

Why Americans Are No Longer Treated as 'Created Equal'

Many Americans, including Christians, are still unaware of the immediate dangers facing religious freedoms and biblical values from the federal Equality Act of 2021 (H.R. 5). In a nation where all individuals "are created equal" as stated in the Declaration of Independence, and where Americans believe in "equal protection under the law" as stated in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, what is wrong with the Equality Act of 2021?

"The answer to that question is that this proposed law uses the word 'equality' while proposing just the opposite: inequality," stated Debbie Wuthnow, president of iVoterGuide.

"The Equality Act—or more appropriately, the Inequality Act—would impose discrimination, unfair treatment, against certain 'disfavored' groups of American citizens, including conservative Christians, based on biblical views of sexuality and relationships.

"Specifically, the law adds 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' as protected classes under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. And the legislation undercuts religious freedom in favor of those who see marriage and biological sex as fluid concepts, specifically overriding the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act."

According to Wuthnow, H.R. 5 would penalize Americans for practicing their beliefs as they operate their businesses, charities, medical practices (H.R. 5, Sec. 3), and even as they raise their children.

"Let's look at Bible-believing Christians, for example," continued Wuthnow. "The federal government would discriminate against Christians—treat them unequally from others—by forcing

them to violate their deeply held religious beliefs on sexuality.

“This is already happening in certain ‘progressive’ states and cities. Under the Equality Act, discrimination against Americans of faith would be condoned and upheld by federal law—nationwide.”

Wuthnow pointed out that Christians would be among those singled out for penalties if they expressed or lived out their faith in business or many other areas of life. “Their biblical beliefs regarding marriage and sexuality would be antithetical to this law,” she said.

“For instance, we’ve seen local governments issue fines and file lawsuits against Christian wedding vendors in ‘hot spots’ around the nation. This treatment would become the norm nationwide under the Equality Act.

“If you believe that biological males who identify as females should not compete against biological females in ‘women’s sports’— and you openly try to express or try to live according to that belief—you could face retribution with no protection under federal law (Sec. 3).

“If Christian adoption agencies resist giving children to homosexual couples, or to a transgendered parent—they could be punished or forced to shut down permanently (Sec. 3).

“The law could affect Christians who teach in public schools; who rent out houses or rooms; who practice medicine; who hire employees; even those who merely have separate male and female restrooms. The list is long and there would be no geographic sanctuaries from such a federal law.”

The Equality Act has passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. “The Senate will soon be considering the bill and even if it becomes law, thankfully, there are still countermeasures to fight back,” stated Wuthnow.

“Congress is almost evenly divided on this legislation. If the measure fails to pass the Senate now, informed, educated voters can make the difference in the 2022 elections. Voters can elect candidates who share their biblical and conservative values and will work to stop the Equality Act. Even if the measure passes in 2021, informed voters can also elect enough of candidates to repeal the act in the 118th Congress.”

According to Wuthnow, the key to who gets elected is educating voters with research and information about more candidates who will uphold American values. “And the key to good information is the factual research presented by iVoterGuide—the most influential nonpartisan guide for Christians in America. iVoterGuide evaluated 8,051 candidates in 2020. Nearly 3.5 million voters used iVoterGuide, helping make a difference in 1,941 races. The future rests on the voters. All elections matter.”

iVoterGuide is a one-stop resource for candidate ratings and election information. In 2020, iVoterGuide’s expert researchers gave an in-depth analysis—and overall rating—from a Christian and conservative perspective for 8000-plus candidates in more than 3,300 races nationwide. Additionally, iVoterGuide offers election dates, registration deadlines, polling locations and other information needed to help Americans vote wisely and identify candidates on the ballot who share their values. Related tools are also available to inform family, neighbors and business associates about getting their own personalized ballots. iVoterGuide is helping to restore the principles of limited government, free enterprise, and traditional American values.

iVoterGuide created Pray for Leaders, an easy way for voters to pray by name for the officials that they personally have the authority to elect.

View the media page for iVoterGuide [here](#).

For more information on iVoterGuide, visit or follow iVoterGuide on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. {eoa}

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How Some Evangelicals Tragically Have Joined the 'Woke' Culture

It's difficult to imagine this issue would rear its ugly head in any Bible-believing church—especially a Pentecostal one—but there is a major atrocity I believe tragically has infiltrated many sanctuaries across our great country.

The best words I can use to describe this problem is the “Christian left.”

There are a lot of Christians out there that are espousing things I don't really believe add up to the Word of God. And sometimes, it's hard to understand.

That's why I decided to bring Lucas Miles back on to my Strang Report podcast. The last time I had him on, we talked about how liberal thought has hijacked the church in recent years. We discussed how the influence of our culture and other theologies and beliefs is sparking division within the church. It's the definitive work of the enemy, and it's the exact opposite of what God wants when He comes back soon for His bride.

The author of *The Christian Left* and an ordained pastor with more than 20 years of ministry experience, Miles says the

church has fallen into compromise in many, many ways and, in a lot of cases, believers aren't even aware of it. That is exactly why he wrote the book.

"This is a book that I hope will correct a problem in the church," Miles told me on my podcast. "And in order to really correct it in the right way, I had to address some of the individuals that are perhaps creating these problems in the church, which certainly puts a little bit of a target on my back.

"I have been preaching for 20-plus years, and at the same church for 17 of those years. I've seen a rising, what the New York Times is calling 'liberal Christianity,' and I'm seeing very few people brave enough to address it. I really felt like the Lord prompted my heart and He asked me, 'do you want to undertake this?' I believe God give us a choice sometimes. It is a challenging topic, but I didn't want to miss what God has for me, so I took it on."

Miles says that there has been a "leftward drift" in the church for many years. It's just been so gradual and subtle that many people have not noticed it.

There are now a lot of believers that refer to themselves as "evangelical Democrats," or so the stickers on the back bumper of their cars say. But there are a lot of Republicans that are liberal, too. We're not just talking about liberal politics; we're talking about attitudes within the church.

So, what is the definition of the term "wokeism?" Miles says this:

"There was a definition I used in my book, and I pulled it from a book called *Woke Christians*. The author refers to Christians who embrace sort o a pro-choice position on abortion, as well as gay marriage, and also things like BLM. Beyond that, wokeism is really the recognition or consciousness of heightened political correctness as well as a

consciousness of an oppressed society.

“I think it’s really a false consciousness of an oppressed society. But it frames a lot of how the woke community operates because they see themselves and many of those around them in some sort of victim state. It really divides society into groups—the oppressed and the oppressor—and anybody that doesn’t look like you is most likely the oppressor. As a woke Christian or individual, you are the oppressed. It’s rather pessimistic because it doesn’t really give any opportunity for redemption or forgiveness.”

For more of my fascinating interview with Lucas Miles, listen to the entire episode of the *Strang Report* at this link. Be sure to subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts or your favorite podcast platform for more words that will inspire and challenge you in the power of the Holy Spirit.
{eoa}

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4 Ways to Find Peace in the Middle of Anxiety and Isolation

Isolated. Secluded. Remote.

These are all words that reveal the need for other human interaction in our lives. Withdrawing into a world with limited interaction can be taxing on our mental health.

We desire friendships and relationships because we want to

feel connected to someone. We crave that encouragement from a friend or warm embrace from a family member. We want to feel loved, cherished and part of a community of others who will lift us up in our time of need.

So many people struggle with the feeling of aloneness and the fear of being alone. Seasons change, stressors arise, friend groups shift—this life is far from perfect and can be disheartening and confusing at times.

Scripture emphasizes our need for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

A recent study revealed that, during this recent period of isolation, there has been a rise in many emotions including stress, depression, irritability, insomnia, fear, confusion, anger, frustration, boredom and stigma associated with quarantine, some of which persisted after the quarantine was lifted.

Here are a few tips for when you start to feel anxious or isolated:

1. **Value yourself.** Much mental health stems from how we view ourselves—not how others view us. Are we looking at ourselves with respect and love for the beautiful and intricate person our heavenly Father created us to be? We are uniquely designed and deeply valued in our Father’s eyes. If we look at ourselves through His eyes, we will see nothing but grace, worth and beauty.
2. **Set goals.** Are we setting realistic goals or hoping to conquer everything in one day? When you set goals that are out of your reach to accomplish, you can begin to feel like you fell short or failed in some sense. Remind

yourself that you are more than a conqueror in Christ. Set achievable and timely goals and make it a point to do what you set out to do, but give yourself grace when you may need a little more time.

3. **Give yourself time to rest–Breathe.** Our bodies and minds need to rejuvenate from the constant stressors of life. Jesus regularly took moments of rest to find peace and quiet with His Father. Take a brief nap, find some quiet time, get some fresh air. Whatever it may be that allows you to unwind.
4. **Plug into community.** Whether that’s an online group, a group chat with some friends that you send and receive encouraging scripture, a church group that meets regularly, or lunch weekly with a close group of friends; whatever it may be, surround and immerse yourself in a community of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

You are not alone if you’ve felt an array of emotions during this crazy season, or if you struggle with a mental illness. Scripture reminds us that we don’t walk through anything without His hand of grace guiding us. When we are weak He is our strength, when we feel pain He experiences it with us and when we feel alone His presence reminds us that we are never alone in Him.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint” (Isa. 40:28-31).

“How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the

grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you” (Ps. 139:17-18). {eoa}

This article originally appeared on .

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Tulsa House of Prayer Calls for Sacred Assembly to Plead God’s Will Be Done in America

Leaders, churches and ministries are calling for a five day solemn assembly in Oklahoma from May 28 through June 1 as one of its cities marks the 100-year anniversary of what’s called the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Pastors and prayer leaders William L. Ford III, Jonathan Tremaine Thomas and Billy Humphrey are bringing ministry teams and intercessors to Oklahoma for the assembly, hosted by churches and the Tulsa House of Prayer.

A prayer tour of downtown Tulsa is slated for May 31 when, 100 years ago to the day, a white mob killed 300, injured hundreds and displaced 8,000 over 18 hours on June 1, 1921 in the Greenwood District.

“The dates that memorialize the massacre would be May 31 and June 1,” said Stu Bents, a local organizer with Civil Righteousness, which has hosted an event called Pray on MLK after civil rights leader and pastor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Pray on MLK began last year at locations across the nation and around the world.

After hosting a wall of remembrance on May 31, teams will pray and walk to seven locations in the Greenwood District which, in 1921, was the black Wall Street and home to successful African-American businesses.

“We’ll stop at every location, pray, read through some Scriptures and share a little of the history as we go through there. And then we’ll circle back to the starting location at the intersection of MLK Boulevard and Reconciliation Way,” Bents said.

“We obviously want to do some deeper repentance and remembrance and pray through Scripture. Isaiah 61 is a big one. Nehemiah one is another Scripture we want to pray over that area,” he continued.

“We’ve been praying over it from time to time for a number of years, as has a number of others for several years,” said Bents who, at a location called Stand Pipe Hill, encountered a Satan worshiper in 2013 during another prayer event.

Bents, along with other leaders, note the event was covered up in the years following and, only since the turn of the century, has the extent of the massacre come to light.

“There was something that happened to stir up controversy in the town between a young man and a woman, a Black and a white, which I think were actually dating. But there was a lot of misinformation, things happening, and people got stirred up.

“That started a series of events—a riot and a massacre that

went on through that night into the next day. And, by the time it was over, the whole business district was completely destroyed and burned to the ground.

“It was kind of brushed under the rug. Reparations were not really made. Even in history books it wasn’t covered at all at first. Now you can find a whole lot more information on it. People come into town and do documentaries on it,” said Bents, who as a Lyft Driver, recently transported two camera crews covering the story.

He’s driven a Wall Street Journal reporter, NBA player LeBron James, a National Geographic representative and a CNN crew.

“It’s coming to light more and more. I think that’s necessary so that the depth of what happened can be dealt with. So the people of God can weep with the Lord like He did with the family of Lazarus before He brought him back to life. He wanted to engage them in a deeper way. So I believe that’s part of what’s happening,” Bents said.

He asked that people pray for God’s provision to accomplish what we’re trying to do, and the message to go across the way God wants it to be presented in public and at two Tulsa churches—Spirit Life and Believers—with all-day prayer on June 1.

Jonathan Tremaine Thomas, an African-American pastor from the Ferguson, Missouri, area and founder of Civil Righteousness, believes fasting and prayer in Tulsa are keys to “breakthrough and breaking in there— a whole city that’s an altar of pain that’s been lost in history.”

“I consider myself pretty locked in on American history, but particularly African-American history,” said Thomas. “And yet this is a relatively new historical event for me. I’m reading a book right now about it. It’s profound to see. It wasn’t just riots. They actually had planes dropping bombs on homes and businesses, like a military assault on the Black

community," Thomas continued, also an activist, artist, missionary and evangelist.

Pray on MLK, one initiative of Civil Righteousness, is like the solemn assembly in Tulsa.

"The spirit of the sacred assembly is not a new thing, but it's an ancient biblical reality that we see in the Bible in times of crisis. Even in the book of Joel you read that when the nation is in crisis, we're to sound the alarm and gather everyone, all the priests and all the clergy officials, and to weep. It says to gather the old and the young. And to weep between the porch and the altar. Weep in that place, go into the gap between the place of brokenness and the place of healing," Thomas said.

Atlanta House of Prayer and Gate City Church Leader Bill Humphrey agreed.

"The church is supposed to be in the gap of the crisis," said Humphrey. "We're supposed to be in the gap of the pain. We're supposed to be in the gap of the bias, of the prejudice. We're supposed to get in the gap. And if my brothers and sisters are hurting, then I'm hurting. If my brothers are in the gap and they're rejoicing, then I'm rejoicing. But I'm going to be with my brothers and sisters from every culture in the gap, between the two, crying out for mercy in the gap. That's what we're called to be," Humphrey said.

Dallas-area prayer leader and author Will Ford III, a descendant of slaves, hopes for tears in Tulsa.

"We want to weep with the situation. [God], give us Your heart for the division in our nation. Break our hearts with the things that break Your heart, until we love what You love and hate what you hate. Use a united church to heal a divided nation, God," Ford prayed leading to the Solemn Assembly.

"If weepers become the reapers, give us tears to sow a harvest

of souls like this nation has never seen before God. Tip the bowls God, release thunder, fire, lightning, earthquakes in the name of Jesus,” Ford prayed.

The Tulsa House of Prayer is partnering with other ministries for the solemn assembly. Its website reads: “Even over the last year, we have witnessed the violence, division and heartache echoing across our nation. We need an answer, and it can only come from King Jesus.

“We are calling a solemn assembly.

“With the same heart cry of the prophet Joel, we are setting a call before the body of Christ to return to Jesus with all our heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning. We are pleading Isaiah 61 and John 17 over the city of Tulsa and our nation as we intercede to see biblical justice and Christ-centered unity manifest. As we unify under the banner of our heavenly Father, we long to see the Holy Spirit poured out on all flesh.” {eoa}

Steve Rees is a former general assignment reporter who, with one other journalist, first wrote about the national men’s movement Promise Keepers from his home in Colorado. Rees and Promise Keepers Founder Bill McCartney attended the Boulder Vineyard. Today Rees writes in his free time.

Revivalist Will Ford: How Jesus Responded to Racism

Will Ford is a revivalist, a leader in the prayer movement and a reconciler of races. His end goal is that of the Lord’s—redemption. Ford travels the globe with his family’s

heirloom, a prayer kettle, passed down from his enslaved ancestors. He uses it as a catalyst for mobilizing prayer, unity, revival and true biblical justice.

On a recent *Fire Starter* podcast episode on the Charisma Podcast Network, Ford explained something that many in the body of Christ may not realize: Jesus experienced racism. As followers of Christ, our response to prejudice needs to be the same as His.

In New Testament times, there was a bitter racial divide between the Jews and Samaritans. Intense hatred between these two groups prevailed. In Luke 9:51-56, Jesus wanted to cut through Samaria on his way to Jerusalem and sent word ahead to advise them of His plans. But the Samaritans sent word back that they would not receive Him.

Ford explains that when he was growing up, as a young African American man, there were certain neighborhoods he felt it wise not to cut through—white, Hispanic and Black. Many in our nation have shared same experiences. If Ford walked through particular sections of town, the people may not have received him. But he points out that instead of reacting as the disciples did, we need to respond like our Savior.

Jesus' disciples wanted to angrily call fire down from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. They wanted revenge but didn't realize from what spirit they were speaking. But Jesus harshly rebuked them.

And Jesus' response becomes even more astonishing! In Luke 10:25-37, a lawyer asks Jesus, "Who is our neighbor?" It is here that Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan. Will Ford points out that even when we have been on the receiving end of racism, we need to respond with a right spirit. "Let me tell you about the good police officer," "Let me tell you about the good Black man," or "Let me tell you about the good white man."

To receive hope and healing for your heart, listen to the rest of Will Ford's story in this week's *Fire Starter* podcast episode. {eoa}

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Oregon Requires Churches to Check Vaccination Status of Unmasked Members

The Oregon Health Authority released a new state requirement for churches, businesses and employers to check the status of individuals who say they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 and therefore wish to go unmasked.

This move comes less than two weeks after the latest update from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) which says that fully vaccinated individuals can forego mask-wearing in "any setting" except where required by state or local law.

The Oregon policy states "all businesses, employers and faith institutions are required" to "continue to apply and enforce" mask-wearing and physical distancing, except in cases where they have a policy for "checking for proof of vaccination status," request proof of vaccination or review proof of vaccination prior to "entry or admission."

"Businesses, employers and faith institutions who do not create such policies will maintain the same masking guidance listed below, regardless of an individual's vaccination status," the policy continues.

The law does allow for accommodations to be made for those with medical conditions but does not encourage the use of plastic face shields unless in the cases of interacting with a deaf or hard-of-hearing individual:

“OHA recommends face shields only be used on a limited basis, for example when talking to someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and needs to read lips to communicate.”

The health authority says the use of masks is “an empowering way for each of us to protect our communities, our families and ourselves.”

When the state reaches a vaccination status for 70% of Oregon adults age 16 and over, Oregon’s health officer and epidemiologist Dean Sidelinger said the state will reevaluate the restrictions. Oregon has had one of the strictest mask enforcement laws since put into effect July 1, 2020.

The implementation of vaccine passports has become a hot-button topic, as states look for ways to open businesses safely and in accordance with evolving government ordinances.

Sidelinger continued in the *Oregonlive* interview, ““We hope that Oregonians will not lie or cheat and put others at risk by forging a vaccine record if they aren’t vaccinated,” Sidelinger said. “For a business that wants to serve their customers in a different way by allowing them to remove their masks if they’re fully vaccinated, or have their staff be able to remove their mask if they’re fully vaccinated, they need to institute a system where individuals can share their vaccination status,” he continued.

Many businesses balked this latest ordinance, saying the requirement of proof of vaccination is too much to put on the “essential workers” who have had to cope with all the changes in the last year of the pandemic.

Miles Eshaia, a spokesperson for UFCW Local 555, said, “Once

again, the OHA has put essential employees in the position of enforcers of public policy without giving them the tools to protect themselves or the public. Telling essential employees to be the mask police and asking customers for their medical information puts them in harm's way and is insulting after months of ignoring the needs and safety of the people who put food on our tables."

Similarly, Rebecca Boyle, a manager at McMenamins Bagdad Theater & Pub, questioned how showing proof of vaccination could violate HIPAA rights: the federal law that protects health information.

"You can't even ask for someone's papers for a service dog," she said.

"I don't want people to feel uncomfortable," said Terry Smoke, owner of a local grocery store. "If you want to wear a mask, fine, but I'm done. It's up to the customer. I trust them. If they ask if they need to be vaccinated [to go maskless], I say yes, but I'm going to believe people will be honest about it. That's the only way we're going to get through this." {eoa}

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Why We Must Be Intentionally Intergenerational in Ministry

It was only a five-minute encounter. But that brief meeting changed my life.

I've written before about Dr. Charles Green and what I now

know was our divine appointment. It happened when his son Michael and I, both 17-year-old high school seniors, made a quick stop by the Word of Faith Temple. Our choir would soon sing in the church's huge auditorium, and our music teacher sent us to work out a performance detail.

I'd heard of Green's effective ministry with high school students. But I didn't expect a busy pastor to notice me, much less stop and speak to me.

I don't remember just what he said. I do remember that the words of life he spoke over me blossomed in my salvation two years later. They also grew within me the same desire he had to impact generations.

I spent many years replicating Green's impact in the young souls God sent my way. We shared life, love, laughter and a whole lot of my wife's shrimp etouffee and jambalaya.

But I also had the opportunity to speak words of life and to share Spirit-birthed truths—to go call the next generation up higher by listening to them more than I spoke.

Years later, when Green and I had another divine encounter at the memorial service for Chancellor Oral Roberts at the University he founded under instructions from the Lord, I took time to thank him for the significant spiritual deposit he made on that day in his church. We continue to speak regularly, and he never fails to impart wisdom and stories only he could tell.

When I think back over my years in education, marketing, ministry and now publishing, I see how God has woven the call to reach, teach and impact the younger generation(s) throughout my life. My staff knows the Lord called me to Charisma to change lives, particularly of those in succeeding generations. And that's how I see Him using me every day. I'm called to speak life into the next generation.

Not long ago, I had the privilege of spending time with Apostles Craig and Colette Toach and their team of Next Gen Prophets. The Toaches have an international ministry of speaking, writing and hosting the Next Gen Prophets podcast on our network and their own prophetic training school. They pour their lives and hearts into equipping the next generation for kingdom ministry.

“As the Lord led us from country to country, and He opened the door slowly, the vision came into view, because it’s progressive,” Colette says. “Nobody decides this is what they’re going to do. Nobody decides they’re going to have a next-generation ministry until one day you wake up and you realize that all the steps you’ve taken in ministry have led to your answer to that question.”

“God is bringing back the fullness of the fivefold ministry,” she says. “And I see in each one of these new generations, not just a passion to want to belong, but to be part of a team; they get it: ‘I can’t do this solo anymore.’”

But the desire to impact coming generations doesn’t arrive in the natural, she says. “Make no mistake—spiritual parenting is not a career choice—it’s a mandate and call,” she writes on their website at .

Craig adds another essential word about next-generation ministry: Character counts.

Of course, this idea of intergenerational impact has a powerful precedence in Scripture. As the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “You share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I know that faith continues strong in you” (1 Tim. 1:5b, NLT).

Timothy’s mother and grandmother invested in him, and the resulting fruit blessed Paul and impacted the nations. No doubt, that knowledge lay behind Paul’s later word to the young pastor to “teach these truths to other trustworthy

people who will be able to pass them on to others” (2 Tim. 2:2b).

Do you have five minutes? Consider investing time in a young person. The next life you change could impact generations to come.{eoa}

Dr. Steve Greene is the publisher and executive vice president of the multimedia group at Charisma Media and executive producer of the Charisma Podcast Network. His Charisma House book, *Love Leads*, shows that without love, you cannot be an effective leader. Sign up for his free “5 Things I Learned Last Week” and “Greenelines” newsletters, and download his *Greenelines* and *At Work With God* podcasts at .

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Messianic Rabbi: Fear Grows Roots When Trust Is Lost

We have just celebrated Shavuot, or Pentecost, the last of the biblical spring feasts, and we enter the season between the spring feasts and the fall feasts, the hot and dry months of

summer.

These arid months remind us of the wilderness journey of the Israelites. Figuratively, this is the time in between the Exodus and receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and the Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

Prophetically, this season can be viewed at the time between the outpouring of the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* (Holy Spirit) on Shavuot and the sounding of the trumpet proclaiming the return of Yeshua (Jesus). This is the season of time that you and I find ourselves in today as we await the soon return of our Messiah, while all around us we are seeing many things politically and socially that may cause us to be concerned. Every single one of these things were prophesied in the Bible to take place. While we should be concerned as believers, we should not be afraid.

Yet, many believers I speak to do seem to be afraid. Fear has overcome many of those I hear speak or post on social media. This fear among believers has grown over the past year as we experienced economic problems, social unrest, a pandemic, wars and political controversies.

Because I've seen and heard so many people who proclaim to believe in Yeshua and the Bible speaking and acting in fear, my studies brought me to a place where I wrote a short e-book titled *Overcoming Fearlessness* about the right and wrong types of fear.

However, the more I prayed and studied, the more one thought kept running through my mind. I am cautious about over-spiritualizing my prayer life or saying, "G-D spoke to me." But I will say that I felt that I was being directed and redirected back to this concept every time I began to seek G-D for answers concerning the fear that is attacking the body of Messiah. It is this thought that I am presenting today in this

post, and I ask that you would prayerfully consider if the Spirit of G-D within you confirms this word.

One reason that so many believers are struggling with fear is because the body of Messiah has been taught a message that says: "We really cannot trust G-D's promises," or maybe, "We cannot fully trust in G-D's covenants." Now, these messages are not spoken quite that boldly or directly. The message is much more subtly presented. But while the wording of the message may be spoken indirectly, and more implied than proclaimed, this message's meaning nonetheless has caused many to question the faithfulness of G-D.

I know that at this point you are wondering what exactly is this message that has so weakened the body of believers that it has allowed fear to overwhelm and overcome them. The message that is spoken by leaders in congregations around the world is that the G-D of the Bible doesn't really keep His covenant promises. I know you may be saying to yourself right now, "I have never heard that taught in my congregation." Let me suggest that if your teachers told you that the Old Covenant was done away with and replaced with the New Covenant, then your teacher is teaching that G-D really doesn't keep His covenant promises.

Before you stop reading, please consider all of the times in the Old Testament that G-D spoke the words "everlasting covenant." Yet, so many New Covenant-believers are quick to proclaim that at least one of those everlasting covenants is no longer in effect. In other words, G-D didn't really mean everlasting when He said everlasting. Now, in this post, we won't have time to discuss how we as believers in Yeshua relate to all the covenants G-D made with His people in the Bible. Even Yeshua said in Matthew 5:17:

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

We must deal with the truth that if G-D made an everlasting promise to His people, then we are walking on dangerous ground if we call G-D a liar by teaching that He really didn't mean everlasting when He said everlasting, and He didn't really mean eternal when He said eternal.

You may be asking what does this stuff about covenants have to do with believers becoming overwhelmed by fear. The answer is simple. If we are teaching that G-D changes His mind concerning His covenant promises, or that He really didn't mean what He said, then how can we fully trust anything He promised His people?

If G-D annulled the Old Covenant, what keeps Him from annulling the New Covenant? If His covenant promises are not sure, then how can any believer trust for protection and provision when confronted by sickness, financial issues, social conflicts and more?

When the people who are supposed to assure us that G-D is faithful instead teach us that G-D is fickle, when the people who are supposed to proclaim that G-D is the same yesterday, today and forever instead are teaching us that G-D is only kind of the same yesterday, today and forever, when those who are supposed to instruct us on how to trust completely in G-D's promises instead tell us that we can only trust some of those promises because G-D may in the future change His mind, then none of us should be surprised when those being taught this message lose trust in the promises of G-D and become controlled by a spirit of fear. {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is the author of *Overcoming Fearlessness, What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?*, *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.

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Egyptian-Born Michael Youssef Takes on Christian Persecution in US

Having grown up in the Muslim-dominated country of Egypt, Michael Youssef knows exactly what it's like to face oppression for his beliefs and to defend his faith.

However, it's something that, decades later, the founder of Leading the Way ministry and founding pastor of The Church of the Apostles in Atlanta never dreamed he be forced to draw upon while living in the United States of America. Yet here he is, like many other Christians in this country, battling a presidential administration that is becoming more and more hostile the gospel of Jesus Christ by the day.

His newest book, *Hope for This Present Crisis: The Seven-Step Path to Restoring a World Gone Mad* (Charisma House, 2021), explains how believers can combat this siege from within the U.S. It provides a diagnosis of the insanity of the current culture in America and a prescription to the moral decay that has beset our country.

“Growing up in a sea of a Muslim world, you kind of learn to

anticipate persecution,” Youssef told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “You grow up strong because you are instructed in the home, you’re instructed in the church, and you know what it is like to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and to be ready to defend or even die for your faith.

“So, for the first 18 years of my life, that really gave me a foundation that I never knew some 55 years later I would have to draw upon. Because we are in the U.S., I never thought I’d see the day where Christians would be persecuted. Every religion, every thought, every philosophy is tolerated except the Christian faith.

“The former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, a friend of mine, said to me, ‘Do you think God has a sense of humor, bringing a man from Egypt to be a thorn in the side of liberal evangelicals?’ I’m happy to be that. God, in His mercy and grace and favor, gave me the pleasure and joy of planting our church in Georgia 34 years ago. We just kept growing, and ever since the opening day, I will tell you that I have not changed my commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am becoming stronger. The older I get, rather than softening and weakening, I am now more committed to the preaching the uncompromised truth, the infallible Word of God.”

For more about Youssef and his attack on today’s cancel culture, listen to the entire episode here, and subscribe to *Greenelines* on your favorite podcast platform for more inspiring stories like this one. Order *Hope for This Present Crisis* to discover ways you can follow Youssef’s example and stand up for your faith in the face of persecution. {eoa}.

Christian College Fights Biden Administration's Order on Opening Dorms, Showers to Opposite Sex

A Missouri college is suing the Biden administration for requiring them to allow transgender male and females to be allowed housing in the opposite sex's dorm rooms and shower spaces.

College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) April 15.

The lawsuit challenges the U.S. HUD-issued directive which "forces religious schools to violate their beliefs by opening their dormitories, including dorm rooms and shared shower spaces, to members of the opposite sex," according to the college's website with the lawsuit details. Under this directive, the Fair Housing Act prohibits colleges from "discriminating" against students' sexual orientation or gender identity.

Lawyers from the Alliance Defending Freedom, who represent the College of the Ozarks, argue this directive forces students and university staff to violate their deep beliefs, or face lofty fines, potentially up to six figures.

The federal district court denied the College's request for an injunction and temporary restraining order. The college sought these orders to gain protection while the court case is pending.

"While we are disappointed in today's ruling, we expect to appeal so that schools are not forced to open women's dorm

rooms to males and violate their religious beliefs,” said College of the Ozarks President Jerry C. Davis in a news release. “For more than 100 years, College of the Ozarks has provided a distinctly Christian education to students with financial need. We will not abandon our mission. The fight to protect our religious freedom has just begun.”

The ADF lawyers argue the order “contradicts the historical judicial interpretation” of the Fair Housing Act, which ultimately affirms that sexual orientation and gender identification are not included in the Act. “Sex,” as referenced in the Act, refers to biological sex, the lawyers state.

Under the Constitution, religious schools are protected from infringement upon their beliefs; a freedom the College of the Ozarks says is under attack in this lawsuit. The lawsuit argues that the directive and order exceed the authority given to the Biden administration.

The school “has long been guided by a Biblical worldview that all people should be treated with dignity, grace and holy love, whatever their sexual beliefs,” the lawsuit states. However, it also “teaches that sex as determined at birth is a person’s God-given, objective gender, whether or not it differs from their internal sense of ‘gender identity.’”

Further, ADF Legal believes “young women shouldn’t be forced to share private spaces—including showers and dorm rooms—with males.”

College of the Ozarks does not charge tuition. Instead, students work on campus while enrolled, and admissions are made under the goal of 90% of students obtaining financial aid. Donations cover the remainder of tuition. This has coined the school as “Hard Work U” by a 1973 *Wall Street Journal* article. {eoa}

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