

Why Culture Refuses to Acknowledge This Plumb Line

There is no question about it, the standard for morality is different today than it was 50 or 100 years ago.

Many would argue that modern cultural trends have become more inclusive. Even the church today is embracing a more tolerant approach to alternative lifestyles.

Culture, however, cannot determine what is good and what is evil.

A young man came running to Jesus one day.

He must have been anxious about something. He was a wealthy man with some community status. But, his question reveals he was feeling a measure of emptiness inside: "Good Teacher, he addressed Jesus, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17b).

Jesus response is a little unsettling. "Why do you call me good? No one is good, except God alone" (Mark 10:18). Jesus' immediate focus was not on the question of eternal life, but the young man's measure of excellence.

Was the young man saying Jesus was a good teacher; one of the good guys; or was he saying Jesus is absolutely good?"

What is intrinsically good?

How does one measure good and evil?

What is the plumb line?

Jesus clearly answered those questions.

Good and evil are not determined by society or culture.

Jean-Paul Sartre had it wrong. Man is not autocratic and the will of the people; the ballot box; not even the Supreme Court is the one who determines good and evil.

Where does one turn when a nation's social engineering goes adrift?

To whom will psychiatry, medicine Congress and sociology turn when they have drifted into a moral free fall?

What is the measure that tells them when the nation is culturally and morally bankrupt?

What guideline assures the social order will not be ravaged by crime, violence and intimidation?

Who determines if they have crossed the line into sexual perversion?

There is One alone who sets the standard. "No one is good, except God alone" (Mark 10:18b).

Almighty God is the plumb line of good.

All-knowing God is the rule of social order. Omniscient God is the measure of good evil for all nations, all societies and all cultures for of all time.

When God delivered the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and was taking them to establish a new nation with a new culture. He gave clear instructions what would be the measure for good and evil for their national laws; their cultural norms and for their interpersonal relationships. "For I am the Lord your God ... you shall be holy for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44).

When Jesus established the church, He gave the same instructions during His Sermon on the Mount. "Therefore be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

This standard is not just the divine fiat that declares a person to be “the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus” when they have repented of their sin and experienced new birth.

It is to be the standard for their daily life.

The Apostle Paul declared,

Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.

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 (Eph. 5:1-7).

The same apostle wrote to the church in Thessalonica urging them to live their lives in a way that is pleasing to God because they knew the commandments Jesus Christ had given to them. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality” (1 Thess. 4:1-7).

Where does a nation look to find the anchor bolts that will secure it from societal and moral destruction?

They must look to the living God. His Holy Word will give them the wisdom and understanding.

His precepts and principles will be the plumb line for good and evil.

Dear ones, the church is to be the living example of that standard for a nation gone adrift.

But when the church of Jesus Christ compromises God’s

holiness, yields to tolerance, adopts political correctness and silences her voice that distinguishes between the sacred and the carnal; the nation is left with no certain standard for measuring good and evil.

The church has put a covering over the light of God leaving the nation in darkness.

The church has bleached her cultural flavoring.

She is good for nothing and she will be trampled under the feet of ungodly men.

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