ISSN 1538-0793) is published once a month by Truth Publications, Inc., 220 S. Marion, Athens, AL 35611. Postage paid at Decatur, AL, and additional mailing offices.

Manuscripts should be sent to the editor:
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Subscriptions, renewals & other correspondence should be sent to:
Truth Magazine
220 S. Marion, Athens, AL 35611
subscriptions@truthmagazine.com

Book orders should be sent to:
CEI Bookstore | truthbooks.com
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Online Website:
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The Limitation of Labels

by Mark Mayberry

This issue of *Truth Magazine* focuses on the woke movement. Two articles explore the familiar statement, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Prov. 14:34). The next four articles explore the woke movement’s impact upon religion, culture, gender and race.

Introduction

Oxford’s American English Dictionary defines “label” as (1) “a small piece of paper, fabric, plastic, or similar material attached to an object and giving information about it,” or (2) “a classifying phrase or name applied to a person or thing, especially one that is inaccurate or restrictive.”

As children, I recall that we were fearful of removing the tags from our bedding, lest the Pillow Police haul us away in the middle of the night.

Recently, we had to replace our clothes washer and dishwasher. When the new appliances were delivered, I checked the tags to ensure that the items delivered were the ones we purchased.

In politics and religion, we frequently speak of liberal and conservative, progressive and traditionalist, etc. While these terms may (when used in context) accurately communicate our convictions, they often prove inadequate and easily misunderstood.

Years ago, a former member here at Adoue Street was planning a cross-country trip, and wisely sought to arrange to worship with faithful brethren as he was traveling. He placed a phone call to a congregation in the town where he would be on Sunday, and asked, “Are you liberal or conservative?” He understood the terminology, but the person on the other end of the phone call did not.

Adjectives are useful when used in context. Bigger is better! Right? Not always. As a child, I wanted a liberal

(large) scoop of ice-cream, and a conservative (small) spoon of castor oil.

Liberal vs. Conservative

Positive Usage

When used positively, both “liberal” and “conservative” are descriptive of God’s people. Christians should be liberal (generous) in their giving (Rom. 12:6-8; 2 Cor. 8:1-2), and conservative (careful) in the stewardship of God’s blessings (1 Cor. 9:16-17; Eph. 3:1-4).

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with **liberality**; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (Rom. 12:6-8).

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their **liberality** (2 Cor. 8:1-2).

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a **stewardship** entrusted to me (1 Cor. 9:16-17).

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the **stewardship** of God’s grace

which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:1-4).

Negative Usage

Nevertheless, while the terms “liberal” and “conservative” may identify where one stands on certain religious issues (when used in context), neither is fully adequate and may reflect a misunderstanding of the gospel message.

When used in theology, “liberal” describes one who “regards many traditional beliefs as dispensable, invalidated by modern thought, or liable to change.”

Certainly, those who have adopted the modern mindset have little respect for God’s Word. Religious liberals have little (or no) concern for scriptural authority—viewing the Bible as a product of human origin, reflecting the ignorance, superstition, bias and bigotry of ancient and unenlightened cultures.

In contrast, faithful Christians recognize that the Bible, being divinely inspired, is a completely reliable guide for this life and the next.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you

accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Those who share this view of the Bible often describe themselves as "conservatives." In a sense, this is entirely appropriate.

When used in a general sense, the word "conservative" describes one who is "averse to change or innovation and holding traditional values," while in a political context, it refers to one "favoring free enterprise, private ownership, and socially traditional ideas."

Certainly faithful Christians are averse to unscriptural innovations and hold to traditional values as set forth in the Scriptures.

However, there is another meaning associated with the term "conservative."

Merriam-Webster says it carries the idea of "(1) a preservative, (2) of or relating to a philosophy of conservatism, (3) tending or disposed to maintain existing views, conditions, or institutions. . ."

Consider the third definition given in the above paragraph. A conservative is one who seeks to maintain existing views, conditions, or institutions.

This approach is workable when people remember and respect the fundamental principles upon which biblical faith is founded. The same holds true concerning western civilization in general and the American experience in particular.

Sadly, our country and culture have drifted so far from its founding principles, there is little left to conserve.

In the inaugural issue of *National Review*, William F. Buckley (the father of the modern conservative movement) wrote:

A conservative is someone who stands athwart history, yelling "Stop," at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it—William F. Buckley.

This approach might work if society still remembers its roots and is committed to its founding principles. However, simply yelling "Stop!" is an insufficient strategy, unless we are collectively committed to restoring those founding principles.

A half-century earlier, G.K. Chesterton (who is one of my favorite authors) offered this perceptive comment on progressivism and conservatism. Noting the tendency for things to fall apart, he stressed the remarkable energy that is required to offset the gravitational pull of disorder and decay:

We have remarked that one reason offered for being a progressive is that things naturally tend to grow better. But the only real reason for being a progressive is that things naturally tend to grow worse. The corruption in things is not only the best argument for being progressive; it is also the only argument against being conservative. The conservative theory would really be quite sweeping and unanswerable if it were not for this one fact. But all conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution. Briefly, if you want the old white post you must have a new white post. But this which is true even of inanimate things is in a quite special and terrible sense true of all human things. An almost unnatural vigilance is really required of the citizen because of the horrible rapidity with which human institutions grow old. It is the custom in passing romance and journalism to talk of men suffering under old tyrannies. But, as a fact, men have almost always suffered under new tyrannies; under tyrannies that had been public liberties

hardly twenty years before (*Orthodoxy*, 212–213).

Progressive vs. Traditionalist

Positive Usage

What about the terms "progressive" and "traditionalist?" In its most basic usage, "progressive" describes something "happening or developing gradually or in stages; proceeding step by step."

Certainly, Christians should constantly seek to grow—adding to their faith (2 Pet. 1:5-7) and progressing spiritually (Phil. 1:23-26; 1 Tim. 4:14-16).

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your **progress** and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again (Phil. 1:23-26).

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your **progress** will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you (1 Tim. 4:14-16).

Since the word "tradition" refers to things that are "handed down," it is essential that we distinguish between human traditions and divine traditions. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees because they transgressed

the commandment of God for the sake of their traditions. By adding to, subtracting from, and changing God's commandments with brazen impunity, they invalidated the word of God for the sake of their tradition—which rendered their worship as “vain” (Matt. 15:1-14).

While we must avoid binding human traditions or being led astray by such (Col. 2:8), we must respect the inspired apostolic message. Commending the Corinthians, Paul said, “Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:1-2). When he exhorted the Thessalonians, saying, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us,” the context clearly shows that he was speaking of “the faith” communicated through “our gospel” (2 Thess. 2:13-15).

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you (1 Cor. 11:1-2).

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us (2 Thess. 2:13-15).

Negative Usage

The word “progressive” is often used “(of a group, person, or idea) favoring or implementing social reform or new, liberal ideas. . . favoring or promoting change or innovation.” In politics and religion, today's progressives view the past with contempt—rejecting the old ways as broken, biased, and beside the point, namely, out of step with their enlightened and elitist views. This is especially true of the woke movement.

They deny the very concept of God. Having adopted an atheistic, materialistic, and secularistic view of life, present-day progressives deny the existence of a triune God (who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, holy, loving, etc.). Moreover, they reject the biblical affirmations that:

- God created the heavens and the earth in six literal days.
- Man (possessing a dual nature, i.e., body and soul) is superior to the lower creation because he is made in God's image and has been placed in a position of dominion over nature.
- Marriage is a lifelong relationship between a biological male and a biological female wherein a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife.
- Human beings are free moral agents who possess the capacity of understanding God's commandments, and are obligated to obey His directive, and will be held accountable for their actions.
- The creature (man) must worship the Creator (God) by offering sacrifice and service in the manner that He directs.
- Men are obligated to walk in God's ways—calling upon His name and conforming their lives to His standard of righteous conduct.
- Sin in all its manifestations (i.e., thoughts, words, deeds) damages personal relationships, degrades the individual who commits sin, debases and can potentially destroy civil society if left unchecked, and, finally, alienates man from his Maker—resulting in the outpouring of divine wrath.
- Because man is made in God's image, human life should be viewed as sacred, and the wanton shedding of man's blood cannot go unpunished.
- Yet, despite man's tendency toward rebellion, God provides a path of forgiveness and reconciliation. He promised to send a Savior (One born of woman) who would deal with the problem of sin, and inflict a death blow against the serpent/Satan.

Please note that the bullet points above all come from the opening chapters

of Genesis. Is it any wonder that the book of Genesis has been a battleground in the modern era? If progressives can destroy the book of beginnings, the entire edifice of divine revelation crumbles into dust. Yet, the foundation of God stands firm!

The Solution: Biblical Repudiation vs Restoration

While terms such as “liberal,” “conservative,” “progressive,” and “traditionalist” may be useful in distinguishing between different approaches to Scripture, let us consider two other concepts that are repeatedly affirmed in the Bible: Repudiation and Restoration.

Instead of rejecting the rule of God in our lives (as do modern progressives and proponents of the woke movement), we must repudiate the old man of sin (Rom. 6:1-7).

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin (Rom. 6:1-7).

Rather than rely upon subjective self-will, let us renew our respect for God's law (Isa. 8:19-20), and restore the ancient order (Jer. 6:16-17).

When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? **To the law and to the testimony!** If they do not speak according to this word,

it is because they have no dawn (Isa. 8:19-20).

Thus says the Lord, “**Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it;** and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ And I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’” (Jer. 6:16-17).

Instead of being conformed to this world, we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2).

Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:1-2).

Instead of being unrestrained in our communication and conduct (which is typical of today’s woke activists), let us be reserved in speech and reverent in life (2 Pet. 2:9-16).

Conclusion

The woke movement claims to be concerned about social injustice and discrimination—which is continually redefined according to an ever-changing subjective standard—while rejecting the authority of God, concerning whom, it is said:

Your throne is established from of old;
You are from everlasting (Ps. 93:2).

Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89).

If we hope to achieve meaningful change, our efforts must be (1) founded upon full and complete obedience to the teaching of Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:24-27), (2) accurately handling the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:14-19), and (3) fulfilling our role as members of the Lord’s church (Eph. 2:19-22).

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built

his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall (Matt. 7:24-27).

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness” (2 Tim. 2:14-19).

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

In its most basic usage, “woke” means to “emerge or cause to emerge from a state of sleep” or to “stop sleeping.” Yes, we need to “Be woke!” but not in the dystopian and destructive sense of the current fad, but by being alert to the danger posed by the devil (1 Pet. 5:8-9) and the deceptiveness of false doctrines (2 Cor. 11:3), such as those promoted by the woke movement!

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around

like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

Concluding his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul said, “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Instead of remaining in a state of spiritual slumber, we must awaken to righteousness (Rom. 13:11-14).

Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to **awaken from sleep**; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (Rom. 13:11-14). **T**

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Black Sunday

by Kyle Pope

While one can easily become discouraged by personal struggles or societal ills, let us avoid idealizing the past and despairing over the future, but seek to live in the present with faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13).

Introduction

While one can easily become discouraged by personal struggles or societal ills, let us avoid idealizing the past and despairing over the future, but seek to live in the present with faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13).

For many of us, the times in which we live look pretty dark. Troubles of all sorts seem to surround us at every turn. It's easy to look at some point in the past and say, "Why were the former days better than these?" While these words come from Ecclesiastes 7:10, they are prefaced with the command, "Do not say" and followed by the instruction from the Preacher, "For you do not inquire wisely concerning this" (NKJV).

Black Sunday in Amarillo

Eighty-seven years ago, things in Amarillo, Texas, where I preach, seemed pretty dark to the residents of this city. Following World War I, wheat production in the United States soared. This was in response to blockades imposed upon Russian wheat. In the Great Plains region, spanning from Montana to Texas, the federal government had encouraged farmers to plow up the native Buffalo Grass and plant wheat crops. For a decade this flourished. Small farmers made good profits and new landowners imagined good times ahead for their crops and families.

Then two things that happened changed everything. On October 24, 1929, which came to be called "Black Thursday," Wall Street experienced the

largest sell-off of stocks in US history. Five days later, on "Black Tuesday," 16 million shares were sold on the New York Stock Exchange in a single day. This "Great Crash" of Wall Street began an economic depression that spanned a decade. Initially, it had little impact on wheat farmers in the plains, but eventually it caused wheat prices to collapse. Just as that was beginning to affect the Great Plains, a second event added to the problem. Three intense waves of drought hit the region in 1934, 1936, and 1939-40. Over the decade, rainfall in some areas fell to half the

yearly average, with 50-60 inches of rain that normally would have been expected never coming to water the crops.

This triggered an unexpected consequence of plowing up the wild native grasses. Buffalo Grass has a deep root system that is well suited for wet and dry cycles. Wheat has a shallow root system. When it couldn't grow, the topsoil had nothing to hold it in place. Beginning in 1931, winds randomly generated massive walls of dirt, dust, and sand that swept through the plains, displacing tons of farmland as they passed. By 1934, 35 million acres of farmland could no



The "Black Sunday" dust storm approaches Spearman in northern Texas, April 14, 1935. Source: Wikipedia



*Buried machinery in a barn lot in Dallas, South Dakota.
Source: National Weather Service (NOAA).*

longer be cultivated. Eventually, an area three-quarters the size of Texas became unsuitable for farming. The heart of this devastation was in an area of the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, including portions of New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas that came to be known as the “Dust Bowl.”

In 1935, these walls of dust called “Black Blizzards” hit Amarillo seven times, turning daylight into darkness. One was especially severe. It would come to be called “Black Sunday.” It hit Amarillo on Sunday, April 14, 1935 around 7:20 p.m., just as some were leaving church. A storm moving at 50-60 mph stretched from Oklahoma City to the Arizona border and traveled in different intensity from the Dakotas to the Rio Grande. The next day, the Amarillo paper reported that it had been 8,000 feet high. Flocks of birds had fled from it as it moved, and small birds lay dead after it had passed. It was so dark that people could not see their hands in front of their own faces. To the west, as it passed, the sun shining through the dust made it look like fire in the clouds of

dust. Many thought the end of the world had come.

When everything was over, it wasn’t the end of the world, but over a quarter of an inch of dust filled closed houses and stores. Outside, there were drifts of dust and sand as high as 15 feet in some areas. Over the entire Great Plains, the storm had displaced 300,000 tons of topsoil. These conditions from 1930-40 left half a million people homeless. Families lost their homes, farms, and some took their own lives in hopeless desperation. By 1940, 2.5 million people who had flocked to the plains with such great hopes and dreams were forced to move away. Those were dark times indeed!

Were the “Former Days” Really “Better Than These?”

Why would the Preacher of Ecclesiastes say that asking why the “former days” were better is unwise? Perhaps for several reasons:

It Is Shortsighted.

Those who lived through the “Dust Bowl” faced a horrible time, but their “former days” had seen World War I, “the war to end all wars,” and the Spanish Flu. As the “Dust Bowl” ended, American involvement in World War II began, leading to an economic expansion that continued for decades. When were their “better” days? The attitude expressed in Ecclesiastes 7:10 forgets the challenges of the past and doesn’t realistically consider the full picture of the present. The Psalmist declared, “This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24, NASB).

There Have Always Been Times That Were Worse.

The word “better” is a relative term. It depends on what is being compared. The Holy Spirit illustrates this in Proverbs: “Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife” (Prov. 17:1, NKJV); “Better is a little with righteousness than great income with injustice” (Prov. 16:18). A dry morsel isn’t good and having too little isn’t good, but injustice and strife are worse than both. To say the past was “better” draws an invalid comparison. It compares some pleasant thing we remember (or imagine) from the past with some unpleasant thing in the present (without considering everything in the present).

It Is Self-Centered.

Paul taught that the disciple of Christ should “look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4). The mindset of Ecclesiastes 7:10 doesn’t do that. It’s all about how I feel. If things aren’t going well for me, I assume life is just as horrible for everyone else. If I look fondly to some golden age of the past, I assume that everyone else must see it the same way. What about the convert to Christ? His “former days” were days of sin and separation from God. Was that “better” for such dear souls? What about the



“Dust Clouds Rolling Over the Pairies.” Image courtesy of Don Hahn. National Weather Service (NOAA).

young? Everything lies ahead of them. Do we rob them of their joys of the present and their dreams of the future by our skewed perspective on an idealized view of the past? Love “does not seek its own” (1 Cor. 13:5).

It Focuses Only on the Negative.

The “Dust Bowl” was one of the worst manmade environmental disasters in history—but there were also good things that came out of it. Many lessons were learned that have helped succeeding generations avoid repeating it. My mother was born the year “Black Sunday” hit Amarillo. That was a good thing! Any point in time has “enough trouble of its own.” That’s why Jesus teaches that we should “not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (Matt. 6:34, NIV). In Ecclesiastes 5, the Preacher affirms that God gives man “riches and wealth” and “power to eat of it” as a “gift of God” (5:19) so that “he will not dwell

unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart” (5:20, NKJV). Seeing the past as “better” ignores the good things all around us that God has given to busy us with joys within our hearts.

Times Will Get Better.

The rains returned to the Great Plains and the droughts of the “Dust Bowl” came to an end. Amarillo is still a dry and windy place, but driving through the city you would never know that a day like “Black Sunday” once descended upon it. Last Spring a dust storm blew through town. It was hazy, and the sun was obscured for a while like you might see during a mild rainstorm, but it passed quickly. No matter how bad things get, things will probably improve with time. No matter how difficult life may be, there are still reasons to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4a). Christians can know, no matter how dark things become, “our

salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11b). May we cling to that hope through any “Black Sunday” life throws our way. **T**

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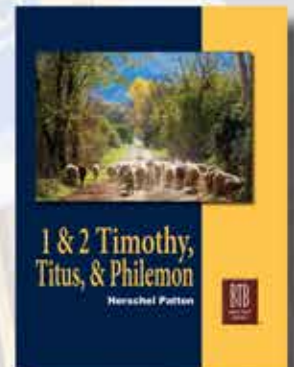
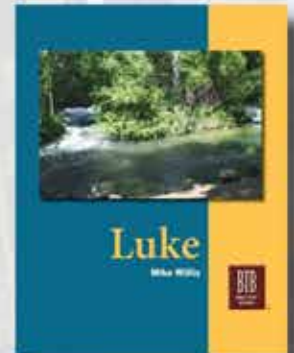
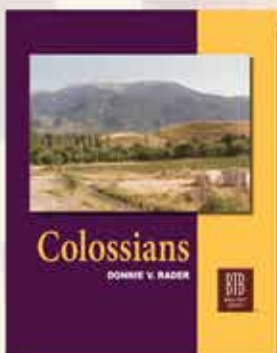
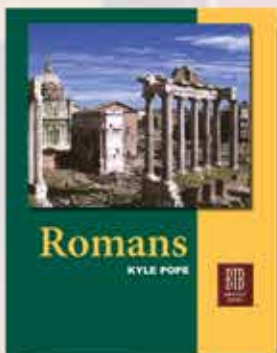
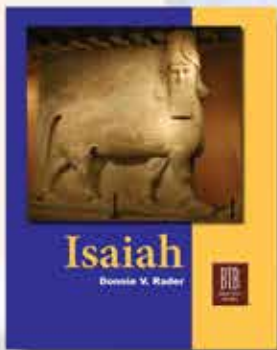
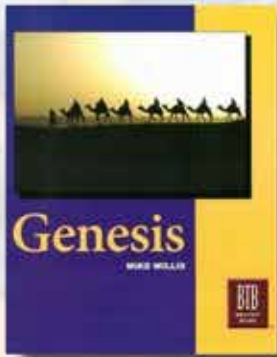
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Homeschooling: What About Socialization?

by Author

Socialization is often used as an argument against homeschooling. It is argued that children must learn from society how to behave in society. God sees it differently. He designed the family to socialize the children.

Even in the womb, a baby is learning to socialize. The baby is listening. He hears his mother's voice and feels calm. Soon he hears his father's voice, his rambunctious siblings, his grandfather's laugh. He is learning the voices of those who love him. He is being socialized.

On the day of his birth, amidst the strange voices of midwives, nurses, and doctors, he hears a familiar voice. The soothing voice of his mother as she cradles him in her arms. He is calm. He is comfortable. He is safe. Then another familiar voice appears. He turns his head in the direction of the strong, deep voice and sees the face of his father. He makes a physical and an emotional connection with the two most important people in his life. He is being socialized.

As the child grows, he feels comfort and love when those around him respond to his needs. He learns to trust. Through the years, he will be introduced to new experiences, new people, new environments.

With mom and dad (and possibly a gaggle of siblings) by his side, he learns how to respond appropriately in various situations. He learns to control his emotions, to respect those in authority, to play with others, to be responsible for his own belongings and respectful of the belongings of others. He is being socialized.

According to Britannica, socialization is "the process whereby an individual learns to adjust to a group (or society) and behave in a manner approved by the group (or society)." Much has been said about socialization in the home-school setting. In fact, until recently,

it was the number one reason many objected to the idea of homeschooling. With the degradation of values in our society, the age-old question "What about socialization?" is asked less often. Nevertheless, those who oppose homeschooling still insist that a child as young as five must be in a school setting to be properly socialized. After all, how can a child learn to "behave in a manner approved" by society if he is not taught by that society?

The Bible tells us that God has given this great responsibility of socialization to the parents. The father is commanded to teach/discipline his children (Eph. 6:4). He will instill faith through knowledge and wisdom that will, in turn, produce the courage and strength necessary for the growing child to navigate life. The mother has been instructed to love her children (Titus 2:4). Through her love, her children will learn to love, to show empathy, and to serve others. She will tell her children stories of faith and courage from the Bible and other sources, offering them a glimpse into the lives of people from all walks of life. This is God's plan: for the family to socialize the children.

Wise parents will introduce their children to a variety of situations. Their children will experience people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, yet with the same faith and values as they worship in their home congregation. Their children will learn how to respond to those with unique needs and from diverse cultures as they tag along on various family errands and social events. Their children will learn to respect authority as

they see their parents doing the same. The children are being socialized naturally.

Separating socialization from the family creates a false environment where character building and behavior training are taken out of context. Placing a 10-year-old in a class of 10-year-olds is an unnatural setting. Only during the school years is one expected to be in an age-specific environment. By setting up this false scenario, it becomes necessary to invent ways to teach a child to respond appropriately in different situations. He must learn socialization in theory from a textbook with a teacher who may not hold to the truths found in God's word. With socialization curriculum changing at the whim of society, we are left with dysfunction and chaos.

The "what about socialization" question implies that the family cannot properly socialize children. Yet, as we can see from God's word, that is not what He planned at all. The family is the center of the child's life. If parents choose to seek help from the neighborhood school, that is their choice to make, but they must never consider their children socialized because they attend school. Parents are and always will be responsible for socializing their children, just as God has planned. **■**



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The Biblical Dynamic of Salvation

by Bruce Reeves

Romans does not present a thin or superficial view of faith, but a thick and comprehensive approach to justification by faith.

Introduction

The Bible's great theme is that our eternally loving and divinely powerful God has provided salvation for all those who come to Him in submissive faith (Heb. 11:6). The principle of salvation by grace through faith, as stated by Paul in Ephesians 2:8, is observed both in the OT and NT. The specific conditions required for Noah, Abraham, Moses, or alien sinners today differ, but the truth that we are saved by grace through faith remains constant (Heb. 11:7-31).

Unfortunately, the heart of the gospel has been clouded and distorted by the erroneous interpretations of men. Reformed Theology's unbiblical definitions of New Testament terms must be corrected, and the gospel as presented, defined, and explained by inspired writers should be accepted without hesitation.

It is not uncommon for some to allow Calvinistic scholars, speakers, and writers to guide their thinking, concepts, and teaching, and then falsely accuse faithful brethren of not believing in grace. Ironically, such presumptive individuals are the ones who have distorted the biblical principles of salvation.

In this study, we will consider key terms and concepts that will help us appreciate the use of various terms which are central to the message of the cross. False teaching frequently redefines biblical terms in an unscriptural manner. Yet, by considering how the words are being used by inspired writers, we bring the clarity and focus of the gospel of Christ to the forefront of the discussion.

Grace

The NT usage of the term "grace" is multifaceted. The concept of grace is seen in the love of God and Christ, salvation, spiritual gifting, divine strength, benevolence for needy saints, sacrificial concern for others, and even apostolic greetings (Rom. 12:6; 16:20; Eph. 2:5; 1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Pet. 4:10). If it were not for the grace of God, we would remain in a hopeless and lost condition because of our sin (1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:1-8, 12-13). In this article, we focus on divine grace as it relates to our salvation. Some misunderstand the fullness of God's grace in redemption by equating conditions with merit. These concepts are not equivalent and must be distinguished to appreciate the message of Christ. The danger of this type of confusion cannot be overstated.

The term *grace* has been rightly defined as the "favor of God." We do not deserve salvation, nor can we merit or earn a righteous standing before God, but this does not deny the conditions of faith in receiving the forgiveness of Christ (Rom. 3:23-26; Titus 3:3-5). We tend to import our own modern-day notions into the concept of grace, whereas the first century perspective of the gift of grace was never understood to be void of reciprocity (Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 20-32). Those who argue that grace removes any expectation of action on the part of the sinner have a foundational misunderstanding of what it means to live for God and how the term was used in biblical times. While we have all fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23) and

desperately need the Lord's cleansing through the death of His Son (Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 1:7-9), let us recognize that the working of God's good pleasure calls us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12-13). Although the provisions of God's grace are freely and openly offered to all, the reception of that grace is conditioned on obedience to the gospel.

The Transformation of Grace

The grace of God does not leave us enslaved to sin, but frees us from spiritual bondage. Paul writes, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2). While we all falter from time to time and must rely on the grace of Christ, the notion that the faithful Christian is in a "wretched" condition of spiritual defeat and should simply give up fighting the good fight is found nowhere in the good news of Jesus (Eph. 6:10-17).

The Spirit's gospel has set us free from the ruling principle of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2). We are not set free to continue in sin, but to live out the purpose of Christ: "So then brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom. 8:12-13). The apostle appeals to our baptism into Christ as a reference point for our spiritual transformation. When we by faith surrender to the Lord in baptism, the old self of sin is crucified

(i.e., put to death), and raised to walk in newness of life. Jesus died, was buried, and arose so that we would no longer be slaves of sin (Rom. 6:3-13; cf. Col. 3:1-2). Paul describes conversion from the world of sin to life in Christ with words such as “master,” “reign,” “death,” “alive,” etc. He proclaims God’s transforming mercy:

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:14-17).

As a result of “the mercies of God,” you are encouraged “to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . .” (Rom. 12:1-2). The Lord’s mercy reshapes our mind and heart from the inside out. The purpose of the grace of God is not to leave us conformed to the world, but to transform us into the image of Christ (Eph. 4:22-24). Through the New Covenant we “are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord. . .” (2 Cor. 3:18). Grace leads to justification, renewal, and the restoration of Christ!

The Teaching of Grace

For the grace of God has appeared, bring salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority.

Let no one disregard you (Titus 2:11-15).

God’s grace includes His instructions, teachings, and commands. Many have the notion that exhortation to holiness and encouragement to godliness undermine the grace and mercy of Christ, but the opposite is true. The Lord’s grace calls us to redemption and purification from sin in zeal for good deeds. God has disclosed His divine will, offered His merciful encouragement, and revealed His holy commands because He loves us. These things are to be graciously, boldly, and authoritatively spoken. If we have accepted a view of grace that precludes what Paul wrote to Titus, then it is not the grace of God that we are preaching and proclaiming.

The Scriptures warn us of those who would abuse or twist the grace of God into license to sin. While just about everyone will deny that their teaching does so, the logical consequences of popular doctrines often lead to this end. As noted earlier, Paul defends the purity of God’s grace by denying that it permits one to continue to live in sin (Rom. 6:1-2). Peter exhorts believers to stand firm in the “true grace of God” (1 Pet. 5:12) and to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Jude demonstrates that God’s grace encourages us to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). It is disconcerting when brethren begin to present a view of grace that dilutes, ridicules, and mocks fundamental principles of biblical authority in doctrinal and moral issues. Jude warns: “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness, and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4). We are “partakers of grace” in the “defense and confirmation of the gospel” (Phil. 1:7). Thank God for the richness of His grace!

Revisiting Faith, Works, and Salvation

There is perhaps no topic that has generated more theological debate than this one. Like the question of the meaning of grace, the issues surrounding the role of faith and works in salvation demand that biblical terms be defined in harmony with the context of Scripture. This is another case in which even some of our brethren have accepted the Calvinistic dictionary, rather than the biblical usage of “faith” and “works” regarding salvation. If one defines saving faith as a “non-doing trust” rather than loyal faithfulness and steadfast allegiance to Jesus Christ as Savior and king, then there are doctrinal consequences that have a ripple effect throughout their entire belief system. This may happen slowly or quickly, but do not be deceived, it inevitably occurs. When it does, it will affect struggling disciples, ungrounded elderships, and vulnerable or untaught congregations. Sadly, history displays the painful reality of this cycle time after time. Lord willing, we will be alert, aware, and diligent.

Faith does not refuse to assess evidence, nor is it a leap in the dark; rather, it is produced through “reasoning. . . from the Scriptures” which persuades us that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 17:2-4; 18:4; 19:8-9; Rom. 10:17). Neither is faith reducible to mere mental assent, for the demons “believe and tremble” (Jas. 2:19). Saving faith is not inactive, disobedient, or non-expressive (John 12:42; Jas. 2:14-18).

The question before us is, “How is Paul using the term “faith” in the book of Romans?” Calvinists argue that he is using it to refer merely to trust, i.e., faith alone with no further acts of obedience. In fact, Classic Calvinists deny faith itself is an act of obedience (John 6:28-29), but argue that it is an irresistible gift (Note #1). Those who have defined “faith” as “faith only” and “works” as “anything you do” are not defining these terms as Paul did in his writings. Romans does not present a thin or superficial view of faith, but a thick and comprehensive approach to justification by faith. The

bookends of Paul's letter to the Romans show the theme of the entire epistle: ". . .through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake" (Rom. 1:5), and then again, "But now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets. . . has been made known to all the nations, leading to the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26). Faith is the total response of obedience to the gospel. It is also a death and resurrection experience which certainly eliminates any notions of shallow belief without the transformation of our lives (Gal. 2:20). The interpretation of faith is not about merit, or "salvation by works," but about what constitutes participation and fellowship in Christ (Gal. 5:6, 13-14; Phil. 3:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:4).

Do Paul and James Agree?

There has been much discussion and misunderstanding regarding whether Paul and James contradict or harmonize in their writings. Anyone who believes in the inspiration of the Bible recognizes they do not contradict, but how can these texts be explained? Paul argues that Abraham was not justified by works (Rom. 4:3), but James argues that he was justified by works (Jas. 2:21-23). Some attempt to reconcile the issue by asserting that Paul is speaking of alien sinners, while James is only speaking of children of God. However, there are some major problems with this line of thinking. At the very beginning, it should be noted that James introduces us to the faith of Abraham, who at the time was a child of God, but also to the faith of Rahab, who was an alien sinner who showed a working faith. The nature of saving faith is the same whether one is obeying the gospel or continuing to walk with Christ—it is obedient. Both writers explain the nature of a saving faith and reference Genesis 15:6, but they are using "works" in two distinct senses. If we understand this truth, then we can see that Paul and James are in perfect harmony.

Paul is contrasting two systems of justification, i.e., the law of works and the law of faith (Rom. 3:27). He then drops the phrase "law of" and just uses the terms "faith" and "works." The "law of works" primarily refers to the Law of Moses, but would apply to any system of justification outside of the gospel of Christ. It would require perfect performance and, since we are all sinners, would offer us no hope (Gal. 3:10-12, 14, 26-29). In Romans, the "works" that are not saving are associated with "wages" and what is "due" (Rom. 4:4). When Paul says, "But to the one who does not work," he does not mean "to the one who does not obey," but rather "to the one who is not sinless." Righteousness before God would not be based on one's Jewishness, but one's faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:28-29; 5:1-2). Note that in the context, he says that God "credits righteousness apart from works," but a couple of chapters later, he says we "obey unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16). Therefore, the works that do not save are not works of obedience to Christ. Baptism is never associated with "the law of works" by Paul, but with faith (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27). It is even related to the "working of God" and the "resurrection of Christ" (Col. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:21). Those who define works as "anything you do" lack understanding of Paul's teaching. We can only be saved through the forgiveness of Christ by an obedient faith (Rom. 4:6-8; 6:16-18). James is not using the term "works" to refer to a system of justification, as is Paul, but to the activity of faith. He only separates faith and works to illustrate that an inactive faith is dead and vain: "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (Jas. 2:24). James is emphasizing the nature of a saving faith just as Paul is emphasizing "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5:16:26).

The New Testament's citation of Genesis 15:6 is significant. The attempt to interpret this quotation as "faith only" or a "non-doing trust" is, at best, reckless and irresponsible and, at worst, deliberately disingenuous. It is emphasized that Abraham was justified

through God's forgiveness by faith before he was circumcised in Genesis 17 (Rom. 4:9-12). As a result, Abraham is the father of faith to the circumcised and uncircumcised, to the Jew and to the Gentile who believes in Christ. Genesis 15:6 was not a description of a one-time event in Abraham's life, but it was a general statement of Abraham living in faithfulness to God. It is applied to Abraham when he began his walk of faith when he left Ur (Gen. 11:28-12:3; Gal. 3:6-8). Later, Genesis 15:6 was applied to him when he trusted the Lord's assurance of His promises (Gen. 15:1-6), again when he and Sarah trusted the Lord for the birth of Isaac (Rom. 4:22), and then when he was willing to offer Isaac (Gen. 22; cf. Heb. 11:17-19; Jas. 2:21-23). James emphasizes the truth that the statement made about Abraham's faith in Genesis 15:6 was fulfilled when he demonstrated obedience to God in Genesis 22. Let us recognize that God's declaration of Abraham's faith was not a single moment in time, but it was a description of his journey of faith. The faith that saves is a surrendering, active, living, obedient trust in God (Heb. 11:6). The biblical dynamic of faith is a life-changing resurrection and transformation. Let us walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). We are saved by a grace that we do not deserve and a faith that fully surrenders to Jesus as our Savior and king.

May God help us see the power, beauty, and majesty of the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. **T**

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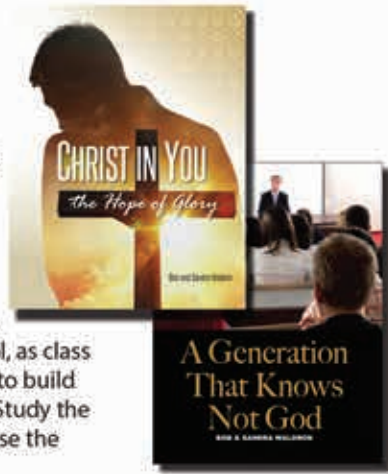
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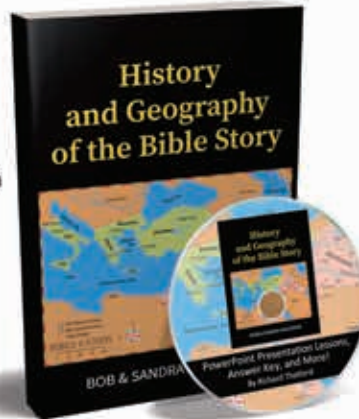
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“Pray at All Times in the Holy Spirit”

by Shane Carrington

Trust what the Holy Spirit reveals in Scripture, not what you feel, and you will pray in faith.

Introduction

Prayer is one of God’s greatest gifts! Like a small child speaking to a loving parent, praying to God holds such importance that the Holy Spirit inspired many statements emphasizing prayer’s vital role in the lives of disciples (1 Tim. 2:1; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Luke 18:1; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12, etc.).

As Paul concludes discussing the armor of God in Ephesians 6:18, he said, “With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. . .” What does the apostle intend by the command, “pray. . . in the Spirit?”

- Pray in tongues?
- Pray expecting to feel bodily sensations of Him moving?
- Pray for mystical guidance outside the written word?
- Pray expecting a visible sign that He is answering you?
- Or pray in harmony with God’s purposes for prayer as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Scripture?

What role does the Holy Spirit possess in our prayers? Let us answer this vital question by relying upon the teachings of Scripture.

Praying in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:18)

The connection between the Holy Spirit and the word He revealed

permeates the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:2-5; 6:17, etc.).

As Paul describes “the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:10-20), every piece of the panoply is a synonym for the gospel of Jesus Christ, or it is so closely connected to the word that you cannot separate them.

- “having girded your loins with truth” (v. 14)—God’s word (John 17:17)
- “having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (v. 14)—comes from God’s word (Rom. 1:16-17)
- “having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (v. 15)—God’s word
- “taking up the shield of faith” (v. 16)—comes from God’s word (Rom. 10:17)
- “the helmet of salvation” (v. 17)—comes from God’s word (Mark 16:15-20; Rom. 1:16-17)
- “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (v. 17)—God’s word

Immediately after this, Paul writes, “With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit. . .” (Eph. 6:18). Two points need to be emphasized (1) The sword with which the Spirit changes hearts and lives is “the word of God,” so “praying at all times in the Spirit” means to pray according to what the Spirit has revealed in the word. Since all other pieces of the armor reference God’s word, this means to pray in harmony with what the Holy Spirit has revealed in the word concerning prayer. This differs greatly from what we sometimes hear today.

A Biblically Deficient View

A biblically deficient view of the Holy Spirit will not grow disciples closer to God. While miraculous gifts of the Spirit were instrumental in God revealing and verifying His word, some today are looking for sensational outpourings of the Spirit without even understanding why those miracles occurred.

Famous author, Max Lucado, now claims to pray in tongues (cf. article by Jessica Lea, cited below). His newest book, *Help Is Here: Finding Fresh Strength and Purpose in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, Lucado claims that the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in first-century disciples is available in some measure to modern disciples, a belief which we showed unbiblical in a recent article.

Another modern preacher claims he has recently seen the walls and floors of the church building shake and groan during prayer and studies with others.

Greg Laurie, a well known denominational preacher, said, “Revival is a work of the Holy Spirit; it’s not something we can make happen. Revival is God’s responsibility. It’s what God does for us” (Pope-Levison, 140). This sentiment is common in Calvinist and neo-Calvinist circles. While all blessings come from God (Jas. 1:17), many of those blessings are realized only when we trust and obey Jesus (Matt. 7:21-29).

In the examples above, feelings take center stage, and every positive emotion is attributed to a mystical, direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit. An absence

of these emotions supposedly shows God's absence in our lives. When such individuals feel emotionally moved in prayer, they claim the Holy Spirit is giving them spiritual power.

In contrast, how did Jesus feel while praying in the garden?

... He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." ... And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground (Luke 22:41-44).

Matthew reports that Jesus prayed this same prayer three times (Matt. 26:44). Was our Lord having a positive emotional experience? If not, was the Spirit not present with Him at this point? Did His feelings betray God's absence?

Emotions indicate neither God's presence nor absence. Jesus, and many other biblical examples, show this. It is dangerous to decide that God is with us or not, depending on whether we "feel" His presence. God declares His presence with His people through the pages of His word (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 13:5-6). Trust what God says in Scripture and do what He wills. Then His promise to be with you will become a reality, whether your emotional experience is one of elation or great suffering. Leaning on emotions is carnality (Gal. 5:16-21); "walking by faith" is true spirituality (2 Cor. 5:1-10). Follow what God says (Prov. 1:1-7; 3:5-6), not what you feel (Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8-9; Prov. 14:12), and you will serve Him by faith (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 5:19-25).

Prayer, the Spirit, and Romans 8:26-27

This is another passage concerning "the Spirit" and prayer. Some quickly accept this as referring to the role of the person called the Holy Spirit in our prayers. While that may be Paul's point (as most commentators agree), there are perhaps other possibilities in the text.

The word "Spirit" is used in three related ways in Romans 8.




- The divine person called "the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 8:9-11).
- The word/law revealed by the Spirit (Rom. 8:2; cf. John 16:7-15; 17:17; Eph. 3:3-5).
- The attitude/mindset produced in hearts that are attuned to the inspired message revealed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:5-8, 15; cf. Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Which of these three uses does the context demand in Romans 8:26-27? While most agree it is the person of the Holy Spirit, some voices dissent. Elmer Moore, Robert F. Turner, and R. L. Whiteside all concur that "the Spirit" in these verses refers to spiritually-minded disciples praying without always knowing exactly what to say (Moore, 134-136; Turner, 68-69; Whiteside, 135-137). God "searches the hearts" of those who pray, and He knows what they mean. These three also agree that the Holy Spirit, through Scripture, teaches us what we need to know about prayer. How incredibly comforting! In truth, we cannot be spiritually minded without listening to the word which the Holy Spirit revealed.

Whatever conclusion one draws about "the Spirit" in Romans 8:26-27, neither position would show what the Spirit does *to* us, but *for* us. The point of this passage remains the same: when you pray, God understands what you intend, even when you don't know what to say. What a difference it makes when we know God loves us, hears us, and patiently considers our petitions as we pour out our hearts to Him!

Conclusion

Prayer is one of God's greatest gifts. The Father designed prayer. Jesus died and arose to give us access to God in prayer. The Holy Spirit revealed the truth about prayer (Eph. 6:17-18), including our assurance as we pray to God in faith (Rom. 8:26-27). Therefore, let us "pray... in the Holy Spirit" by praying biblically, earnestly, unselfishly, humbly, and lovingly. Trust God when you pray; He will hear you and answer according to His will. 

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By Bobby L. Graham

QUESTION.

Can you expound on 1 Kings 22:13-28, especially verses 19-21?

ANSWER.

Question

Can you expound on 1 Kings 22:13-28, especially verses 19-21? How do I reconcile verse 19 (all the host of heaven being there with the Lord) and a spirit coming forth (from that host, I presume) saying they will entice Ahab with lies? I know a righteous, kind and just God wouldn't purposely trip someone up when He wants none of us to perish. Or was this just a test?

Answer

Our questioner poses a question about which many have probably wondered. God is just, kind, and righteous (such qualities being assumed here for lack of space, as most readers are already aware of such character in God). Why would He resort to such a tactic? How can we reconcile this deception with God's righteous character?

I believe that this matter becomes clear when we consider the attitude of King Ahab in rejecting the will of God.

- As background, recall that Ahab has already turned from Jehovah to Baal, and he has already relied upon the false prophets of Baal.
- In 1 Kings 22:8, Ahab has already manifested an attitude of rejection toward Micaiah, whom he said he hated because of his negative prophecies toward the king.
- The king's messenger, sent to bring Micaiah after Ahab reluctantly agreed to use him, tried to "whip Micaiah into line" on the way back to see the king (v. 13). Such conduct by the messenger no doubt was approved, and possibly even desired, by the king. Ahab wanted Micaiah to speak as the other prophets had already spoken). It was then that Micaiah affirmed his intention to speak only what the Lord gave him to speak (v. 14).
- The king was so shocked by Micaiah's prophecy telling him to go up and succeed in the battle against Ramoth-gilead, that he even lied in demanding

that the prophet tell the truth, because it was not truth that he wanted to hear! Then Micaiah fully revealed what would happen to the nation after the king was no more, because Jehovah again revealed this part of the message "on the spot" (vv. 15-17).

Only after King Ahab had repeatedly demonstrated his preference for a lie over the truth did Jehovah cater to his desire. God used a lying spirit in a false prophet to entice the king. Why? The king did not want to hear the truth, but a lie. God gave him what he wanted to hear. God uses a strong delusion (working of error) with people who do not love the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:1-12). It might also be clearer if we stress that Paul said the power, signs, and lying wonders, involving all deceit of unrighteousness, are characterized as the working of Satan (2 Thess. 2:9-10). God allows Satan to work evil, as in the life of Ahab. Because God allowed it, He is said to have done it, but only in recognition and reaction to their rebellion:

For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness (2 Thess. 2:11–12).

God has acted in this way at other times, helping us to gain a fuller picture of these matters. He allowed the magicians of Egypt and the plagues upon Egypt to harden Pharaoh's heart against the appeals of Moses. He permitted Satan to enter into Judas and prepare him as a vessel for a sinful work. However, we must remember that such persuasion as seen in these three persons—Ahab, Pharaoh, and Judas—was moral, not irresistible. After Satan had completed his work in them, the three human agents used by him in the work of sin were nothing that they had not already purposed to be before Satan began his work. Satan—and God, to the extent that He allowed such to happen—never violated the moral nature of God's moral creatures. If you will remember that the same sun which hardens the clay also softens the wax, you will learn that God's beneficial influences are designed to bring all to repentance (Rom. 2:4); but hardened and impenitent hearts resist such influences and react more positively to the evil influences of the Wicked One. Such was the heart of King Ahab, who set his heart as stone against Micaiah. **TM**



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The Word of the Lord Concerning Pharaoh Hophra

by Leon Mauldin

Pharaoh Hophra is mentioned by name in Jeremiah 44:30, when his downfall is prophesied. Our article gives the biblical setting of the prophecy and explores its historic fulfillment.

Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life” (Jer. 44:30).

The message of the biblical prophets may be broadly summarized into three broad areas:

- God’s message to His people of the prophet’s time.
- God is the God of all the earth; His message to the nations.
- Most importantly, the Messianic prophecies of Christ, His redemptive work, and His kingdom.

Our present article deals with the first two of these subject areas, both a message in Jeremiah’s time for the people of Judea, and for the Pharaoh of Egypt. First, the context of Jeremiah’s statement is immediately post-captivity. The Jerusalem temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians (586 BC), and Jewish captives had been taken to Mesopotamia. Those remaining in Judea had a governor appointed over them. However, rebellious Jews had disobediently gone to Egypt and had taken Jeremiah by force with them (Jer. 43). Therefore, God’s prophetic word to the Israelites in Egypt is that they would be punished (Jer. 44:13).

Yet, the LORD also had a word for Egypt. Judgment would come upon the nation of Egypt, and specifically Pharaoh Hophra (also known as Apries; the fourth king of the 26th Dynasty, who reigned 589-570 BC. He was the Pharaoh allied

with Judah’s king Zedekiah (who reigned 597-586 BC) who “despised the oath by breaking the covenant” (Ezek. 17:18) to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. Pharaoh Hophra’s army proved ineffective in providing any lasting relief to Jerusalem when it was under siege (see Jer. 37). He was assassinated following a power struggle with a court official who had earlier saved him from a rebellion of his own troops and had ruled as co-regent with him.

Regarding Jeremiah’s prophecy, K. A. Kitchen writes,

This was fulfilled in 570 BC, after Hophra had sent an army to help the Libyans against the Greek colony of Cyrene. The Egyptian force was overwhelmingly defeated, and the

Egyptians accused Hophra of having sent their countrymen to their deaths and of unduly favoring the Greeks. Revolt broke out, and Amasis became its leader, defeating and capturing Hophra. Hophra was then probably put to death; at any rate, soon afterward he was buried as befitted a pharaoh by Amasis, his successor (Kitchen, 755).

Our photo of Pharaoh Hophra’s stele was taken at Memphis (cf. Ezek. 30:13). Memphis had been one of the most important administrative centers in Egypt. Only Thebes in the south was comparable in economic, political and religious importance. Memphis was the capital of Egypt as far back as the Early Dynastic Period. It was located at the juncture of the Nile River and the Delta. It was the city that united Lower and Upper Egypt. Very little remains of Memphis today. We have included a photo of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, also on the grounds of Hathor. 📷

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Caption 1: The Goddess Hathor at Memphis. Photo by Leon Mauldin.



Leon Mauldin

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Caption 2: Pharaoh Hophra's Stele at Memphis. Photo by Leon Mauldin.



Caption 3: Sphinx of Apries. Department of Egyptian Antiquities of the Louvre. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 France License. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sphinx_of_Apries-N_515-IMG_0583-gradient.jpg

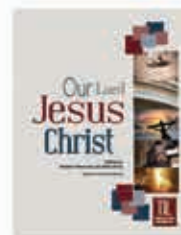
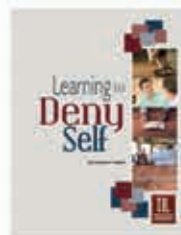
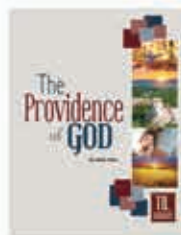
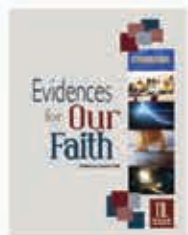
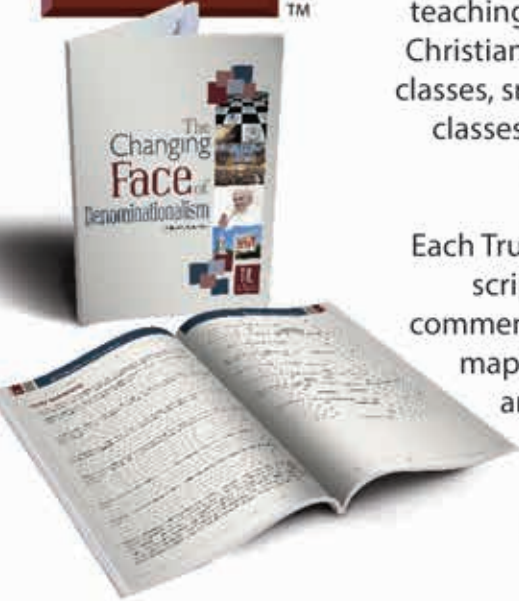


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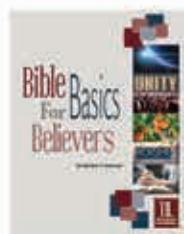
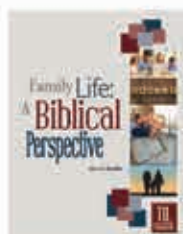


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Mentoring Our Teachers

by Chris Reeves

Bible class teachers in the local church of all ages need a reminder that teaching the text of the Bible is the primary work of a class teacher. It is easy to get side-tracked on doing other things during the class period.

Introduction

I appreciate all our Bible class teachers in the Lord's church. When I was young, I had many good Bible class teachers, both men and women. I know the importance of such teaching both from my work as a gospel preacher and from being in classes of others who have taught me through the years. Indeed, the Scriptures are "profitable for teaching" (2 Tim. 3:16).

While I appreciate all our Bible class teachers today, I also see a need to remind brethren to focus on the Bible text itself and not focus on secondary things. If we are not careful, the secondary things (things meant to illustrate the Bible text) quickly become the primary things. Let's face it. To teach a good Bible class properly, the teacher has to take time during the week to learn the biblical text. The teacher needs to study the context, facts, word meanings, etc. This takes time.

Yet, because many class teachers do not have time or make time to do all of this properly, they tend to fall back on the easy stuff, the class "filler" stuff. Teachers of the younger students can fall back on filling the time with activities and not the text. Teachers of the older students and adults can fall back on filling the time with conversations and "sharing" their thoughts about the Bible without learning what's in the Bible. On the way to the

church building, an unprepared teacher may think, "I can always do such-and-such to fill the time." "I can always give my kids a coloring sheet or a crossword puzzle." "We can always play Bible hang-man." "We can always talk and share what we think about the Bible." Etc.

Sometimes others in the local church do not know that teachers are unprepared because the teaching is done behind closed



doors. The leaders do not know that their "teachers" are really not teaching. The parents do not know that their children are not being taught well. They just see their children coming out of the classroom with workbooks and handouts and think all is fine. The children, when they are young, do not know that they are not being taught. With this in mind, let me offer five practices that will help us to focus on teaching the Bible text.

1. Read the Bible Text in Class.

Let me encourage all our Bible class teachers to spend some time during class reading the actual text of the Bible out loud. It is very good to hear the words of Scripture read clearly. No, this is not a waste of time. We are not trying to "kill some time" because we are unprepared. Rather, we are following a biblical precedent. Nehemiah 8 is a good example of this. In this instance, God's word was first read out loud, then interpreted or explained, and then applied. Moreover, in 1 Timothy 4:13, we learn that "reading" God's word is tied to "teaching" God's word.

Remember, it is very possible that some students have not read the Bible before coming to class. Visitors may not have read or heard this text before. Others have forgotten it and some need a reminder. Let's be honest and real, some students, young

and old, come to class unprepared. For whatever reason, they have not read their lesson in the workbook and they have not read their Bible. At least while you have them with you for a few minutes each week, you can read the text of God's word to them. Also, hearing God's word from a different, literal-based translation can also be helpful. Teachers should read the Bible text in class. You can read and you can have your students read as well.

Encourage each student to bring his own Bible, open it up, and read from it.

2. Teach the Bible Text, Not the Workbook.

Let me encourage all our Bible class teachers to spend the majority of the class teaching and explaining the Bible text and spend less time reading from the workbook. Workbooks are good. I have written them and I use them. However, the workbook should be an aid, not the main thing. Encourage your students to fill out the workbook at home and even answer questions from it in class, but focus on the Bible text. What God says in the text, not what a human author says, is what is important. Remember, you are a Bible teacher (you explain what a Bible verse means), not a workbook coordinator (you make sure the students read from the workbook).

3. Demand Answers From the Bible Text, Not the Workbook.

Let me encourage all our Bible class teachers to require their students to give Bible answers to Bible questions. I mean, the students need to answer with the specific wording that comes straight out of the text, not the generalized and paraphrased wording of the author in a workbook. One thing that is occurring today is that our students are learning to repeat what an author says, but they don't know what the text of their Bible actually says. If they answer with the words of the author, fine, but encourage them to turn in their Bible and give the answer that comes directly out of the verse. Have them read the verse and then answer again with what the Bible says.

4. Bring the Students Back to the Bible Text.

Let me encourage all our Bible class teachers to keep the students focused on the text of Scripture. It is very easy in a class to drift into generalized discussions *about* the Bible and not learn the meaning of the Bible text itself. Yes,

give students the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. This is one way we learn. Nevertheless, keep the discussion focused on learning the Bible text. Sometimes a teacher has good intentions and he starts with the text, but the discussion soon goes astray with the teacher and students "sharing" for the rest of the class period. This is not using our class time wisely.

5. Apply the Bible Text Before You Finish.

Let me encourage all our Bible class teachers to make practical, current, and daily applications from the Bible text each time in class. I have known of really good Bible class teachers who can explain the meaning of the text, but not apply it to the lives of their students today. We must do both. Read Nehemiah 8 again. God's word was first read, then interpreted (i.e., explained), and then applied. Let us follow this same structure today in our classes. Make time for Bible reading (What does the text say?), Bible interpretation (What does the text mean?), and Bible application (What does the text mean for us today?) in each class period.

Am I opposed to classroom activities, workbooks, and discussions that help illustrate the lessons of a particular Bible text? Of course not. They are helpful, especially in the younger grades. However, each Bible class teacher needs to focus on teaching the Bible text. Remember, it's Bible class, not activities class. It's Bible class, not workbook class. It's Bible class, not a chat session. If we have drifted from our primary goal and purpose as Bible teachers, let's come back to the text of Scripture. I hope these five reminders will help all of our teachers us to do that. **T**



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Wisdom

by Jacob Lawrence

Proverbs all to attain wisdom: “Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way” (Prov. 23:19). Shall we be wise or foolish? Will we build our houses on the rock of divine truth, or the sands of human understanding?

Introduction

Wisdom can be a tricky topic for some to understand. Actually, I don’t think many people *do* understand it. Some think that wisdom can just be handed to them. This is not true. You must strive for it and ask for it.

What is wisdom? *Merriam Webster* defines wisdom as the “ability to discern inner qualities and relationships.” *Dictionary.com* defines wisdom as “the quality or state of being wise; knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action.” In the NT, the Greek word *sophia*, translated “wisdom,” refers to “the capacity to understand and function accordingly” (BDAG, 934). In summary, wisdom is the ability to have knowledge and know how to apply it and use it.

Divine Wisdom Versus Human Wisdom

Before jumping into the study itself, let’s consider divine wisdom and human wisdom. We should already know that divine wisdom is much better than human wisdom. Divine wisdom is from God; human wisdom is not. God is perfect; man is flawed, and so also is human wisdom.

Man’s Flawed Wisdom

After the period of the Judges, Israel did what *they* thought was wise, not what *God* thought was wise (Judges 21:25). That resulted in their captivity a couple hundred years later (2 Kings 24:10-16;

25:1-10; 17:6-23). God had grown tired of Israel’s repeated sins and mistakes, so He punished them by sending them into slavery. Clearly, man’s wisdom is often inaccurate, flawed, and undependable. Even Solomon—the wisest man who ever lived, except for Jesus—warned against human wisdom (Prov. 3:7-8)! Yet, human wisdom can be upgraded into a form of wisdom that is trustworthy, i.e., through God’s divine wisdom (Jas. 1:5). While we do not inherently possess God’s wisdom, we can become *wiser* by following His will.

God’s Divine Wisdom

Let’s look at Jesus. He was God in fleshly form, so He had divine wisdom (Mark 6:1-2; Luke 2:52). Jesus possessed wisdom, and it continued to grow. Jesus was perfect. Obviously, no one but God is truly perfect. While Jesus was a man, He was also God—with a full measure of divine wisdom. So there are two types of wisdom: (1) flawed, human wisdom; and (2) perfect, divine wisdom.

What Does Wisdom Look Like?

Now that we have discussed the two types of wisdom, let’s consider what wisdom looks like.

Solomon

Young King Solomon asked God for wisdom. This was a wise thing to do already. God told Solomon that he could have anything he desired. Solomon chose wisdom (1 Kings 3:3-15).

God kept His promise and granted Solomon wisdom. However, that wisdom was soon tested when two women came before the king, claiming the same child (1 Kings 3:16-28). How did he identify the actual mother? Solomon knew the *real* mother would do *anything* to see her son live, so far as to give her son up to a complete stranger. So Solomon easily identified the rightful mother. He judged wisely. Was it through human wisdom that Solomon found out who the actual mother was? No, it was through God’s divine wisdom.

Daniel and His Friends

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken from their nation, cities, and homes, and exiled into a nation that knew not God (Dan. 1:1-8). Far from home, these four youths could’ve done anything they wanted and no one would’ve stopped them. However, they stayed true to God. This was wise; they knew about God and His laws and obeyed them when put to the test (Dan. 3:1, 8-18).

The Bereans

How do you think what the Bereans did was wise? The Bereans didn’t just take Paul’s words and blindly accept them. Instead, they *studied* to make sure that he was preaching the truth (Acts 17:10-11).

The Apostles

Peter and the apostles were being told to stop preaching about Jesus. So they listened and shut up, right? *No!*



They knew God was more important than the men who wanted them to stop preaching. They knew what God wanted was what they had to follow—not what man wanted. This is a great example of wisdom; they listened to God rather than man (Acts 4:13-20; 5:23-29).

How Do We Get Wisdom?

So, we know what wisdom is, and we've looked at examples of wisdom. So how do we *get* wisdom? We can find wisdom. However, only God knows where it is and decides whether to give it (Job 28:12-28). So how do we get it? We look for it in the right place (1 Cor. 1:18-31). We ask God for wisdom (Jas. 1:5). If we ask for it, He will give us an opportunity to grasp it.

Wisdom calls to us (Prov. 1:20-33), but we must recognize its call, and respond appropriately, if we hope to attain it. We live according to its teaching (Jas. 3:17). If we forsake wisdom, wisdom will forsake us.

Conclusion

So what is wisdom? Wisdom involves attaining knowledge *and* knowing how to apply it.

If we want to grow as Christians, we must beg for wisdom, as did Solomon. God *will* give it to us. When He does, we must recognize it, and take it. Once we take it, we must use it for good.

Remember the Bible examples which have been mentioned above, and act like them. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had wisdom and did good when surrounded by evil. We can do the same. The Bereans used wisdom to make sure Paul was preaching the truth. We must search the Scriptures as well. Even if it's the same trusted preacher in the pulpit every time, *we must search the Scriptures*. This is especially if it's a new (or less experienced) teacher in the pulpit. Who knows? He may knowingly or unknowingly teach error. Peter and the apostles had wisdom and used it, for they feared God rather than men. Wicked men could kill them, but God could send them to hell. In like manner, we must obey God rather than man.

Why should we want wisdom? With wisdom, we can grow more as Christians. There is more chance to do good when one grows in wisdom. It offers with more opportunities for service. Yet, without wisdom, there is no hope of spreading the gospel effectively. Do not let wisdom pass you by, for you may never get another chance. **LU**

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“Righteousness Exalts a Nation”

by Kyle Pope

How does God define right and wrong? How does pursuing God’s standard benefit a nation? Proverbs 14:34 teaches some general truths that every Christian should recognize.

Introduction

The Bible sometimes reveals principles of general truth that do not apply in every instance. Proverbs 22:6, for example, teaches, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (NKJV). This is not a guarantee that sound teaching in childhood prevents unfaithfulness to the Lord as an adult—as Solomon, who likely penned these words, proves (see Prov. 10:1; 1 Kings 11:4). This is a general truth. In most cases, teaching our children to love and fear the Lord produces adults who remain faithful to Him.

Proverbs 14:34, from which the title of this study is drawn, is a similar example. It reads, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Does this guarantee that nations who do right will always be victorious in battle, have flourishing economies, and develop happy, healthy, and safe communities? No. Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33), and Paul told Timothy, “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). This, like Proverbs 22:6, is a general truth. When nations, communities, families, and churches practice what is right and seek to be right before God, it raises them out of the chaos and turmoil of this world into an exalted condition.

General Truths Rely Upon Proper Definitions.

What constitutes what is right? Our world is going through a conceptual crisis of definitions. What used to be

considered right and true is under attack. What used to be considered wrong and evil is flaunted and marched into the public spotlight without shame. Will such redefinitions of righteousness exalt a nation? No. Long ago, the Lord warned, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20).

What, then, determines whether something is right or wrong? Do our individual feelings and opinions set the standard? The criminal thinks that his actions are right. Everyone has different feelings and opinions. Is right and wrong really that subjective?

Some say it is cultural. Do the customs and mores of each culture determine right and wrong? Certainly, different societies and cultures develop different ideas that come to be bound upon the members of their communities by local laws or peer pressure, but history demonstrates how transitory these standards are. What is criminal at one time can become legal and approved only a few years later. Is right and wrong really something that variable?

Thankfully, the Bible offers us a much different gauge to determine righteousness. The psalmist declared of God, “all Your commandments are righteousness” (Ps. 119:172b). God has revealed His will for humanity in the inspired texts of Scripture. Paul explained, through the Holy Spirit, “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, are “profitable” for “instruction in righteousness” equipping us for “every good work,” then the assertion is that they serve as the true and unchanging standard of determining right and wrong.

The message of salvation and life in Christ revealed in the New Testament is often referred to as “the gospel”—a word meaning “good news.” Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Rom. 1:16-17). So, while “all Scripture” is inspired of God, the message of Christ contained in the New Testament now reveals “the righteousness of God”—that is, what God now defines as right and how one may now be right before Him. It is this “righteousness” in the lives of individual citizens and this “righteousness” when allowed to shape and influence civil law that will exalt a nation.

General Truths Often Use Relative Terms.

What does it mean to exalt something? It depends on what it is. The same Hebrew word translated “exalts” in Proverbs 14:34 is used elsewhere of bringing up children (Isa. 1:2) or the growth of trees (Ezek. 31:4-5). Does righteousness raise up a nation in that sense? Perhaps to a certain extent, but that’s not generally



how we think of the exaltation of a nation or of people. We noticed above that righteousness does not eliminate tribulation or persecution, but can actually cause it. So, the exaltation promised in Proverbs 14:34 does not guarantee a life free of trouble and hardship.

Perhaps we can compare this to a statement made by Jesus. In teaching against religious ostentation, He taught, “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt. 23:11-12). How will one “be exalted” if he deliberately avoids titles and behavior that makes him stand above others? On the one hand, it may come from honor given by others rather than something taken upon one’s self. Jesus used similar language in a parable about one invited to a wedding who took the lowest seat, but was then honored by being moved to a greater seat (Luke 14:7-11).

Jesus’s words may also address spiritual exaltation. The disciple of Christ, in many cases, must accept self-denial and deprivation in this life in anticipation of an exalted hope in eternal life. The rich young ruler was told, “Go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven” (Matt. 19:21b). The disciples were promised, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father

or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life” (Mark 10:29-30). This promises spiritual blessings “now in this time” and “in the age to come” despite any sacrifices or persecutions that saints may suffer in service to the Lord.

The exaltation promised to the righteous nation is much the same. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10). Peter wrote, “But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed” (1 Pet. 3:14a). In spite of whatever suffering the righteous may face in this life, they are in a spiritually exalted condition (cf. Eph. 2:6-7). As children of God, they are honored, loved, and in fellowship with the King as they await the promise of inheriting the exalted blessing of eternal life with God in heaven.

General Truths Depend Upon Meeting Specific Conditions.

The exaltation promised in Proverbs 14:34 is contingent upon the practice and attaining of righteousness as defined by God. Man imagines that doing what is “right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6; 21:25)

leads to happiness, justice, peace, and prosperity. That wasn’t true in the time of the judges, and it isn’t true in our world today. The Holy Spirit warns, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts” (Prov. 21:2). Before the throne of God’s judgment, our opinions don’t matter.

Only the righteousness of God, as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, will exalt our nation and our lives. We will never come to a time when our world, as a whole, embraces the gospel: “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:14). In that sense, Proverbs 14:34 is an ideal that can never be absolutely attained. Yet, righteousness as it relates to the status of a nation has never meant that every single individual lives right. It often means that the righteous minority has the courage to act. As more and more men and women today rebelliously do only what is right in their own eyes, may God’s people have the courage to seek and practice the true righteousness of God. 📖



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“Sin Is a Reproach to Any People”

by Ron Halbrook

No nation which defies the laws of God, even in the name of the woke agenda, can escape His just and righteous wrath.

Introduction

King Solomon spoke from experience, observation, and divine inspiration when he distilled wisdom in this proverb: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). This truth is written into the history of all nations from the beginning until now. As surely as God rules the physical universe by physical laws, He rules the human family by moral and spiritual laws enforced by His providence.

God scattered the human race by confusing them with multiple languages, thus forcing them to congregate into communities which became nations with shared values (Gen. 11:1-9). God ordained governments to protect obedient citizens and to punish criminals who endanger the safety and well-being of these communities (Rom. 13:1-4). These steps were necessary to restrain the corrupting and demoralizing nature of sin, lest the world should revert to the depraved nature of Noah’s generation.

In most cases, governments reflect the moral character of their people. When the leaders and the people embrace divergent values, change is inevitable in one direction or the other. Leaders have been known to guide their people in correcting their course, and a spirit of repentance has been known to sweep through a nation and touch the hearts of its leaders (2 Kgs. 22-23; Jon. 3:5-9). However, when unrestrained sin runs its course through a nation and its leadership, the nation collapses.

What Is Sin?

If we are to avoid sin and its destructive force, we must first know what sin is. From the beginning of time, God has defined sin for mankind. He created man in His image with the moral capacity to learn right from wrong, and with the free will to choose between the two. Man was given free range to eat from all the trees of the garden of Eden, including “the tree of life,” but one tree was forbidden, thus drawing the line between “good and evil” (Gen. 2:9, 16-17).

Adam and Eve lived in blissful fellowship with God until they crossed the line and experienced the difference between good and evil. They not only tasted the guilt and shame of sin, but also its penalty of death. Tasting spiritual death in the severing of their joyous relationship with God, they attempted to hide from Him, and subsequently experienced physical death after they were banished from the Garden (Gen. 3:8, 22-24).

Satan appeals to our selfishness and vain pride by seducing us to think that we ourselves can become “as gods,” creating our own standards of right and wrong without suffering consequences and penalties (Gen. 3:4-5). The current woke movement disguises sin as “freedom” and “social justice,” just as Satan has disguised his agenda throughout history. Isaiah 5:20 warns, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” God’s law reveals what is right and what is sinful, what is good and what

is evil (1 John 3:4). Furthermore, His standard is not subject to human review or amendment.

Jesus warned that “ravening wolves” come in “sheep’s clothing,” peddling their false philosophies and dogmas as truth and righteousness (Matt. 7:15). Paul explained that “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

The false awakening, or “woke” agenda, is vividly exemplified by the website of the C.D. Educators for Social Justice: A Project of Teaching for Change. With repeated use of the word “demands,” the site proclaims “the Black Lives Matter 13 Guiding Principles and demands,” starting with the innocuous introduction of “Restorative Justice.”

We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for black people and, by extension, all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

What, specifically, does this loving beautiful vision anticipate? They speak of awakening “young and older children” to a “worldwide” plan for “diversity” as follows:

6. Queer Affirming—We are committed to fostering a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the

tight grip of heteronormative thinking or, rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual unless s/he or they disclose otherwise.

7. Trans Affirming—We are committed to embracing and making space for trans brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are committed to being self-reflexive and doing the work required to dismantle cis-gender privilege [cis-gender refers to acceptance of birth gender, RH] and uplift black trans folk, especially black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.

8. Collective Value—We are guided by the fact all black lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location.

Another plank in the platform demands the dismantling of “the patriarchal practice” which requires women “to mother” when they need to give their time to “justice work.” In short, this agenda demands that American schools be turned into hothouses producing comrades devoted to dismantling Bible standards of gender roles, morality, marriage, and family life.

This is not the path to peace and justice but is the dark road of sin, rebellion, and misery traveled by the human family again and again since Satan first proposed to Eve, “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). The French Revolution in 1789 tread this path, waving the banner of “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité” (i.e., “liberty, equality, fraternity”), but quickly became a bloodbath and a house of death.

Why and How Is Sin a Disgrace?

Every sin is a rebellion against God, insulting Him, demeaning Him, and attempting to push Him out of the universe which He created. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of our very existence. In words that apply

to all sin, God rebuked Israel’s selfish and sinful ways:

Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand.” Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on Him (Isa. 1:2-4, NIV).

Only when loving, hearing, and serving God do men learn to love and serve each other. Shouted demands with raised fists do not produce social justice, but spawn riots, mayhem, and iron-fisted dictators who oppress poor and rich alike. Nations degenerate and collapse under the weight of such rampant sin. Through Isaiah, God pled with Israel to repent and escape the wrath of God:

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it (Isa. 1:16-20, KJV).

A Disgrace to Any People

God rules over the universe and the nations in a way which allows people who seek Him to find Him (Acts 17:24-27). He likens nations to clay in a potter’s hand. If the clay becomes marred, the potter reshapes it—if the nation rebels against God, He replaces it in His own time and way (Jer. 18:1-10). Peter reminds us that God did not spare the angels who rebelled against Him but cast them into Tartarus to await the final judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). If creatures of a higher order are

punished for their rebellion, how much more may we, who are a lesser order, expect to face God’s just wrath!

The flood is a powerful reminder that when people harden their hearts against God and descend into the maelstrom of darkness and sin, He pours out His righteous anger on them. “Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark” (Gen. 7:23, NIV). God overthrew the prosperous city-state of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins of sexual immorality by engulfing them in fire and brimstone for time and eternity—making them “an example” of “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Gen. 19:24; Jude 7).

Throughout history, individuals and nations who have defied God have brought themselves to ruin. God reminded His chosen nation of Israel how they had refused to repent when He patiently chastened them. Therefore, they would be doomed to Assyrian captivity by God’s righteous judgment: “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12). No nation can defy God with immunity. That is the true awakening that is sorely, direly, desperately needed at this hour! **T**

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Woke's Impact on Religion

by Mike Willis

The woke movement is a looming threat to Christians in America because its belief system undermines and radically opposes the tenets of Christian faith.

Introduction

While this article focuses upon “Woke’s Impact upon Religion,” it is important that we understand the movement’s origin and recent impact upon society.

Many people of my generation have been shocked by the meteoric rise of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in America. Books have already been written to better understand the background from which it came and how it is affecting American culture. Today, the idea of being “woke” is to recognize the role of the white oppressor and the black oppressed (Note #1). Those in positions of authority are the oppressors and those affected by their decisions are the oppressed. At first, the term was only applied to racism (white oppressors/black oppressed), but soon the term was used of all kinds of oppression: feminist, sexual (including homosexual, transgender, etc.), political, and religious. It is called identity politics (Note #2). Because Christianity has been the dominant religion in America, it also is viewed as an oppressor. In the Marxist view from which the social justice movement’s belief came, the oppressed are urged to disrupt or destroy all kinds of oppressors.

A white person becomes woke (Note #3) when he confesses the sins of his ancestors’ involvement in slavery and other forms of racism. The person is expected to repent of his ancestors’ guilt and the advantages he has inherited as a result of his “white privilege,” i.e. being born white in a society dominated by whites. This confession might include

confessing one’s sins for complicity in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, although one’s parents and grandparents had never even seen King, except on television.

Sociologists who are trying to identify and classify the BLM or woke movement are placing it in the category of a religion (Note #4). There are many similarities between the faith of the social justice

movement and religion, as itemized in the materials listed. One of the primary comparisons is white supremacy (Note #5) and original sin (Note #6) as understood by Calvinist theology. In Calvinist doctrine, original sin is passed down by procreation from Adam to every man. It corrupts his nature, though he may repent of his sins; one can never escape his corrupted nature. He can receive salvation only by the



influence of God's Holy Spirit, enabling him to believe. Similarly, whites inherit by procreation their whiteness and there is nothing they can do to escape or overcome their whiteness. Becoming woke is comparable to the conversion experience whereby one confesses his whiteness and accepts his responsibilities for the oppression of the black people.

The BLM movement quickly evolved into the larger social justice movement that includes feminist, sexual, and religious oppression. The woke movement is a postmodern, secular movement which has the foundational belief that God is dead, embracing the bleak nihilism that results from that belief. Here are its axioms:

- Knowledge and truth are largely socially constructed, not objectively discovered.
- What we believe to be “true” is in large part a function of social power: who wields it, who's oppressed by it, and how it influences which messages we hear.
- Power is generally oppressive and self-interested (and implicitly zero-sum).
- Thus, most claims about supposedly objective truth are actually power plays, or strategies for legitimizing particular social arrangements (see Lindsay and Nayna, quoting Connor Wood, under sub-heading “Faith in Social Justice”).

The power of this movement would be difficult to exaggerate. Lindsay and Nayna described the power of the social justice movement saying,

Social Justice seeks societal institutionalization at the broadest scales, but it started out by bending our universities to its agenda. Because universities are the houses of higher education in our society, thus the pinnacle institutions for creating, legitimizing, and passing on knowledge, this has been a frightfully worrying takeover. And this point that they've taken over our greatest institutions for producing and transmitting knowledge is no small point. Religions in secular sociopolitical environments are forced to treat their beliefs as beliefs. Social Justice has arranged things such that it *can treat its beliefs as knowledge*.

The result is that this slow creep into academic institutions makes Social Justice much harder to challenge or dismiss from the outside than religious precepts (at least in the modernized world over the last couple hundred years—certainly this difficulty exists in every non-secular society, from the pre-Enlightenment Catholics to the devout Hindu and Islamic worlds today, all of which also claim or claimed to be the true arbiters and producers of genuine knowledge). This enables Social Justice as an ideology to seep out of the university with undue legitimacy, both through citations of its research and application by its graduates. In this way, it creeps into other institutions, including *primary and secondary education* and any *portions of media, the corporate world, and politics* that are susceptible to it. Surely you will have noticed that everywhere people seem to be taking up initiatives to incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion at an institutional level. Unwelcome and worrying as it may be, this is to be expected (under the sub-heading “Social Justice Institutionalized”).

Another example of the power of the BLM/social justice movement is seen from the riots of 2020. The Armed Conflict Locations & Event Data Project (ACLED) published a paper concerning “Demonstrations & Political Violence in America,” for the Summer of 2020, which says, “Between 26 May, the day after (George) Floyd's death, and 22 August, ACLED records over 7,750 demonstrations linked to the BLM movement across more than 2,440 locations in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.” Again, the power of this movement is difficult to exaggerate!

The Woke Movement's Attack on Religion

1. It Denies the Existence of God.

Originating in secularist, post-modern thought, the woke movement rejects the belief in God. I do not have space here to answer the atheist position, but refer you to a good discussion in Daniel

H. King's book, *Does God Exist?* (Truth Publications, 2020).

2. It Denies the Inspiration of Scripture.

This is a logical consequence of denying God's existence. Therefore, there is no inspired revelation to guide mankind through his earthly life. For the woke movement, the Bible claims for itself are mistaken: “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Leaders of the woke movement would acknowledge that the Bible is sacred to Christians in the same sense that the Book of Mormon is to Mormons and the Koran is to Muslims, but none of these books carries any weight with unbelievers.

3. It Denies the Existence of Truth.

It is logically compelled to deny absolute truth. By denying God, a person denies that there is a God point of view on any subject. Jesus was mistaken when He said about the words of the Old Testament, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

4. It Denies Absolute Standards of Morality.

Post modern morality is what is right for you, but you should not try to bind his moral standards on me. The movement seems oblivious to the logical consequences of their own social justice movement. Who defines what is “justice”? If there is no absolute morality, what makes it wrong to oppress anyone else? One should hold his belief about social justice to himself and not try to bind it on others. It would seem that “oppression” in a secularist model for the universe is nothing more than the natural consequences of Darwinian evolution, the survival of the fittest. In that context, oppression has no moral meaning.

5. It Denies That Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

The post modern view of Jesus, if one admits He is a historical person (some do not), is that He was a good man who was an itinerant teacher of the first century, a faith healer, exorcist, and “miracle” worker. He was crucified in Jerusalem by Pontius Pilate. That is about as far as a postmodernist can go. Yet, the belief that Jesus was a simply good man is about the most impossible belief that one can have. If Jesus claimed to be God (and He did, see John 1:1-3, 14), He was either a liar (therefore, not good) or a lunatic (for claiming to be God). If He was neither liar nor lunatic, one is left with only one alternative—He was Lord! Yet, the postmodernist does not believe God exists.

6. It Denies Christianity.

The social justice movement opposes Christianity as an oppressive religion that should be held as one’s private view, if held at all, because it is oppressive to feminists, homosexuals, and transgender people. It holds the Christian religion responsible for the oppression of black slaves in America, although it is historically evident that atheism is not what led to the liberation of black men from slavery. Rather, it was the biblical teaching that all of mankind is created in the image of God, both male and female (Gen. 1:26). The social justice warriors have committed violent attacks against Christianity when it defaced and damaged Roman Catholic Church houses of worship because of their pro-abortion stance and also launched attacks against Right to Life organizations and their buildings. It is a religious oppressor trying to force its views about abortion and sexuality on all other people.

7. It Perverts the Meaning of “Justice.”

Merriam-Webster defines “justice” as “the maintenance or administration of what is just, especially by the impartial

adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.” When did it become “justice” to hold any man accountable for a crime that he has not committed, such as occurs when it tries to extract reparations for slavery from those who have never seen or owned a slave? Recent court decisions are recognizing that the Affirmative Action programs are racist, depriving both Asians and Whites of equal opportunities because of the color of their skin.

8. The Woke Movement Is Not About Social Justice.

It is a battle for power! Should this movement gain full control of power, we can expect not only cancel culture, but also persecution, imprisonment, and even death. Woke leaders are among the first to “cancel” anyone who disagrees with them (Note #7). The cancel culture is ready to deprive the free speech of those who disagree, to use the powers of their institutions and that of government itself to silence opponents. It is but a short step between cancel culture and political and religious oppression. Isn’t it ironic that a movement identifying itself as Social Justice, appealing for justice for the oppressed, is already showing signs of becoming the oppressor. It already has control of our educational system in higher education and is showing its power over elementary through high school by indoctrinating our children with government-sponsored social justice/wokeism. It shows itself intolerant of Christian beliefs and morality, and is willing to use the power of federal government to enforce its beliefs about homosexuality and transgender. To emphasize the magnitude of the woke movement threat, we should recognize that it already controls all levels of education, government, and on top of that, has the buy-in of major corporations and technology giants.

Conclusion

As I am writing this article, Queen Elizabeth II has just passed away and her funeral is in progress. When her passing was imminent, Professor Uju Anya, a university professor and researcher in applied linguistics, critical sociolinguistics, and critical discourse studies primarily examining race, gender, sexual, and social class identities at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA, wrote wishing the Queen “excruciating pain” upon her death for presiding over a genocidal regime. How disgusting! What would happen to a professor at an American university who posted the same thing about former president Barack Obama? Would he still have a job at the end of the day? Nothing is likely to happen to Prof. Anya because higher education is controlled by the woke establishment. I am not optimistic that anything will come from this explicit example of the venom from the woke establishment. It makes you ask, in Marxist terms, who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor?

The spread of the woke movement portends ominous times for Christians. To this writer, the future looks bleak in America. 🇺🇸

End Notes

Note #1

For a brief account of the history of the word “woke” and its meaning, consider the following:

Before 2014, the call to “stay woke” was, for many people, unheard of. The idea behind it was common within black communities at that point—the notion that staying “woke” and alert to the deceptions of other people was a basic survival tactic. But in 2014, following the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, “stay woke” suddenly became the cautionary watchword of Black Lives Matter activists on the streets, used in a chilling and specific context: keeping watch

for police brutality and unjust police tactics.

In the six years since Brown's death, "woke" has evolved into a single-word summation of leftist political ideology, centered on social justice politics and critical race theory. This framing of "woke" is bipartisan: It's used as a shorthand for political progressiveness by the left, and as a denigration of leftist culture by the right.

On the left, to be "woke" means to identify as a staunch social justice advocate who's abreast of contemporary political concerns—or to be perceived that way, whether or not you ever claimed to be "woke" yourself (Romano, Aja. "A history of 'wokeness'").

Note #2

"Identity politics is a political approach wherein people of a particular race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social background, social class, or other identifying factors develop political agendas that are based upon these identities. Identity politics is deeply connected with the idea that some groups in society are oppressed and begins with analysis of that oppression. The term is used primarily to describe political movements in western societies, covering nationalist, multicultural, women's rights, civil rights, and LGBT movements" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_politics).

Note #3

"Woke (WOHK) is an English adjective meaning 'alert to racial prejudice and discrimination' that originated in African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Beginning in the 2010s, it came to encompass a broader awareness of social inequalities such as sexism, and has also been used as shorthand for American Left ideas involving identity politics and social justice, such as the notion of white privilege and slavery reparations

for African Americans" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/woke>).

Note #4

See Voddie T. Baucham, Jr., *Fault Lines*; John McWhorter, "Atonement as Activism" (*The American Interest*, 24:1 (May 24, 2018) , available online at <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/05/24/atonement-as-activism/>; "Antiracism, Our Flawed New Religion," (*The Daily Beast*, (April 14, 2017) , available online at <https://www.thedailybeast.com/antiracism-our-flawed-new-religion?ref=scroll>; "On 'Social Justice' and the Gospel," Parts 1-4 (available in the archives of gty.org); Michael Vlahos, "Church of Woke: The Next American Religion?" (*Humanitas Journal* 34 (2021):1-2, pp. 113-122); James M. Patterson, "Wokeness and the New Religious Establishment" (*National Affairs*, 52: Summer 2022); James A. Lindsay and Mike Nayna, "Postmodern Religion and the Faith of Social Justice," *Areo Magazine*, 12/18/2018 (available online).

Note #5

To most of us, a white supremacist is someone who is a member of the KKK or other white supremacist groups; to the social justice group, every white person is a White Supremacist by birth.

Note #6

To define "original sin," I quote from the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

3. They (Adam and Eve, mw) being the root of mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by original generation.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions"

(Chapter 6, Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof).

Note #7

"The notion of cancel culture is a variant on the term call-out culture. It is often said to take the form of boycotting or shunning an individual (often a celebrity) who is deemed to have acted or spoken in an unacceptable manner" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cancel_culture#:~:text=The%20notion%20of%20cancel%20culture,spoken%20in%20an%20unacceptable%20manner).

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Woke's Impact on Culture

by Daniel H. King, Sr.

American culture has changed radically—most notably with the woke mindset. This perverse phenomenon is eating like an acid through the fabric of our society. Where is it taking us and what does the future hold for us?

Introduction

Wokeness is a new reality on the American landscape. Sometimes referred to as Cultural Marxism, Neo-Marxism, social justice, and identity politics, it is a fly in the ointment of the modern cultural environment. For most ordinary people, it is considered a freakish mob of small-minded, would-be tyrants. They refuse to reason with others, shouting them down, cursing and insulting them. One would think that few people would give them the time of day. Yet, there is little doubt that, despite the dilettantish fetishes of these people, they have gotten the attention of the public media outlets, grabbed control of the major universities in the US, forced many corporations and national institutions to kowtow to their whims, and even slithered into the upper echelons of the national government. As Mike Pompeo said, “Wokeism is not what America is about. It distorts our glorious founding and our real history to make this country look like something it isn't now, or ever has been.” It is like a cultural cancer that consumes the vitals of our nation. Its effects are only destructive, never beneficial.

This ideology is based on Critical Theory, borrowed from German philosophy and social theory in the Western European Marxist tradition, known originally as the Frankfurt School. It sees itself as a movement which challenges the underlying power structures of society and liberates people from the restraints that control law and order. According to Critical Theory, “the only things that exist are hierarchies of

power, and those hierarchies must be eliminated. The goal of these theorists is to completely dismantle a culture, and reinvent it from the ground up. This new religion. . . has infected every facet of American culture. Since wokeism is self-centered destruction of society, it must create its own commandments and rules to meet its goals and objectives. Wokes use these rules to banish anyone who they consider a threat to them. Critical Theory does not improve society, so wokes use every means possible to eliminate people who support the traditional institutions, morals, and social values that guide normal societies. They develop their own rules and ostracize everyone who does not conform” (William Haupt III, 4/26/2021).

America was already a hopelessly divided nation politically, almost evenly divided along lines of traditional versus liberal and progressive thinking. With the arrival of wokeism, the division has now risen to a fever pitch. People are at one another's throats, ready to fight at the drop of a hat. The culture is at a tipping-point, or, perhaps the expression, boiling-point, is better. Revolution is in the air. Surprisingly, it is coming from two different directions: the ultra left radicals and the far right patriotic crowd. Both sides blame the other for the problem. Violence is a constant on American streets. Conservative speakers are shouted down and not allowed to speak on college campuses and even at public events. Murder rates and crime rates have been much higher lately in the inner cities, ghettos, and gang infested neighborhoods. Life is not as it was.

Peace and solemnity seem to be a thing of the past in the American public square. What is ahead for us?

1. Societal Divisions Will Become More Bitter

Woke progressives are intent on making distinctions between people whom they consider “the oppressed” in society versus those who are labeled “oppressors.” This being so, divisiveness in society will continue to increase so that Americans will find it difficult to work beside others who are different from themselves in some way or another. For many people, this will be a strange new phenomenon because, all of their lives, they have lived and worked beside others from whom they have differed greatly and have done so peacefully and harmoniously until lately.

2. Racial Strife Among Citizens Will Increase.

One of the most evil aspects of cancel culture and the woke agenda is its tendency to aggravate what has always been the deepest division in most societies: racial or ethnic differences. This has been a source of hatred and war since time began. Christianity spoke to this problem and has always been a source of moderation in such matters (Col. 3:11). There are two very wicked aspects of this tragic obsession with racial differences that characterize this way of thinking. First, it makes “oppressors” out of people who have never oppressed anyone in their lives, simply by virtue of the color



of their skin. Second, it makes “victims” out of people who have never in fact been victimized by anyone, once more, simply by virtue of the color of their skin. One person who is innocent must be punished and the other person who has not been injured must be rewarded, in both cases because of one factor: skin color. This has come to be called “identitarian ideology.” This is a perspective that “espouses that group identity is the most important thing about a person, and that justice and power must be viewed primarily on the basis of group identity rather than individual merit” (*The Urban Dictionary*). Any society built on such a premise cannot stand, but will end in societal fracture.

3. Rampant Crime and Lawlessness Will Persist.

City mayors and criminal prosecutors who are woke are convinced that the jails should be emptied and criminals should not be prosecuted for their crimes if their skin is a certain color,

hence people who dwell in the areas into which these career criminals are released will become increasingly the victims of individuals with long criminal records. Most of their victims will be the poorer members of society. We are seeing this already in most of the larger cities of America. Unsurprisingly, we are seeing it in every single city where the mayor and prosecutors are woke. Is it not strange that an ideology that seeks to “help” the poor and downtrodden, in fact, only hurts and destroys their communities, and subjects them to fear and victimhood? We are not supposed to notice this, however, because it is not results that matter but only the “good intentions” of these perverse idealists.

4. Rude and Uncivilized Behavior Will Escalate.

The wane of Christianity in our society has led to an expected result which we are also seeing all about us. Leftists and progressives can say what they would like to say about Christianity,

but one thing is certain: it has a civilizing effect on people who may not otherwise have been so. Christian people are not perfect. At times, they may fail to live up to the high expectations of their religion, but it is inarguable that it is to be preferred to living in the midst of heathens and barbarians (cf. Luke 6:35; 1 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 4:32). In effect, that is precisely what we are experiencing to a greater degree lately. Christianity is taught and learned. With people not attending churches any longer, civil society is on the wane. One aspect of this reality is wokeism. The woke elites are rude, crude, vulgar, churlish, and at times even brutal monsters who go for the throats of their enemies like hungry wolves. They are not nice people. Do not fool yourself in thinking so. Simply read after a few of them on Facebook or Twitter. It will not take you long to see of what sort they are.

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4. Hypocritical Judgmentalism Will Abound.

Elites of this ilk are incorrigible hypocrites. Abhijit Naskar said it best: “Woke and cancel culture are signs of a judgmental culture. In their world, you cannot speak to another person without worrying about what they will be thinking about you” (Quoted by Haupt). Jesus taught us not to be judgmental toward others, but rather to show them mercy and understanding (Matt. 7:1ff.), seeing that we all make mistakes and none of us is above sin. In recent years, we have watched as wicked men and women have condemned others for the slightest wrongs in the name of “political correctness.” Meanwhile, many of these same critics have been guilty of the most evil behaviors imaginable, but because they are on the correct side of the political divide, their own transgressions are ignored or even justified because “the end justifies the means.”

5. Forgiveness Will Become a Forgotten Virtue.

Proponents of the woke agenda offer no second chances for anyone. If you commit a transgression against the woke ideology, you will be banned and exiled forever. *Forget public life; you are done.* There have been a number of high-profile comedians who have been destroyed because a single joke “offended” some minority group or another. The most recent cases have been associated with “transsexuals” whose feelings were hurt by a fellow who was himself a minority race storyteller. They sought his firing, as they had done with so many others previously, but in this case, they were unsuccessful. His own minority status apparently shielded him, but others have not been so fortunate. wokeism is an unforgiving religion, and, make no mistake about it, it is a cultic religion that fills the God-shaped vacuum in the lives of these godless individuals. Even though it has no religious structure as such, it has all the functions of religious doctrine and has become the only

religion of some atheists. It has a unique epistemology (theory of knowledge), an evaluation of the human condition, as well as a redemption narrative (Max Funk, 10/20/2020). Jesus, on the other hand, taught us to forgive and show compassion to others, seeing that we all will require it on our own part (Matt. 6:14, 15). wokeism, however, is opposed to traditional religion, so it cares nothing for the Judeo-Christian ethic. It can be unforgiving if it would like, and so it is.

6. Traditional Morality Will Be Maligned.

Promoters of the woke agenda malign traditional morality as they promote sexually deviant lifestyles such as homosexuality and transgenderism. “In a truly surreal inversion of reality, they paint traditional morality as immoral by charging it with being homophobic, transphobic, and similar terms” (*Knights Templar Order International*, 4/30/2021). Name-calling is very much a characteristic of the woke.

7. Opposition to Christianity Will Grow.

Expect more intense hostility toward the Christian religion and additional persecution of Christianity. These advocates of atheism, deism, pantheism, etc., possess an intensive hatred for traditional Christian faith. They describe it as patriarchal, intolerant, and oppressive. This, in spite of the fact that they are the most intolerant and oppressive people around.


8. Climate Change Hysteria Will Soar.

Climate change advocacy is based on the notion that it is desirable and possible to arrest climate change by human actions. Question the “science” on this issue and their response is always: “Off with your head!” Climate change has characterized the planet since its beginning. The idea that human beings can alter it is practically and theoretically

absurd. Scientists have always been divided on this issue. Every few years, though, these radicals cannot help themselves and they tell us the world will end in “X” number of years. Thus far, all of their predictions have proven false. Why would anyone believe them anymore?

Conclusion

Will the woke mentality eventually disappear? Not likely. Tyler Cowen suggests that it will probably evolve into a sub-culture here in the Americas “that is highly educated, highly white, and fairly feminine” (*Bloomberg*, 2/18/2022).” They are entrenched in human resource departments, and fear of employment lawsuits will make it hard to dislodge their risk-averse procedures and pro-diversity rhetoric. The status quo for hiring practices, for better or worse, is now a permanent feature of the American life. . . . The woke also are likely to achieve an even greater hold over American universities. Due to the tenure system, personnel turnover is low, and currently newer and younger faculty are more left wing than are older faculty. The simple march of retirements is going to make universities even more left wing, and even more out of touch with mainstream America” (*Ibid.*). Christians might be better off to avoid these schools altogether. Alternatives are available.

Clearly, wokeism has lost steam in recent months as its advocates have lost their positions on school boards and as prosecutors who have refused to prosecute violent criminals. Even in San Francisco, California, there are limits to people’s patience with wokeism. In fact, even secular humanists have begun to chafe at their profligacy as they saw Richard Dawkins have his “2020 Humanist of the Year” honor rescinded because of statements he made which under the “guise of scientific discourse” were employed “to demean marginalized groups.” When you have lost the atheistic humanists, you have probably gone too far to be relevant much longer! Let us hope wokeism dies a quick death. 

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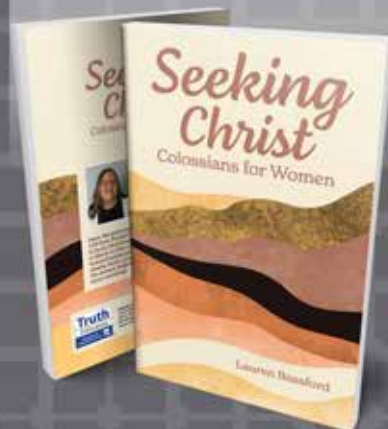
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Woke's Impact on Gender

by Kevin Maxey

Love, understanding, discernment, and correction empower Christians as they engage in the current gender identity debate.

Introduction

In the name of “enlightened awareness,” leading woke advocates are currently attempting to redefine gender. Gender, clearly defined in the past as male or female, now, according to some, refers to one’s perceived personal identity, regardless of biological sex. In other words, your body no longer identifies your gender, you do. Basing sexual identity on personal feelings instead of scientific and divine biology has unleashed an ever-growing cultural gender dysphoria. (Note: The opposite of euphoria, “dysphoria” signifies a state of profound unease or dissatisfaction, and may lead to depression, anxiety, mania, and maladjustment.)

Repercussions of the gender identity debate are pervasive, affecting public classrooms, government legislation, employment policies, entertainment platforms, operating tables, athletic fields, military standards, and even local bathrooms. Confusion abounds as definitions, names, appearances, pronoun identifiers, rules, and relationships are constantly in flux. People, even young children without parental consent, are encouraged to question sexual attraction, explore gender identity, receive hormone replacement therapy, and even undergo sex-reassignment surgery.

How does God call Christians to respond to society’s ever-growing gender dysphoria? In 2 Timothy 2:22-26 Paul told Timothy how to respond to those ensnared by the lustful passions of his day. Reread this familiar passage in light of the current gender identity debate:

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Paul affirms that the Lord’s servant may save souls ensnared by the devil through love, understanding, discernment, and correction.

Approach the Gender Debate With Love.

If you are like me, you may be tempted to correct harshly. However, Paul begins by saying, “Pursue. . . love. . . from a pure heart” (v. 22). Correction without love is abhorrent. “If I have. . . all knowledge. . . but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Remember, the goal is not to prove ourselves right and others wrong. Instead, our goal is to save souls ensnared by Satan. What issue more illustrates the need to help souls flee fleshly lusts than current sexual manifestations of gender dysphoria? As you engage in the gender debate, do so in love. See this as an opportunity to help broken souls who, like all sinners, ourselves included, desperately need God’s love, healing, and transformation (Luke 19:10; 1 Tim. 1:15). The gender identity debate provides us

with an opportunity to lovingly point people to God for answers (John 3:17). Love instead of sneer. Show compassion instead of disdain. Improper attitudes push souls towards Satan. Prepare yourself, instead, to help neighbors, coworkers, brethren, and even children who are struggling to find answers in God.

Approach the Gender Debate With Understanding.

As Paul builds towards correction, he next adds kindness and patience, which only come through listening. Be “kind to everyone. . . patiently enduring evil” (v. 24). The unkind, impatient, and quarrelsome do not listen. “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (Jas. 1:19). Profitable discussion is impossible when participants misunderstand. Do you understand how the LGBTQ+ community defines words like “gender,” “trans,” “intersex,” “asexual,” “body,” and “questioning”? Why do people experiencing gender dysphoria say things like, “I am a woman trapped in a male body,” “I am not my body,” “I don’t belong,” and “I am a boy but I feel more comfortable doing girl things”? Before you can help someone with a problem, you must should seek to understand the problem.

Approach the Gender Debate With Discernment.

Next, Paul calls Timothy to discern between “foolish ignorant controversies” and worthy battles, and between the

truth of God and the lies of the devil (vv. 22-26). The gender identity debate does not stop with superficial expressions of love and understanding. One must also discern. God's word, not human wisdom, is the standard for true spiritual discernment (Heb. 5:14; Acts 17:11). C.S. Lewis encourages discernment, stating, "The Christian and the Materialist hold different beliefs about the universe. They both can't be right. The one who is wrong will act in a way which simply doesn't fit the real universe" (Lewis, 108-9).

Approach the Gender Debate With Correction.

Paul charged Timothy with "correcting" those ensnared by the devil, not harshly, but with "gentleness" (v. 25). The purpose of correction is not condemnation, but salvation. Correction is a demonstration of God's love (Heb. 12:6). The Lord's servant must teach God's truth boldly and clearly.

Carefully applying these four steps to the gender identity debate enables us humbly to plead: "I love you (love); I hear you (understanding); I have searched the

Scriptures (discernment); I gently correct you (correction). Will you love and hear me?"

Woke Advocates Devalue the Body.

Transgender advocates argue: "the body is an accident that has befallen the real me" (O'Donovan, 12); "What does some little bit of flesh between the legs matter?"; "It doesn't matter what living, meat skeleton you've been born in; it's what you feel that defines you" ("Boy or Girl?"). These statements clearly devalue the human body, subjugating it to subjective feelings. woke advocates contribute to body-hate, feed self-hate, encourage gender dysphoria, value subjective feelings over scientific biology, foster manipulative confusion in children, and deceitfully undermine parental consent.

In Contrast, God Values the Body.

Sacred Scripture affirms that the human body is fearfully and wonderfully made:

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You (Ps. 139:13-18).



God values the body through creation. The human body is a manifestation of the Creator's magnificent handiwork. "Male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27). The human body is no accident. Your body is so important, God fashioned it for you!

God values the body through divine function. God sets humanity apart from all creation, when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:26-27). The human body is not to be emasculated or discarded. The human body is not a prison to a confused and fickle self-identity. God made male and female humanity to bear His very image. Your body is so important, God made you to bear His image to the world.

God values the body through marital oneness. Male and female are uniquely different, yet complimentary, as they share in divinely created monogamous union. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, 18; Prov. 18:22). Jesus values this male and female created order when speaking of the sacred moral order of marriage (Matt. 19:3-6). Your body is so important, God made you to be and to receive a perfect complement in marriage.

God values the body through reproductive function. Even evolutionists agree that body parts have purpose and function. Males and females have different body parts for different functions. Humans are not randomly placed in "meat skeletons" to be dismissed, discarded or emasculated according to discontented human will. Human bodies are uniquely fashioned and intentionally purposed with male and female body parts. God empowers males and female bodies with the majestic ability to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). Your body is so important, God uniquely created you with strengths to be used for His glorious purposes.

God values the body through Christ's incarnation. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9; 1:19). The very presence of Jesus in the flesh demonstrates the perfect manifestation of the image of God. Your body is so valuable that even Jesus came to walk in a human body. It was not beneath Jesus to walk in a gendered body. Is it beneath you?


God values the body through the Spirit's indwelling. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" (1 Cor. 6:19). Paul forbids the Christian from defiling his valuable body in illicit sexual acts based on this truth. God values your body, Satan does not.

God values the body through the crucifixion. "For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:19). Your body is so valuable, God paid the highest price possible in order to redeem it.

God values the body through holy living. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. . . Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:13-18). Throughout Scripture, God elevates humanity to use their bodies in purity and holiness. Males and females are not to dress like the other (Deut. 22:5). Same-sex and animal-sex acts are forbidden (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; Lev. 18:22-23). Satan degrades the body, God elevates the body. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness" (Rom. 6:12-13). God made your body to be holy, respected, valued and good!

God values the body through the resurrection. God demonstrates the value of the human body through His promise of even raising our bodies from the dead. "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11, 23; 1 Cor. 15:50-58). Your body is so valuable, God promises to resurrect it.

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. . . "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" . . . But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:52-58).

God values you more than you know. He sent His son to redeem you from your body of sin. Submit your body to the waters of baptism and be washed (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 22:16). God says to you now, "I love you. I hear you. Will you love and hear me?" 

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Kevin Maxey

Kevin has worked with the Port Royal church of Christ in Spring Hill, TN, since 2009. He completed his doctorate in Education at Lipscomb University in 2019. He and his wife, Jennifer, have five children. The church website is springhillchristians.com. He can be reached at maxeyspringhillchristians@gmail.com.

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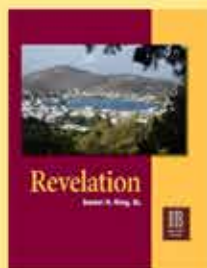
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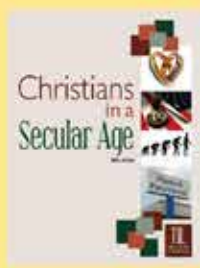


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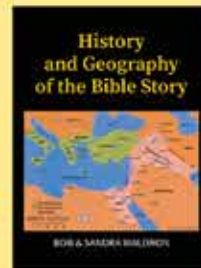
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Woke's Impact on Race

by Shawn Jefferies

While being “woke” may seem helpful, it is actually harmful, and has become a destructive tool of Satan.

Introduction

The woke movement has had a tremendously negative impact on race relations in this country. While we have moved past ugly and harmful periods of legalized slavery and segregation, many are using the statement “stay woke” to suggest America is inherently racist. The phrase promotes the idea that America is a country of white privilege, racial profiling, white supremacy, and systematic and institutional racism. It means that white people are prejudiced and should feel guilty over the sins committed by some of their ancestors.

As a black man who preaches the gospel and labors with a wonderful congregation made up of all races, I am deeply troubled by the impact “wokeness” will have on our country and even the Lord’s kingdom. I fear that if adopted by kingdom citizens, the progress made in diversifying our local congregations over the last several decades will be set back significantly.

I also fear that being “woke” will only diminish acts of true racism. It will be like the shepherd boy who kept falsely calling “wolf.” His false cries eventually led to deaf ears. Once the real wolf showed up, no one would believe his call, and the wolf ate the sheep. In the same way, if the word “racism” continues to be used loosely in our society, in time, when actual acts of racism are performed, they will be overlooked.

What other dangers are attached to being “woke”?

It Promotes Racism.

It is hypocritical to argue that America is full of racism and discrimination while also doing the very thing you claim to oppose. This also is discrimination. This also is racist. This also is intolerance towards others because of the color of their skin.

Let’s be clear. All forms of racism are evil! Racism demonstrates partiality among the nations. The Apostle Peter preached, “God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:34-35).

The Apostle Paul (who was given a special ministry to the Gentiles) proclaimed that in the kingdom of God, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is

neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

It Promotes Inherited Sin.

In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, the children of Israel felt that God was punishing them for the sins of their forefathers (Eze.18:1-2). Their conclusion was wrong! God judges people based on their actions, not the actions of others (Eze. 18:19-20; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

I recently discovered that my ancestors were slaves in South Carolina for many years. Many of them were beaten and raped by their masters. I can also remember my grandparents (who raised me in the south) telling me stories about the days when they were required to drink out of separate water foundations, go to all-black schools, ride at the back of buses, and eat at different counters from whites.



There were even times when they were called the N-word and other racial slurs.

My ancestors were not the only ones to experience racism. Many other blacks experienced the same treatment for hundreds of years in this country. Yet, it is wrong to hold the sins of the past against people today. I wouldn't want my ancestors' evil deeds held against me, and I refuse to hold others to a different standard.

Some of my closest friends have told me that their ancestors were slave masters, fought in the Civil War to preserve slavery, and even supported Jim Crow laws in the south. They confessed to being reluctant to share that information with me because they feared I might shame them and make them feel guilty. Without hesitation, I told them, "I will not!" What did they have to do with the past actions of their family members?

Jesus demands that we treat all people in the manner we want to be treated (Matt. 7:12). We must judge people by their fruits and not by the fruits of others (Matt. 7:15-20; John 7:24). Every person deserves the benefit of the doubt until proven otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).

It Promotes Unnecessary Suspicion.

Eliab is an example of someone who was unnecessarily suspicious of another. When his younger brother, David, brought food and inquired about the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, he incorrectly judged David as having wicked and evil intentions in his heart (1 Sam. 17:26-29).

Being "woke" gives birth to more Eliabs. It generates suspicion. It advocates the judging of hearts, fear, mistrust, and pessimism. These are tools that Satan can use to divide and conquer God's spiritual family!

Instead of suspicion and mistrust, God wants kindness, trust, and optimism in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 13:4-7). He wants the exercising of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). He wants unity,

devotion, service, and genuine love (John 17:20-21; Rom. 12:9-11). Since the Lord's church is made up of all races of people, suspicious hearts must be eliminated for solid relationships to be formed.

It Promotes Being Part of the Problem and Not the Solution.

No one is born a racist. Like most sins, racism is a sin that begins in a person's heart. It is closely connected to the sin of pride (Mark 7:21-23). Is it not prideful for someone to feel superior to another because of the color of their skin?

Since racism is a heart problem, being "woke" is not the solution. Viewing a segment of people as inherently racist will not end prejudice. Neither will politicians, riots, looting, affirmative action, taking down certain monuments and flags, or blaming others for past sins. None of these things is at the root of racism. Many of them only add fuel to the fire.

The solution to the sin of racism is Jesus! His death broke down barriers between the races and made it so that all could become one in the family of God (Eph. 2:13-18; Gal. 3:26-29). Jesus calls on us to be peacemakers, not people who are always contentious and hostile (Matt. 5:9). He demands that compassion and mercy be extended to all people (Luke 10:30-37). The main thing that makes the parable of the "Good Samaritan" so powerful is its ending. Jesus shocked His original audience by making the Samaritan the good guy! The Samaritan was willing to help a desperate Jewish man despite the racism that existed between the two nations.

Stoking racial tension and causing conflict and division won't end racism. However,, being like the Samaritan man will! Preaching and converting people with the gospel of Christ will! When the gospel transforms a person's heart, any racism present is uprooted.


It Doesn't Promote the Love of God.

God unconditionally loves all people (John 3:16). He desires for all people to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9). He died for all people (1 Tim. 2:6). His gospel has the power to save and make all people righteous (Rom. 1:16-17). Regardless of people's gender, background, economic status, or race, God desires them to be in fellowship with Him. He yearns for their salvation so much that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for their sins!

While those claiming to be "woke" promote racial favoritism and white guilt, those who advocate God's love treat all people with respect, dignity, and fairness. They are moved to see value in all people. They live with their eyes open to the reality of all nations being made in the image of God and the product of His creative work (Gen. 1:27; Acts 17:24-26). They never discriminate when sharing the gospel (Mark 16:15). They are driven to call out real acts of racism (Gal. 2:11-14), love their neighbor as themselves (Matt. 22:39), and even pray for those who have hatred and racism within them (Luke 23:34).

Conclusion

This racial tension of culture should put within us a strong desire to be in heaven. It should cause us to long for the heavenly place where our souls will be with God for eternity (1 Cor. 15:50).

While many in our current society attempt to use race as a tool to divide and promote their agendas, let us strive to show the world a better way. Let us keep our eyes focused on Jesus, His word, and the place that He has reserved for those who possess His love in their hearts. 



Shawn Jefferies

Shawn has been laboring with the Monte Vista church of Christ in Phoenix, AZ, since June of 2019. He and his wife, Genesis, have two children. The church website is montevistacoc.com. He can be reached at sj23212002@yahoo.com.

ALABAMA

ATHENS

Jones Road Church of Christ

17312 Jones Rd, Athens, AL 35613

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship: 10:20 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: John Gibson | jonesroadchurch.org

Market Street Church of Christ

514 W Market St, Athens, AL 35611

Sun. Bible Class 9:45 am | Sunday Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: David A. Cox | 256-232-1525 | marketstreet-church.com

Mt Zion Church of Christ

24190 Wooley Springs Rd, Athens, AL 35613

Sun. Worship 9:30 am & 5:15 pm | Wed. Bible Class 7:00 pm

Evangelists: Bob Watson & Matt Taylor | mtzionchurchofchrist.org

BIRMINGHAM

Vestavia Hills Church of Christ

2325 Old Columbiana Rd. (near I-65 & Hwy. 31)

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelists: Zack Lee | 205-822-0018

Elkmont

Sandlin Rd Church of Christ

19965 Sandlin Rd. Elkmont, AL 35620

Sun. Bible Class 10:00 am Worship: 11:00 pm & 5:00 pm (Worship & Study) | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Lance R. Taylor | 256-777-0990 | sandlinroadhchurch.com

FLORENCE

College View Church of Christ

851 N. Pine St. (Located next to University campus)

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Kenny Moorer | 256-766-0403

GARDENDALE

Gardendale Church of Christ

601 Pineywood Road, Gardendale, AL, 35071 (Located 10 miles N of Birmingham)

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship: 10:25 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Evangelists: Andrew Smith & Jason Shackelford | 205-631-2131 | gardendalechurchofchrist.com

MOBILE

West Mobile Church of Christ

129 Hillcrest Rd, Mobile, AL 36608

Sun. Worship 9-9:30 am | Bible Study 9:30-10:30 am | Worship 10:30-11:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Ken Sils | 765-307-8048 | 251-342-4144 or 342-2041 | westmobilechurch.com

ARKANSAS

CONWAY

Hwy 65 Church of Christ

271 Highway 65 N, Conway, AR 72032

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Bruce Reeves | Bldg: 501-336-0052 | hwy65churchofchrist.org

Prince St. Church of Christ

2655 Prince St., Conway, AR 72034

Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible class 9:50 am | Worship & Lord's Supper: 10:40 am | Wed. Bible Class 7:00 pm

501-450-8640

FORT SMITH

South 46th St. Church of Christ

2323 South 46th St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: John Hagenbuch | Bldg: 479-782-0588 | churchofchristfortsmith.com

HARRISON

Capps Rd. Church of Christ

407 Bella Vista Dr.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell | 870-741-9104 or 870-741-5151 | cappsroad.org

JONESBORO

StoneRidge Church of Christ

514 Airport Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Dick Blackford | 870-933-9134

PINE BLUFF

Hwy 79 S Church of Christ

4341 S Camden Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Clarence W. Sell | 870-879-2097

ARIZONA

TUCSON

Church of Christ

145 N. Country Club Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Brenden Ashby | 520-326-3634 | churchofchristtucson.org

CALIFORNIA

BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. Church of Christ

17903 Ibbetson Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
562-866-5615 | roseavenue.org

LONG BEACH

Church of Christ

3433 Studebaker Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:50 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
JP Flores | 562-420-2363 or Mark Reeves | 562-377-1674 | justchristians.org

SAN DIMAS

San Dimas Church of Christ

449 W. Allen Ave., Suite 120, San Dimas, CA 91773
Sun. Bible study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 4:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
909-788-9978 | sandimaschurchofchrist.com

COLORADO

FORT COLLINS

Poudre Valley Church of Christ

126 West Harvard St. | Suite 6
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am
Evangelist: Richie Thetford | poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org

MONTROSE

San Juan Church of Christ

1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Sun. Worship 11:00 pm | Bible Study 2 pm & 1:30 pm
970-249-8116 | sanjuanchurchofchrist.org

FLORIDA

DESTIN

South Walton Church of Christ

64 Casting Lake Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
850-622-3817 | southwaltonchurchofchrist.com | Location change coming in 2022: 497 Church St Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

GENEVA

Church of Christ

Ave. C & 2nd St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:45 am | 407-349-9998

MARY ESTHER

Church of Christ

6 Ln. Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joey Rankin 850-244-9222

ORLANDO

Church of Christ at S. Bumby

3940 S. Bumby Ave.
Sun. Communion: 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:00 am | Praise & Preaching: 10:55 am (No pm Service) | Wed 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Ken Chapman
Office: 407-851-8031 | bumby.org | Note: Please call for current worship and Bible study times.

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach Church of Christ

8910 Front Beach Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
850-234-2521

SEFFNER

Church of Christ

621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington | 813-684-1297 | seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

PINE MTN. VALLEY

Church of Christ

Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas | 706-628-5117 or 628-5229 | pmvchurch.com

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

Church of Christ

370 N. Shilling | P.O. Box 158-83221
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
208-785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

Church of Christ

1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:40 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
515-262-6799

ILLINOIS

DOWNERS GROVE

Church of Christ

1236 63rd St. (Dir: 1.5 miles E of I355)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Steve Wolfgang | 630-968-0760 | dgcoc.org

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ

796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown | 630-858-2290 & 630-377-3990

MATTOON

Southside Church of Christ

1100 S. 17th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
217-234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast Church of Christ

16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 4 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins | 708-339-1008 | southeastchurchofchrist.com

WASHINGTON

Tazewell County Church of Christ

Meeting @ Sleep Inn Suites and Motel | 1101 North Cummings Lane, Washington, IL 61571
Sun. Worship: 11:30 am | Bible Study: 12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm @ home of Tim Sundlie, call for address
Evangelist: Tim Sundlie | 608-796-9028 | sunbeads1@gmail.com | tazewellcoc.org

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville Church of Christ

407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brian Anderson | 812-944-2305 or 812-948-9917 | clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

JAMESTOWN

Church of Christ

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am | Wed. 7:00 pm
765-676-6404 | jamestowncoc.com

NOBLESVILLE

Stony Creek Church of Christ

15530 Herriman Blvd, 46060
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: John Smith | preacherjohn54@att.net | 317-501-8035 or 317-501-0249 or 317-701-1204

OOLITIC

Church of Christ

400 Lafayette Ave. | P.O. Box 34
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. 7:00 pm
812-279-4332

PEKIN

Church of Christ

(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen | 812-967-3437 or 967-3520 | pekinchurchofchrist.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street Church of Christ

5600 SW 17th St, Topeka, KS 66604
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
785-235-8687 or 785-273-7977 | 17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

BEAVER DAM

Church of Christ

1235 Williams St.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study After am Worship & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter | 270-274-4451

BENTON

Fairdealing Church of Christ

8081 US Hwy 68-East, Benton, KY 42025
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
270-354-9451 | fairdealingmarc@gmail.com | churchofchristatfairdealing.com
| Conveniently located near Kenlake State Resort Park on the western shore of Kentucky Lake.

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg Church of Christ

612 Broadway
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:30 pm
Evangelist: Charles J. White | 270-422-3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ

107 Sunny Hill Dr.
Worship 9:30 am & 11:30 am | Bible Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Lee | 270-789-1651 | sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville Church of Christ

103 N. Main St. | P.O. Box 233
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs | 270-589-4167 or 270-274-3065

DANVILLE

Church of Christ

385 E. Lexington Ave.
Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Bible Study 11:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: B.J. Sipe | 859-236-4204

FLORENCE

Northern Kentucky Church of Christ

18 Scott Drive, Florence, KY 41042
Sun. Worship 9:30 am & 5:30 pm | Sun. Bible Study 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
859-371-2095 | nkcofc.com

FRANKLIN

31-W North Church of Christ

1733 Bowling Green Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steve Monts | 270-776-9393 | 31wchurchofchrist.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. Church of Christ

733 Mill St. Hwy 62 E.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:55 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Dan McMahan | 270-971-1492 | millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station Church of Christ

1803 Dixie Garden Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Michael Hardin | michaelhardin1123@att.net | 502-937 2822

SHEPHERDSVILLE

Hebron Lane Church of Christ

3221 East Hebron Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Ron Halbrook & Connie W. Adams | 502-957-5115 or 502-955-1748 | hebronlanechurchofchrist.com

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside Church of Christ

405 Orice Roth Rd. | 70737 (Baton Rouge area)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: R.J. Evans | rjevans@eatel.net | 225-622-4587

MANY

Lakeside Church of Christ

12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
318-256-9396

MAINE

PORTLAND

Church of Christ

856 Brighton Ave. (Breakwater School) | Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm w/ second service immediately following am worship | Mid-week Bible Study (please call for times & places) 207-839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

KENTWOOD

W. Michigan Church of Christ

3084 Creek Drive SE, #1-C, Kentwood, MI 49512 | P.O. Box 8446, Kentwood, Mich. 49508 (Grand Rapids area)
Sun. Worship 11:00 am | Sun. Bible Study 12:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell | cedarsprings98@gmail.com

ROSCOMMON

N. Michigan Church of Christ

414 South Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Evangelist: Ryan Thomas | 810-837-1302 or 989-389-3226 | northernmichiganchurchofchrist.com

MISSISSIPPI

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. Church of Christ

301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Leonard White | 601-925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

7th St. Church of Christ

2914 7th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am

Grandview Church of Christ

2820 Grandview Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. 6:30 pm
Ron Cooper: 601-934-3675 | roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: 601-737-5778 | rickymarsha@bellsouth.net

SOUTH HAVEN

Church of Christ

2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55) (Memphis area)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: James A. Brown | Bldg: 662-342-1132

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest Church of Christ

805 Meadow Rd, Severn, MD 21144
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brandon Trout | 410-969-1420 or 410-551-6549 | swcofchrist.com

MISSOURI

BLODGETT

Blodgett Church of Christ

422 N Linton St., Blodgett, MO 63824

Sun. Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Russell Rice | 573-475-0417

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside Church of Christ

4000 SW Christiansen

Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Brett Hogland | 816-228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Rd. Church of Christ

432 Eagle Rock Rd.

Sun. Worship 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:30 am | Sun. Evening Worship 2 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm

Evangelist: Philip North | 417-239-1036 | primrosenor@suddenink.net | eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape County Church of Christ

2912 Bloomfield Rd

Sun. Bible Study 9:15 am | Worship 10:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Seth McDonald & Jerry Lee Westbrook | 573-837-1001 | capecountycoc@gmail.com | capecountycoc.com

FAIR GROVE

Church of Christ

217 N. Orchard Blvd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am & 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Walter Myers | 417-830-8972 or 417-736-2663

KENNETT

Church of Christ

703 Harrison St.

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Nolan Glover | 573-888-6778 or 870-650-1648 | westsidechurchofchrist.us

SAINT JAMES

Church of Christ

685 Sidney St.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Lynn Huggins | 573-265-8628

SAINT JOSEPH

County Line Church of Christ

2727 County Line Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

816-279-4737 | countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

Church of Christ at 7th & Bell

Bell St & S 7th St. Beatrice, NE 68310

Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 6:30 pm

402-233-4102 or 402-228-3827 | churchofchrist7bell.org

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Church of Christ

5327 S. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28217

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm

704-525-5655 | charlottechurchofchrist.org

LINCOLNTON

Lincoln Church of Christ

3781 East Highway 27, Iron Station, NC 28080

Sun. Bible Study: 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Stan Adams | 704-748-9777 (Bldg) & 704-748-3747 (Jerry) | lincolnncchurch@gmail.com | lincolnccoc.com

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood Church of Christ

1031 Welford Dr, Beavercreek, OH 45434 (located a few miles E of Dayton)

Sun. Short Worship: 9:30 am | Bible Study 10:05 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am |

Wed. Bible Study Adults: 1:00 pm & All ages: 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Heath Rogers | 937-426-1422 | knollwoodchurch.org

DAYTON

West Carrollton Church of Christ

28 W. Main St., Dayton, OH 45449

Sun. Worship 9:00 pm | Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:25 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelists: Michael Grushon 937-866-5162 or Alan Beck 937-469-3311 | wc-coc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin Church of Christ

6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. Franklin, OH 45005

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Tues. Bible Study 6:30 pm

Evangelist: Josh Lee | 937-789-8055 or 937-746-1249 | franklin-church.org

MANSFIELD

Southside Church of Christ

687 Mansfield-Lucas Rd. Mansfield, OH 44907

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am | Wed. Bible Study 4:30 pm

James Bond: 419-564-3878 | Mr. Kim Walton: 419-651-3488 | Bldg: 419-522-8982 | northsidecofc.us

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon Church of Christ

1973 W Main St. New Lebanon, OH 45345
 Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am, & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Bruce Hastings | 937-687-7150 or 937-478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno Church of Christ

80 Sandhill Rd. Reno, OH 45773
 Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Mark Childers | 304-615-1091 | 740-374-9827 | mariettarenochurchofchrist.org

NORTHWOOD

Frey Rd. Church of Christ

4110 Frey Rd., Northwood, OH 43619 (Toledo Area)
 Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Donald Jarabek | 419-893-3566 & 567-694-5062

POMEROY

Westside Church of Christ

33226 Children's Home Rd., Pomeroy, OH 45769
 Sun Worship 10:00 am & 5 pm | Bible Study 11:00 am | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
 Jack Hunt | wmhunt55@gmail.com | 740-645-4612 | Find us on Facebook!

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. Church of Christ

2120 No. A St.
 Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:45 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum | 918-931-1362 or 918-423-3445

OREGON

PORTLAND

Liberty NW Church of Christ

4110 NE 122nd Ave #101, Portland, OR 97230
 Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 am | Thur. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Samuel A. Matthews | 971-331-2838 | Bldg: 503-432-8697 | samatm@comcast.net | libertynwchurchofchrist.org

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ

3702 E. Long St.
 Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 7:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
 Bldg: 541-367-1599

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

Mt. Airy Church of Christ

7222 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19119
 Sun. Bible Study 10:15 am | Sun. Worship: 11:15 am | Tues. Bible Study: 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. | 215-248-2026 | mtairychurchofchrist.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

SUMTER

Woodland Church of Christ

3370 Broad St. Extension
 Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. | 803-499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport Church of Christ

4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
 Note: See our web site for current assembly schedule.
 Evangelist: Terry W. Benton | 803-834-6978 | airport-church-of-christ.com

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike Church of Christ

417 Mooresville Pike | (Located .8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
 Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 3:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 931-388-5828 or 931-381-7898 | mooresvillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby Church of Christ

4894 Hooper Hwy. | 37722 | (Located 15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
 Sun. Bible Study 10am | Worship 11:00 pm & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
 Evangelist: Olie Williamson | 423-487-5540 or 423-748-0844

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs Church of Christ

350 North Main St.
 Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Steve Walker | kscoc.com

MOUNT PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ

108 Locust St.
 Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
 Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr. | 931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924 | Iscoc.com

MURFREESBORO

Cason Ln. Church of Christ

1110 Cason Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 615-896-0090 | casonlanechurch.org

Northfield Blvd. Church of Christ

2091 Pitts Ln, Murfreesboro, TN 37130 (located at the corner of Northfield Blvd and Pitts Lane)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: David Bunting | 615-893-1200 | GodsRedeemed.org

NASHVILLE

Hillview Church of Christ

7471 Charlotte Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Lee Wildman | 615-952-5458 or 615-356-7318

Perry Heights Church of Christ

423 Donelson Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:55 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Johnny Felker | 615-883-3118 | perryheights.faithweb.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

Twin Creeks Church of Christ

1414 W. Exchange Pkwy
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10:00 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jerry King 214-504-0443 or 972-727-5355 | twincreekscoc.com

ALVARADO

I-35 Church of Christ

E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
817-295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. Church of Christ

605 E. Adoue St., Alvin, TX 77511
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry | mark@ascoc.org | ascoc.org

BAYTOWN

Church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit

701 North Pruett St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:40 am & 6:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Bldg: 281-422-5926 | Weldon: 713-818-1321 | biblework.com

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. Church of Christ

3060 Dowlen Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Max Dawson | 409-866-1996 | dowlenroad.com

DICKINSON

Dickinson Church of Christ

2919 Main St/FM 517 E., Dickinson, TX 77539
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sunday Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
713-298-6673

EDNA

Church of Christ

301 Robison St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Phillip Stuckey | 361-782-5506 or 361-782-2844 | ednachurchofchrist.org

EL PASO

Eastridge Church of Christ

3277 Pendleton Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
915-855-1524

GALVESTON (BACLIFF)

Bacliff Church of Christ

4303 18th St, Bacliff, TX 77518
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Sun. Worship 10:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Richard Lay | bacliffchurchofchrist.org

FORT WORTH

West Side Church of Christ

6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
817-738-7269

GRANBURY

Old Granbury Rd Church of Christ
4313 Old Granbury Rd, Granbury, TX 76049
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Chip Foster | 817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351 | oldgranburyrd-church.org

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. Church of Christ

2510 Fry Rd, Houston, TX 77084
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: David Flatt | fryroad.org | church@fryroad.org

IRVING

Westside Church of Christ

2320 Imperial Dr. (Located close to DFW Airport)
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 9:50 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Mark Roberts | 972-986-9131 | justchristians.com

LUBBOCK

Indiana Avenue Church of Christ

6111 Indiana Ave, Lubbock, TX 79413
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 9:00 am & 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
806-795-3377 | lubbockchurch.com

MANSFIELD

Northside Church of Christ

1820 Mansfield Webb Rd, Mansfield, TX 76063
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship: 10:20 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 5:30 pm.
Evangelist: Tom Roberts | 817-996-3926 | northsidecofc.us

NACOGDOCHES

Shawnee Church of Christ

612 S Shawnee St, Nacogdoches, TX 75961
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 pm
Minister: Van Dennis | 936-615-2950

Stallings Dr. Church of Christ

3831 N.E. Stallings Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:20 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley Church of Christ

268 Utopia Ave. (Dir: I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jesse Garcia | 210-660 0409 | pecanvalleychurchofchrist.org

SHERMAN

Westwood Village Church of Christ

314 N. Tolbert
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley Church of Christ

4404 Twin City Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Jason Garcia (yourfriendjgar@gmail.com) or (leonvalleychurch@gmail.com) | 254-939-0682 | leonvalleychurch.org

TEXARKANA

Franklin Dr. Church of Christ

2301 Franklin Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:15 am | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Bryan Garlock | 870-772-0746 | txkchurch.com

WACO

Sun Valley Church of Christ

340 E Warren St. (in Hewitt, a suburb of Waco)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Marc Smith | 254-292-2482 or 652-7698

VERMONT

MONTPELIER

Montpelier Church of Christ

Meeting in the Capital City Grange Hall, 6612 Route 12 Berlin, VT 05602
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 am | Worship 10 am | Tues. Evening in Homes
Evangelist: Open | montpelierchurchofchrist.com | P.O. Box 70, Williamstown, VT 05679 | For questions or directions: Wade Holt 802-485-4311

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater Church of Christ

217 Taxus St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Steven Matthews | 757-436-6900 | tidewaterchurchofchrist.com

RICHMOND

Courthouse Church of Christ

8330 Doublecreek Court, Chesterfield, VA 23832 (Located in teh Metro Area; Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct. 2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 5:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Nathan L. Morrison | 804-778-4717 | courthousechurchofchrist.com

Forest Hill Church of Christ

1208 W. 41st St.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. | 804-233-5959

RIDGWAY

Church of Christ

2970 Old Leaksville Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm & 5:30 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
276-956-6049 | churchofchristatridgeway.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge Church of Christ

929 Indiana Ave. N.E. (5 min. from Roanoke Convention Center)
Sun. 1st Lesson 9:15 am | Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 pm
Evangelist: Brent Paschall | 540-344-2755 | blueridgecoc.org

ChurchDirectory

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside Church of Christ

5652 Haden Rd.

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm

Robert Mallard | 757-464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker Church of Christ

1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Joe Price | 360-752-2692 or 360-920-6965 | bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

TACOMA

Manitou Park Church of Christ

Meeting at Gray Middle School, 6229 S. Tyler St., Tacoma, WA 98409

Note: Please see webpage for updated meeting location and times.

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 11:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm (Online)

253-242-3098 | tacomachurch@gmail.com | tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CLARKSBURG

Westside Church of Christ

7 Old Davison Run Rd

Sun. Worship 9:30 am

304-622-5433 | westsidechurchofchristwv.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside Church of Christ

1929 Morgantown Ave.

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Worship 10:45 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

304-363-8696 or 304-844-2437

MOUNDSVILLE

Moundsville Church of Christ

210 Cedar Ave, Moundsville, WV 26041

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 am | Sun. Worship 10:30 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Tony Huntsman | 304-845-4940 | cedarsower.com

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside Church of Christ

803 20A Ave NE, Calgary AB T2E 1S1

Sun. Bible Study 10:00 am | Sun. Worship 11:00 am & 6:00 pm | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Evangelist: Eric Castillo | +1-403-619-1249 | churchofchristcalgary.com

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