

Trends

The moral compass of Americans is greatly influenced by age. A recent survey of the American public asked the question: "Does morality (i.e., what is right and wrong) change over time based on society?" The percentage of respondents that strongly agreed were:

☛ Gen Z (24 years old or younger; 68 million in U.S.): 24%

☛ Boomers (56-74 years old; 71.6 million in U.S.): 12%

One Gen Z participant responded: "Society changes, and what's good or bad changes as well. It is all relative to what's happening in the world."

—via Barna Research

Titus 2:11-12: *"¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,"*

Sentence Sermons

"Always do what is right. It will gratify half of mankind and astound the other." —Mark Twain

Proverbs 10:9: *"⁹ He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will become known."*

News & Notes

Please pray for the Wallace family. They continue to miss our services (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17

Please pray for Marcia Wilson, Wilma's daughter. She recently had gall bladder surgery. Also, please pray for Lana May. She is struggling with kidney stones.

Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have the words of eternal life."*

John 6:68



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"What you doin?" "Nuthin!"

Craig Thomas

Today's **Thought for the Day** comes from Psalm 119, the sixteenth set of eight verses, "AYIN" (vv. 121-128). Human beings are masters at making excuses. I remember many times when I was a youngster my mother, seemingly out of the blue, asking me, "What are you up to?" I would quickly respond, "Nuthin!" In my mind, however, I was amazed at my mother's prescience. How did she know? Because I was up to something! I was up to something I was trying to hide from her. How in the world did she know?!

My point is simply this: human beings are masterful at hiding their true intentions and masking them by making asinine excuses and rationalizations. We humans bring this character flaw to its greatest heights when it comes to our relationship with God. We are masterful at making excuses and rationalizations concerning our failure to serve God with all our strength, energy, and focus. Our psalmist did not exhibit this all too common character flaw. He writes (v. 123):

*"My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation
And Your righteous word."*

If you and I are making excuses and rationalizations for failing to offer God our all, we need to stop N-O-W! Jesus said:

"²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." (Matt. 16:25-27)

"²⁶ If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Lk. 14:26-27)

The Bible makes it as clear as crystal. When it comes to our service to God

there is only one gear, there is only one speed, there is only one overarching and guiding principle. It is a “flat out” and “all or nothing” proposition!

*“I love those who love me,
And those who seek me **diligently** will find me.” (Prov. 8:17)*

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who **diligently** seek Him.” (Heb. 11:6)*

*“¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more **diligent** to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11)*

*“Blessed are those who **hunger** and **thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6)*

*“But seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33)*

Serving God is simple, it's A-L-L or nothing! Let's quit making it more complicated than that. Let's quit making excuses. Let's follow the apostle Paul's example. Our relationship with God now and in eternity hang in the balance.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

Wisdom Cries Aloud

SWORD TIPS #2071 (SEPTEMBER 29, 2020)

Joe R. Price

²⁰ Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. ²¹ She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words: ²² “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. ²³ Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.” (Proverbs 1:20–23, NKJV)

Solomon personifies wisdom as a virtuous woman calling out in the streets to all who will stop, listen, learn, and follow her words of understanding. She seeks to bless those upon whom her words fall. Yet, in their ignorance, the naïve turn away from her insight. Others mock her perception while others loathe her knowledge. Even so, wisdom offers her spirit of discernment to all who are willing to hear. But beware. Rejecting wisdom's call ultimately leads to ruin (Prov. 1:24-27). What is at work in the heart that refuses God's wisdom? Proverbs 1:29 gives us an answer: “Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD.” Pride and irreverence prevent accepting wisdom's guidance. We must choose to fear the Lord and to love the knowledge He gives us in His word. If not, we will search for wisdom and never find her (Prov. 1:28).

Here is our test: Our attitude and reaction to the gospel of Christ (“the wisdom of God”) tell whether we hear wisdom or despise her (1 Cor. 1:21-25; 3:18).

The Sword That Jesus Brought

Larry Hafley

In Matthew 10:34, Jesus told his disciples, “Do not think I came to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”

Recently, I heard the question asked, “What did Jesus mean when he said, ‘I did not come to bring peace but a sword?’” Immediately, my mind flashed to Hebrews 4:12, “The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” Initially, however, I doubted that it fit the context of Matthew 10:34. After all, the word of God is not a literal sword.

But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that the sword of Hebrews 4:12 was parallel to the sword of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 10:34. Also, I thought about John 17:14 where Jesus, as he prayed for his disciples, the apostles, said, “I have given them your word.” Then, I remembered Ephesians 6:17 which says, “the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.”

With these passages in mind, I connected the text of Matthew 10:34-36. “And do not think I came to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household.”

Though the Spirit's sharp sword is designed to bring peace and harmony between men and nations, and between Jews and Gentiles, because of unbelief and disobedience, it has often brought division (Jn. 3:19-21; Eph. 2:11-16; 4:17-19; 5:11; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; 4:3, 4).

Becoming a Christian has set father against son, mother against daughter, mothers-in-law against their daughters-in-law, and husbands against their wives. Indeed, the word of God often has made a man the enemy of his own household. As long as people are able to read the word of God, and not only learn the truth, but also obey it, the word will continue to act as a sword, a sword that “pierces even to the division of soul and spirit.” As long as some obey and some remain disobedient, the sword of God, the word, will divide and separate and make enemies of whole households.

Although Jesus was not referring to this is Matthew 5:44, the lesson still applies to anyone who wears the name of Christ. Jesus said, “I say to you, love

**“Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works
and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

—Matthew 5:16

your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” If, as Christians, we fail to show this love, and cease to do good to those divided against us, we fail in our duty to God. Worse still, we fail to lead the lost to God (Matt. 5:16).