

# Reactions Continue to Pour In On President Trump's Strike on Syria

Reactions continued to pour in Friday morning following President Donald Trump's decision to launch missile strikes against the Syrian airbase used to launch chemical weapons attacks on civilians on Thursday night.

Among the first to respond were U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.), perhaps two of the president's biggest opponents within his own party, who praised his decision:

We salute the skill and professionalism of the U.S. Armed Forces who carried out tonight's strikes in Syria. Acting on the orders of their commander-in-chief, they have sent an important message the United States will no longer stand idly by as Assad, aided and abetted by Putin's Russia, slaughters innocent Syrians with chemical weapons and barrel bombs.

Unlike the previous administration, President Trump confronted a pivotal moment in Syria and took action. For that, he deserves the support of the American people. Building on tonight's credible first step, we must finally learn the lessons of history and ensure that tactical success leads to strategic progress. That means following through with a new, comprehensive strategy in coordination with our allies and partners to end the conflict in Syria. The first measure in such a strategy must be to take Assad's air force—which is responsible not just for the latest chemical weapons attack, but countless atrocities against the Syrian people—completely out of the fight. We must also bolster support for the vetted Syrian opposition and

establish safe zones to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis. As we do, we can and must continue the campaign to achieve ISIS' lasting defeat.

Another of Trump's critics, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), was also quick to praise the decision in an interview with CNN's Anderson Cooper:

I don't believe this is a message; I believe this is actually a tactical action that furthers an objective, which is important ... it's an important and decisive step that was taken. It is not a message; it is an actual degrading of the capability of Syrian regime to carry out further chemical attacks against innocent civilians. This will degrade their capability to launch those attacks from the air, and I think it was an important step and hopefully it's part of a comprehensive strategy moving forward to bring to a close this chaos that's happening in Syria.

Congressional leadership backed the decision to strike the Syrian base. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) also offered his support for the president's decision:

Earlier this week the Assad regime murdered dozens of innocent men, women, and children in a barbaric chemical weapons attack. Tonight, the United States responded. This action was appropriate and just. These tactical strikes make clear that the Assad regime can no longer count on American inaction as it carries out atrocities against the Syrian people. Resolving the years-long crisis in Syria is a complex task, but Bashar al-Assad must be held accountable and his enablers must be persuaded to change course. I look forward to the administration further engaging Congress in this effort.

Democrats largely criticized the decision to strike, calling it reckless and careless. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (R-Calif.) hasn't responded as of this writing, but Rep. Tulsi

Gabbard (R-Hawaii) made a statement indicative of most liberals' responses:

It angers and saddens me that President Trump has taken the advice of war hawks and escalated our illegal regime change war to overthrow the Syrian government. This escalation is short-sighted and will lead to more dead civilians, more refugees, the strengthening of al-Qaeda and other terrorists, and a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia—which could lead to nuclear war.

This administration has acted recklessly without care or consideration of the dire consequences of the United States attack on Syria without waiting for the collection of evidence from the scene of the chemical poisoning. If President Assad is indeed guilty of this horrible chemical attack on innocent civilians, I will be the first to call for his prosecution and execution by the International Criminal Court. However, because of our attack on Syria, this investigation may now not even be possible. And without such evidence, a successful prosecution will be much harder.

Not every Democrat was critical of the decision, though. Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) gave a more middle-of-the-road response:

My preliminary briefing by the White House indicated this was a measured response to the Syrian nerve gas atrocity. Any further action will require close scrutiny by Congress, and any escalation beyond airstrikes or missile strikes will require engaging the American people in that decision.

Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Fla.) actually praised the president's actions:

I support the admin's strike on the air base that launched the chemical attack. I hope this teaches Assad not to use chemical weapons again.

Likewise, not every Republican was happy with the decision to strike Syria. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who has been working with the president to push through a health care reform bill, issued this statement:

While we all condemn the atrocities in Syria, the United States was not attacked. The president needs congressional authorization for military action as required by the Constitution, and I call on him to come to Congress for a proper debate. Our prior interventions in this region have done nothing to make us safer, and Syria will be no different.

His father, former Rep. Ron Paul, went as far as to defend the Assad regime, effectively taking Russia's position on the matter:

It doesn't make any sense for Assad under these conditions to all of a sudden use poison gases—I think there's zero chance he would have done this deliberately. It's the neo-conservatives who are benefiting tremendously from this because it's derailed the progress that has already been made moving toward a more peaceful settlement in Syria.

World reaction has been generally positive. As of this writing, leaders from the following countries are praising the president's decision to launch the missile attack on Syria: Israel, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

The list of countries that have been critical of the strikes is a bit shorter: Russia, Iran and Indonesia. {eoa}

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# Why You Can Have Unceasing Joy No Matter the Heartache

“God gave us free will to choose mind over matter or let the matters of life control our minds. The choice is ours, and that important choice will determine the direction of our faith and our ability to enjoy God’s joy and peace, even when our hearts are heavy. Unsinkable optimism, hope and faith hinge on where we choose to focus our thoughts, not on life’s circumstances.” –[Proverbs 31 Encouragement for Today Devotion, “The Year I Didn’t Want to Buy an Easter Dress,” Tracie Miles](#)

I’m not going to lie, today’s P31 devotion was hard to write. I remember the day I described in the devotion so vividly. It still tugs at my heart, remembering the tears trickling down my face while driving home from shopping with my Kaitlyn, after saying those hasty words about not being excited for Easter last year due to the breakup of my marriage and the heaviness of my heart.

I had been leaning so much on my faith and spending time with God every day, even on those days when that was about all I had the strength to do. But yet, my thoughts were still sinking my attitude and my outlook, and as a result, I found myself on the shore of a pessimistic, negative mind.

And I knew that wasn’t where I wanted to land. Much less live. And serious change was needed. Can you relate?

I certainly still have days when I feel sad or angry or frustrated. Days when I wish I had a magic wand to fix all the problems in my life, take away all the fears, and make all my dreams come true. But life is never going to be perfectly positive—so our only choice is to focus on our perfectly positive God and ask Him to transform our minds and the way we think, even when our circumstances remain the same. Our joy

and peace hang in the balance of that decision.

I've learned that I can be happy no matter what is going on in my life—as long I keep implementing the three strategies I talk about in *Unsinkable Faith* and continually practice the reshaping of my thoughts through the power of Christ.

Friend, if I can do it, so can you, regardless of what you're facing today. How am I so sure of that? Because this is the truth Paul shared in the Bible in Romans 12:2a (NLT): "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." These are instructions that promise we can have victory over our thoughts. Isn't that exciting? None of us is too far gone to be changed, and it's never too late to make the intentional choice to think positive!

I promise you this, my friend, you can bet your bottom dollar I'm buying a new Easter dress this year. In fact, you should subscribe to my blog if we're not already connected, because I plan on posting an Easter photo of my three amazing kids and me just to prove it, even if I'm having a really bad hair day. Smiles.

Trust me, I still have some heavy burdens to carry and wounds still trying to heal. There are still problems to sift through, more unknowns to face and more changes to come. But the one thing that will never change is the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ. It is because of Him I can be positive, and it is Him I can be grateful to for helping me learn the value of controlling my thoughts so they stop controlling my life. Not only at Easter, but every day of the year.

My prayer is that you will allow Him to do the same for you. Beginning today. {eoa}

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## **The Error Behind Those Popular 'Balanced Life' Messages**

I once heard a message in church on "the balanced life." Using a diagram of three overlapping circles, the speaker made the point that we need to give equal time to each of the most significant areas of our lives so we don't get out of balance.

I had a small computer Bible with me and felt prompted to do a search on the word "balance" to see if I could find scriptural backing for the message. The only reference given that contained the word was a verse in Proverbs, and that had to do with a scale—in other words, with weights and measures, not

with the way we use our time.

What I found did not convince me the preacher was right. I asked the Holy Spirit to show me the truth, and He replied, "The truth is that being wholehearted for God is the key to balance."

I looked up all the verses with the concept "whole heart" and found references throughout the Scriptures. The most significant was Matthew 22:37, which records what Jesus called the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." According to the Word, God demands that we put Him first, not that we prioritize our time so He gets an equal share.

But loving God wholeheartedly is more than a command. It is our destiny. Ignatius, one of the early church fathers, said, "I come from God. I belong to God. I am destined for God." God created us for the purpose of knowing and loving Him.

Developing intense love for Him is a process of turning away from the things of the world. We cannot fully embrace Him while we are holding onto other things—even good things. The goal is to be able to declare with the psalmist, "... there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You" (Ps. 73:25).

It's not always easy to be wholehearted for God. The other demands of our lives—family, friends, work, ministry—press in on us and try to distract us. But I have found that if I purpose in my heart to put Him first, He will help me keep my focus. And He will tell me when my choices don't indicate that He is my top priority.

During a season when I desired to spend more time in prayer, I asked Him to help me find opportunities. Afterward, whenever I sat down to read the newspaper or watch television, He would say, "You could be spending time with Me." It was amazing to see how much time I had for my spiritual life when I gave up

unnecessary pursuits.

When we commit to putting God first, the other priorities in our lives will fall into their proper places. God will direct us by His Spirit as we learn and apply the principles in His Word. He is the one who gives us the priorities, and He will help us balance them correctly.

The important thing is to love God first and foremost. Then we will be motivated by our love to do what He desires us to do. We can't follow His commands or otherwise serve Him out of ourselves; we must be led by His Spirit so that, like Jesus, we will do only what we see the Father doing (see John 5:19).

This week, increase your resolve to be wholehearted to what the Lord called the greatest commandment. Surrender anew to the Holy Spirit and, as you do, enjoy His presence, cleansing and empowering to fulfill His perfect will for you. Continue to pray for our nation, our allies and all those charged with leadership in these crucial times. Read Matthew 22:37 and John 5:19. {eoa}

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## **President Trump Selects Another Evangelical Christian to Join a Key Administration Post**

President Donald Trump recently announced a new "hire" to his administration that will likely send liberals' heads spinning.

Although the announcement has not yet been formally made,

several news outlets are reporting the president has selected Tennessee state Sen. Mark Green (R-Clarksville), the leading candidate for that state's governor in 2018, to become secretary of the Army. The West Point graduate was a medic for the special operations team that captured Saddam Hussein and wrote a book about the experience titled *A Night With Saddam*.

He's also an evangelical Christian who holds to the biblical definition of marriage. This is particularly relevant because he will be replacing the first openly homosexual civilian leader in the Army's history, Eric Fanning.

As the ultra-liberal Center for American Progress complains:

Just last June, the Pentagon announced that it was lifting the ban on transgender people serving openly in the military. Part of that plan was a year-long rollout, such that transgender people can not start enlisting until this coming summer. Green, whose opposition to transgender equality is well documented, would be easily positioned to throw a wrench in this implementation.

Green, who is a physician, founded AlignMD, a hospital staffing company providing service to five southeastern states, which was later bought by another company for approximately \$26 million, according to news reports. As secretary of the Army, he would be responsible for a \$150 billion piece of the Pentagon's annual budget.

The legislator is expected to drop his gubernatorial bid to accept the president's offer to lead the Army. {eoa}

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# Rabbi Jonathan Cahn Unlocks the Mystery of Nisan: The Month of Messiah

*Editor's Note: This mystery is taken from The Book of Mysteries, Jonathan Cahn's national best-seller that takes you on a one-year journey into the desert with "the teacher" with the greatest mysteries of God and the greatest secrets of overcoming in your walk with God, one for every day of the year. You can get The Book of Mysteries for yourself wherever books are sold.*

We were walking along a barren plain when he stopped to pick up a desert flower that had just blossomed.

"Even in the desert," said the teacher, "you can find blossoms."

"It's beautiful," I replied.

"The word for 'winter' in the Scriptures is the Hebrew *setav*. *Setav* means the season of hiding or the time of darkness. The winter is the season of darkness, barrenness and death. But each year, the winter ends with the coming of the Hebrew month of Nisan."

"In the spring."

"Yes," said the teacher. "Nisan is the month that ends the season of darkness, that breaks the death of winter. Nisan is the month when the earth again bears its fruit, and its flowers again begin to blossom. Nisan is the month of new life. In fact, the word 'nisan' means 'the beginning.' Nisan is the month when the sacred Hebrew year begins anew."

"Why is that significant?"

“Because Nisan is the month of redemption, the month of Messiah. It’s the month Messiah chose to enter Jerusalem, to die on the cross, and to rise from death to life. Why do you think it all happened in Nisan?”

“Because Nisan is the time of new beginning. So when Messiah comes, it must be a new beginning. So it must be Nisan. And Nisan is the season of new life. So Messiah’s coming brings new life ... a new birth.

“Yes,” said the teacher. “And what else does Nisan do?”

“It ends the winter.”

“What winter would be ended?” he asked.

“Our winter,” I said. “The winter of our lives. The season of our darkness ... the time of our hiding ... the days of living in the shadows ... the season of our barrenness ... when our life can’t bear the fruit it was meant to bear.”

“Yes,” said the teacher, “Messiah’s coming is our Nisan, that which ends the winter of our lives and begins the spring of our lives. That’s the power of Messiah, the power of Nisan. And for those in Messiah ... it is always Nisan. And that is where we must always stay, in the season of new life, of new beginnings, of blossoming and the end of winter.

Break out of the winter and out of every darkness, and bear the fruit your life was meant to bear. Live in the power of Nisan.

✘ *Adapted from The Book of Mysteries by Jonathan Cahn, copyright 2016, published by FrontLine, Charisma Media/Charisma House books. The book is a treasure chest of 365 life-changing devotionals that uncover mysteries, reveal truths, bring end-time revelation and give keys to opening the doors to a life full of joy, blessings and fulfillment. To order your copy, click [here](#).*

## **Prayer Power for the Week of April 9, 2017**

This week as we move toward remembering and celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord, ask Him for divine connections where He can use you to be a blessing and point others to His love and redemption. In all the festivities, take time to meditate on His great sacrifice, thank Him for it and rejoice that because He lives, we are reconciled to God and have the gospel of reconciliation to share with a dying world. Continue to pray for revival in our nation and around the world. Remember Israel during this busy tourist season, and lift up our leaders and allies: Isaiah 13:1-5; Hab. 2:14; James 5:16. {eoa}

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# **Powerful Passover Lessons From Jesus' Last Sermon on Earth**

As Jesus hung on the cross, struggling painfully for each breath, He uttered seven short, powerful statements showing who He was and what was happening, and encouraging those who would follow Him. It was His last sermon.

1. "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus is not only practicing the forgiveness He preached (Matt. 5:44), He is asserting His divinity as God who forgives sin (Ps. 103:3). Beyond that, however, He is announcing the beginning of the New Covenant under which our sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:33, 34).

2. "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Jesus' promise of life to the criminal on the cross tells us He has authority over heaven (Ps. 115:16), He will conquer death (Ps. 16:10) and through Him we also will live (John 14:19). He is the priest of the New Covenant because of His indestructible life (Heb. 7:16, 17).

3. "'Woman, here is your Son' ... 'Here is your mother'" (John 19:26-27)

Jesus took time to entrust His mother into the care of the beloved disciple John, fulfilling the Scripture at Psalm 69:8 that He was estranged from His brothers and showing us that God expects us to honor our family (Mark 7:10-13). We are also reminded that Jesus was the "seed of woman," the Savior born to a virgin promised in Genesis 3:15.

4. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

Many of those who heard Jesus, and many commentators since, have failed to understand that Jesus is quoting the Hebrew title of the 22nd Psalm. Jesus sends us to Psalm 22 to show us that 1000 years earlier, it was prophesied that Jesus would be mocked (Ps. 22:6-8) and even prophesying the very words of His mockers (Matthew 27:41-43). In one sense, He was mocking His mockers. The crucifixion is also described, as His hands and feet were pierced (Ps. 22:16), His clothes were divided by casting lots (Ps. 22:14) and it was difficult to speak (Ps. 22:15).

Yet Psalm 22 is not a picture of forsakenness or despair, but is instead a declaration of victory. God did not despise the suffering of Jesus (Psalm 22:24). Rather, God used it to purchase eternal life (Ps. 22:26) and promised that all nations will come to Jesus (Ps. 22: 27- 28). Jesus is telling us that He knew the price and gladly paid it.

5. "I am thirsty" (John 19:28)

This is another fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 69:28), when the suffering Savior is given vinegar for His thirst. Yet in the midst of His pain and distress, Jesus used Psalm 69 to tell us that those who seek God will live (Ps. 69:32), and the God does not despise the suffering of His people (Ps. 69:33). There is also the promise that His people will rebuild Judah (Ps. 69:35, 36), an apparent reference to His promise to return.

6. "It is finished" (John 19:30)

To fully understand this statement, we believe we need to look to the prophet Daniel. He foretold the coming of the Anointed One who would come 483 years ( $69 \times 7$ ) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (458 B.C. or A.D. 26) and then be "cut off" (Daniel 9:25-26). Jesus is telling us that He has fulfilled Daniel's prophecy to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, bring eternal righteousness, seal up prophecy and anoint the Holy One (Dan. 9:24). This is the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

7. "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

The last words of Jesus on the cross are taken from Psalm 31. He is telling us that we can take refuge in God (Ps. 31:1-4) and that we can trust God with our life (Ps. 31:15). Our times are in His hands (Psalm 31:19-22) and He preserves the faithful (Psalm 31:23, 24).

With His last sermon, Jesus told us what he was doing even as He was doing it.

Can you join Him in saying "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit?" {eoa}

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## **Big Brother Isn't Who You Thought He Was**

Since the earliest centuries A.D. Christians have been speculating about the coming one-world government of the anti-Christ. But what if the precursor to that government isn't a government at all? What if it is agenda-driven, multi-national corporations whose size, wealth and domination of a market gives them the same power to coerce as a governmental power?

These days, it's hard to know who is taking their cues from whom—the NSA or Amazon, the CIA or Facebook, the Defense Intelligence Agency or Vimeo?

The stripping of First Amendment freedoms of speech, religion and privacy have all been broached in our generation by both corporate and government entities in the name of national security and/or under the guise of protecting people from “hate speech”.

As an example, Target Department Stores flung open its bathroom doors to pedophiles, sex criminals, would-be transgenders and others in an arrogant and callous disregard for the safety of women and children. Our former president spent a great deal of time, effort and taxpayer dollars trying

to force nuns at the “Little Sisters of the Poor” to pay for abortions (via insurance premiums) and to strip florists and bakers of their religious freedoms (with egregious fines) so as to drive them out of business for not complying with “big brother’s” wishes. He also set out to rob school districts everywhere of federal income if they refused to allow men into women’s bath and shower rooms. Never mind that his order would allow any man to enter such private areas. “Big Brother” had declared it to be so, or else.

In 1949, George Orwell wrote the classic novel, *1984*, in which a totalitarian government takes control of its population and programs the minds of its people to accept their enslavement.

Here are some chilling quotes from this prophetic book:

“Freedom is slavery.”

“The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power, pure power.”

“Reality exists ... only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal.”

“One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.”

“I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don’t want virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones.”

“And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. ‘Who controls the past’ ran the Party slogan, ‘controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.’”

“The choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness and for the great bulk of mankind, happiness is better.”

"Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing."

"Power is not a means; it is an end ... The object of power is power"

"No one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it."

"Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."

"What you say or do doesn't matter; only feelings matter."

"Big Brother is Watching You."

Then there was the 1931 dystopian novel, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley:

"One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them."

"On no account brood over your wrongdoing."

"Great is truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth."

"... most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution."

"... reality, however utopian, is something from which people feel the need of taking pretty frequent holidays..."

"A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude."

"Science is dangerous, we have to keep it most carefully

chained and muzzled.”

The most recent example of corporate “big brother” is Vimeo.com, which is the single largest platform for high-end videos on the internet. It essentially has no competition for that market and has become a monopoly. If you want your video to be seen worldwide by the market that expects high-end, quality videos, it’s the only place to go.

In the past few years, Vimeo began dictating new “political correctness” rules for the many nonprofits, churches, ministries and corporate entities, some of whom had spent tens of thousands of dollars establishing their presence during almost a decade on the site. The site’s new rules imposed restrictions on what they could post on their own well-established pages.

You’d expect such rules to revolve around eliminating pro-pedophile videos or rape videos or pornographic videos, or videos about terrorism, jihad or other violent acts. No—those were okay.

Just put “jihad” in Vimeo’s search bar and you get 2,233 selections. Put “lust” + Vimeo in a Google search and one option is a porn filmmaker site, among 288 other sites containing 2,872 videos. Search on Google for “rape” + Vimeo and you get 2,817 videos. Google “teen rape” + Vimeo, and you get at least one rape video.

Vimeo offers “sugar daddy” dating sites for the enrichment of children everywhere who are looking for some extra cash, plus all kinds of gay porn videos. You can even watch some of Allen Ginsberg’s speech glorifying NAMBLA (a society that promotes the molestation of children) on Vimeo. I was expecting some concern for the millions of children who can easily access such predator sites, (some of whom will no doubt end up being sex trafficked as a result), but found just the opposite.

Some months ago, Vimeo removed all of the videos from the

Christian network of ministries to homosexuals, [Restored Hope Network](#) –an outstanding ministry that helps those who come to it for healing from wounds that have led to sexual brokenness. Homosexuals have proven and significant levels of brokenness, such as histories of childhood sexual abuse, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc. Research abounds at CDC and APA websites. Entire books have been written on the brokenness, not only by ministries like ours, but by secular and gay authors as well.

But the thought police at Vimeo don't want it known that homosexuals have sexual brokenness. They have declared that such an idea is "demeaning." They also consider the idea that Jesus Christ can bring healing to sexual brokenness both offensive and demeaning.

Recently, Vimeo removed all 850 of our award-winning videos—videos that feature many of the world's top experts in helping sexually broken people, as well as testimonies of individuals whose lives have been rescued from destruction as a direct result of the help found in the videos.

Though no more than half deal with healing sexual brokenness among homosexuals, Vimeo wanted them all gone. Censored! No more help for victims of sex trafficking or other forms of childhood sexual abuse. No help for the massive population of sex addicts, some of whom get their porn fix from Vimeo. Many have testified to us that our videos kept them from committing suicide, spurred them to give their lives to Jesus Christ, saved their marriage and much more. But Vimeo wanted them all gone—displaying the very kind of selfish, self-centeredness that (ironically enough) typifies sexually broken people.

Vimeo claims that our videos "harass, incite hatred or depict excessive violence"—a claim that is patently false and without a shred of merit. Our approach to ministry has always been based on the scriptural teaching that it is love that compels us (Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 5:14) and that it is grace that teaches

us to say “No” to ungodliness (Titus 2:11-14). We have always been respectful, kind and grace-filled in showing people that Jesus Christ can heal their brokenness, no matter whether they are heterosexual or homosexual.

Vimeo claims that our videos display a “demeaning attitude” toward homosexuals—again, patently false. When I asked them why our help for sexually broken heterosexuals wasn’t also considered demeaning, they refused to answer.

By their own words, it is clear that Vimeo’s opposition to our ministry is grounded in unadulterated religious bigotry. They objected to the following statements found on our website:

- “God can transform the life of anyone caught in homosexual confusion”
- “Overcoming homosexuality is achievable through the power provided by the blood of Jesus Christ”
- and to the idea that the Word of God can be a “tool that empowers the overcoming of homosexuality”.

The homosexuals who have been featured in our videos have all testified to multiple levels of sexual brokenness, (including childhood sexual abuse, porn/sex addiction, etc.), as have many that have been featured in articles and appearances on pro-gay venues such as the Huffington Post, The Advocate, *The Dr. Phil Show* and *Oprah*.

I personally was a victim of bullying in childhood so am all too familiar with this kind of intimidation. Bullies always go after the small, the weak and the poor. They know that we are small and do not have the funds to defend ourselves in court. But I know that if you do not fight back with what you do have, they will continue to intimidate and bully to their heart’s content.

In one final attempt to reason with them, I wrote:

*You are misrepresenting our ministry and outreach to sexually broken people. We are kind, respectful and helpful to everyone who comes to us for help. We are not demeaning to anyone in any way, nor is the gospel of Jesus Christ demeaning to homosexuals.*

*As a former homosexual and in ministry to them for 30 years, I am well versed in the profound brokenness of those who come to us for help. They are often suicidal, dangerously addicted to drugs and/or alcohol, bound in the trap of domestic violence, riddled with STDs, victims of childhood sexual abuse and/or sex trafficking, abandoned by parents, kicked out of their churches, sex/porn addicted and more.*

*Multiple gay studies, the CDC, the APAs and every other secular organization that gathers statistics on the gay lifestyle repeatedly publish proof that there is an abnormally high incidence of brokenness among the gay community. If it is so "demeaning" to address such brokenness, why aren't you threatening to remove the videos of such organizations?*

*The "T" in LGBT are also in crisis health-wise, with astronomical rates of major depression and suicide. Why do you consider it a crime to try to help those who are seeking help? And why would you remove help for those affected by the very conditions that drive them to suicide at such abnormally high levels?*

*The numbers of people who have indeed been healed by Jesus Christ from these underlying conditions belies your claim that it is impossible.*

*These are the people who come to us for help and who are indeed "set free" from these life-threatening situations in many cases. A better way to word it is they find healing in relationship with Christ for the wounds that have led to their dysfunctional activities.*

*Not only [are your actions in removing our videos] an abridgment of free speech and religious freedom, I find it unconscionable that you would remove anyone from your site who is trying to rescue broken people who are seeking help for their brokenness, no matter what their sexual orientation.*

*We have never focused on sexual orientation change, but have always and only addressed the brokenness that underlies those coming to us for help. And indeed, they are often gloriously helped, even to the degree of deciding not to take their lives, to get off alcohol, drugs, etc.*

*Therefore, there is no reason for us to remove any of our videos. With the thousands of testimonies of lives rescued in one way or another, it would be an unforgivable act for us to do so.*

*Your admission of ignorance of the findings of the APAs, the CDC and dozens of gay studies is to make my point. Your policy is misinformed. For your righteous cause, you think you are helping homosexuals by shutting down any information about there being any brokenness among them (under the guise of it being "demeaning" to suggest such a thing) and in the process leaving the broken ones strewn on the battlefield with no one left to help.*

*This is akin to how HIV was handled in the early years. Up 'till then, everyone with an STD was supposed to report those they had had sexual contact with, so that they could receive testing and treatment in order to halt the progression of the disease and save lives. But activists, afraid of what people might think, forced a removal of that policy. The result was greater and greater proliferation of the deadly disease. In other words, for the sake of some righteous cause and the fear of what people might think, people were left to get infected and die in far greater numbers than was necessary. So the concern was not for the individual homosexual, but a*

*selfish and ill-informed reaction borne out of fear.*

*Censorship and the withholding of help for those who seek it is never the answer to brokenness.*

*It's very much like the situation found in many families of alcoholics. For fear of what people might think, the entire family system is forced to deny that there is anything wrong. They think they are protecting the reputation of the family, but in the process, the alcoholic dies from his/her brokenness and the wife and children grow up with an unhealthy fear of disclosing their own areas of brokenness. It's a dysfunctional model that selfishly ignores the wounded among them.*

*For the life of me, I can't see how it is demeaning to address brokenness among homosexuals and NOT demeaning to address it among heterosexuals. Our ministry has always addressed both populations and without prejudice.*

*And for the sake of your political cause, you seem ready to censor anyone who wants to help the broken among you. That's crazy! Even gay activists like Camille Paglia regularly point out in their columns the insanity of such an approach.*

*Our approach to ministry has always been to let people speak the truth about the healing they've received for their brokenness, whether heterosexual or homosexual. The problem does not lie in the heterosexuality or homosexuality, but in those traumas and experiences in their lives that have wounded them and left them wounded and out of control. To censor such help is, again, unconscionable.*

*I see that you post videos praising pedophilia, jihad and that depict "demeaning" pornography that is destroying people's lives. Did you know that a significant part of the population of porn actors are victims of sex trafficking and/or childhood sexual abuse? Did you know that they are regularly sexually abused on the set and beaten if they do*

*not do what is demanded of them? Many are forced into prostitution and drug addiction. Did you know that an abnormally high percentage of them commit suicide because of their abuse? Did you know that your video of Allen Ginsberg glorifies the molestation of children by adult men?*

*In other words, I'm failing to see any moral standard represented by the videos found on Vimeo that provides a leg for you to stand on to justify censoring people who are trying to help the broken people who are the casualties of many of the videos that you host.*

*After hosting our videos for almost nine years, (most of them under no such policy as you now claim), after our spending tens of thousands of dollars creating Vimeo-quality versions, uploading them, linking them to websites, smart devices and channels, advertising and promoting their presence—all resulting in the rescue, healing and even saving of hundreds of lives, and without any complaint from Vimeo until now, you suddenly want to trash all of our hard work and throw away our entire investment in time and money on a policy that doesn't even help homosexuals, but rather robs them of help. And in order to justify your actions, you have decided to slander us by inventing a fiction that we are acting in ways that are demeaning to homosexuals.*

*People can see through all of that. They hate the spin doctors who would rather destroy people for their pet cause than help them. They hate "thought police" and other Orwellian actions that censor free speech and freedom of religion, even when they disagree with them. You're headed toward a legacy of promoting things that hurt people and censoring those that are trying to help them in ways that evoke memories of the cruelties of the Soviet Union during the reigns of Lenin, Stalin and others in the Cold War.*

*As I've said before, we will not remove videos that are saving lives. It would be a sin against God and against those*

*who desperately want hope and the kind of help that will bring healing to whatever brokenness they may have. We have the track record to prove that for 30 years, what we have been doing has been healing and no demeaning or hateful or whatever other spin you want to put on it.*

Vimeo responded:

“Your account has been removed by the Vimeo staff for violating our guidelines. Vimeo does not allow videos that harass, incite hatred or include discriminatory or defamatory speech.”

It’s 1984 come to life in corporate America. Per Orwell:

“The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power, pure power.”

“Reality exists ... only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal.”

“One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.”

“Big Brother is Watching You!” {eoa}

**Dr. David Kyle Foster** is the producer of *Pure Passion TV* and the documentaries *Such Were Some of You* ([www.SuchWereSomeOfYou.org](http://www.SuchWereSomeOfYou.org)), *How Do You Like Me Now? When a Child, Parent, Spouse or Sibling Says They’re Gay* ([www.HowDoYouLikeMeNow.org](http://www.HowDoYouLikeMeNow.org)) and the upcoming *Tranzformed: Finding Peace with Your God-Given Gender* ([www.Tranzformed.org](http://www.Tranzformed.org)) (coming June 2017). He is also the author of *Love Hunger (Chosen)*, *Sexual Healing (Regal)* and *Transformed Into His Image: Hidden Steps on the Journey to Christlikeness (Laurus Books)*.

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# U.S. Senator Discusses Being a Christian Witness

In an age of continuous economic disruption and social fragmentation, what can possibly hold society together?

Many are quick to turn to politics for such answers, pushing for increased price controls, trade barriers and subsidies to prevent or mitigate the effects of such change. Others are just as quick to shrug off the disruption altogether, encouraging faith in “economic progress” and the enduring promise of productivity.

But while the recent waves of economic disruption have surely brought their share of opportunity and economic blessings, the march forward ought not to be so blind. Indeed, even if we tend toward a sunny view of our economic future (and I do), we’d do well to ask ourselves what, exactly, such “progress” should like—both materially and spiritually—and how or whether it might be pursued and achieved.

In a recent talk at TGC 2017, Senator Ben Sasse explores those questions at length, tailoring his message specifically to Christians and the role of the church amid rapid change. See the video above.

“Politics can only work well if it’s a framework and not the center,” he explains, noting the importance of the family, the church and the various mediating institutions of society. The American experiment is one whose roots begin with a flat rejection of politics as problem-solver-in-chief.

And yet even if we understand that politics isn’t the answer, we still need a proper view of those other foundational

features of a flourishing society. Even as we remind ourselves of the limits of princes and kings, we also ought to remember the limits of a civil society outside the power of the gospel.

The quest to build Babel doesn't just rest in the halls of political power. In our families, businesses and social institutions, Christians have the responsibility to carry with us far more than mere moralism or Tocquevillian social engineering. The ultimate aim of our activity points toward something else.

Sasse emphasizes the need to have "guard rails" in our hearts and a "cultural awareness" that "we're a forgetful people," particularly when it comes to the successes we can achieve here on earth. It's the story we see throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, whether in the Israelites' constant pursuit of an earthly kingdom or the disciples' illusions about what Christ's coming reign would actually look like.

"We have always yearned to have a city that had foundations. We've always wanted to make it happen in the here and now," Sasse says. "This whole [biblical] text is stories of our forgetfulness and our hope that the kingdom would come soon and that it would be a worldly kingdom."

Those desires are understandably "natural," but Sasse reminds us that "the king that you yearn for is supernatural." If we hope to redeem and restore civil society, never mind the halls of political power, we have to embrace and assume that basic orientation:

And it is our calling and it is your calling to preach to ourselves—to preach to our congregations, to preach to our kids, to preach to our neighbors—to recognize all of this ambassadorial language throughout our text ... We have the task of setting up an embassy that says, "Your yearning for a city that has foundations is natural, but the king that

you yearn for is supernatural, and he is coming again, and he is a liberator, and he has actually already arrived on a distant shore.”

This is not a Platonic dualism of the material vs. the spiritual world. This is ... about the future kingdom breaking into the present evil age. The dualism that we know is the dualism between this evil age where we think by our own power we can establish security and comfort and happiness and hope and durable jobs and stable families and true community and loving neighbors that are always reconciled and reconciling. And what really is our hope is the Messiah who comes and who breaks in and ... announces all the truths of the kingdom that is to come, of the New Jerusalem, of the city that has foundations.

When we grab hold of our true callings as dual citizens and ambassadors for Christ, we are equipped to bring a true vision of freedom across all spheres of society, not just government. With this at the forefront of our cultural imaginations, we work not only toward a political witness that accurately discerns between Washington and Jerusalem, but we also see new ways of sowing seeds at the ground level of culture and civilization.

Acting in and through that lens, we prepare ourselves to meet social and economic disruption with courage, boldness and love. Rather than turning to earthly mechanisms out of fear, we seize the tools and institutions God has given us, stewarding them to spread the joy and freedom and glory of the coming age in the here and now.

**Joseph Sunde** *is a writer and project coordinator for the Acton Institute, serving as editor of the Letters to the Exiles blog and content manager of the Oikonomia channel at Patheos.com. He is the founder of Remnant Culture and was a longtime contributor to AEI's Values & Capitalism project.*

*This article was originally published at [Acton.org](https://www.acton.org). Used with permission.*

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# Raising Your Stepchildren With Holy Spirit's Love

A few years after my husband and I married, our two youngest children (not my biological children but I refuse to call them "stepchildren") confessed that when their dad and I decided to marry, they were a little apprehensive. Like most of us, they had heard the tale of Cinderella and her mean, ugly stepmother.

Thankfully they added, "But then you were so nice ..." How relieved I was to hear them say that! I was present with the kids much more than their dad was when we first married, so I did a lot of the disciplining. I tried to be loving and kind, but having had their share of caregivers during their first mom's illness and passing, they needed boundaries and consistency.

**[RELATED: "This Is Your Home"](#)**

Stepparents understand what it is like to go through the hard process of raising children knowing that on Facebook it is often the absent parent who gets the homage. We don't do it for the accolades.

I can only imagine how Joseph felt as he raised Jesus. He provided physically for his "stepson." He watched over him. He provided spiritual training and taught him life skills. It had to be intimidating, knowing Jesus' biological Father watched his every move. Most of all, he lived a steady, godly,

exemplary life.

[\*\*RELATED: "A Gift of Grace: An Interview With Glen and Bernie Gram"\*\*](#)

No mention is made of Joseph after Jesus began His public ministry. Most likely he had passed. Yet think of his legacy. God picked *him* to help raise His Son.

Maybe God wants to use you in someone's life—an orphan, a child who just needs some parental guidance, or that person who seems to have lost his or her moorings. What makes Cinderella's story so treasured is that in the end she found love; she found a home. Look around. Maybe there is a Cinderella near you. {eoa}

**Andrea Johnson** *is managing editor of the Message published by Open Bible Churches USA.*

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## **Fulfilling Your Divine Calling in Your Marriage**

[\*Servant Marriage\*](#) is a response to the calling we all already received the moment we said, "I do." All the courting, dating, emotional intimacy, quality time and resources culminated into the primary lifelong relationship we call marriage.

For some, years or decades may have passed since they received their calling to be married to the one with whom they would be given the privilege of serving alongside on their journey called life. However, in current culture, many couples are getting a quite different result from the happily ever after

we have all heard about. Some feel alone or merely tolerated in marriage. Others feel unappreciated or exploited. Still others feel stuck or trapped “until death do us part.” Marriage challenges Christians, and some do not make it—their marriages end in divorce.

How is it that so many start the race of marriage, but growing numbers of them do not cross the finish line of “until death do us part”? As a Christian counselor working with couples in distress for more than a quarter of a century now, I think I have learned quite a bit as I watched brave couples address their wounds, bad ideas, unproductive practices and attitudes, and move toward picking up new ideas to change their marriages for the better.

One of these new ideas is learning that they are servants in their marriage and are responsible for how they believe and behave, and that they will stand before the Lord and give an account of how well they served their spouse—not how well they got served.

When you hear a young man or woman say, “I’m called,” what images come to your mind? Probably several. You might think of the person who goes down to the altar of your church and feels at a very deep level that they are “called” to be a missionary, preacher, or teacher.

When they “receive the call,” everything changes. The way they look at themselves is totally different than moments before receiving the call. They suddenly have a purpose for their lives and a sense of knowing why their Creator has made them. They also seem to have a passion for their newfound calling. I do not mean just an emotional temporary high, but a strong multi-decade passion for their area of ministry.

This calling is much more than their present 9 to 5 job. It is an expression of who they are, almost at a DNA level. This person becomes their calling. We all know someone who is so

passionate about something that it really becomes who they are. Their passion is what we think about when we characterize the person in our minds.

Just as we have a calling to a vocation and/or ministry, many of us have a calling to marriage. If marriage is part of your calling, it is important to understand it if you intend to grow in it. Without understanding the call to be married, you will look at marriage mostly through secular lenses and focus your evaluation of the marriage on how happy you are, and not on how well you are serving your spouse.

Here is just a little bit more about calling. When you answer your cell phone, it has a cool feature on it that tells you who is calling (if you have them in your contacts list). It is important to know who is calling you. When anyone is called to a vocation, ministry, or marriage (and so on) who does the calling? God.

God, the Almighty, the awesome, all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful Creator is the one who calls you into salvation, ministry, vocation, and yes—He alone has called you into marriage. He alone is the one to whom you will answer for the quality of service toward your spouse. He alone will move you into various stages of preparation and progress as you pass through the various adventures of marriage.

It is God who has called me to serve Lisa. She alone is my first ministry—above my children (as wonderful as they are), any public ministry or vocation or responsibility, my house responsibilities, workouts, hobbies or adventures. The only calling above ministry to Lisa is my ministry to love and serve my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Accepting my role as a servant (and the ongoing revelations of what that means) has so far been a 29-year journey of growth, repentance and expansion of my servant heart toward Lisa. I started off young, immature, selfish, impatient and

unkind—like many married people do. Today, I accept my role as a servant. I am called to serve, period. {eoa}

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