

Jody Burkeen: An Open Letter to Christians, Liberals and Atheists

As I write this letter, I am heartbroken over the lack of love, respect and regard we have for each other.

As humans, we ought to have an innate love for one another, no matter our beliefs or backgrounds. But what I have seen from the controversy of *Duck Dynasty* and homosexuality is ignorance, hatred and a complete lack of a common-sense debate.

First, let me tell you a little about myself. I am the founder of Man Up God's Way men's ministry. I am a former atheist and evolutionist and now a sellout for Christ. Because I am "sold out" for Christ, that makes me a Christian. With views that are formed from the Bible, I believe 100 percent of all that it says and try to live according to the rules, love and forgiveness it teaches.

I do not claim to be perfect, all knowing and/or sinless. I believe that the gospel (the Good News) is that Jesus came to us through a virgin birth, lived sinless all His days, and was crucified, buried and resurrected for me and you. He was there in the beginning (Creation, Adam and Eve) and will be coming back to claim those who follow Him (the church) and judge those who don't. It is through my faith (belief) in Him that I am saved, meaning I can go to heaven.

Because of my salvation, I will learn to love to do the things of the Lord, the Bible and the things the Holy Spirit directs me to (which are not easy). I am called to proclaim His name and His ways and teach others to do the same. All in love! That is who I am, a Christian.

So, this letter is to Christians. If you claim to be a Christian, act like it! Stop arguing, name-calling and getting angry over every little thing. But don't back down from ungodliness (sin). Know your Bible and stop paraphrasing His Word and use it wisely. Don't speak, debate or argue it unless you know it! If you don't know it, read the Bible, study the Bible and memorize the Bible. Stop being a hypocrite! Too many Christians are talking out of both sides of their mouths. Learn to live and talk like Christ.

If you can't do these things, stop telling people you are a Christian because you are just making it harder for those of us striving to be more Christlike.

This letter is also for the liberals. So many times you try to push a political agenda of certain things, thinking that it will make people "free." But it does nothing but enslave us. Our country was founded on biblical morals, which made us a free nation. The Bible tells us in John 8:31-32 that if you continue in God's Word, then you are truly His disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

We are no longer a free nation. Oh, we have rights to do just about anything we want, but that does not make us free. Can't you see where our nation is going? We have taken the Bible out of schools, colleges and a lot of churches. We have murdered 57 million babies since 1972 because of "rights." The family is being split apart because we don't sanctify marriage anymore. Suicide rates are up because of no foreseen hope. Drinking and drugs are being legalized even when we know they are killers of body, soul, and families—all in the name of "freedom." But I respect your view, even though I don't agree with it. Like you, I will not back down, but I will be bold in love. I hope you do the same.

This letter is also to the atheist, of which I was one. Why are you so angry? There is a void that you have in your soul—I know; I had it. With no hope, despair and anger kick in. You

point your anger toward my belief, and your anger is frightening sometimes. You spout off things you don't have proof of and have no desire to seek otherwise. The path of evolution leads nowhere (it's still a theory). Your faith in believing in evolution, a godless nature and chance, are greater than most Christian's faith in a holy God, and for that I commend you.

It takes great faith to be an atheist. My view changed when I saw my children. In order for the body to function like it does, we have to have a Creator. Even if you had 500 billion years, a child just doesn't happen, much less two that are different sexes and that can procreate. Think about it.

And if it takes a Creator, wouldn't He want to have input in your lives? Wouldn't He want to see us live for Him and not ourselves? Isn't it sad to think that an average of 70 years of life on this earth is all there is? You die, and then there's nothing. It was sad when I was an atheist. But I respect your view even though I don't agree with it. And like you, I will not back down, but I will be bold in love. I hope you do the same.

I hope this letter allows us to talk, debate and search for truth in a loving manner, no matter our beliefs. My belief tells me to share the gospel, and I will. My belief tells me to do it in love, and I will. My belief tells me I will be hated because of it, and I am. I am to love others, but I am to hate sin. No matter if you are a liberal, atheist, pagan or even a fence-straddler, we all should try to be a respecter of persons. But my beliefs will never let me condone sin! I won't get angry over your stance, and I ask that you don't get angry over mine.