

House of Cards: Netflix Is Poster Child for Tech Bubble 2.0

How can a company that is going to generate \$2,000,000,000 in negative free cash flow in 2017 be worth \$70 billion?

Netflix has soared in popularity in recent years, but so have its financial losses. Just like during the original tech bubble, investors are ignoring basic fundamentals and are greatly rewarding firms that are bleeding giant mountains of cash year after year just because they are trendy tech companies. But somewhere along the line, you actually have to quit losing money if you are going to survive. Just ask tech bubble 1.0 victims , Webvan and . The investors who poured enormous amounts of money into those companies ended up losing everything, and similar tragedies will play out as tech bubble 2.0 bursts.

So far in 2017, the S&P 500 is up about 8 percent, but FANG stocks (Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google) are up a whopping 30 percent.

But at least Facebook, Amazon and Google are making money.

Netflix is not.

So why in the world has the stock shot up by more than 30 percent so far this year? It just doesn't make any sense at all. According to CNBC, during the first quarter Netflix had \$423 million in negative free cash flow, and for the entire year it is being projected that it will have \$2 billion in negative free cash flow:

The California-based company is now dumping cash into original content to maintain its dominance over its growing

field of rivals. The company had \$423 million negative free cash flow during the quarter, wider than the \$261 million negative free cash flow a year ago. Netflix expects to have \$2 billion in negative free cash flow this year.

The bleeding of cash at Netflix only seems to be accelerating. The number for the first quarter of 2017 was 62 percent worse than the number for the first quarter of 2016, and it was more than twice as bad as the number for the first quarter of 2015.

It is hard to imagine Netflix will ever be more popular than it is right now.

So if Netflix is not making a profit at this point, when will it ever make a profit?

Similar things could be said about Twitter. This is a company that has never made a yearly profit and is actually starting to see revenues decline. But somehow the stock just continues to go up. Since the last time I wrote about Twitter, the market cap has shot up another \$1.5 billion.

At this point, the market values Twitter at \$13 billion, but in the entire history of the company it has actually lost \$2 billion.

What we are witnessing is a modern-day version of tulip mania, and at some point, this irrational euphoria will come to a sudden end. In fact, there are already some signs that tech bubble 2.0 may be in a significant amount of trouble. The following is an excerpt from a Bloomberg article entitled "Investors Go All-In on Tech Giants":

The tech-powered rally has catapulted the sector to a price-to-earnings ratio of 24.4, or 41 percent above the 10-year average. But as Google and Amazon stretch to nearly \$1,000 a share, not everyone is comfortable with the valuations. Investors pulled more than \$716 million from the most popular

technology exchange-traded fund last week—the \$17.4 billion Technology Select Sector SPDR Fund, or XLK—its largest weekly outflow in over a year, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

“Most everybody remembers 2000, so they might be getting a little nervous with this development,” said Maley. “I just wonder how many people have said to themselves, ‘If AMZN gets to \$1,000, I’m going to take at least some profits.’”

All over the financial world, prominent voices are warning that the enormous financial bubbles that we see all around us are not sustainable and that a major crisis is heading our way. I wrote about some of these voices yesterday, and today we can add Paul Singer to the list:

Given groupthink and the determination of policy makers to do ‘whatever it takes’ to prevent the next market ‘crash,’ we think that the low-volatility levitation magic act of stocks and bonds will exist until the disenchanting moment when it does not. And then all hell will break loose (don’t ask us what hell looks like ...), a lamentable scenario that will nevertheless present opportunities that are likely to be both extraordinary and ephemeral. The only way to take advantage of those opportunities is to have ready access to capital.

When the financial markets collapse, Donald Trump will likely get most of the blame.

But Donald Trump did not create the stock market bubble, and he will not be responsible for ending it either.

Since the Federal Reserve was created in 1913, we have seen this same story play out over and over again. There have been 18 distinct recessions or depressions since the Fed was established, and the more the Fed interferes in the marketplace, the larger the booms and busts tend to be.

And it could be argued that this time around the Fed has

manipulated financial markets more than ever before. Interest rates were pushed as low as possible, and trillions of dollars were pumped into the financial system during the Fed's quantitative easing programs. Of course those actions were going to create a huge bubble, and of course that bubble will inevitably burst.

Unfortunately, this is not just a game. Real people with real hopes and real dreams are going to be absolutely devastated. Millions of Americans who were carefully saving for retirement are going to be financially crippled, and pension funds all over the nation are going to be wiped out.

I don't know why we can't seem to learn from history. And I am not talking about events that happened decades ago. The build up to this coming crisis is so similar to what we witnessed just before the crashes of 2000 and 2008, but we just keep getting fooled over and over again.

But once things fall apart this time, I think the American people will finally be fed up. I think that they will be sick and tired of an unelected, unaccountable central bank that creates endless booms and busts, and I think that they will finally be ready to push Congress to shut the Federal Reserve down for good. {eoa}

President Trump Confronted Abbas on Palestinian Incitement of Violence

It was heartening to hear that President Donald Trump privately confronted Palestinian Authority (PA) President

Mahmoud Abbas on his incitement of terrorism and payments to terrorists. The question is whether the Trump administration will confine itself to rhetoric or follow up with concrete steps regarding the Palestinians and terrorism.

An unnamed "Palestinian official" has told various media outlets that during the recent Trump-Abbas meeting in Bethlehem, Trump said, "You lied to me in Washington when you talked about commitment to peace, but the Israelis showed me you were personally responsible for incitement."

According to the report, Trump "made it clear to Abbas that he must curb anti-Israeli incitement in the Palestinian education system, saying Abbas cannot turn a blind eye to Palestinian incitement and pay stipends to terrorists' families while simultaneously setting conditions that hinder any progress in the peace talks."

Abbas's reported response is very important, because it gives us a clue as to how he may try to wiggle out of the controversy. The unnamed Palestinian source said Abbas replied that "in the past, there was a joint Palestinian-Israeli committee that sought to deal with incitement on both sides, but it has not met for years."

Here's what Abbas was talking about. In 1998, Israel began complaining seriously to President Bill Clinton that the PA's incitement to violence and hatred was a blatant violation of the Oslo Accords. So Clinton created a committee called "the Trilateral Anti-Incitement Committee." Its purpose would be to decide the validity of complaints from either side.

That formula seemed to make sense. Obviously, each side has a very different view of what constitutes "incitement." So there needed to be a neutral, reasonable-minded third party to judge them. Presumably, the U.S. could serve that role. But after meeting just a few times in 1999 and 2000, the committee stopped functioning. Fifteen years later, the public was given

a glimpse of what went wrong.

In an op-ed for *The Washington Post* in December 2014, Prof. Shibley Telhami of the University of Maryland, who was one of the American members of the committee, pulled back the curtain. Telhami, as a Middle East scholar, superficially seemed to be impartial and therefore qualified to be one of the American delegates to the committee. But in fact, he was deeply biased.

Telhami explained in his op-ed that the committee reached an impasse because the Israeli and Palestinian representatives “could not agree how to define incitement.” The Israelis, he wrote, “would present, for instance, a statement by a Muslim religious figure against Israel, and Palestinians would respond by citing settlement construction or episodes of Palestinian humiliation.”

Telhami’s self-serving description did not actually tell the whole story. The Israeli delegates didn’t present just “a statement by a Muslim religious figure.” According to one of the Israeli representatives, Palestinian Media Watch Director Itamar Marcus, he and his colleagues presented multiple statements that were by paid PA officials (some of whom were Muslim religious figures), as well as statements that were broadcast by the official PA media.

Clearly, the Palestinian position was ridiculous and illogical. “Settlement construction” and “humiliation” do not qualify as incitement. The fact that the PA doesn’t want Jews building homes in Jerusalem or having Palestinians checked for weapons at security checkpoints doesn’t make those situations incitement.

But for Telhami and the other American delegates to the committee, who were operating on instructions from the Clinton White House and State Department, the real goal was not to stop incitement. Their goal was to keep the “peace process”

going. Confronting the PA on incitement might cause a crisis in the “peace process.” So instead of siding with the truth, the U.S. representatives chose to be “evenhanded” and not take sides.

This is where the Trump administration needs to be very careful. Reviving the Trilateral Committee on Incitement is no solution unless the American delegates clearly do not have a pro-Palestinian bias.

And the committee needs to start its work with a clear definition of what constitutes “incitement.” American policymakers can find a precedent by checking the criteria used in the Nuremberg Trials, when Julius Streicher, publisher of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Sturmer*, was convicted of incitement to mass murder, or in the 2003 case of the Rwandan newspaper editor and two radio broadcasters who were convicted by the International Criminal Court of incitement to genocide because they used dehumanizing language and encouraged violence.

I thank Shibley Telhami for being (unintentionally) honest about his bias and about the reasons for the failure of the anti-incitement committee. Now that we know what went wrong and why, the Trump administration can fix it—if it is committed to actually stopping Palestinian incitement instead of just talking about it. {eoa}

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5 Highly Respected Financial Experts Warning Market Crash Imminent

If everything is going to be “just fine”, why are so many big names in the financial community warning about an imminent meltdown? I don’t think I have seen so many simultaneous warnings about a market crash since just before the great financial crisis of 2008. And at this point, you would have to be quite blind not to see that stocks are absurdly overvalued and that a correction is going to happen at some point. And when stocks do start crashing, lots of fingers are going to start pointing at President Trump, but it won’t be his fault. The Federal Reserve and other central banks are primarily responsible for creating this bubble, and they should definitely get the blame for what is about to happen to global financial markets.

My regular readers are quite familiar with my thoughts on where the market is headed, so today let me share some thoughts from five highly respected financial experts:

No. 1: When Altair Asset Management’s chief investment officer Philip Parker was asked if a market crash was coming to Australia, he said he has “never been more certain of anything in my life.” In fact, he is so sure that the investments that his hedge fund is managing are going to crash that a decision was made to liquidate the fund “and return ‘hundreds of millions’ of dollars to its clients”:

While hardly a novel claim—in the past many have warned that Australia’s housing and stock market are massive asset

bubbles (which local banks have been forced to deny as their fates are closely intertwined with asset prices even as the RBA is increasingly worried)—so far few if any have gone the distance of putting their money where their mouth was. That changed, when Australian asset manager Altair Asset Management made the extraordinary decision to liquidate its Australian shares funds and return “hundreds of millions” of dollars to its clients according to the Sydney Morning Herald, citing an impending property market “calamity” and the “overvalued and dangerous time in this cycle”.

“Giving up management and performance fees and handing back cash from investments managed by us is a seminal decision, however preserving client’s assets is what all fund managers should put before their own interests,” Philip Parker, who serves as Altair’s chairman and chief investment officer, said in a statement on Monday quoted by the SMH.

No. 2: Seth Klarman leads one of the biggest hedge funds in the United States, and he believes that U.S. investors are greatly underestimating the amount of risk in the market right now:

“When share prices are low, as they were in the fall of 2008 into early 2009, actual risk is usually quite muted while perception of risk is very high,” Klarman wrote. “By contrast, when securities prices are high, as they are today, the perception of risk is muted, but the risks to investors are quite elevated.”

Klarman oversees one of the U.S.’ largest hedge fund firms, with some \$30 billion under management. He has a huge following on Wall Street— investors named his book, Margin of Safety, their favorite investment book in a recent SumZero survey.

#3 Bill Blain is a strategist at Mint Partners, and he is

actually specifically pointing to October 12 as the date when things will start to get “horribly interesting”...

But. ... Catch a falling knife, why don't you... I shall spend the summer wondering just how long the Stock Market games continue. When, not if.

At the moment, my prediction is October 12. Around that day, it's going to get horribly interesting.

Why that particular day?

Gut feel and knowing how the Bowl of Petunias felt in Hitchhikers. (“Not again.”)

There are just too many contradictory currents out there. The unsustainability of burgeoning consumer debt, unfeasibly tight credit spreads, the sandcastle foundations of student loans, autos, housing and the CLO market, China, Trump, politics ... worries about what follows Brazil in the EM market and whatever ... The risks of a massive consumer sentiment dump.

No. 4: David Stockman has also been warning about what may happen this fall. According to Stockman, this current stock market bubble “is the greatest sucker’s rally we have ever seen”:

“The market is insanely valued right now. They were trying to tag, the robo machines and day traders, they were trying to tag 2,400 on the S&P 500. They ended up at 2,399, I think, but the point is that represents about 25 times trailing earnings for 2016. We are at a point in the so-called recovery that has already lasted 96 months. It's almost the longest one in history. What the market is saying is we have reached the point of full employment forever. There will never be another recession or any kind of economic surprise or upset or dislocation. The market is pricing itself for

perfection for all of eternity. This is crazy. ... I think the market could easily drop to 1,600 or 1,300. It could drop by 40 percent or even more once the fantasy ends. When the government shows its true colors, that it's headed for a fiscal bloodbath when this crazy notion that there is going to be some Trump fiscal stimulus is put to rest once and for all. I mean it's not going to happen. They can't pass a tax cut that big without a budget resolution that incorporated \$10 trillion or \$15 trillion in debt over the next decade. It's just not going to pass Congress. ... I think this is the greatest sucker's rally we have ever seen."

No. 5: Last but certainly not least, David Kranzler seems quite certain "that the stock market bubble is getting ready to pop":

Anyone happen to notice that several market commentators have argued that Bitcoin is a bubble. but the same stock "experts" look the other way as the U.S. stock market becomes more overvalued by the day vs. the deteriorating underlying fundamentals? Bitcoin going "parabolic" triggers alarm bells but it's okay if the stock price of Inc (NASDAQ: AMZN) is hurtling toward parity with the price of one ounce of gold. Tesla (NASDAQ: TSLA) burns a billion per year in cash. It sold 76,000 cars last year vs. 10 million worldwide for General Motors (NYSE: GM). Yet Tesla's market cap is \$51.7 billion vs. \$48.8 billion for GM.

This insanity is the surest sign that the stock market bubble is getting ready to pop. If you read between the lines of the comments from certain Wall Street analysts, the only justification for current valuations is "Central Bank liquidity" and "Fed support of asset values." This is the most dangerous stage of a market top because it draws in retail "mom & pop" investors who can't stop themselves from missing out on the next "sure thing." There will be millions of people who are permanently damaged financially when the

Fed loses control of this market. Or, as legendary "vulture" investor Asher Edelman stated on CNBC, "I don't want to be in the market because I don't know when the plug is going to be pulled."

Could all of these top experts be wrong?

It's possible, but I wouldn't bet on it.

Every stock market bubble of this magnitude in U.S. history has ended in a spectacular crash, and this one will not be any different. We can certainly have some good arguments about the exact timing of the next crash, but what everyone should be able to agree on is that a crash is coming.

You only make money in the stock market if you get out at the right time. Many of those who timed things well have made a tremendous amount of money, but most investors will be entirely caught off guard by the market implosion that is rapidly approaching.

As I have explained to my readers repeatedly, markets tend to go down a whole lot faster than they go up, and in the not too distant future, we are going to see trillions of dollars of investor wealth wiped out very, very quickly.

Let's hope that the coming crisis will not be as bad as 2008, but I have a feeling that it is going to be much worse.

We didn't learn our lessons the last time around, and so now we are going to pay a very high price for our stubbornness.
{eoa}

Comedienne Kathy Griffin 'Begs for Your Forgiveness' After Jokingly Beheading Trump

Comedienne Kathy Griffin begged for forgiveness after jokingly holding up a bloody head that appeared to belong to President Donald Trump.

"I'm a comic," Griffin says. "I cross the line. I move the line, then I cross it. I went way too far. The image is too disturbing. I understand how it offends people. It wasn't funny. I get it. I beg for your forgiveness. I went too far. I made a mistake, and I was wrong."

The president himself was horrified at the photo.

"Kathy Griffin should be ashamed of herself. My children, especially my 11 year old son, Barron, are having a hard time with this. Sick!" he tweeted.

TMZ released (*Editor's note: graphic photo*) the photo after receiving a sneak peek from a video shoot. The article then launched (*Editor's Note: graphic photo repeated*) a Secret Service investigation.

Even Trump's critics were appalled by Griffin's move.

"For the record, I am appalled by the photo shoot Kathy Griffin took part in. It is clearly disgusting and completely inappropriate," Anderson Cooper tweeted.

Chelsea Clinton tweeted: "This is vile and wrong. It is never funny to joke about killing a president." {eoa}

The Current Rift Isn't Between the US and Europe

After last weekend's G-7 and NATO summits, leading figures would have the world believe that transatlantic relations are rougher than ever, literally as well as figuratively. The media have highlighted such ephemera as President Trump's allegedly pushing the prime minister of Montenegro and his white-knuckle handshake with French President Emmanuel Macron. European politicians, however, speak in starker tones about the twin threats of a Trump presidency and an impending Brexit.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced her despair at a campaign rally in a Munich beer hall on Sunday. "The times in which we could rely fully on others, they are somewhat over," she said. While she remains a "convinced transatlanticist," she said the time has come that "we must fight for our future on our own, for our destiny as Europeans."

The proximate cause of her grief was Trump's potentially pulling out of the Paris climate agreement, which Merkel deemed "a central agreement for shaping globalization."

Such is its significance that Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, would instruct the United States to focus on "values ... not just interests." Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni then extolled "fundamental principles, such as our commitment to fight climate change."

No one exceeded Merkel's rival for the chancellorship, Social Democratic Party leader Martin Schulz, who said that the present U.S. administration had become "the destroyer of all Western values."

“Europe is the answer,” Schultz offered. “Stronger cooperation among the European countries at all levels is the answer to Donald Trump.”

Eurocrats have consistently invoked a vision of an “ever-closer union,” ever more firmly consolidated under their control in Brussels. But in the context of the EU, “centralization means a lack of democracy,” as Tomasz Poreba, a Member of European Parliament from Poland, said at the first Conservatives International–Americas conference in Miami over the weekend. The more remote the level of governance, the less any individual can influence it and the greater it is subject to cronyism.

Furthermore, reticence about the Paris climate agreement is well-founded and shared by many Eastern European nations behind the scenes. In order to meet its targets, the price of emitting carbon dioxide would have to rise by 1,000 percent in Europe. “To the extent the Paris accord increases political control over human and natural resources, it will make the world poorer and technological progress less likely,” the *Wall Street Journal* has warned.

It is far from clear that empowering supranational governing bodies and increasing the price of energy are bedrock transatlantic values.

Still, Merkel told the Munich crowd that, inside the G-7 meeting in Sicily, support for the Paris agreement ran “six—if you count the European Union, seven—against one.” It is precisely this assertion that the EU—led by four nations already represented in the G-7 Summit—is a co-equal and independent entity that the United States and a growing number of Euroskeptics are unwilling to tolerate.

This is especially true when many of those insisting the United States adhere to modern secular progressive “values” have not upheld their promise to adequately contribute to

NATO. Only five of NATO's 28 members meet their obligation to spend two percent of their GDP on defense. If every nation had done so, it would have amounted to \$119 billion last year alone, President Trump said in Brussels.

The United States is doing Europe no favors by alleviating the continent's need to pay for its own defense. Indications are funds that otherwise would have gone to defense—a core function for which governments are instituted among men—instead go to fund the EU's generous welfare state. Such programs, Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus*, lead to “a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients.”

That is by no means to say that there are no failings in Washington, D.C. On Tuesday, President Trump tweeted that the “MASSIVE trade deficit with Germany ... will change.” A potential trade war with Germany would, indeed, create a gulf within the transatlantic alliance.

However, urging leaders to fund central government responsibilities and avoid costly agreements that sap energy (both human and natural) does nothing to harm “Europe.” Such principles are valid for every nation. The current rift is not between the United States and “Europe” but between the U.S. and the EU superstructure. And Brussels' agenda already faces serious opposition from its own 28 (soon to be 27) member states.

At some point, the EU must implement policies that stimulate economic growth and development, and allow more breathing room within its “ever-closer union,” or it will speak to an ever-smaller—and ever-poorer—constituency.

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Breaking Out of Disappointment's Vicious Vortex

Have you ever felt like God wasn't paying attention to you or that you had been forgotten by God? Maybe you feel that way now. Maybe you feel as though life is mundane or drudgery. Maybe you feel like you aren't really living at all and life just isn't what you expected it to be. Well, I've got a little bit more encouragement for you.

Psalm 33:18-19 says, "The eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

God is good. He is not apathetic to your personal disappointments or misery. However, if you have put your hope in something else, say, a job, a boyfriend, personal talent or anything else to fulfill what you are longing for, He is not jumping up and down and waving His hands to get your attention. Clearly your eyes are somewhere else. When your eyes are somewhere else, so are His eyes. His gaze is never wasted.

He is not looking at you only to be ignored. However, when your eyes are on Him (aka hope in Him), His eyes are on you. So maybe, just maybe, you have misplaced your hope.

Misplaced hope is a vicious cycle of disappointment. But putting your trust and hope in God does not disappoint. When you hope in the Lord, He then turns around and delivers you from a double death. He delivers your soul from death and even your body. Hey! That is good news right there!

Some of you have been walking around too long feeling half-dead. You feel like you are waiting for your life to really start. Can I challenge you to put your hope and trust in God alone? Can I challenge you to drop every other thing you were putting your hope in? This is when you get God's attention. This is when He notices. This is when you and God lock gazes, and He begins to move on your behalf. {eoa}

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Subtle Signs You're Choosing to Live as an Object

Sometimes people allow themselves to become objects in order to survive emotionally. As an object, they can project anything they want to those around them in an attempt to be accepted and survive. But as an object, you will have struggles connecting emotionally, especially in romantic relationships. As an object, you will also struggle with being authentic.

If you made choices to survive that have led you to become an object, your choices might have been the best you could have made at that time. It is important to not feel shame about the choices you made when you were a child or teenager in response to your circumstances. Something I have learned along my personal journey to healing is that those choices I made and

things I brought into my life to survive also kept me from living—really living.

I want you to absolutely know that you can move from object to being and from surviving to living. Over my career, I have helped many people through this process. My hope is that as you walk through the process, lights will come on and hope will begin to happen for you in a whole new way.

Below are a few characteristics of people who struggle with being objects.

1. Uncomfortable with their flaws. As an object, you feel either all good or all bad. If you are all good by your own measure, you are lovable. If you are flawed, you are all bad and therefore unlovable.
2. Rarely apologize. They find it difficult to believe they can be both flawed and loved. Rather, they believe they are either flawed or loved. Apologizing means they are flawed and puts them into the “all bad” box; apologizing means they are not loved.
3. They measure themselves. The object person measures himself against others. They see themselves as better than or less than for various reasons.
4. They measure their giving. The object person feels they are like a book, so when they give (especially in marriage or committed relationships) they are ripping out a page of the book. Eventually, they fear they will find themselves without pages and empty.
5. Giving is painful. I am not talking about time, gifts, abilities, or money. Giving the heart is painful for an object.
6. Feelings and connecting to feelings are a real challenge. In an object relationship with one’s self and others, it is about manipulating images and perspectives

to look good or be acceptable.

7. They tend to read their spouse's and other people's minds, but almost always in the negative. They believe their spouse has certain motives, project those motives onto their spouses, and treat them as if the projection is reality, regardless of the spouses' insistence to the contrary.
8. They tend to relate to themselves and others as functions. People in object relationships tend to see people more for what they do than who they are.

Moving from object to being has been one of the harder things I have ever done, but I am so glad I did. Because I did, I know almost anyone can do it. It takes work, but it is definitely a way to make progress.

A being is nothing like an object. A being is absolutely immeasurable in intellect, spirit, desire, experience, history, or personality. As a being, you are not only immeasurable, unfathomable, and unique, but you are also unlimited and eternal.

You are unlimited, and years or decades from now, you will have emotions, spirit, intellect and energy to have and give away at will.

As a being you can give 10 percent, 20 percent or more to a spouse, friend or family member and still have 100 percent of you left. In my experience, when I give, I expand. I can come home after giving to clients and give to my wife, my children and even my dog, and still have 100 percent of me left.

I am a being and I have almost limitless resources. My resources are replenished daily, and over time, have an opportunity to expand again. I do not feel or keep track of my giving as I give from my being, not as an object. People have inherent, immeasurable value, so it is a privilege to serve

and give to them as I can. There is no pain in giving because it is not expensive to give of yourself.

I would like to give you some characteristics of people who are beings. Some people are just born this way and stay this way regardless of their life circumstances. Others are nurtured during childhood and adolescence, and being them is the only thing they know.

Here are their characteristics:

1. Others are equal. Someone who is a being sees others as having value. He is equal to those around him and others are equal to him.
2. Being flawed is being human. They accept that they can and do make mistakes and are quick to take responsibility for them. Mistakes are just part of the learning process of life and self-discovery.
3. Inquiry before judgment. A being will mostly give people the benefit of the doubt and will inquire as to the reasoning or circumstances surrounding someone's behavior.
4. Giving is loving. A being gives throughout the day by being present and available. There is no way to track giving; it is as normal as breathing.
5. Feelings. A being can be authentic in almost any situation. She can share how she feels regardless of the other person's level of maturity.
6. People have value. Regardless of a person's function or direct contribution, people innately have value. How they feel and what they are going through is significant.

I believe your true DNA is available and absolutely worth releasing into the world. Your unique DNA can have a very positive influence in this world. You can blossom and become

that amazing person you were intended to become. I have committed my life to seeing people reach their true potential.

I liken the process to the destiny of a seed. Inside the seed is its own DNA. A sunflower seed becomes a sunflower. Your DNA of being is inside of you and was there way before you had to erect the protective mechanisms around you, moving you toward an object relationship with yourself or others.

You must crack the shell and let out the life in you—the real, authentic you—little by little. It feels hard at first, like the seed pushing through the dirt. As you do it, it may even seem counterintuitive. You must let go of the illusion that the shell keeps you safe. The price you pay for believing in safety is real, so push and push.

Believe me, a day will come when it seems easier to be authentic than to be an object. You are no longer pushing against something; you are growing towards being something. It becomes almost natural to grow. Being authentic and flawed become easier, and being an object feels more and more uncomfortable. {eoa}

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Does Manchester Need a

Concert With Ariana Grande, Miley Cyrus and Katy Perry?

I assume the performers mean well. I assume they intend their concert to be an act of redemption and healing for the people of Manchester, England. But does this hurting city really need a performance featuring Ariana Grande, Katy Perry and Miley Cyrus (among others)? Is this the best way to bring healing to these open wounds?

Before I go any further, let me allow some of you (my critics) a moment to blast me. In fact, I'll write out what you're thinking to save you the trouble.

Perhaps it's something like this: "Who in the (obscenity) do you think you are? What gives you the right to tell the people of Manchester what's best for them? It's antiquated religious hypocrites like you who are messing up the world. So, go find a rock and hide under it, old man. We could care less what you have to say."

Do you feel better now? Did that help you vent?

Good. Then let's move on and try to have a fair-minded, heart-to-heart conversation. I mean to help, not hurt, to be constructive, not destructive.

Of course, whatever concert is or was held, however degraded or debased it might be or have been, it does not merit a terrorist attack. God forbid!

Even if the performers sang the vilest songs and had a corrupting effect on young people. Even if they mocked every religion on the planet. Even if their words and actions were deeply offensive, you don't blow up their audience with a bomb. Never!

You don't maim them. You don't injure them. You don't kill them. No, no, no, no. (Rather than write it out, I'll just say "a thousand times no!")

The suicide bomber was doing the devil's work, not God's work, and there is no possible religious justification for his acts. What he did represents the worst of humanity and is hellish, not holy. It was horrific. It was barbaric. It was despicable. Every person of conscience, of every faith and non-faith, needs to denounce the act for what it was: a vile, cowardly act of mass murder.

Have I made myself clear?

The question now, is this: What would bring the most healing to the people of Manchester? What would help them rebuild their broken world, one life at a time?

The *Daily Mail* reported that on June 4th, Ariana Grande will "join forces with Katy Perry, Miley Cyrus and a star-studded line-up at [a] One Love Manchester benefit gig for victims of terror attack."

Perhaps they'll raise lots of money for the victims and their families. Perhaps they'll infuse the community with vigor and energy. Perhaps they'll shout to the world, "We will not be intimidated by violence and hatred!"

That's all good and commendable. And, to repeat, I assume the performers mean well. They obviously have busy schedules and they're coming together to say, "People of Manchester, we care about you."

I get it, and I appreciate it.

It's just that there's something amiss with the whole picture.

Remember that Ariana Grande's concert tour was called "Dangerous Woman," and as innocent as she may look, her songs are as vulgar as they come.

According to one post I received, "Ariana Grande's 'music' is, very simply, pornography. EVERY SONG, and I do mean EVERY SONG has exactly the same theme: the physical, mechanical act of sex, including manual, oral and anal sodomy."

Is this overstated? Perhaps. I haven't read the lyrics to most of her songs. And there is plenty about the rest of the post that I differ with, especially its tone. But the lyrics I have read are absolutely gross—that is, once their meaning was explained to me. As the Huffington Post reported, "The Meaning of Ariana Grande's 'Side to Side' Is Way More Sexual Than We Thought."

To make matters worse, I've read that Grande's target audience is pre-pubescent girls. As another article stated, "The 23-year-old's most dedicated fans—largely made up of girls between the ages of 8 and 18—call themselves Arianators."

Am I blaming these young girls for following stars like Grande? Certainly not. Most of them haven't the slightest clue what she's talking about.

Am I saying that the young girls and teenagers killed at her concert deserved it? To repeat: a thousand times no! As a father and grandfather, the very thought of this kind of violence makes me sick.

I'm simply stating that what Manchester needs most will not be found in a concert featuring the likes of Ariana Grande or Miley Cyrus (she of naked, wrecking-ball fame) or Katy Perry (she of a recent cannibalistic-fetish video; the links are too vile to provide).

What Manchester needs is hope from above.

What Manchester needs only the Lord can provide.

What Manchester needs is the beauty of love and the presence of true goodness, not a bunch of scantily-clad stars gyrating

to sex-charged lyrics. And even if the benefit concert strikes a higher tone and the performers are on their best behavior, they are still not the ones the city needs to be looking to.

How wonderful it would be if the top worship bands of the nation came together for a night of worship and prayer. (Perhaps this is being planned as I write?)

How wonderful it would be if the Christian leaders of the region joined as one to declare a message of hope and redemption. (Perhaps this is being arranged as well?)

How wonderful it would be if the church of the city (and country) shouted out to their friends and neighbors, "God has a better way! In Jesus, you can find true life! Manchester turn to Him!"

My assumption is that many Christian leaders and churches in the U.K. are seeking to do this very thing, and my prayer is that the message of the gospel would touch that wounded city and country, reaching the Muslim communities as well.

Surely that would do far more good for Manchester than Arianna, Miley, Katy and friends. (And let's pray for them too.)

Do you agree? {eoa}

The No. 1 Sin Sweeping the Nation and Promoting a False

Religion

On February 12, 2015, 21 Egyptian Christians were beheaded on the coast of the Mediterranean at the hands of ISIS fighters. Just before they beheaded each man, they offered him his life—if only he would deny Christ. But these brave men loved Jesus more than their own lives.

While this type of persecution is happening around the world, another form of attack on Christ and His church is happening here at home. A false religion is gaining ground—and it recognizes only one sin.

This modern-day religion is called tolerance. Its sacred doctrine states that we must be tolerant of any form of belief, regardless of its teaching. Therefore, the only sin is believing that there is absolute truth or only one true God. And if you commit this sin of exclusivity, there is a price to pay.

With persecution on the rise, whether from secular culture or Islamic jihadists, we must face the inevitable cost of following Christ in our lifetime. In the face of such forces, we must not fall victim to fear but rather trust in the power of God. We must learn and grow in our knowledge of the Word of God and obey it. Above all, we must understand that suffering for Christ is at times what it means to identify with Him. Instead of avoiding it, perhaps we must embrace it.

In 1 Peter 4:12-13, the apostle Peter says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ’s sufferings, so that you may rejoice and be glad also in the revelation of His glory.”

The same Peter who wrote these words once rebuked Christ for declaring His intention to go to the cross (see Matthew

16:21-23). Peter once found suffering abhorrent, but now he tells us we should rejoice. Peter had grown in his understanding of the role of suffering in the Christian life. He had seen that the suffering of the cross was not the end—but only the way to the resurrection.

The persecution of the church is not new. In fact, history proves again and again that Christianity flourishes best under persecution. How then are we as Christians to respond to persecution?

In this age of tolerance, we must love those who persecute us—but never surrender the truth. We must invite all people to come to the one who loves them and died for their sin. We must “implore [them] in Christ’s stead: Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Above all, we must resist the temptation of being ashamed of the Gospel.

In the midst of suffering, God makes us some incredible promises:

- “If you are reproached because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Peter 4:14).
- “In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).
- “Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

There is an indescribable blessing that can only be received through suffering for Christ. When you trust in Him, even amid persecution or difficult circumstances, you will experience His presence with you in a unique and powerful way. And as you walk with the Lord in obedience, He promises that He will never leave you or forsake you—in the fiery furnace, the lion’s den, or even in your workplace. {eoa}

This article originally appeared on Leading The Way.

Jerry Boykin Has a Message for 'Mad Dog' Mattis

Army Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin (ret.), vice president of the Family Research Council, wrote an open letter to Secretary of Defense James "Mad Dog" Mattis in which he suggests Obama administration holdouts are damaging the U.S. military's primary mission.

He wrote:

The head of the United States Pacific Command, Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr. testified before the House of Representatives in late April that the threat posed by North Korea has grown sufficiently to endanger the Hawaiian Islands. All around the globe, serious national security problems are coming to the fore in places like Iran, Venezuela, Afghanistan and the South China Sea. Yet, because of holdover personnel from the Obama administration, and damaging Obama-era policies remaining in place, our military continues flailing.

Specifically, Boykin is concerned about the Obama-era policy that the military will begin accepting transgender recruits on July 1. He wrote this policy alone would have a devastating impact on President Donald Trump and Secretary Mattis' stated priorities: mission readiness, command proficiency and combat effectiveness.

He wrote:

I received a letter from a known but confidential source in the naval service who asked me to inform the command structure in Washington about the damaging effects of these policies:

As part of the policy, COs must facilitate the requests of individuals for transgender treatment (surgery, cross-hormonal therapy, etc.). ... [O]nce the service member is considered "stable" in their preferred gender, and their "gender marker" is changed in a DoD database, they must be accommodated in the berthing and bathroom facilities of their preferred gender regardless of whether they still possess their opposite sex anatomy! (And most are expected to do so). Given the close living quarters that most military members have to share, this is particularly distressing to many of us, especially women.

These policies will ultimately undermine recruitment and retention.

Secretary Mattis must consider the many complex ramifications of these Obama-era policies that remain in effect. The DOD and the Congress need to ensure the priorities of the U.S. armed forces remain those that the Secretary has outlined: mission readiness, command proficiency and combat effectiveness. Holdover personnel from the Obama Administration need to focus on these new priorities, and not on the last Administration's social engineering projects that ignore military readiness.

Boykin served in the Army for 36 years, most of them in special forces, including Delta Force. The last four years of his military career were spent as Undersecretary for Intelligence at the Department of Defense.

Click here to read his entire op-ed at . {eoa}