

LIVING RIGHT IN A CULTURE GONE WRONG!

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It may be in the checkout line at the supermarket, a billboard on the interstate, or on the sidewalk at a newsstand, where one is bombarded with images and words that cut at the very core of what we know as “Christian culture.” There is no doubt that the very culture in which we live is changing at a rapid pace and not for the better. If one were to pick up a copy of the May 21 edition of the magazine, *Newsweek*, he or she would be subject to the very images and words just mentioned. On the cover the reader will see a sitting President of the United States of America with a rainbow colored halo looking skyward with the words, “THE FIRST GAY PRESIDENT,” adorning the bottom of the page. All things political aside, it would not have to be a political figure, just a well known one, to demonstrate that the war on our “Christian culture” is at a fevered pitch.

There are those that desire a change in the direction of our nation, culturally speaking, and the sooner the better. It does not have to be the subject of homosexuality or the Bible’s distinct rebuke concerning it (Rom. 1:26-28), simply any subject that can aide in the destruction of our “Christian culture.” It does not have to be a “hot topic” or the fact that God condemns those that support ideals that are destructive to His cause (Rom. 1:32), just one that causes an individual to step a little farther from the Father.

The question must be asked, “How does one live right in a culture gone wrong?” Understanding that we live “by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7), we must turn to the pages of the Bible for the answer.

In a letter to the Philippian Christians, Paul taught how to live in a culture that was influenced by immorality, paganism, and intellectualism; and that same letter can aide one today in learning how to live “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” (Phil. 2:15). Paul told his readers to first “work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12). In other words, he was telling them to “get your own act together.” We are to strive to live the life that Christ has demanded of us no matter the circumstances. Paul told a group of believers, those that had obeyed the gospel of Christ and proclaimed to be His followers, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2). If those that have dedicated themselves to Christ are truly dedicated, it wouldn’t matter if all the magazine covers in the world depicted something foreign to God’s teaching, it would not affect them.

Christians cannot allow society to dictate the beliefs by which we live. Whether it is a current trend or one that has faded to the background, Christians must still walk in the footsteps of Christ and allow Him to be the example (Jn. 13:15). The thing some often forget is that God legislated morality in the long ago; we know it as the Bible!

Paul told his readers how to work out their own salvation “with fear and trembling.” It may be the case that we fear the wrong person or people. Recall the words of Christ when He said, “**And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**” (Mt. 10:28). Having more fear of those that have a direct influence on our earthly lives, than for the One that has the final say in our eternal lives should not occur! Fear is often used in describing one’s relationship to God, but “trembling” has just as much of a place as fear does. When considering the term “fear,” the idea is one of dread, terror, and more of a reverential awe of God. However, Paul did not stop there; he also used the word “trembling.” This carries with it the

idea of “a trembling or a quaking with fear.” One might refer to this as “shaking in one’s boots.” One should shake in his boots at the thought of the Lord’s return, knowing he is not in compliance with the commands of God as he embraces a culture gone wrong (2 Thess. 1:6-9). James said, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin” (Js. 4:17).

There is definitely a place for trembling in the life of the Christian, not one where we doubt our salvation, but one where we are very well aware of our shortcomings and the areas in which we need work. How do we live right in a culture gone wrong? We do it by being faithful to God and living in accordance to His will, not according to the will of a misguided and ungodly culture!