

People of God, Let Us Change the World Rather Than Be Changed by the World

In front of our eyes, America is descending into vulgarity, lewdness, crudeness and profanity. In front of our eyes, things which should not be spoken of in private are being shouted across the airwaves, and there seems to be almost no way to escape the bombardment of filth.

At times like this, those of us who love and fear the Lord need to be careful that we too don't descend into this trashiness, paying careful attention lest we become desensitized and hardened along with the rest of the culture.

I don't know if it can be demonstrated statistically, but many people believe that President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky had a negative effect on the nation as a whole, in particular, among young people, who learned that one particular sexual act did not constitute "having sex."

Today, with the daily attacks on Donald Trump's past and the daily reminders of Bill Clinton's past, with websites blasting out the most salacious headlines and with newscasters shamelessly talking about shameful things—all this by the minute and by the hour—we run the risk of being polluted by the world's corruption without even knowing it, just like a non-smoker comes out of a smoke-filled room smelling like smoke but doesn't even realize it.

This is a time to remember the words of James who wrote, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27).

By all means, let us “visit orphans and widows in their affliction,” and by all means, let us keep ourselves “unstained from the world.”

Last week, I posted a video expressing my grief and sadness over professing Christians who minimized so-called “locker room” talk, referring specifically to the horrific sexual comments made by Donald Trump back in 2005.

But my focus was not on Trump.

My focus was on Christians saying, “It’s no big deal. All of us do things like that.”

There were even Christian women who said, “Hey, I hear that from my husband and sons.”

Seriously? No big deal? The kind of stuff most men and boys engage in? What kind of rubbish is that?

Followers of Jesus claiming that crass, despicable, crude, degrading talk about women is no big deal, even for themselves? Followers of Jesus calling me self-righteous and a liar if I don’t admit to engaging in similar talk? What kind of deception are they living in?

In response to my video, one individual wrote, “I guess Dr. Brown never says or minimizes anything inappropriate! Maybe Dr. Brown takes the opposite side of this issue to generate controversy for his Youtube Channel.”

Another wrote, “Dr. Brown, I’m sure you have said even worse, and you don’t fool anybody; you’re no better.”

What kind of world are these people living in?

It’s true that I’ve been following Jesus for the last 45 years, but my teen years were anything but holy, to the point that I was shooting heroin at the age of 15 and even broke into a doctor’s office to steal drugs for fun. I hung around

with some pretty despicable and even dangerous people, and I had a miserably foul mouth.

But even then, the level of “locker room” talk heard on that tape was not something I engaged in, maybe because I wasn’t a star with that kind of access to women, even though I was filthy.

Either way, the past is not the issue, not for me, not for you, not for Trump, not for Clinton, as long as we have asked God and people for forgiveness, as long as we have made things right, and as long as we are putting the past behind us by living new, transformed lives.

The issue, then, is how we are living today.

The issue is what we think about, what we talk about, and what we do today.

The issue is the purity of our hearts and the purity of our lips and the purity of our actions—and make no mistake about it, we are called to purity. And purity is downright beautiful.

This is how the Lord calls us to live—and this is just one relevant passage out of many; I encourage you to read it slowly, out loud, several times over:

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

“And do not let sexual immorality, or any impurity, or greed be named among you, as these are not proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse

joking, which are not fitting. Instead, give thanks. For this you know, that no sexually immoral or impure person, or one who is greedy, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ..." (Eph. 5:1-8).

Yes, we used to be darkness, but now, in Jesus, we are light. Let us walk as children of light!

As sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus the Messiah, we have been given wonderful promises by God, but with those promises comes responsibility. That's why Paul wrote, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

As the world around us is plunging into sexual anarchy and madness, let us swim against this polluting tide, determining, with God's help, that rather than the world changing us, we will change the world.