

Michael Brown: The Opposition to Holiness Is Mounting

Have you ever heard the saying, “Being forewarned is being forearmed”? When you know the hurricane is coming, you board up your house and go to safer territory. When you know a severe cold spell is on the way, you make sure that you have proper winter clothing.

In the same way, the Bible not only predicts seasons of great temptation and lawlessness, it also tells us how to survive such times. We can even thrive during such difficult seasons, with the grace and help of God. In fact, the same proven methods for overcoming sin and resisting temptation that apply to everyday life also apply in times of severe pressure and stress. We just need to be more vigilant in putting these methods into practice during times like this.

That’s because it’s so much easier to swim with the tide, to embrace the prevailing culture, to go with the flow, rather than to push back and resist.

If you decide not to acquiesce to the latest LGBTQ talking points on the job or in school, you will be vilified, marginalized and demonized. You will be excluded, marked, mocked and even canceled. You will be branded a bigot, a hater, a Nazi, to the point of losing promotions, jobs, scholarships and your reputation. Who wants any of this? Better to conform than to resist. At the least, better to be silent. That’s certainly what the flesh wants to do.

Yet when we do this, compromising our convictions for the sake of our comfort, we compromise our very souls. This, too, is part of the Lord’s warning, and it accurately describes the culture of the day. Lawlessness abounds. Wickedness has increased. The opposition to holiness is mounting. The

resistance to the gospel is growing.

☒ Will we stand tall for the world to see, or will we cower? Will we hold to God's truth regardless of cost or consequence, or will we rationalize our spineless choices? Will we have the courage to do what is right even when it makes us unpopular, or will we succumb to the pressure to conform? Put another way, which is more important to us, being accepted by God or being accepted by people? Whose favor do we value more? Whose praise do we live for?

In the words of Paul, "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). That is some straightforward language.

In that same spirit, Jesus said to religious leaders in His day, "How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God" (John 5:44)? As John recorded later in this same book, "Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in Him [referring to Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God" (John 12:42–43).

Does that apply to any of us? Do we care more about human opinion than divine opinion? Are we more interested in the praise of people than the praise of our Lord? Are we more focused on temporal favor than eternal favor?

☒ May the Lord open our eyes to eternal realities and deliver us from the fear of man and the desire to be praised by man. As a colleague of mine once said, "When you are on your knees [meaning, in prayer], the praise and the criticism go right over your head."

Or perhaps this question will help us get the right perspective: Would you rather be rejected by God or by people?

Chew on that for a moment. How you answer that question will have eternal repercussions. {eoa}

(Excerpted and adapted from Michael L. Brown, "Why So Many Christians Have Left the Faith: Responding to the Deconstructionist Movement with Unshakable, Timeless Truth." To read a free chapter, visit .)

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