

Kingdom Economics: Why is America Declining Spiritually So Quickly?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a surprisingly strong July Employment Report. Total nonfarm employment was 528K (398K previously, 250K expected). Private nonfarm employment was 471K (404K previously, 230K expected).

The headline unemployment rate dropped to 3.5% from 3.6%. Average hourly earnings for the previous 12 months remained unchanged at 5.2% but 4.9% was expected. The participation rate (proportion of the working age population that are in the workforce) dropped to 62.1% from 62.2% (a loss of 239,000 from the workforce).

To dig deeper, we need to know that BLS administers two different surveys each month, an establishment survey and a household survey. The establishment survey tallies employment from incorporated businesses. The household survey polls a sample of households. The establishment survey is used to determine employment (the number of jobs), whereas the household survey is used to determine the unemployment rate, varied details of the labor market and the number of people working.

The two surveys rarely diverge much from each other for more than a couple of months. However, the divergence for the last four months is the largest in decades, if we exclude the 2020 pandemic year. According to the household survey, 239K people left the workforce in June, and 303K began working part-time for economic reasons.

With the establishment survey every new part-time job would count as employment increasing by one. But the household survey counts individuals. If an individual had three new

part-time jobs, employment would increase by one.

The household survey is painting a different picture of the economy, than the picture which the press was touting upon the release of the employment report. Time will tell whether the establishment survey, household survey or some combination of the two will have the most predictive ability. But certainly a risk conscious individual should always seek to find the rest of the story.

In the United States, people are becoming less religious and spiritual. According to a 2022 Gallup survey, a record low 81% of Americans believe in God. Between 1944 and 2011, it was above 90%. Seventeen percent of American's do not believe in God.

Similarly, another 2022 Gallup survey showed that a record low 20% of Americans believe the Bible is the actual Word of God to be taken literally. This compares to the highs of 40% in 1980 and 1984. Forty-nine percent believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. A record high 29% responded that the Bible is a collection of fables, legends, history and moral precepts which were recorded by man.

In 2021 Gallup surveys, 69% of Americans self-identified as Christians, 7% as non-Christian religions and 21% said they have no religious preference. In 1971, 90% of Americans self-identified as Christian 25% of Americans said that religion was not very important in their lives, 27% thought it was fairly important and 49% thought that religion was very important in their lives. Twenty-nine percent of Americans reported that they had attended church in the last seven days.

Why is America declining spiritually? Why has it declined so rapidly? The United States has been blessed more than any country in recent history, even with all the current problems, it is still highly blessed compared to nearly every other country. America was founded, and its laws for most of its

history were based, on the Judeo-Christian faith. Yet its spiritual decline has been broad, based and rapid? Why?

Could it be that too many churches and ministers are teaching an incomplete gospel? Have we emphasized forgiveness, joy and peace while downplaying repentance, separation, suffering and sacrifice? Have we emphasized musical talent to the exclusion of worship? Have we emphasized individualism while omitting unity? Have we stressed grace while minimizing obedience? Are we seeking spiritual experiences instead of a deepening relationship with our King?

Unfortunately, one could attend too many of America's churches today and see very little of the Bible preached. Sin is too often minimized or ignored. Blatant sin in today's culture is often unaddressed from the pulpit by falsely claiming that the separation of church and state requires it. Some churches have even become apologists for sins in today's culture, which the Bible considers heinous.

Perhaps it is time to return to the complete gospel. As members of the kingdom of God, we have the obligation to study, follow, and teach the entire gospel. We do not have the authority or right to pick and choose which parts of the gospel we will teach and follow. The Bible teaches that in the last days many will not tolerate sound doctrine and will find teachers eager to teach to the desires of the listener. We have the sacred responsibility not to be one of those teachers.

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires," (2 Tim. 4:2-3, NASB 2020).

Jesus died to give us the full gospel, not just the parts we

believe. Now is the time for the rest of the story.

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