

Orthodox Jew: Disney, Ben and Jerry's and Biblical Values

During my trip throughout the U.S. last month, I had a number of incredible experiences, driving more than 2,000 miles in eight states, speaking in several churches and fellowshiping with people across all denominations and walks of life who want to connect with, support and bless Israel.

Perhaps this wouldn't be so noteworthy if I were not an Orthodox Israeli Jew for whom the grace and love shown to me is always remarkable. In the end, the blessing was mutual.

Throughout my travels I did my best to keep up with news at home in Israel, where five terror attacks took place while I was away, internationally including the horrors in Ukraine and doing what I can leading the Genesis 123 Foundation to be the biggest help, and domestic U.S. news. One of the main later topics for a number of days was the announcement of Disney's decision to promote an agenda that had my Christian friends concerned by the unraveling of traditional values by imposing an agenda that's anti-biblical.

Many confided that they don't care what people do in their private lives, although they always pray for people to come to God. The issue across the board was the imposition of "Disney values" on the broader society, which makes many uncomfortable, even unwilling, to expose their children and grandchildren to anything connected to Disney.

It wasn't planned to coordinate with the news, that I was invited to speak as the guest of my friend Pastor Anthony Daley at Mosaic Church. But we know that there are no coincidences. In March the theme throughout Mosaic's community was "Happy Together," multiple conversations about biblical family values. Pastor Daley used the opportunity with me, as

an Orthodox Israeli Jew, to join him in an incredible teaching in the form of a dialogue about biblical family values from a Jewish perspective. He interwove them masterfully in a teaching for his church. Pastor Daley is solid in his understanding of Christianity and the New Testament being rooted in Judaism and the Old Testament. So, exploring traditional Jewish family values with a Jewish guest from Israel, albeit out of the box, could not have been more appropriate.

The format and conversation went over especially well. It was an honor to participate.

The Disney controversy had not come up yet, but the overall threat to undermine biblical family values is not new. Listening to our conversation underscores just another way in which the reality is that Jews and Christians have more in common than that about which we differ. The theme from that Sunday was carried through Pastor Daley's teachings the rest of the month and became even more relevant as Disney's decision became public.

While I was away, I had the opportunity to underscore a different connection to biblical values, something that was understood if not stated outright in every church I visited and every meeting in which I participated: God's injunction in Genesis 12:3 (ERV), "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you." In most cases it didn't need to be stated, or even referenced. As Jews and Christians, we just believe it. But for me, it played out in a unique way that nobody noticed except me.

Last year, Ben and Jerry's announced a boycott of Israeli communities over the "green line" (also known pejoratively as the "West Bank" and biblically as Judea and Samaria). The Ben and Jerry's boycott is discriminatory, antisemitic and illegal. Their parent company, Unilever, has done a poor job trying to explain away the boycott, but has been subject to

significant legal action and financial repercussions. Their stock price has tanked. One doesn't have to look further than God's warning that He will curse those who curse Israel to see how that plays out even in international business. Cursing Israel is bad for business. Period.

Here's a little secret. When I am traveling, sometimes at night I like to run out to get some ice cream and bring it back to my hotel. I often will get a pint and, because my hotel rooms don't usually have a freezer, do a pretty good job finishing it off. This trip, however, I affirmed the biblical injunction of Genesis 12:3 and my own personal boycott of Ben and Jerry's and all Unilever products. All I did, however, was NOT buy their ice cream. The truth is, Americans don't appreciate how many great brands and flavors are out there, so it was not a sacrifice at all. I didn't miss Ben, Jerry or their hate-filled chunk, not one bite.

Biblical values play out in everything we do. From dialogues like I had with Pastor Daley to walking past Ben and Jerry's in the freezer aisle, as Jews and Christians we're reminded of the common bonds and beliefs even in the most mundane ways.

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