

Identifying and Praying Into Our Core Values

The Lord spoke to me about my core values more than 40 years ago when I was a young pastor, and what I learned then has stuck with me. At the time, I was not thinking 40 or 50 or even 100 years into the future; I was just thinking about the week ahead and my next Sunday sermon.

Yet out of the blue, this sentence occurred to me, and I knew it was from God: “Your end-time worldview will determine your lifestyle.”

The Lord wasn’t delineating to me what my end-time worldview should be. He was simply pointing out that my day-to-day decisions, taken together, would create my style of life. Inevitably, these decisions would be based on my faith.

How would my core values be affected by what I thought about Christ’s return? How would I interpret the Scriptures? Would I view myself as helping to bring God’s kingdom to earth? What might be my contribution to this purpose? What kind of education would I acquire in relation to it?

Over time, my worldview and my approach to everything in life has turned out to align with these four core biblical values:

1. God is good, all the time.
2. Nothing is impossible with God.
3. Everything that needed to be accomplished was completed at Calvary.
4. As ambassadors of Christ, we carry His delegated, regal authority.

Again, 40 years have gone by since the Lord first spoke to me

about core values, and as it has turned out, I have given my life to raising up a people who are so filled with the Holy Spirit that His light shining through them can replace the darkness. I have endeavored to understand God's kingdom and, like the sons of Issachar, to discern the times and the seasons in order to teach people how to live wisely (see 1 Chron. 12:32).

I may not have succeeded in every respect, but I aim to finish as well as I can. I want to live in and share an authentic culture of wisdom and faith until the day God calls me home.

Core Values Shape Attitudes and Expectations

Our enemy would like to deflect us from the purposes of God by inserting ungodly beliefs into our minds, but the Spirit helps us to uncover those negative strongholds, and with His help we can replace them with positive attitudes and applications. For example, when I discover that I am being plagued by the fear that God has passed me by, giving good things to other people but not to me, I call up the truth that God is good, all the time.

I allow my biblical core values to shape my attitudes and expectations. Otherwise, I will view my memories of past experiences, my present tribulations and my uncertain future through a dark lens, and my faith will falter. But I have learned to not let fear have the final word.

I lay hold of this truth: we do not fight toward victory—we fight from victory. Jesus has already won the battle. He has overcome the world. Thus, when evil washes over me and I am tempted to despair, I can discern the desperate efforts of the devil to persuade me that Jesus' victory is not true.

Additional Lessons Along the Way

I also learn to embrace the humbling circumstances in which I find myself. I have adopted a new attitude about humility. The

world tells me that I should be powerful, capable, strong, respected—while keeping up a front of false modesty so nobody will criticize me.

But Jesus tells me that true humility paves the way to His kind of success. I have discovered through experience that false humility will deny my true destiny, while true humility will take me to it. Our boasting should be in what Christ has already accomplished, not in our human ability to bring His earthly rule and reign to pass.

The only way you and I can do any good on this earth and help bring in God's kingdom is to let His light shine through our broken, humble selves. Jesus the Messiah is the light of the world. We are not supposed to merely gaze on Him and reflect His glory; rather, His glory is supposed to burst out of us. We do not deny the darkness, but we do deny its finality. As Isaiah 60:1 encourages, we arise and let His light shine through us.

Our theme verse for targeted prayer this month comes from Colossians 1:27 (NIV), "To them [the Lord's people] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Let us endeavor to pray into and create a healthy kingdom culture where all believers can shine their light together and thus overwhelm the kingdom of darkness, including every religious and political spirit, every spirit of pride, the antichrist spirit and anything else that the enemy decides to throw in our faces.

Let's identify our kingdom core values, pray into them and walk them out! Let's displace darkness by walking in the opposite Spirit and release Christ in us, the hope of glory!

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