

- » pg. 2 From the president's desk: Pew Survey a Shot Across the Bow for Evangelicals
- » pg. 5 Doc's recent readings on climate change
- » pg. 7 Summit spotlight: Making space for displeasur

- » The latest announcements and news
- » Find us on Facebook
- » Check our Twitter feed: @summitmn

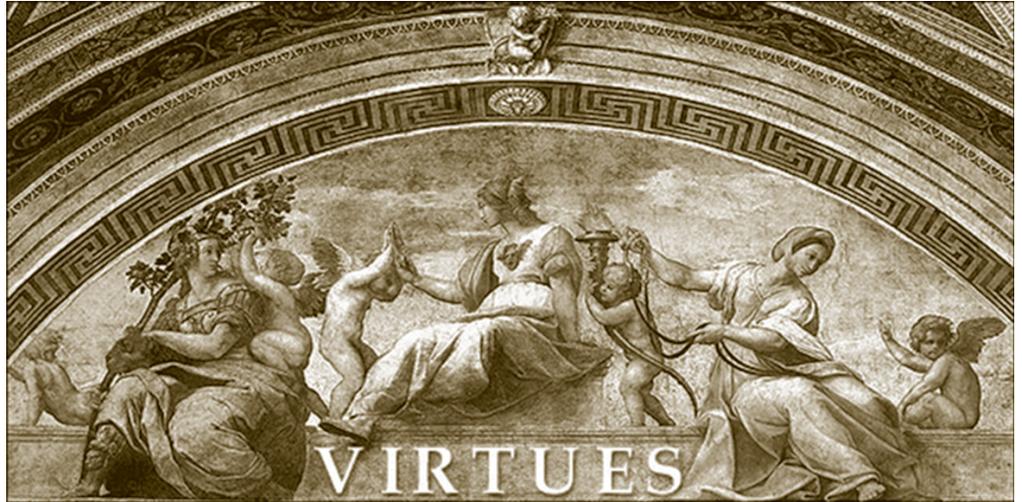
Becoming People of Virtue

This month, we are featuring a talk by Breakpoint co-host and Summit speaker John Stonestreet, given at a Summit Student Conference in 2014. John discusses why our culture so desperately needs people of virtue, and how we become this sort of person who can make a difference. To read the transcript in full, please go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the June PDF, and scroll to the end.

Here's the thing. Western civilization is on the edge of the moral abyss. I would agree. We're running out of gas. We're cashing checks. We're not putting any deposits back into our cultural capital. Pretty soon, it's going to run out of steam. But it doesn't change the sort of people we need. If culture collapses, we have to rebuild it. You know what? We need people with virtue. If we're going to recover culture, we need people with virtue. Does that make sense?

This is what's so important for us to remember — that the cultural story is not the real story of the world. The real story of the world is that Christ has risen from the dead. So, if our cultural story recovers — which, God help us, I hope it does — or if our cultural story is going downhill fast and we're going to have to rebuild it from the ground up, you know what? The truth is Christ has risen from the dead and we are still responsible for the times in which we live.

The question is, how do we become this sort of people who can make a difference? Dallas Willard referred to this thing as people with a well-ordered heart. So, if we talk about synonyms for virtue, we could also add this idea of a well-ordered heart. Here's what he means. He says, "Those with a well-ordered heart are people who are prepared for and capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are good and right."



Have you ever met someone who's just a victim of their times, a victim of their life? Life happens to them, right? Culture happens to them. This is what Scripture calls somebody just being blown in the wind, right? What Willard is saying: Listen. Those with a well-ordered heart ... and by the way, Proverbs says, "Above all else, guard your heart — heart." By the way, the heart is not your emotions. That's not what it's talking about.

The heart is your center. It's the place where your thoughts and your will and your emotions all meet. It's your operating system. It's your CPU in the center of you. Scripture says, "Guard that." You can lose it through your mind. You can lose it through your emotions. You can lose it through bad habits. The Scripture says, "Guard that," right? This is what Willard is saying.

The question is, how do we have a well-ordered heart so that if we get smacked upside of the head or patted on the back, we still know how to respond, right? If culture goes our way, if culture goes another way, we still know how to respond.

...

Now, I want to go to two people. We've got virtue. We've got a well-ordered heart

and we've got the moral imagination. I want to go to two people who, I think, contribute to our understanding of this in a pretty powerful way. The first one is Aristotle. Aristotle wrote one of the earliest books in Western Civilization on ethics. It was interesting because he wasn't comparing ethical theory. Anybody here took an ethics class in college or an ethics class in seminary grad school? Three of us. That's the problem with this group right here. Yes. If you were like me, our ethics classes were "here are seven ethical theories and here's how you compare them." Back here, Aristotle's not writing a book on the different ethical theories.

What Aristotle was doing is he's trying to help people become good citizens. For Aristotle, most of it landed around the idea of habits. He said, "So, it is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earliest age. It makes a vast difference, or rather, all the difference in the world." A lot of our life is habits, right? I'm seeing this with my kids. I don't think about brushing my teeth every morning and every night. I just do it because it's now a habit. It's not a habit with my kids. I got to remind

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



Pew Survey a Shot Across the Bow for Evangelicals

"America Is Getting Less Christian, Less Religious," wrote the *Huffington Post*. "Survey Fail — Christianity Isn't Dying," says Ed Stetzer for *USA Today*.

Um ... if I remember the law of non-contradiction correctly, these headlines can't both be true.

So which is it? Well, there's good news and there's bad news. The good news is that those reporting Christian affiliation grew by 2 million people since 2007. Thus, the "Christianity Isn't Dying" headline.

The bad news: The overall percentage of Christians in the U.S. fell by 8 percent. If Christianity grows a little and the population grows a lot, that means Christianity is shrinking. Thus, the "Less Christian" headline.

This new survey is a wake-up call. I encourage you to read it at www.pewforum.org. But for the fast-track version, three things stand out to me:

The Rising Generation Isn't on Board

In the new Pew survey, Millennials (those born from 1981-1996) saw the largest decrease in religious affiliation. Over one-third are "nones," as in "What's your religious affiliation?" "None." The figure has risen 1 percent a year for seven years. We wonder why: Do they find religious commitment too burdensome? Are they commitment-phobic? Does it even matter to them?

Leading Christian researcher Ed Stetzer says it might just be that less-committed believers are finally showing their true colors. "Christianity isn't collapsing, it's being clarified," he says. When a person is low-commitment to begin with, it's easy to slide from "nominal" to "none," Stetzer thinks. It's not that they've fallen out of love; it's that they weren't really in love in the first place.

Americans Would Rather Believe Nothing Than Very Little

Catholic and Mainline denominations are losing members by droves. No doubt many churches in these denominations are holding the line, but the overall trend is clear: Why go to a church that asks you to believe very little when you can stay home and believe nothing?

Evangelicalism, on the other hand, is growing slightly. We asked Mark Mittelberg for his comments on this. Mittelberg is a Summit faculty member who, along with his ministry partner Lee Strobel, has shared the Gospel with millions. He replied, "This study shows what a lot of us have been saying for a long time: Liberal, compromising Christianity is slowly going extinct, while vibrant, biblical faith is on the rise."

Even one in five fragile-faithed Millennials reports an Evangelical faith. This is good, but not great, news. A cohort of Millennials holding their ground isn't exactly a hipster revival. In an increasingly hostile culture, how long will they hold on?

Surveys Only Reveal a Partial Truth

The Pew study is asking the wrong questions. Christianity isn't about choosing a religious affiliation from a list, like selecting pizza toppings. The culture is not about statistics. It's about people longing for meaning, confused about what's true, and in desperate need of discipleship from those who know and live the truth.

Living the truth is what this issue of the *Summit Journal* is about. This month's article is a lecture on virtue by Summit faculty member John Stonestreet, who asks questions like, "The question of virtue is: How do I become a good person? How do I actually live a good life? How

do I actually become the sort of person that I'm supposed to be?"

If it's a culture war, we're losing. More and more people are believing less and less.

But if it's about culture *care* instead of culture war, we don't have to be elite warriors to secure victory. We can be unsung heroes who kneel in prayer to fight for our kids' hearts, who share our faith with our neighbors, and whose character earns us a hearing around the water cooler.

Stonestreet challenges us to ask what we should do with the opportunities we have. May I make a suggestion? Summit Ministries recently released *Grow Together*, a film, study guide, and book focused on uniting the generations. Get a copy for your church at www.growtogether.org.

Grow Together shows how to reverse the trend of people walking away from the faith by giving simple counsel on befriending and mentoring young adults. Young people with an adult friend in church are more than twice as likely to stay. This is an easy win. We can start with a cup of coffee, a smile, and a listening ear.

The Pew study shows Summit's work to be more vital than ever. Mittelberg says, "There's much more to be done, especially among young people who so desperately need to know what we believe and why. That's why I thank God for what he's doing through Summit Ministries to prepare and build into the next generation of Christian leaders."

God is at work. Your prayers and support are making it possible for us to send a whole new wave of fired-up young believers into a failing culture. Thank you.

people of virtue

continued from page 1

them every morning and every night, right?

When I tie my shoe, the rabbit knows exactly where to go. It's really kind of fun. The rabbit just [goes] around the tree into the hole, right? When my daughter ties her shoe, her rabbit goes everywhere because her rabbit has not been properly trained and habituated. When we go to work in the morning, we don't think about it. We just turn into Starbucks. It's not our fault. It just happens to us, right?

This is the power of habit. In fact, there was a book two years ago written and called *The Power of Habit*. They estimated that about 50-60 percent of your day is just habituous — just things that you do in routine. ...

But let me give you five categories of habits, five categories of things we don't often think of as being habits but they are very key to virtue and, I think, in particular as we're trying to raise the next generation. The first one is this, what are my loves? We often do not think of loves as being habits. We think of loves as being emotions or feelings. But loves are much more habitually cultivated than they are not, right? Another way to ask this question is, with what or with whom am I habitually most intimate? What gets the real me? The loves is the question of intimacies, right?

What do I choose to give myself to? You can see how much loves have been corrupted with this statistic. I'm not trying to be crude with this. I had no idea what to do with this, OK? I'm doing the research for this book and there's been this whole talk about Japan. Do you know that 25 percent of young men in Japan, 25 percent, from 16 to 24-year-olds, have no interest in sex? Who are these boys? What's that? Yes, yes. I'm not talking about 2 percent — 25 percent. The number of women are

even much, much higher. Do you know what the Japanese birth rate is? Nowhere close to reproduction, OK? Why is that? One of the theories is because this is the generation that has been intimate with the screen their whole life.

...
Augustine is the guy who talks most about loves — St. Augustine. Augustine said two things about loves, and these are really helpful for me. Number one is, for someone to love well, they have to love the right things, right? This is the thing we're seeing, I think, in Japan and with young men is that they love machines more than they love people. They haven't been taught to actually be intimate and love and be relationally proper with people. People are objects that are actually experienced through

“The truth is Christ has risen from the dead and we are still responsible for the times in which we live.”

John Stonestreet

objects and the list just goes on and on and on. So, love the right things.

The second thing is love things in the right order. You have to have the proper order of your loves. I love my kids' happiness. I do. I love it when they get happy. I did it this year. We did it. I had two trips down in Florida. We have three little girls. You know what happened, don't you? What happened? We did it. We went to Disneyworld. I am still tired from that, those two days! It's just exhausting but I tell you what.

The first day, you get online. You're

no good at Disney without a plan. So, I printed out somebody's plan, how to get through Disney in a day. I had it. Go to Enchanted Tales with Belle. We booked it to the back of the park, right? We go through Enchanted Tales with Belle. They were in this room with this mirror. I think it's just kind of a fancy, magic mirror sort of thing. Then, all of a sudden, the mirror opens and my little girl turned around to me with a look of Disney like she could be on the commercial. You know what I mean? Like, “Huh, how did they do that?” That was it. That was worth it. That was worth all the exhaustion. It wasn't quite worth the money yet, but it was worth the exhaustion.

I love my kids' happiness. It gives me great joy, but I also love my kids' holiness, right? Have you ever met somebody whose parents love their happiness more than their holiness? Have you ever flown beside that kid on an airplane? OK, there we go. We're on the same page. That's the importance of the order of loves.

Secondly, what are my longings? What am I longing for? ... The question of longings is the question of my aim. ... The question of loves is a question of intimacy. The question of longings is a question of imagination. Here's what we mean by longings. When we sit in bed at night and we imagine the sort of life we want to have, what world is it?

Remember when Jesus said, “If a man looks lustfully at a woman, in his heart, he is already what?” Because he's already set his imagination away from the things he's responsible to something he's not responsible for. You know this as well as I do — we cultivate these imaginations. We cultivate them. What is it that I long for? What is it? Because my longing ends up aiming my loves, my

See **people of virtue** page 4

people of virtue

continued from page 3

longing will reshape our loves, and these are things. There are times we have to chasten our longings. It's wrong for me to do this. What I need to long for is this instead.

Third, what are my loyalties? The question of loves is intimacies. The question of longings is imagination. The question of loyalties is commitment. Anybody here too busy like me? OK. So, this is good because it gives us a built-in excuse, right? Whenever anyone asks us to do something that we don't want to do, what do we say? "I just don't have enough time. I don't have enough money." But, it's amazing how we always find the time and the money for what we really want to do. Is that fair enough?

So, this is the question of loyalties. What makes us commit? ...

Because our loyalties are fostered. Let me tell you how it affects me. If you would ask me right now, "Hey, John. Which do you love more, your daughters or your cell phone?" What would I say? Daughters. If you took me out in the ocean on a boat and you said, "OK. One of them's gotta go in the water. You got to throw over one of your daughters or your iPhone." Which one is going to go in the ocean? I have said that to the students this summer. They were like, "Can your daughter swim?" I was like, "Come on." Boneheads.

But, I would throw the iPhone in every time, right? But every day that I go home, after being on this thing all day, it sits there and it buzzes or it dings or something and I make a decision. I make a decision whether to put this down and pick up my kid or put my kid down and pick up my phone, right? You see what it's doing? This thing has cultivated loyalty from us. You know that this can happen? Honestly, if we watch too much, I think, kind of crazy, angry conspiracy theory sort of things — that the world's

going to come to an end — it cultivates a loyalty to that stuff. So, we have to find a conspiracy everywhere we look. If you're not a little bit conspiratorial these days, you're not paying attention, but do you understand what I'm saying? It can cultivate a loyalty to despair instead of a loyalty to hope and things like that.

Fourth, what are my labors? This is just how hard do we work at what? What gets my efforts and my energies? Scripture says it's a shame for someone to win the whole world and lose his own soul. Vince Lombardi said, "I'm not afraid of losing. I'm afraid of winning at something that doesn't matter," right? What's worth the time, energy, and attention?

The fifth one is just this, what are my liturgies? Liturgies is, obviously, a loaded word maybe for some of us who grew up in particular denominations or Christian expressions or so on, but all that means is that what are these rhythms of life that we have. Liturgy is a rhythm of worship, and you know what? Every denomination has liturgy. If you don't have any other liturgy except using just as I am and having [inaudible] at the end, that's a liturgy because it cultivates you. I grew up in an environment like that. What it taught me — and non-intentionally and no one would ever say that — but what it taught me was the time that God speaks to you is at the end of the service with every head bowed and every eye closed.

So, I started to think that would be the moment I was most tense because I like [inaudible] doesn't speak to me because I don't want to change. Then, it didn't. I was like, "Sweet. I'm off of another hook. I'm off the hook for another week." Right? Nobody would have ever said that, but this is the sort of things that it cultivates. We do liturgies all the time, I think, in our society. Isn't it bizarre? Isn't it bizarre that the day after we spend

giving thanks as a nation and eating a lot of turkey and playing football, we then trample security guards for flat-screen TVs? You might see the irony in this. Why? Because there's a cultural rhythm that takes place called the Christmas season.

...

Now, I think the habit thing is a really helpful thing. I think Aristotle brings a lot to it. I'll give you a quick lesson, maybe, a quick hand, on how to use these five questions. First of all, spend 45 minutes by yourself in prayer before God and just answer the questions. Secondly, go to someone you know and you trust — your spouse, your mentor, your friend — and say, "Answer these questions for me. What do you think I really love more than anything else?" Scripture says faithful are the what of a friend? — the wounds of a friend. There's a lot of good stuff. If you want to be wise, you walk with the wise, right? Iron sharpens what? Iron, right? This is the way to do this.

Secondly, if you have kids, this can be great discipleship stuff. Honestly, I know there's some worldview test out there that you can take. I really don't buy many of them because you know what? We have a generation now of kids. This is the new stage of worldview and apologetics development. We have a bunch of Christian school and home-schooled kids who bought into apologetics and worldview and that sort of stuff, and you know what? They know how to answer all the questions. A lot of them do, but they're addicted to porn. They're jerks. They don't know how to love each other. They don't know how to care for each other. They don't know how to talk to people like human beings. It's got to be at both ends. So, this is a great, I think, mentoring thing for your kids. Do it with them.

a look at our world

news and commentary



Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

Climate Change

DURHAM, N.C. — A new study based on 1,000 years of temperature records suggests global warming is not progressing as fast as it would under the most severe emissions scenarios outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

“Based on our analysis, a middle-of-the-road warming scenario is more likely, at least for now,” said Patrick T. Brown, a doctoral student in climatology at Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment. “But this could change.”

The Duke-led study shows that natural variability in surface temperatures — caused by interactions between the ocean and atmosphere, and other natural factors — can account for observed changes in the recent rates of warming from decade to decade.

The researchers say these “climate wiggles” can slow or speed the rate of warming from decade to decade, and accentuate or offset the effects of increases in greenhouse gas concentrations. If not properly explained and accounted for, they may skew the reliability of climate models and lead to over-interpretation of short-term temperature trends.

The research, published today in the peer-reviewed journal *Scientific Reports*, uses empirical data, rather than the more commonly used climate models, to estimate decade-to-decade variability.

“At any given time, we could start warming at a faster rate if greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere increase without any offsetting changes in aerosol concentrations or natural variability,” said Wenhong Li, assistant professor of climate at Duke, who conducted the study with Brown.

The team examined whether climate models, such as those used by the IPCC, accurately account for natural chaotic variability that can occur in the rate of global warming as a result of interactions between the ocean and atmosphere, and other natural factors.

To test how accurate climate models are at accounting for variations in the rate of warming, Brown and Li, along with colleagues from San Jose State University and the USDA, created a new statistical model based on reconstructed empirical records of surface temperatures over the last 1,000 years.

“By comparing our model against theirs, we found that climate models largely get the ‘big picture’ right but seem to underestimate the magnitude of natural decade-to-decade climate wiggles,” Brown said. “Our model shows these wiggles can be big enough that they could have accounted for a reasonable portion of the accelerated warming we experienced from 1975 to 2000, as well as the reduced rate in warming that occurred from 2002 to 2013.”

Further comparative analysis of the models revealed another intriguing insight.

“Statistically, it’s pretty unlikely that an 11-year hiatus in warming, like the one we saw at the start of this century, would occur if the underlying human-caused warming was progressing at a rate as fast as the most severe IPCC projections,” Brown said. “Hiatus periods of 11 years or longer are more likely to occur under a middle-of-the-road scenario.”

Under the IPCC’s middle-of-the-road scenario, there was a 70 percent likelihood that at least one hiatus lasting 11 years or longer would occur between 1993 and 2050, Brown said. “That matches up well with what we’re seeing.”

There’s no guarantee, however, that this rate of warming will remain steady in coming years, Li stressed. “Our analysis clearly shows that we shouldn’t expect the observed rates of warming to be constant. They can and do change.”

—Patrick Brown & Wenhong Li
Duke Environment
April 21, 2015

As California’s drought continues, desalination has emerged as an answer to the state’s chronic water shortages. As the Orange County Register notes, desalination would provide a near-infinite supply of water at only twice the price. The main objection of environmentalists is that desalination uses up to 50 percent more electricity, meaning more fossil fuels might be burned to make water, setting back efforts to fight climate change. It is an objection that is looking less and less serious.

The damage caused by climate change is still only theoretical. Scientists have yet to prove a link between the global rise of surface temperatures — which has slowed dramatically in the last 20 years — and California’s extreme drought.

Moreover, the kind of increase in greenhouse gas emissions that desalination would cause would barely register on the global scale, and would be offset by the reductions in emissions the U.S. has been achieving for nearly a decade by switching to natural gas.

In contrast, the environmental dam-

continued on page 6

a look at our world

news and commentary, continued from page 5

age done by pumping groundwater — the only choice many Californians have had — is concrete, local, and probably permanent.

In the Central Valley and other farming regions, the drop in the water table has been so dramatic that the ground itself has subsided, making large areas of land harder to cultivate. Desalinization could replace at least some of the

water that leaves the interior of the state today for thirsty, growing coastal communities.

One comment in the Register article suggests the real reason that environmentalists resist desalinization: They want to use water scarcity as an opportunity to force permanent changes in Californians' lifestyles. Certainly some changes are long overdue: using water

more responsibly, planting water-efficient gardens, and so on. But desalinization would also achieve that by raising the price of what many consider a virtually "free" commodity.

A win-win — except for the most extreme green ideologues.

—Joel B. Pollak
Breitbart.com
April 19, 2015

alumni spotlight

a look into the lives of local summit communities

The North Denver group launched in September and meets on the second Wednesday of each month.

Having gathered to discuss topics like feminism and Messianic Judaism, as well as having gone to see and discuss several movies, they're now studying the book *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*.

Want to get involved in a Local Summit Community? Check out more information at:

summit.org/alumni-groups



**Join us for our next monthly Faculty Q&A Webinar
Saturday June 27, at Noon MTN
featuring Kevin Bywater,
Director of Summit Oxford
“Insights into Islam”**

**Register and find out more:
summit.org/alumni-webinar**

alumni spotlight

a look into discipleship



5 Starting Points to Making Space for Discipleship in Your life, Now:

By: David Knopp

If “Christianity” is slotted between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Sundays, is it really a whole-life calling? Jesus was a discipler, and all too often we equate “ministry” with “teaching” rather than “discipleship.” Jesus walked (literally) with his disciples. And his teaching to his disciples found a natural home within the context of those real-life experiences. Our calling is to follow that model and take our faith to the real world — taking those younger than us along for the journey. Whether you are 17 or 70, your commission is the same. Yet the biblical call-to-action can seem daunting, and you may not know exactly where to start. Here are five simple ways to get started right where you are.

Get Out: In American culture, it is very easy to be imprisoned by our agendas — agendas that typically don’t involve our neighbors or neighborhoods. Making a conscious effort to get out of our homes and off our phones is the first step toward being a part of our local communities.

Act Locally: Some of us have two key places: where we sleep and where

we live. We may have a home, but our lives are lived someplace else. At Summit, we believe in a double-helix of relationship and truth. Delivering truth meaningfully happens through strong relationships. But you will never develop strong relationships at a distance. So live where you sleep and see how much of an impact you can have.

Be Relational: It’s not enough to just be somewhere; you have to engage. Whether it’s at church, work, or community activities, it’s quite easy to slip in and out without actually looking at the souls of the God-created people around you. C.S. Lewis said: “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations — these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit — immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” So, learn to say “hi.” Learn to listen. Learn to encourage. Walk among the people.

Stay Classy: Being culturally literate and socially sensitive will go a long way to move us from the Christians that people ignore to the Christians that people confide in. Relationship is not about winning arguments. So

learn to ask thoughtful questions and listen well.

Quit Something: We tend to be good at addition but not very good at subtraction. You cannot love and serve people well by saying “yes” to everything. Saying “yes” to everything is saying “no” to sustainability and spontaneity. And those are two huge losses for people wanting to love others well. If you say “yes” to one thing, make sure you are consciously and intentionally saying “no” to something else.

These are just five ways to kickstart making space for discipleship in your life. Remember, discipleship isn’t a checklist and it isn’t about adding something to your plate which makes you even busier. It’s about relationship. It’s about walking together, loving and serving each other well, and leading others to Jesus.





American Christian College
dba Summit Ministries
PO Box 207
Manitou Springs, CO 80829

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Newton, KS
PERMIT 867

INSIDE: John Stonestreet on becoming people of virtue

Address Service
Requested

the summit lecture series I



Is Your Worldview Really Biblical?

Join John Stonestreet in another lecture as he explores how to make the Christian life a personal reality. After laying out the foundation for “worldview” in previous lectures, Stonestreet turns the magnifying glass inward and asks: How can we determine if our worldview is actually biblical? Are you living according to biblical principles? Does it seem like you have “head knowledge” but not “heart knowledge”? Does your life reflect the truth you claim to hold?

Available at www.summit.org/store
MP3, CD, or DVD
for just \$2.95

The Journal is the monthly publication of American Christian College (dba Summit Ministries), a nonprofit, educational, religious corporation operating under the laws of the states of Oklahoma and Colorado.

PO Box 207, Manitou Springs, Colorado 80829 | **Phone:** 866.786.6483 | **URL:** www.summit.org | **Email:** aaron@summit.org

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 6

Religious Liberty

The retired electric company worker scrawled his signature on the office sign-in sheet and waited in the conference room. The name “Walt Tutka” meant a lot in his hometown of Belvidere, N.J.

To his wife of 40 years, it meant a best friend and admirable role model for their five sons. To his friends, it meant a humble and well-liked citizen who quietly contributed to his community.

To the teachers in the nearby Philipsburg School District, it meant a consistently high-performing substitute teacher to run their classes; he taught 28 of the first 33 days of the 2012-2013 school year.

Yet to Superintendent George Chando, the name “Walt Tutka” represented a dangerous rule-breaker.

When Tutka arrived at the district’s administrative offices that autumn day, he wasn’t signing in to cover a class. He was there to meet with Chando about two policies — distributing religious materials on school grounds and remaining neutral with students when discussing religious subjects. His friend Joe Imhof accompanied him as a witness.

When Chando, along with the district’s assistant superintendent, saw that Tutka was not alone, he declined to follow through with the meeting he’d requested. Instead, the school board fired Tutka on Jan. 14, 2013, telling the media that he never showed up for the meeting. When reporters asked, Chando refused to release the sign-in sheet bearing Tutka’s signature.

Suddenly, the name “Walt Tutka” meant a Christian fired for answering a student’s spontaneous question about the Bible and later giving him the actual

book to keep if he wanted to.

A Simple Question

“Walt is a down-to-earth, nice everyman, so to speak,” his attorney, Hiram Sasser of the Liberty Institute, tells *Citizen*. “I don’t know what his driving habits are, but if he drives above the speed limit I would be surprised. He’s a rule-follower and always tries to do the right thing.”

It’s a habit Tutka endeavors to pass on to his students. So when a middle-schooler straggled behind his classmates in the fall 2012 semester, he quipped, “The first shall be last but the last shall be first,” in an effort to hurry the kid along.

A few days later, that student asked him where the saying came from. Tutka, a Christian since 1992, told him it was from the Bible but couldn’t remember the exact reference.

When the boy repeatedly asked about the verse’s origin over several school days, Tutka finally pulled out his personal New Testament and turned to Matthew 20:16 during lunch on Oct. 12, 2012.

As they talked, Tutka learned the boy didn’t have a Bible. “Would you like mine?” he asked. The student accepted.

“It was a spontaneous moment,” Sasser says. “Walt’s never done this before or since; these were unique circumstances that may never happen again.”

Almost immediately, Tutka received a summons to the principal’s office, where the matter was referred to Chando. Tutka met with him three days later. The administration accused him of breaking the school’s policies on distribution of religious items and neutrality during religious-leaning discussions.

Imhof, Tutka’s friend for nearly a decade, instantly recognized the injustice.

“Instead of sending the student off to the library where a Bible was available, (Tutka) answered a question. That’s what a good teacher does,” he tells *Citizen*. “Walt was not participating in a ‘distribution of religious material,’ nor was he acting for any church or other religious group.”

The higher-ups at Philipsburg disagreed. While they knew Tutka through their pool of substitutes, they recognized his name from another list, too: the roster of local members of Gideons International, a century-old organization that has given away nearly two billion Bibles worldwide since its inception.

As a courtesy and safety measure, the Gideons in the Philipsburg area give the local police force and school officials the names of anyone participating in occasional Bible giveaways on the public sidewalk outside the school. A Gideon since 2006, Tutka’s name was on that list.

Firing and Fighting

John Stillo, the middle school’s assistant vice principal, wrote his staff a memo concerning the Gideons on May 30, 2012. “It has been brought to the administration’s attention that Gideons may be near our campus to distribute literature to our students,” he wrote. “Please make sure they DO NOT step foot onto our campus at any time. There will be added police and security presence at dismissal.”

Ironically, though Tutka could legally do so, he chose never to participate in Bible distributions on the days he subbed. He felt it wasn’t fitting, says Sasser, and he “wanted to make sure he wasn’t doing anything inappropriate. Walt draws his own line there that he doesn’t want to (hand out Bibles on days he works at schools).”

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 9

Still, the Philipsburg School Board, buoyed by Tutka's alleged non-meeting with Chando, chose to terminate his employment.

Howard Mankoff, the school district's attorney, implied the board's problem with Tutka wasn't about Christianity or the Scriptures. "It's all well and good to suggest here that it was the Bible and no harm was done, but suppose it was some other, more objectionable religious literature," he told *The Warren Reporter*. "Parents might be very upset about that."

Still, Tutka kept working for other school districts while he reached out to Sasser, the managing director of strategic litigation at the Liberty Institute. Devoted to "restoring religious liberty in America," the firm took Tutka's case to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in April 2013 on the basis that the Philipsburg School District used Tutka's Christianity as a factor in his firing.

Victory

Initially, the EEOC dismissed the complaint for what it deemed a "lack of evidence," despite the fact that the district ignored Liberty Institute's open-records request for its documents concerning Tutka.

But in a rare reversal, the commission re-opened the case in June 2013. Typically, says EEOC spokeswoman Christine Nazer, re-openings are "made based on the evidence provided by the employee and any additional evidence uncovered by the commission."

On Dec. 15, 2014, after extensively interviewing Tutka and school district employees and reviewing the documents the school hadn't made available to Sasser and his team, the EEOC made its decision: The Philipsburg School

District had indeed "discriminated against (Tutka) on the basis on religion and retaliation."

Though the commission recommended that the district pay Tutka \$14,000 in restitution and implement additional employee training, Philipsburg has yet to rehire the 61-year-old or decide if it will appeal or settle the case.

Matthew Dowd, a member of Tutka's legal team at the Washington, D.C., law firm Wiley Rein, tells *Citizen* the First Amendment doesn't forbid teachers from answering religious questions. "Students are naturally curious about all subjects," he says, "and teachers must have the freedom to respond to academic inquiries without fear of termination."

Now that commission officially agrees, Sasser says people of faith in similar situations can know "that the EEOC is going to take religious liberty claims seriously — they're going to do serious investigation and call it like they see it."

That's good news for Tutka, who's more interested in "serving the community by being a substitute teacher" than being a household name.

"Walt has great respect for authority, peers, and everyone around him," Sasser says. "For him to have been treated this way simply for handing a Bible to a student was totally ridiculous."

—Crystal Kupper
Citizen Magazine
May 2015

Climate Change

"Today, our planet faces new challenges, but none pose a greater threat to future generations than climate change," President Obama wrote in his proclamation for Earth Day on Wednesday. "As a Nation, we must act

before it is too late."

Secretary of State John Kerry, in an Earth Day op-ed for USA Today, declared that climate change has put America "on a dangerous path — along with the rest of the world."

Both the president and Mr. Kerry cited rapidly warming global temperatures and ever-more-severe storms caused by climate change as reasons for urgent action.

Given that for the past decade and a half global-temperature increases have been negligible, and that the worsening-storms scenario has been widely debunked, the pronouncements from the Obama administration sound more like scare tactics than fact-based declarations.

At least the United Nations' then-top climate scientist, Rajendra Pachauri, acknowledged — however inadvertently — the faith-based nature of climate-change rhetoric when he resigned amid scandal in February. In a farewell letter, he said that "the protection of Planet Earth, the survival of all species and sustainability of our ecosystems is more than a mission. It is my religion and my dharma."

Instead of letting political ideology or climate "religion" guide government policy, we should focus on good science. The facts alone should determine what climate policy options the U.S. considers. That is what the scientific method calls for: inquiry based on measurable evidence. Unfortunately this administration's climate plans ignore good science and seek only to advance a political agenda.

Climate reports from the U.N. — which the Obama administration consistently embraces — are designed

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 10

to provide scientific cover for a pre-ordained policy. This is not good science. Christiana Figueres, the official leading the U.N.'s effort to forge a new international climate treaty later this year in Paris, told reporters in February that the real goal is "to change the economic development model that has been reigning for at least 150 years." In other words, a central objective of these negotiations is the redistribution of wealth among nations. It is apparent that President Obama shares this vision.

The Obama administration recently submitted its pledge to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The commitment would lock the U.S. into reducing greenhouse-gas emissions more than 25 percent by 2025 and "economy-wide emission reductions of 80 percent or more by 2050." The president's pledge lacks details about how to achieve such goals without burdening the economy, and it doesn't quantify the specific climate benefits tied to his pledge.

America will never meet the president's arbitrary targets without the country being subjected to costly regulations, energy rationing, and reduced economic growth. These policies won't make America stronger. And these measures will have no significant impact on global temperatures. In a hearing last week before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, of which I am chairman, climate scientist Judith Curry testified that the president's U.N. pledge is estimated to prevent only a 0.03 Celsius temperature rise. That is three-hundredths of one degree.

In June 2014 testimony before my

committee, former Assistant Secretary for Energy Charles McConnell noted that the president's Clean Power Plan — requiring every state to meet federal carbon-emission-reduction targets — would reduce a sea-level increase by less than half the thickness of a dime. Policies like these will only make the government bigger and Americans poorer, with no environmental benefit.

The White House's Climate Assessment implies that extreme weather is getting worse due to human-caused climate change. The president regularly makes this unsubstantiated claim — most recently in his Earth Day proclamation, citing "more severe weather disasters."

Even the U.N. doesn't agree with him on that one: In its 2012 Special Report on Extreme Events, the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says there is "high agreement" among leading experts that long-term trends in weather disasters are not attributable to human-caused climate change. Why do the president and others in his administration keep repeating this untrue claim?

Climate alarmists have failed to explain the lack of global warming over the past 15 years. They simply keep adjusting their malfunctioning climate models to push the supposedly looming disaster further into the future. Following the U.N.'s 2008 report, its claims about the melting of Himalayan glaciers, the decline of crop yields and the effects of sea-level rise were found to be invalid. The InterAcademy Council, a multinational scientific organization, reviewed the report in 2010 and identified "significant shortcomings in

each major step of [the U.N.] assessment process."

The U.N. process is designed to generate alarmist results. Many people don't realize that the most-publicized documents of the U.N. reports are not written by scientists. In fact, the scientists who work on the underlying science are forced to step aside to allow partisan political representatives to develop the "Summary for Policy Makers." It is scrubbed to minimize any suggestion of scientific uncertainty and is publicized before the actual science is released. The Summary for Policy Makers is designed to give newspapers and headline writers around the world only one side of the debate.

Yet those who raise valid questions about the very real uncertainties surrounding the understanding of climate change have their motives attacked, reputations savaged, and livelihoods threatened. This happens even though challenging prevailing beliefs through open debate and critical thinking is fundamental to the scientific process.

The intellectual dishonesty of senior administration officials who are unwilling to admit when they are wrong is astounding. When assessing climate change, we should focus on good science, not politically correct science.

Mr. Smith, a Republican from Texas, is chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

— Lamar Smith
The Wall Street Journal
April 23, 2015

DURHAM, N.C. — A new study based on 1,000 years of temperature records suggests global warming is not progressing as fast as it would under the

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 11

most severe emissions scenarios outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

“Based on our analysis, a middle-of-the-road warming scenario is more likely, at least for now,” said Patrick T. Brown, a doctoral student in climatology at Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment. “But this could change.”

The Duke-led study shows that natural variability in surface temperatures — caused by interactions between the ocean and atmosphere, and other natural factors — can account for observed changes in the recent rates of warming from decade to decade.

The researchers say these “climate wiggles” can slow or speed the rate of warming from decade to decade, and accentuate or offset the effects of increases in greenhouse gas concentrations. If not properly explained and accounted for, they may skew the reliability of climate models and lead to over-interpretation of short-term temperature trends.

The research, published today in the peer-reviewed journal *Scientific Reports*, uses empirical data, rather than the more commonly used climate models, to estimate decade-to-decade variability.

“At any given time, we could start warming at a faster rate if greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere increase without any offsetting changes in aerosol concentrations or natural variability,” said Wenhong Li, assistant professor of climate at Duke, who conducted the study with Brown.

The team examined whether climate models, such as those used by the IPCC, accurately account for natural chaotic variability that can occur in the rate of global warming as a result of interactions between the ocean and atmosphere, and

other natural factors.

To test how accurate climate models are at accounting for variations in the rate of warming, Brown and Li, along with colleagues from San Jose State University and the USDA, created a new statistical model based on reconstructed empirical records of surface temperatures over the last 1,000 years.

“By comparing our model against theirs, we found that climate models largely get the ‘big picture’ right but seem to underestimate the magnitude of natural decade-to-decade climate wiggles,” Brown said. “Our model shows these wiggles can be big enough that they could have accounted for a reasonable portion of the accelerated warming we experienced from 1975 to 2000, as well as the reduced rate in warming that occurred from 2002 to 2013.”

Further comparative analysis of the models revealed another intriguing insight.

“Statistically, it’s pretty unlikely that an 11-year hiatus in warming, like the one we saw at the start of this century, would occur if the underlying human-caused warming was progressing at a rate as fast as the most severe IPCC projections,” Brown said. “Hiatus periods of 11 years or longer are more likely to occur under a middle-of-the-road scenario.”

Under the IPCC’s middle-of-the-road scenario, there was a 70 percent likelihood that at least one hiatus lasting 11 years or longer would occur between 1993 and 2050, Brown said. “That matches up well with what we’re seeing.”

There’s no guarantee, however, that this rate of warming will remain steady in coming years, Li stressed. “Our analysis clearly shows that we shouldn’t expect the observed rates of warming to be

constant. They can and do change.”

—Patrick Brown & Wenhong Li

Duke Environment

April 21, 2015

As California’s drought continues, desalinization has emerged as an answer to the state’s chronic water shortages. As the Orange County Register notes, desalinization would provide a near-infinite supply of water at only twice the price. The main objection of environmentalists is that desalinization uses up to 50 percent more electricity, meaning more fossil fuels might be burned to make water, setting back efforts to fight climate change. It is an objection that is looking less and less serious.

The damage caused by climate change is still only theoretical. Scientists have yet to prove a link between the global rise of surface temperatures — which has slowed dramatically in the last 20 years — and California’s extreme drought.

Moreover, the kind of increase in greenhouse gas emissions that desalinization would cause would barely register on the global scale, and would be offset by the reductions in emissions the U.S. has been achieving for nearly a decade by switching to natural gas.

In contrast, the environmental damage done by pumping groundwater — the only choice many Californians have had — is concrete, local, and probably permanent.

In the Central Valley and other farming regions, the drop in the water table has been so dramatic that the ground itself has subsided, making large areas of land harder to cultivate. Desalinization could replace at least some of the water that leaves the interior of the state today for thirsty, growing coastal communi-

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 12

ties.

One comment in the Register article suggests the real reason that environmentalists resist desalinization: They want to use water scarcity as an opportunity to force permanent changes in Californians' lifestyles. Certainly some changes are long overdue: using water more responsibly, planting water-efficient gardens, and so on. But desalinization would also achieve that by raising the price of what many consider a virtually "free" commodity.

A win-win — except for the most extreme green ideologues.

—Joel B. Pollak
Breitbart.com
April 19, 2015

Same-Sex Marriage

James Dobson hosted a panel of Christian leaders on his "Family Talk" radio show Wednesday and warned that Christians are about to face a new status in America as a "hated minority" if the U.S. Supreme Court decides, as many expect, to mandate same-sex "marriage."

"The heart of what's happening is an attempt to impose a new morality on all of America," said Maggie Gallagher, a traditional-marriage advocate for 25 years.

The author of "The Case for Marriage," Gallagher is co-founder of the National Organization for Marriage and a senior fellow with the American Principles Project.

Homosexual advocates have no interest in a "live and let live tolerance," she said. "After redefining marriage, the next thing on their agenda is to redefine Christianity."

Under the new regimen, there will be

no difference between man and woman, husband and wife, she said.

The attitude is that if you "see something different, there's something morally wrong with you."

Christianity, she said, "will enter a new phase, as a hated minority group."

She and several others joined Dobson to discuss the U.S. Supreme Court case in which justices, including Elena Kagan and Ruth Ginsburg, who already publicly have endorsed same-sex marriage, will hear arguments April 28.

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals previously ruled states have a right to define marriage.

Also visiting with Dobson, who recently clashed with the Obama administration over its abortion mandates, were Jim Garlow, senior pastor of Skyline Church in San Diego, and Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage.

Dobson noted that marriage has been defined as the union of a man and a woman since God created the institution thousands of years ago, predating any government.

And he detailed how in 31 state elections, 31 times voters adopted the traditional definition.

The courts, however, Dobson said, "have steadily been ruling that traditional marriage is unconstitutional and discriminatory, and those decisions have found their way now into the Supreme Court."

"Almost all the court watchers are predicting the highest court in the land is about to redefine marriage."

If that happens, he said, it "will change everything in the culture," including churches, schools, businesses, the military, and family.

"Who knows where it will end?"

Brown said the judiciary doesn't have a right to rule on the issue.

"All of us can see there's nothing in the U.S. Constitution that says anything about the redefinition of marriage," he said.

But, he said, "We're at a point in history where ideology trumps all, the notion that judges should be bound at all by what the Constitution or what precedent says."

He noted that in 1971, the Supreme Court dismissed a case regarding redefining marriage, saying there was no federal question there.

He said Christians are going to have to stand up for their beliefs.

Garlow continued, "If I were the evil one, I would set out to destroy marriage."

And he warned that the attacks by homosexuals now on businesses will expand.

"What we're seeing happen to businesses today will happen to churches tomorrow," he said. "[They may] lose their buildings, or keep their buildings and agree they're going to perform same-sex marriages."

He cited existing cases stemming from attacks on Christians who run the Ocean Grove camp in New Jersey, a wedding chapel in Idaho, and Houston pastors who opposed a transgender-rights ordinance.

"It's evidence of what's going to come to the church," he said.

Dobson added that ministries "better decide now what you will do when forced into that corner."

Dobson is a familiar critic of government. He recently described President Obama as the "abortion president" and warned America is heading toward "depravity."

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 13

In his October 2014 newsletter, he wrote about the Old Testament account of Abraham's nephew Lot, "who chose to take his family into the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah."

"The men living there had become desperately depraved, burning with lust for each other. Jehovah told Abraham that their sin was so grievous that the Lord decided to rain utter destruction upon them. Abraham pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the people, but the patriarch could not find even 10 righteous men in either of the cities to justify mercy," he wrote.

"Why have I chosen to recount this biblical story from so long ago? Because I am convinced that America and other Western nations are sliding in the same direction," he warned. "We have not yet reached the depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, but that appears to be where we are headed."

Dobson added: "Judge Robert Bork, the brilliant jurist who was shamefully denied a seat on the Supreme Court, wrote a book about this danger 18 years ago. It was titled 'Slouching Towards Gomorrah.' I think he had it right.

"Many influential men and women of the judiciary are leading us toward perdition," he said.

His concerns were shared by the Rev. Billy Graham in a Sept. 30 column for *Decision* magazine.

Only Graham didn't hold quite as positive an opinion about America as Dobson. While Dobson said America is on a moral slide, Graham said it's already hit bottom.

"Even though America is just as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah ever were, and as deserving of the judgment of God, God would spare us if we were earnestly praying, with hearts that had

been cleansed and washed by the blood of Christ," he wrote.

Dobson pinned part of the blame for a crumbling America on federal judges — especially those who of late have found ways to undermine traditional marriage.

"Modernists, libertarians, and atheists today recognize no condemnation of sexual perversion in the Bible. However, this historical account illustrates how God views it. The outrageous behavior of the wicked men of Sodom and Gomorrah sealed their doom. Fire and brimstone fell from the sky on both cities and utterly destroyed them," Dobson explained.

"The story of Abraham and Lot also illustrates how entire societies can become so corrupted by evil that divine judgment eventually destroys them, or they simply fade away. It happened to the people of Greece, Rome, Pompeii, and other cities and cultures where wickedness became the order of the day. One thing is certain. God is the holy Sovereign Lord of all heaven and earth, and He will not be mocked."

In his newsletter at the time, Dobson said, regarding Obama's abortion mandates, "Among other things, [Obama] was targeting religious freedom and set about accomplishing that from the beginning. That was the activity to which I objected strenuously during my comments in Washington. I offer no apologies for expressing those views now. The effort to force Christians to violate their consciences must be opposed with all vigor, regardless of the consequences — primarily because it is unconstitutional. Christians are being chastised, dismissed, harangued, and sued for daring to practice their deeply held convictions in the public square.

Family Talk is among those who have been pressed against a wall."

WND also reported that when Dobson spoke to the National Day of Prayer, hundreds stood and cheered his condemnation of the government's ongoing attempts through Obamacare to require Christians to participate in something that profoundly violates their faith — abortion.

Dobson, through his Family Talk, had fought the Obamacare requirement that employers must pay for abortion-causing agents for their employees. The U.S. Supreme has struck down that requirement now.

Dobson at that time bluntly backed up his opinion.

"[Obama] has made it so that every American will have to pay toward the support of abortion," he said, citing hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funds that already go to Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.

"How can anyone challenge my characterization of Mr. Obama as 'the abortion president?' ... He even voted three times in the Illinois state senate not to protect babies who were born alive after surviving botched abortions," he said.

Regarding the current fight over the definition of marriage, WND has reported several state judges already are suing for being told they must perform same-sex marriage services.

WND has done a series of reports on friend-of-the-court briefs submitted in advance of the ruling. One argues changes could have far-reaching effects.

"If the traditional definition of marriage is not a rational basis for legislative action, it is hard to imagine what is. Put another way, if rational-basis re-

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 14

view invalidates traditional marriage, it seems likely that few other laws would be safe from the federal courts.”

Such a determination “would enable federal courts, through mere disagreement with the wisdom or utility of state policy, to overturn scores of state laws that afford government benefits or impose government costs on some (but not all) citizens. That result would undermine federalism, liberty, and our nation’s democratic processes.”

WND reported longtime conservative leader Pat Buchanan urged Christians to fight the “LGBT fanatics” who are demanding they betray their faith, even if it means civil disobedience.

In an interview with WND, Buchanan, the author of *Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025?* and other bestsellers, spoke on the controversy over the Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Buchanan forcefully condemned defeatism among social conservatives and rejected retreat or even compromise. Instead, the one-time presidential contender and Reagan White House aide urged Christians to put the laws of God above the laws of man.

“This battle can be won, but it cannot be won if we do not stand our ground and fight against this moral onslaught from the left,” he said. “The hill to stand on and fight on is the God-given natural right and the constitutional principle that people of faith may choose not to associate with those whose actions are abhorrent and whose lifestyle is insulting and offensive to that faith.”

Buchanan dismissed arguments that “gay”-rights activists are simply asking for political freedom or the same rights as any other citizen.

“The LGBT militants are not asking to be left alone,” he said. “They are demanding that we accept the morality of homosexuality and same-sex marriages and manifest that acceptance, under pain of law and sanctions, in our daily lives.”

Buchanan added: “As the Romans demanded of the Christians, the LGBT fanatics want us to burn incense to their gods. The answer is no. If it comes to civil disobedience, so be it.”

WND also reported a team of prominent Christian leaders worked on a statement to inform the public — including Supreme Court justices — that they will engage in civil disobedience rather than follow a ruling that establishes homosexual marriage in the United States. Among those leading the charge are Dobson, Rick Scarborough of Vision America Action, Mat Staver of Liberty Counsel, and James Robison of Life Today.

—Bob Uhrh
World Net Daily
April 22, 2015

In a stunningly blunt brief, a team of lawyers acting on behalf of a number of Christian and liberty-focused organizations has told the U.S. Supreme Court that to mandate same-sex marriage is to invite God’s judgment.

And that’s probably not going to turn out well.

The brief was filed by the William J. Olson law firm and the U.S. Justice Foundation on behalf of Public Advocate of the U.S., Joyce Meyer Ministries, the Lincoln Institute, the Abraham Lincoln Foundation, Institute on the Constitution, Conservative Legal Defense and Education Fund, and pastor

Chuck Baldwin.

The Supreme Court is to hear arguments later this month in a case coming from the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in which judges said state residents are allowed to define marriage in their state. The appeal to the Supreme Court contends barring same-sex marriage violates the U.S. Constitution.

Other briefs already have pointed out that marriage existed before any government, law, or constitution, so the judiciary doesn’t have the authority to allow people to simply change the definition.

The new brief goes much further.

“Should the court require the states and the people to ‘ritualize’ sodomite behavior by government issuance of a state marriage license, it could bring God’s judgment on the nation,” the brief warns. “Holy Scripture attests that homosexual behavior and other sexual perversions violate the law of the land, and when the land is ‘defiled,’ the people have been cast out of their homes.”

The brief cites Leviticus 18:22 and 24-30, a biblical passage that seldom finds its way into popular discourse.

Verse 22 states, “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.”

And the subsequent section warns against such defilement.

“If you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. ... Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them,” the Old Testament passage states.

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 15

The court filing, citing the book of 2nd Peter, continues: “Although some would assert that these rules apply only to the theocracy of ancient Israel, the Apostle Peter rejects that view: ‘For if God ... turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly’” (King James Version).

The brief says the “continuing application of this Levitical prohibition is confirmed by the Book of Jude: ‘Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.’”

The brief argues: “Whatever justification any judge may believe compels a state to define marriage to include same-sex couples, it is not found in the Constitution, nor is it based in any constitutional principles. For any judge to require a state to define marriage to include same-sex couples is an usurpation of authority that he does not have under the laws of man or God, and is thus illegal.”

Christian evangelist Franklin Graham defended traditional marriage on his Facebook page Tuesday.

“God’s Word doesn’t need a majority vote. God’s Word is true regardless of the winds of moral change, and we must stand up for biblical truth in the midst of a depraved society.”

WND previously reported some of the top names in Christian ministry — including the National Religious Broadcasters, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the Chuck Colson Center,

Southern Baptists, Albert Mohler, and Charles Stanley — asked the U.S. Supreme Court to protect marriage as God defined it.

Their brief also was filed in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case, where the 6th Circuit ruled residents of Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee can define marriage for themselves.

That brief was filed by Liberty Institute on behalf of the National Religious Broadcasters, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Samaritan’s Purse, In Touch Ministries, Pathway to Victory, The Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview, Dallas Theological Seminary, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Daniel L. Akin, Mark L. Bailey, Francis J. Beckwith, Robert A.J. Gagnon, Robert Jeffress, Byron R. Johnson, Eric Metaxas, Albert Mohler Jr., Charles F. Stanley, John Stonestreet, and Owen Strachan.

“In reaching its decision, this court should reaffirm that the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment protects religious dissenters who disagree with state-recognized same-sex marriage and to reaffirm the importance of free debate and free inquiry in this democratic republic,” the brief states.

Liberty Institute President Kelly Shackelford said religious liberty and free speech “are our first American freedoms.”

“We hope the Supreme Court will use this opportunity to affirm the Sixth Circuit and reaffirm the constitutional rights of all Americans to speak and act according to their beliefs,” he said.

When the Alabama Supreme Court prevented a federal judge from impos-

ing same-sex marriage there earlier this year, it argued the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of states to decide the issue when it overturned the federal Defense of Marriage Act in the Windsor case.

In its order, the Alabama court wrote: “An open question exists as to whether Windsor’s ‘equal dignity’ notion works in the same direction toward state laws concerning marriage as it did toward DOMA. The Windsor court stated that ‘the history of DOMA’s enactment and its own text demonstrate that interference with the equal dignity of same-sex marriages, a dignity conferred by the states in the exercise of their sovereign power, was more than an incidental effect of the federal statute.’”

The Alabama court noted that in Windsor, New York’s law allowed same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses.

“Thus, the ‘dignity’ was conferred by the state’s own choice, a choice that was ‘without doubt a proper exercise of its sovereign authority within our federal system, all in the ways that the Framers of the Constitution intended.’”

The Alabama court thus asked: Why, if New York could make that choice, would Alabama be deprived of exactly the same choice?

“The problem with DOMA was that it interfered with New York’s ‘sovereign’ choice,” the Alabama court said. “Alabama ‘used its historic and essential authority to define the marital relations’ and made a different ‘sovereign’ choice than New York. If New York was free to make that choice, it would seem inconsistent to say that Alabama is not free to make its own choice, especially given that ‘the recognition of civil marriages

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 16

is central to state domestic relations law applicable to its residents and citizens.”

The new brief makes several other points, including that the “constitutional foundation” for the “right’ to marry any person of one’s choice” is simply fabricated.

“The same-sex advocates have posited that their right to marry is an evolutionary one, having gradually emerged from the dark ages of the common law into the full bloom of a social science consensus of marriage equality,” the brief explained.

But to travel that path would be to “ignore what [the court] clearly acknowledged in *Marbury v. Madison* — that the power of judicial review is limited by the words of the Constitution, and by its original purpose — to secure the right of the people to limit future governments by principles designed to be permanent, not to empower this court to change the Constitution to fit the changing times.”

On the issue of homosexuality, the American people “have seen a flurry of judicial opinions with ‘no foundation in American constitutional law’ overturning laws which were ‘designed to prevent piecemeal deterioration of the sexual morality’ desired by the people.”

“These opinions together constitute what [was] described as ‘an act, not of judicial judgment, but of political will.’”

The problem is social science isn’t static, the document said.

“Prior to 1973, the American Psychiatric Association consensus was that homosexuality was a mental disorder. Now the consensus is that homosexuality is a positive virtue. Who knows what tomorrow may bring.”

The brief said today people are being told that marriage cannot constitutionally be based on “a divinely revealed moral foundation, but only according to the secular reasons of men.”

Beware, the brief says.

“The nation was not so founded. The Declaration of Independence, the nation’s charter, grounded our nation on the biblical ‘Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,’ embracing the principle that all men ‘are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,’ putting its case for liberty before ‘the Supreme Judge of the world,’ and acting in ‘firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence.’”

Such a change would require the “entire revision” of every family law in the country, closure of adoption agencies, and government persecution of those who preach against homosexuality, the brief warns.

And there would be no logical barrier to three men or three women marrying: “Why not an uncle and a niece as in *New York?*”

“The current accepted vernacular is said to be “lgbttqqiiaa+,” standing for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, intergender, asexual, ally, and beyond,” the brief notes. “Indeed, some consider pedophilia to be a legitimate sexual orientation, returning us to the pagan pederasty of ancient Greece.”

Nearly all orders for states to recognize same-sex marriage have come from federal judges. The judges have simply overridden the will of the state’s residents who voted, often overwhelmingly, to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

That was the scenario in California, where the fight over marriage ended up at the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled only on a technicality — the standing of those supporting the state constitution — and not the merits of the case.

Of the three dozen states that now have been forced to recognize same-sex marriage, only a handful enacted it through their own legislative or administrative procedures.

The Alabama court noted: “Only 12 states have accepted same-sex marriage as a result of choices made by the people or their elected representatives. The 25 other states that now have same-sex marriage do so because it has been imposed on them by a federal court.”

California Supreme Court Justice Marvin Baxter warned of the fallout from approving same-sex marriage in 2008.

Baxter said the court’s decision to overturn a “deep-rooted” standard for marriage opened a Pandora’s box.

“Who can say that, in 10, 15, or 20 years, an activist court might not rely on the majority’s analysis to conclude, on the basis of a perceived evolution in community values, that the laws prohibiting polygamous and incestuous marriages were no longer constitutionally justified?”

Two justices of the U. S. Supreme Court already have made a public stand for same-sex marriage, having performed ceremonies.

The actions by Elena Kagan and Ruth Ginsburg have prompted citizens groups to call for them to recuse themselves from the coming decision, but they have declined to do so.

Kagan performed a Sept. 21 same-

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 17

sex marriage for her former law clerk, Mitchell Reich, and his partner in Maryland. Ginsburg performed a same-sex marriage at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., in August 2013.

“Both of these justices’ personal and private actions actively endorsing gay marriage clearly indicate how they would vote on same-sex marriage cases already before the Supreme Court,” the American Family Association said.

—Bob Uhrh
World Net Daily
April 7, 2015

Education

KITTERY, Maine — Officials at Mitchell Primary School are apologizing after a book about a transgender child was read to most of the school’s K-3 students.

“We have a practice of if a topic is considered sensitive, parents should be informed,” Superintendent Allyn Hutton told SeaCoastOnline.com.

“In this situation, that didn’t happen. The whole culture at Mitchell School is about teaching tolerance and respect. The people presenting the lesson thought (the book) was one more piece of teaching that lesson.

“In retrospect, we understand that toleration is tolerating people of all opinions,” Hutton said.

Criticism flooded the district after Fox News host Sean Hannity posted about the lesson on his website, prompted by a Mitchell school mother who was angry she wasn’t given advanced warning that teachers were reading students the book *I am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, the

news site reports.

The book details the struggles of a child “with a boy’s body and a girl’s brain,” who eventually finds a doctor that tells the family the boy is a transgender.

From the book’s description on Amazon.com:

“From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl’s brain in a boy’s body. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn’t feel like herself in boys’ clothing. This confused her family, until they took her to a doctor who said that Jazz was transgender and that she was born that way. Jazz’s story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers.”

The mother wrote in to Hannity.com to express her frustration that she wasn’t given a heads up about the lesson, which was read out loud to students in 20 of Mitchell’s 22 classes.

“I feel like my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs were completely ignored. ... My right as a parent to allow or not allow this discussion with my child was taken from me,” the mother wrote. “It is very upsetting to me that I didn’t have an option at all.”

The mother said she tried to approach school officials about her concerns but was given the cold shoulder.

“When I spoke with the principal, he was very cold about it,” she said. “It’s amazing how thoughtless the school has been with this whole thing.”

Hannity contacted Hutton with specific questions about the lesson and received “an anemic response.”

“I have spoken with the principal at

Mitchell School who has been working with their guidance counselor to appropriately manage this situation and provide the appropriate information for the children at this age level,” Hutton said.

“All information has been posted on the school’s guidance blog for parent review.”

That blog, written by guidance counselor Dana Richerich, contends “some people may think primary school students are too young to worry about addressing issues surrounding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. Not so, experts say. It’s never too early to begin teaching children about respecting differences.”

“When our students and their parents have questions related to LGBTQ issues, our goal is to foster healthy dialog (sic), critical thinking, and inclusiveness. With that in mind, our conversations include all students and perspectives to create a safe and supportive school climate,” the blog reads.

The critical LGBTQ thinking, however, seems to have confused at least one student. The mother who wrote in to Hannity said her son’s now confused about whether he’s transgender.

The boy asked his mother if he’s transgender, or if he could be “a girl in love with a girl.”

“The mother says that up until the time the topic was brought up in school, her son had never said anything like that before,” according to Hannity.com.

“I was taken aback by it,” the mother said. “Being seven, once you put something in their mind they don’t forget so easily.”

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 18

—Victor Skinner
EAGNews.org
April 20, 2015

Judaism

Many know the old joke about the Jew stranded on a desert island. When he is finally discovered after many years, his rescuers find that he has constructed two synagogues. “One, I go to. The other? The other I would never set foot in.” Such is the attitude of most American Jews. They don’t know what they are missing.

In our little shtetl of Squirrel Hill in the eastern part of Pittsburgh, my family has the opposite situation. There are about 10 synagogues in our neighborhood — and we belong to four of them. Not only that: We set foot in all of them, even those to which we don’t belong.

Why pay for multiple synagogue memberships? One has a fabulous musical Friday night service, while another finishes early but still includes an inspiring Torah commentary. One is a kind of co-op with no rabbi and run by the congregants. Yet another has a super thumbprint cookie as part of its post-service repast.

The total tab for the memberships isn’t as onerous as might be expected: The reduced rate for an affiliate member — and who doesn’t love a deal? — is usually somewhere between \$180 and \$360 a year. My mother likes to joke that we are like social members at a country club where we can pray but we can’t golf.

One of the best perks is that if I decide to have a lazy Saturday morning and skip synagogue, each rabbi assumes

that I’m at one of the other synagogues.

The truth is that there are things about every denomination of Judaism that I like and want to support.

Reform services eliminate much repetition, incorporate more English, and use instruments, all of which make for a most moving prayer experience. Orthodox services usually have Torah commentaries that delve a bit deeper as the congregation is more Jewishly literate. The Lubavitcher service starts blessedly late at 10 a.m. and features a singing psychiatrist offering the weekly Torah commentary. Conservative services are a bit less formal, allowing me to sit with my daughters and to chat occasionally with other congregants during the service. Some are there to talk to God; I’m there to talk to Finkelstein.

I have friends at each shul — I’m happy to see them, but not every week, which also puts off the day when they finally get sick of my stories. When my political conservatism comes out during informal discussions after services, the reactions range from agreement at the Orthodox synagogue to stupefied curiosity at my Reform Congregation.

The multiple memberships were helpful when I once gave a weekly commentary at a synagogue that the rabbi found too controversial. I spoke about the false gods of many Jews, among them the Democratic Party platform. He insisted that synagogue wasn’t the place for contentious topics, and that there were other synagogue options for those that wanted to relate that week’s Bible reading to what was currently going on in the world. No hard feelings; I still make occasional contributions to the shul where I was shown the door.

One of the joys of traveling is seeing how other people worship. On vacation my daughter and I visited a shul in St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands that had sand on the floor to represent either the Israelite journey through the desert or an homage to the congregants’ Marrano Jewish ancestors who used sand to muffle the sounds of their secret prayer services during the Spanish Inquisition. They lived as Catholics publicly, but returned to their Judaism in their basements.

We happened to attend this Caribbean synagogue when the head of the women’s club was having an adult bat mitzvah. The highlight came during her speech, when she surveyed the crowd, appeared to do a mental calculation, and announced: “Family hold back!” The lox was delicious, and the whole experience was so great — how could we not join for the off-island rate of \$72 a year?

So if you are traveling to the ’burgh and looking for that special something from your synagogue experience: Ask and I’ll set you up. Just not during services. I’ll be busy talking to Finkelstein.

—Lou Weiss

The Wall Street Journal

April 23, 2015

Higher Education

Well-known author and scholar Heather Mac Donald recently visited UCLA to talk about the idea of “micro-aggressions” on college campuses, but before she even went there, she had a few words to say about the people running the place.

The launch of her talk Thursday began with outlining the proliferation of

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 19

the “massive diversity bureaucracy” at universities in general and UCLA in particular. She called out UCLA’s brand new Vice Chancellor for Equity and Diversity position by mentioning his salary alone could “pay ... for 12 under-privileged college students” to attend UCLA. She also chided UCLA Chancellor Gene Block for “selling out his faculty” and believing “that faculty need constant monitoring by a phalanx of chancellorettes and deanettes.”

She went on to say university administrators have cast the diversity issue as an “epidemiological miasma,” because they never mention the exact perpetrators but allege that it is everywhere.

And she was just getting warmed up.

Mac Donald, a self-proclaimed “secular conservative” who is well known for her articulation of conservative views on crime, proceeded to describe a litany of academic horrors at the public campus.

First, she recalled an incident in the UCLA Education School where professor emeritus Val Dean Rust was subject to protests because of alleged microaggressions in his editing of student papers a few years ago.

Among the 81-year old professor emeritus’s alleged transgressions were repeatedly requiring students to write “Indigenous” in lowercase form instead of uppercase, requiring students to capitalize “white” if they also chose to capitalize “black,” and requiring students to use the Chicago Manual of Style instead of the style standards of the American Psychological Association.

Mac Donald called the result of the situation — in which Rust was forced to stay away from UCLA for six months and the student protester who led the

cause was praised — as a “travesty of justice typical of this reign of terror.”

She mentioned that she herself interviewed many of Rust’s former students, and all of them had nothing but praise for the retired professor, who was well known for only wanting the best for his students. Her final verdict on the situation was that “UCLA grovels to protesters.”

She also cited a viral video that attacked UCLA for grievances against black students. Mac Donald said the way the university responded to the video, which was public praise, defies the true narrative of the situation.

The video implies that current black students are as equally oppressed as black students on campus in 1969. But Mac Donald highlighted that although only 3.8 percent of the university is black, only “5 percent of UCLA applicants are black” and only 7 percent of California is black. She said interviews with Professor Richard Sanders and Professor Tim Groseclose, UCLA whistleblowers on affirmative action, have revealed to her that “UCLA twists itself into knots to admit blacks.” She went even further by claiming that the “UCLA Law school admits blacks at 400 times what their proficiency would predict.”

In the closing moments of her lecture, Mac Donald implored students to reject what she calls a “cult of victimhood.” She encouraged students instead “get revenge by acing your chemistry exam.”

During the question and answers portion, Mac Donald fielded questions on a variety of topics, including the “campus rape epidemic.”

She questioned the validity of the rape epidemic, postulating that if such an epi-

demic existed at elite universities, then there would be a strong movement for single sex schools, but instead there is a push for coed bathrooms. In an additional remark, she said that the idea that women are only victims at universities “makes her want to throw up.” She cited the larger number of women at universities and the “frenzy to find qualified women and minorities” for professorships as evidence against such an idea.

The event drew attendance from both students and outside community members, and was organized by Bruin Republicans as part of their “Lectures on Conservative Thought” series. There were no protests of the talk.

—Jacob Kohlhepp
The College Fix
April 20, 2015

Minimum Wage

Just in time for Wednesday’s nationwide walk-out by fast-food workers to demand a higher minimum wage, Hillary Clinton emailed supporters this week to complain about pay differentials in American business. According to Reuters, Mrs. Clinton griped that “the average CEO makes about 300 times what the average worker makes.”

Many of these CEOs can only wish they were rewarded for their time as handsomely as Mrs. Clinton is. The expected 2016 Democratic presidential nominee has been paid as much as \$300,000 per speech.

Supporters of Wednesday’s worker rallies are hoping that Mrs. Clinton will endorse their demand for a \$15 minimum wage. That’s more than double the current federal minimum of \$7.25. And for the sake of argument, let’s assume that \$15 per hour is what event staff were paid at the venues where Mrs. Clinton spoke.

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 20

We'll also assume about 90 minutes of her time for a speech plus a question-and-answer period. Mrs. Clinton's fee in this scenario would be more than 13,000 times the earnings of the typical worker.

Not many CEOs can come close to scoring that high on the Hillary Ratio — the difference between the highest-paid worker and the typical worker in a given situation (or you could think of this as the gap between Clinton rhetoric and Clinton reality).

Mrs. Clinton said in her Sunday campaign video that the “deck is still stacked in favor of those at the top,” and she would know based on her taste for amenities and expenses along with her speaking fees. “She insists on staying in the ‘presidential suite’ of luxury hotels that she chooses anywhere in the world, including Las Vegas,” the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* wrote last August. “She usually requires those who pay her six-figure fees for speeches to also provide a private jet for transportation — only a \$39 million, 16-passenger Gulfstream G450 or larger will do.”

There's one more way she and husband Bill have stacked the deck in their favor. The average worker — if she could even dream of pulling down \$200,000 for an hour of work — would pay taxes on this income; Mrs. Clinton often doesn't.

By routing speaking fees through their family's foundation, the Clintons ensure that the money won't be taxed before it is directed to support foundation travel, meals, and promotional events, among other things. The highly compensated political influence peddlers at the top of the untaxed sector of the U.S. economy have found their champion.

— Editorial
The Wall Street Journal
April 14, 2015

Culture Wars

The Republican rout in the Battle of Indianapolis provides us with a snapshot of the correlation of forces in the culture wars.

Faced with a corporate-secularist firestorm, Gov. Mike Pence said Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act would not protect Christian bakers or florists who refuse their services to same-sex weddings. And the white flag went up again.

Politics follows culture. And the cultural revolution of the '60s is triumphant. Traditional Christianity, driven out of schools and the public square, is being whipped back into the churches and told to stay there.

America has gone over to the revolution.

Looking back, the sweep of the capitulation becomes stark.

First came the plea of atheists not to have their children forced to participate in prayers at school. Fair enough. Americans do not believe in compelling people to do as they disbelieve.

Then followed the demand that no child be exposed to prayers or religious books, including the Bible, nor have any day or week set aside as a holiday if connected to Christianity.

Out went Christmas and Easter. In came winter break and spring break. Coaches of high school teams were ordered to dispense with prayers before games. The coaches complied.

No matter what the majority wanted, the minority prevailed, thanks to a Supreme Court whose dictates were never challenged by democratically elected presidents or Congresses, nor ever de-

fied by a Christian majority.

In the sexual revolution, there came first the plea that abortion in extreme cases be decriminalized, then legalized, then subsidized, then declared a right. From crime to constitutional right in two decades!

Under Obamacare, Christian businesses must dispense abortion-inducing morning-after pills to employees.

On gay rights, first came the demand that a bar in Greenwich Village patronized by homosexuals be left alone by the cops.

Next came the demand that homosexuality be decriminalized, and then that this, too, be declared a constitutional right. And so it went.

Soon, same-sex marriages will likely be declared a right hidden in the Constitution and entitled to all the privileges and benefits accorded traditional marriages. Next, those who refuse to provide services to same-sex weddings will become the criminals.

Thus does biblical truth become bigotry in Obama's America.

And the process has been steadily proceeding for generations.

First comes a call for tolerance for those who believe and behave differently. Then comes a plea for acceptance.

Next comes a demand for codifying in law a right to engage in actions formerly regarded as debased or criminal. Finally comes a demand to punish any and all who persist in their public conduct or their private business in defying the new moral order.

And so it goes with revolutions. On the assumption of power, revolutionaries become more intolerant than those they dispossessed.

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel, continued from page 21

The French Revolution was many times more terrible than the Bourbon monarchy. The Russian Revolution made the Romanovs look benign. Fidel Castro's criminality exceeded anything dreamt of by Fulgencio Batista.

Looking back, one appreciates why we hear so often, "This isn't the country I grew up in." For it isn't.

But how did this moral-cultural revolution succeed so easily?

How was it that the Greatest Generation that won World War II let itself be intimidated by and dictated to by nine old men with lifetime tenure who had been elected by no one?

How did this happen in a republic where minority rights exist but the majority rules? Why did Middle America meekly comply and not resist?

By the mid-'50s and early '60s, black folks were engaged in civil disobedience, refusing to move to the back of the bus, sitting at segregated lunch counters, getting clubbed by cops, and marching for equal access to schools, hotels, motels, and voting booths.

And across the South, there was resistance to the civil rights revolution: Southern manifestos, governors standing in schoolhouse doors, federal marshals and federal troops called out.

Whatever side of the civil rights revolution one was on, folks on both sides fought for what they believed in.

Amazing. The old segregationists who, morally speaking, held a pair of deuces resisted. But a Christian majority that had the Faith that created Western civilization behind it rolled over and played dead.

Christians watched paralyzed as their country was taken from them.

What explains the rout in Indianapolis? The GOP simply cannot stand up to media denunciations as intolerant bigots, especially if the corporations upon which they depend threaten economic reprisals.

With the Democratic Party irretrievably lost, and the Republican Party moving to neutrality in the culture wars, traditionalists should probably take comfort in the counsel, "Put not your trust in princes."

When that father and daughter at Memories Pizza in Walkerton, Ind., said their religious beliefs forbade them from catering a same-sex wedding, they were subjected to a hailstorm of hate, but were also showered with \$840,000 from folks who admired their moral courage.

Religious folks who do not believe in collaborating with what they think is wrong should go forth and do likewise.

Courage as well as cowardice is contagious.

—Patrick J. Buchanan
Buchanan.org
April 10, 2015

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet

Becoming People of Virtue

This month, we are featuring a talk by Breakpoint co-host and Summit speaker John Stonestreet, given at a Summit Student Conference in 2014. John discusses why our culture so desperately needs people of virtue, and how we become this sort of person who can make a difference.

All right. Well, what I want to do now is move on into the final topic on this idea of the framework of freedom. It's kind of what I've been thinking about, the framework of freedom. The first day, what we said is that the idea of the image of God was the most transforming idea that entered this Western civilization and brought this idea of freedom because it taught that people were inherently free. They were responsible to God, not to the government primarily, and then this started to spread. It actually started to infect ideas of law and society and that sort of thing. So, this is the power of the idea of the image of God.

Then yesterday, we talked about how, in a Christian worldview, freedom comes not by escaping from ideas but what Bonhoeffer called *The Tempest of the Living*. That really, Christianity has got to be boots on the ground. In fact, I think it's true that Christians will be most free when we have our hands dirty working around in the real world.

The third thing that we need to talk about is the connection between freedom and the virtue. This goes back to something I mentioned yesterday, which is the idea of working at the middle of society. We said that right now, in the political framework, we have two choices. We can either have a

big government or we can have radically free individuals. These are the two choices we're given, right? But the problem is that you cannot have radically free individuals unless you have virtue.

The last three years of Chuck's life, any time I went with him somewhere to speak, he began his talk by asking this question, "I wanna begin by asking you this question. Can freedom be sustained in a place where virtue does not flourish?" Can freedom be sustained in a place where virtue does not flourish? One of the guys who wrote on this is a guy named Edmund Burke, and Burke said this. Here is how you put it, "Men of intemperate minds cannot be free because their passions forge their fetters." They become addicted, and therefore, they become slaves.

So, I want to talk about this idea, really, of virtue. And as we go through this, we are going to look at different synonyms for the idea of virtue and where this idea comes from. We don't talk a lot about virtue anymore especially as Christians. We've kind of wandered to the language of values. When we talk about it on the societal level, the level of values, it becomes very difficult to rise above this subjectivism or relativism because it's your values versus their values. Who are you to say that your values are better than my values? Who are you to say that there's something like traditional marriage values? That's just not the same thing as virtue. The question of virtue is not "what do I believe is right?" The question of virtue is "how do I become a good person?" How do I actually live a good life? How do I actu-

ally become the sort of person that I'm supposed to be?

I'll give you my last day of obligatory pictures of my children. You may have noticed they look a little bit alike. Did you notice that? Some people told us they're like those Russian tea dolls where you pull them out and there's another one. You pull them out. If some of you have different kids, even though they look alike, it's always potentially the case that even though they look alike, they're very, very different. My kids are that way. My oldest daughter is a type A. She's my firstborn. When she comes and sits on my lap, it's because she needs to notify me of the plans for the day, right? That's what she's supposed to do.

My youngest daughter, Allie — we're still trying to figure her out. She is a beast, so when she comes and sits on my lap, it's just really, I think, because she wants to hurt me. But my middle daughter, Anna, when she comes and sits on my lap, she is my lover. Does anybody have like a lover in your house? I mean, just love. Her sky is pink all the time. You know what I mean? She is just that kid. So when she comes and sits on my lap, it's just because she wants to sit on my lap, which is a lot of fun because I travel a lot and I try to take my daughters on dates. The good news is, when you have a lover, everything counts as a daddy day as long as you're together, right?

I realized this when she was three and I was in between trips. I had just a little bit of time so I grabbed her and took her with me to the dry cleaners

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 23

and it was great. One of the things that made it such a great daddy date was the lady that I paid for my clothes. She thought Anna was so cute that she took the dollar bill that I gave her and gave it back to Anna as a gift. That token of appreciation was like it just made Anna's day. She was so excited, except she was three. She didn't know what a dollar bill was so what she kept saying, "Daddy, the lady gave me a ticket. The lady gave me a ticket." I said, "A ticket it was." She goes, "A ticket!" She had no idea. It was just a ticket. So, we get home. She burst through the door, "Mommy, mommy, the lady gave me a ticket. The lady gave me a ticket."

Abigail, my oldest, is sitting there. She's five. She does know what a dollar bill was. She's our firstborn so she's our arbiter of justice in our household. You know what comes next, right? The green monster — she gets super-jealous because Anna has something that she does not. She got really upset, so we sat her down. Now, you listen, "Abigail, don't these things happen sometimes, too?" She's like, "Yes." "Don't you love your sister, Anna?" She had to think about it, but she said yes after a while. I said, "So, shouldn't you be happy when good things happen to someone you love?" She looked back at me and she expressed in this kind of one statement the struggle of humanity throughout all of history. Seriously, in all sincerity, she said, "Daddy," real serious. "I know I should be happy for Anna but I just can't."

That's the challenge, right? There are these times where we know what's right. There's the question of knowing what's right, and then, there's the question of actually what — doing and being and

that sort of thing. We haven't talked about this sort of thing for quite some time — this idea of what it means to be an integrated person, a person of integrity for a long time. So, what we do is we try to throw out substitutes. These are substitutes we see in the Christian space. These are substitutes we see in the secular space as well.

One way we try to make good people is let's just add more rules. If we give them more rules, then they'll become better people, right? I grew up in an environment like this. We had lots of rules. The idea was if we have long skirts and short hair, the girls won't get pregnant. But they did, right? Because they were ... never mind. They did, right? This is the idea of rules. The idea of rules is something like this. We need to protect ourselves from the bad influences out there. You know what I'm talking about? So, if we have high fences, it will protect us from them, but that's missing a very key thing, which is who's going to protect us from what? Us. Yes.

This is the thing we have to realize in the Christian worldview is that the problem is not just out there. The problem is also where? — right in here. Rules can only go so far. Now, I realized the impetus for rules because since the '60s, we've been getting rid of rules. Is that fair enough? We've done this in the name of "freedom." We talked a little bit about this already, but let me just put it this way.

One of the words that desperately needs to be redefined in our culture is the word "freedom" because in our culture, the word "freedom" means do whatever you want. Do whatever you want with no consequences and no accountability. Just do whatever you

want. I saw a couple of studies over the last couple of years on this, and I don't know how you measure this. But they said that there are more addicts in America than ever before. If you think about it, we're addicted to drugs. We're addicted to sex. We're addicted to alcohol. We're addicted to Facebook. We're addicted to what? Computer games — there you go. We're addicted to chocolate. We're addicted to coffee. I mean, that's OK because that one's mine.

What do you call someone who's an addict? An addict is someone who is really a slave, right? Our definition of freedom has made us slaves. That should tell us that we've got a bad definition of freedom. The definition of freedom that we have — that you could do whatever you want, however you want it, with whomever you want — is based on an idea that we don't actually have a design to us. If something is designed, it's most free not when it does whatever it wants. It's most free when it is what it's supposed to be. Right?

Think about it this way: This is a really a demonstration. But if I were a pilot and I went down and hopped in my plane at the local Colorado Springs Airport and I say, "I'm feeling really free. I don't wanna obey anybody's rules, so today, I'm not gonna fly my plane. I'm going to drive it." Right? I get to the end of the runway. I turn left. Who's going to stop me? I'm in a 747. I'm rolling down the street. I'm running over Hummers. It's kind of a fun day. Then I decide, "I'm gonna go see Pike's Peak."

It's not going to happen, right? Once you start getting into those mountain roads, my expression of freedom, actually, is going to enslave me. It restricts me. If I want to be free in a plane, I

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 24

should not drive it. I should fly it, because that's what it was designed to do. Conversely, by the way, a car is most free when you drive it, not when you fly it. OK? But that's really, actually, a good example, because the idea of our freedom when you fly off a cliff in a car, you might feel free for a couple of seconds. That's the idea that it's this feeling of euphoria, freedom that we have, that no rules apply to me and that sort of thing. This is really an epidemic, right?

Another strategy that we tried to use to get people to do the right thing is motivation. Motivation — motivation is great because motivation can get you started. The problem is motivation doesn't what? It doesn't last. It doesn't keep you going. I grew up in an environment where we did a lot of the real rallies or revival services and went to a lot of youth camps where there is a lot of rah-rah stuff behind it and we made these commitments. "If you are gonna follow Jesus, are you gonna get up at 6 a.m. every morning for the rest of your life and read your Bible?" We'd say yes. Anybody else make that commitment? How long did that last? ... That's the thing. Motivation got us going, but motivation just didn't keep us going, right? So, how are we going to actually be the right person when there's nobody to kick us in the behind and send us in the right place? There's also the idea of incentives. Incentivize good behavior, and I believe in this. I actually believe in the strategy here for at least some good behavior, like incentivizing or bribery really works in potty-training. It does. It sure does, doesn't it, especially with girls. I don't know about boys. I've never tried to potty-train boys. I hear that has something to do with Cheerios,

but with girls, what you do is you do the potty-dancing and you give them a Skittle. It works. It's unbelievable. It becomes a really fun time because girls want to celebrate not only when they go potty but when anyone goes potty. So, if you have company over or you're in an airport, it just really spruces up the day.

But what if, like, 15 years from now, I brought my daughter up in front of you and I said, "Hey, this is Abigail and she'll go potty if you give her a Skittle." You think to yourself, "Wait a minute. Something's really wrong." But if you actually think, "What's going on here?" here's what's going on. If that was true of somebody when they're 23, it's not because they're potty-trained. It's because they're a Skittles junkie. Do you see what I'm saying? It's because they're so addicted to the incentive, they're not actually a good person. They only want it because there's something in it for them.

This is one of the things. If we just try to incentivize good behavior, incentivize good behavior in ourselves or in our kids or in the next generation or in our employees or in our society, then what we do is we create a generation of junkies. When culture shifts — which culture has — so that the incentives now are not for good behavior, the incentives are for bad behavior, right? This is one of the things that Chuck talked an awful lot about. The incentives that we're dealing with now is almost everything in our life incentivizes us to immediate gratification. The quickest way to lose a society is a society that lives for immediate gratification.

This is one of the most important aspects of family. This is what Glenn Stanton and I talked about on Monday is that when I'm in a family, I don't think

about today all the time. I also think about what — tomorrow. I think about, how am I going to have a good life for my kids and my grandkids? Every time I spend a dollar these days, I'm thinking, "I've got to pay for three weddings one day." Yes. You see what I mean? This is the thing about thinking long-term thoughts, and incentivizing right now is working against us.

Of course, the liberal answer to everything is to educate it. If there's crime, let's educate it. If there's poverty, let's educate it. If there's a lack of education, let's educate it. Anything we can educate, let's educate.

Education is important and education is good. Sometimes the lack of a virtue is because of the lack of education, but does education deliver good people? No. Dale Moody said if you take someone who steals railroad tires and you can give him an education, all you've done is teach him to steal the entire railroad the next time. Education can make us a whole lot better at being bad.

There's a great quote in one of my favorite education books. I mentioned it yesterday called *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, in which a Duke University student is quoted as saying, "We've got no philosophy of what it is that we want by the time somebody graduates. The so-called curriculum is a set of hoops that somebody says students ought to jump through before graduation." Do you ever feel like you're just jumping through hoops? When you were in college, did you ever feel you were just jumping through some of these hoops?

Listen to the last line, "No one seems to have asked, how do people become good people?" About 10 years ago, two

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 25

sociology students who were master's level students started a movement called the Quarter Life Crisis. Have you heard of the Quarter Life Crisis? It's like, why have a midlife crisis when you can have one at 25? The Quarter Life Crisis was started by two 20-something sociology master students who heard the song by John Mayer called "Why Georgia Why" where he talks about having a quarter life crisis. They said, "Yeah, that's us, too." They just study it and they build out this whole movement. They started a website at Community Form, and at one point there was well over 100,000 different people there. Actually, 20-something is going: I've got a great education and I'm miserable. I've got a great job and I'm miserable.

In other words, because they knew a whole bunch of what's but they didn't know why, they didn't have a reason for what they were doing. They didn't have a vision for what they were doing. Postman, in his book *Technopoly*, says that the most important thing educators can give is not a bunch of disconnected facts but it's a coherent vision of what life is all about. That's the power of worldview teaching. That's why we do what we do at Summit.

Then, of course, there's the self-actualization motto of getting good people. This was what Oprah tried for years, right? Just look inside, look inside, find yourself, look inside, find yourself. I once had a lady on an airplane say, "John, all the truth is inside you. Just look inside." I said, "Well, what if I look inside and it looks confusing and dark and I don't know where to go." She's like, "Just look deeper." [chuckle] That's the thing. Just look inside, look inside,

look inside.

This idea of self-actualization and finding yourself. My friend Mike Miller at the acting institute was part of a project — so was Glenn — that Chuck put together called Doing the Right Thing. They were talking about looking inside. Mike Miller said, "We've told all these people to go find themselves. What if they find themselves and they're jerks?" [chuckle] This is a good question, right? What if we look inside and the people we find, there's a problem with it.

The problem with just telling people to find themselves is that there's no fixed reference point outside of themselves by which they can actually base where they should go. This is why a compass works, right? A compass works not because it points you in the direction you should go. Don't just follow the arrow. A compass always points where? — north because there's a fixed, magnetic North Pole. It's stable. It's solid. That's where it goes. Once you know something fixed, you can find yourself outside of there.

Listen. For example, let's say, if you're out there hiking in the wilderness and you have a compass and it always points at you no matter where you turn, right? That's not going to work out very well, is it? One of the things that helps me and I would really recommend it is reading biographies, just a little bit. No one's going to do a session to talk about a lot of Christians who made a difference around the world in different contexts. I think that's really helpful to know because I think, at least in terms of the culture we're moving into and are really already in, if we want to actually preserve freedom, we're not going to be able to do it without virtue.

If we want virtue, we're not going to be able to do it with any of these sorts of anemic solutions. I think you can see that most clearly when you compare our culture with the sort of lives that people have lived throughout history that have made a significant difference. I am a big fan of Eric Metaxas' two biographies. One is on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The other is on William Wilberforce. Two great men who made a big difference in their times.

One of the reasons I think you should read these guys is because their stories are fantastic. Eric is a phenomenal writer, too, if you've ever read. How many guys have read *Bonhoeffer*, by the way? OK. Anybody read *Amazing Grace*, too? A handful of you. He's got a new one called *Seven Men*. Anybody read *Seven Men*? Yes. You should pick up these things because we need to read about these guys.

Eric has this brilliant way of putting things. In fact, in each of the biographies of Bonhoeffer and Wilberforce, he's got this amazing way of summing up their lives in a sentence or two, or a paragraph or two. With Bonhoeffer, it actually comes at the very beginning of the book. It's a strange way to begin a book because he begins it at Bonhoeffer's memorial service. The reason he does it is because that was a strange event. Bonhoeffer's memorial service was, first of all ... the first thing was that his parents did not know for sure that Dietrich Bonhoeffer had died, actually, in the concentration camp. There were rumors going around that he had been released. Of course, the communication lines were decimated. They received confirmation about it when an announcement was made about the

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 26

memorial service and it was announced across the BBC that it was going to be hosted by the Bishop of London. Now, put that together.

That's the other strange thing. Here, you have the Bishop of London holding a memorial service for a German right after World War II and it was going to be broadcast across the British radio. You see how weird that was? Eric describes this, this way. He says, "As the couple," talking about Bonhoeffer's parents, "took in the hard news that the good man who was their son was now dead, so too many English took in the hard news, that the dead man who was a German was good. Thus did the world again begin to reconcile itself to itself."

With Wilberforce, that one little kind of line summing up his life comes near the end of the book. We all know Wilberforce's main accomplishment was what — abolition of the slave trade. Right. But he said that God has given him two great aims, the abolition of the slave trade. Anybody know what the second one is — the reformation of manners.

It's interesting because he's not talking about table manners. No one's saying "Bless you" when someone sneezes anymore. This must change. For him, it was the reformation of virtue. If you know anything about pre-Victorian England, it was just a bad place. It was estimated that 25 percent of women in London were prostitutes at the time. Children were being chained to the machines, to be forced to work in the factories. Public drunkenness was very common. Read Charles Dickens. He's writing about this time period in a lot of his books. I mean, it's just an awful, awful place to live, especially if you were

a woman, a child, an immigrant, or an animal. It just was bad.

So, this is what Wilberforce is trying to change. If I know what era in British history they entered after Wilberforce and the Clapham Group in their influence, it was the Victorian era. What's that era known for? It's actually known for virtue. I'm not saying it was perfect, but the police force was strong. Women's virtue was protected. Children were unchained from the machines and sent to the schools. The point is, really incredible. We often say, "Well, yeah. He accomplished the abolition of the slave trade." Yes, and also the reformation of manners.

At the end of his life, he had one more fight. He had a political fight he had to do, and it took him to the home of the Duchess of York. I don't remember all the details, but there on the floor of the Duchess of York's home was a little six-year-old girl who was playing there. Even though Wilberforce is in very bad, frail health — if you saw the movie, they picture that pretty well — he gets down on his hands and knees and he sits on the floor with the six-year-old little girl and they play together for a while. Her name was Victoria. She was the future queen of England.

This is the story. This is the way Eric tells it. He said, "And so here on the miniature plain of the carpet in a prophetically fitting tableau of domestic happiness, the child who would lend the future era her name met the man who would lend it his character." If you go to Westminster Abbey right now and you step across the grave of Charles Darwin and David Livingston and all the other random people that are buried there, you go to the epitaph

of Wilberforce. It says something very similar, "He left his character as a mark on his times."

Here's the other thing why I appreciate so much putting Wilberforce and Bonhoeffer side by side. Because if you look at it, Wilberforce was given two great aims. He went after those two great aims. He built up networks of powerfully influential people. He mobilized movements. He started voluntary associations. He really built up middle society, by the way. Wilberforce's change has happened not because he changed it from the top down, but because he changed it from the middle out. So, he really accomplished his two great aims.

Bonhoeffer had a great aim, too. Bonhoeffer's aim from the very beginning was to stop Hitler. He started to protest against Hitler from the very beginning. When Hitler announced himself as the Fuhrer, especially when he said, "I'm also the Fuhrer of the church," Bonhoeffer just started resisting, started an underground seminary, started to build the Ecumenical Movement, and you know what? None of it worked.

He got to the point where he joined the plot to assassinate Hitler, and all three attempts what — failed. It's really strange when you put these two guys side by side because Wilberforce won. Bonhoeffer lost. Nothing Bonhoeffer tried to stop Hitler succeeded. The only thing that stopped Hitler was his own suicide attempt or his move to Brazil, depending on the Fuhrer conspiracy theories.

Here's the thing. Bonhoeffer wins — excuse me — Wilberforce wins. Bonhoeffer loses. Both men found their cultures at the edge of what we

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 27

might call the moral abyss. Wilberforce works and he sees his culture spiral back upwards. Bonhoeffer works and he sees his culture collapse. Which man was a failure — neither man. Wilberforce changed his culture. Bonhoeffer has brand new [influence] right now, doesn't he?

Here's the thing. Western civilization is on the edge of the moral abyss. I would agree. We're running out of gas. We're cashing checks. We're not putting any deposits back into our cultural capital. Pretty soon, it's going to run out of steam. But it doesn't change the sort of people we need. If culture collapses, we have to rebuild it. You know what? We need people with virtue. If we're going to recover culture, we need people with virtue. Does that make sense?

This is what's so important for us to remember — that the cultural story is not the real story of the world. The real story of the world is that Christ has risen from the dead. So, if our cultural story recovers — which, God help us, I hope it does — or if our cultural story is going downhill fast and we're going to have to rebuild it from the ground up, you know what? The truth is Christ has risen from the dead and we are still responsible for the times in which we live.

The question is, how do we become this sort of people who can make a difference? Dallas Willard referred to this thing as people with a well-ordered heart. So, if we talk about synonyms for virtue, we could also add this idea of a well-ordered heart. Here's what he means. He says, "Those with a well-ordered heart are people who are prepared for and capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are

good and right."

Have you ever met someone who's just a victim of their times, a victim of their life? Life happens to them, right? Culture happens to them. This is what Scripture calls somebody just being blown in the wind, right? What Willard is saying: Listen. Those with a well-ordered heart ... and by the way, Proverbs says, "Above all else, guard your heart — heart." By the way, the heart is not your emotions. That's not what it's talking about.

The heart is your center. It's the place where your thoughts and your will and your emotions all meet. It's your operating system. It's your CPU in the center of you. Scripture says, "Guard that." You can lose it through your mind. You can lose it through your emotions. You can lose it through bad habits. The Scripture says, "Guard that," right? This is what Willard is saying.

The question is, how do we have a well-ordered heart so that if we get smacked upside of the head or patted on the back, we still know how to respond, right? If culture goes our way, if culture goes another way, we still know how to respond. How do we, as the church ... This is something along the lines, I think, of what Jeff talked about the other night when he talked about not being fragile.

Christians are incredibly fragile. Where is that character going to come from to do what's right? It's a different age. I had two girls come up to me after a talk I was giving in South Carolina a couple of years ago. They came up and they said, "Hey, we're 20-something and we're gonna be nurses. We wanna know what we should know to be a good Christian nurse. What are these things

we need to know?"

So, I went into it. I've been asked questions similar to that before. Usually, I would say, "You know what? You need to determine the ethical questions around the beginning and the end of a life. You need to know what life is and what death is so that you can make these tough bio-ethical decisions." I said that, but this time I said something else first. I kind of caught myself later. Because the first thing that came out of my mouth when these girls said, "What do I need to do to be a Christian and a nurse?" I said, "The first thing you need to know is you need to just know, in your mind right now, that if you're gonna be a nurse in the years to come, you are going to have to choose in your life between your career and your convictions."

It is foolish for us to raise a generation that isn't prepared to make that choice. They will have to make that choice. I cannot think of a single vocation, a single occupation, where the cultural pressure will not face them in that sort of way. It's just the reality of it. So, how do we raise a generation that can do what's right? Edmund Burke called it the moral imagination. I love that phrase. Because, really, it kind of gets to the part of those who can imagine what's right.

We don't always know what's right, but we just have the gut instinct to do what's right. Think about it this way. Dick, imagine if your mom and dad sat you down, right? When were you born? What year were you born? Share with us. Don't be ashamed. '45. Yes, you said that with gusto and pride! So, in the middle of the '50s and they sat you down and they said, "OK, Dick.

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 28

We're gonna walk through all the ethical dilemmas that you're gonna face in your life and exactly what you should do in each dilemma, right?" It would be crazy. They couldn't even possibly imagine it because this was pre-Internet days, just by a couple of decades, right? Yes. Right.

There was no sense of radical Islam. There was no sense of this postmodernism. The sexual revolution hadn't happened in full form yet, right? I mean, all of these things. In other words, we can't do that with our kids either. The question is, how do we become the sort of people who, even if we don't know the answer, we still have that moral gut?

Now, I want to go to two people. We've got virtue. We've got a well-ordered heart and we've got the moral imagination. I want to go to two people who, I think, contribute to our understanding of this in a pretty powerful way. The first one is Aristotle. Aristotle wrote one of the earliest books in Western Civilization on ethics. It was interesting because he wasn't comparing ethical theory. Anybody here took an ethics class in college or an ethics class in seminary grad school? Three of us. That's the problem with this group right here. Yes. If you were like me, our ethics classes were "here are seven ethical theories and here's how you compare them." Back here, Aristotle's not writing a book on the different ethical theories.

What Aristotle was doing is he's trying to help people become good citizens. For Aristotle, most of it landed around the idea of habits. He said, "So, it is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earliest age. It makes a vast difference, or rather, all the difference in the world." A lot of our life is habits, right? I'm seeing

this with my kids. I don't think about brushing my teeth every morning and every night. I just do it because it's now a habit. It's not a habit with my kids. I got to remind them every morning and every night, right?

When I tie my shoe, the rabbit knows exactly where to go. It's really kind of fun. The rabbit just [goes] around the tree into the hole, right? When my daughter ties her shoe, her rabbit goes everywhere because her rabbit has not been properly trained and habituated. When we go to work in the morning, we don't think about it. We just turn into Starbucks. It's not our fault. It just happens to us, right?

This is the power of habit. In fact, there was a book two years ago written and called *The Power of Habit*. They estimated that about 50-60 percent of your day is just habitual — just things that you do in routine. I think there are a lot of things. I think there's something very, very important to this. Aristotle believed that we are what we do. We are what our habits are. I think there's a lot of truth to this. I'm going to nuance in a little bit.

But let me give you five categories of habits, five categories of things we don't often think of as being habits but they are very key to virtue and, I think, in particular as we're trying to raise the next generation. The first one is this, what are my loves? We often do not think of loves as being habits. We think of loves as being emotions or feelings. But loves are much more habitually cultivated than they are not, right? Another way to ask this question is, with what or with whom am I habitually most intimate? What gets the real me? The loves is the question of intimacies, right?

What do I choose to give myself to? You can see how much loves have been corrupted with this statistic. I'm not trying to be crude with this. I had no idea what to do with this, OK? I'm doing the research for this book and there's been this whole talk about Japan. Do you know that 25 percent of young men in Japan, 25 percent, from 16- to 24-year-olds, 25, have no interest in sex? Who are these boys? What's that? Yes, yes. I'm not talking about 2 percent — 25 percent. The number of women are even much, much higher. Do you know what the Japanese birth rate is? Nowhere close to reproduction, OK? Why is that? One of the theories is because this is the generation that has been intimate with the screen their whole life.

Here's another stat. I don't endorse this idea of [inaudible] and what we choose to habitually love. Viagra found that they had a whole new demographic to sell to that they had never planned on when they made up the Viagra pill, and that is 20- and 30-something year-old young men. Why? Because these young men have been so used to being sexual in front of a computer that when another human being is in the room, they actually cannot perform. It's just kind of depressing, isn't it? This is how our love shapes us.

Augustine is the guy who talks most about loves — St. Augustine. Augustine said two things about loves, and these are really helpful for me. Number one is, for someone to love well, they have to love the right things, right? This is the thing we're seeing, I think, in Japan and with young men is that they love machines more than they love people. They haven't been taught to actually be intimate and love and be relationally

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 29

proper with people. People are objects that are actually experienced through objects and the list just goes on and on and on. So, love the right things.

The second thing is love things in the right order. You have to have the proper order of your loves. I love my kids' happiness. I do. I love it when they get happy. I did it this year. We did it. I had two trips down in Florida. We have three little girls. You know what happened, don't you? What happened? We did it. We went to Disneyworld. I am still tired from that, those two days! It's just exhausting but I tell you what.

The first day, you get online. You're no good at Disney without a plan. So, I printed out somebody's plan, how to get through Disney in a day. I had it. Go to Enchanted Tales with Belle. We booked it to the back of the park, right? We go through Enchanted Tales with Belle. They were in this room with this mirror. I think it's just kind of a fancy, magic mirror sort of thing. Then, all of a sudden, the mirror opens and my little girl turned around to me with a look of Disney like she could be on the commercial. You know what I mean? Like, "Huh, how did they do that?" That was it. That was worth it. That was worth all the exhaustion. It wasn't quite worth the money yet, but it was worth the exhaustion.

I love my kids' happiness. It gives me great joy, but I also love my kids' holiness, right? Have you ever met somebody whose parents love their happiness more than their holiness? Have you ever flown beside that kid on an airplane? OK, there we go. We're on the same page. That's the importance of the order of loves.

Secondly, what are my longings?

What am I longing for? The question of loves is the question of imagination. The question of longings is the question of my aim. When I talk about longings, I'm talking about ... Sorry. The question of loves is a question of intimacy. The question of longings is a question of imagination. Here's what we mean by longings. When we sit in bed at night and we imagine the sort of life we want to have, what world is it?

Remember when Jesus said, "If a man looks lustfully at a woman, in his heart, he is already what?" Because he's already set his imagination away from the things he's responsible to something he's not responsible for. You know this as well as I do — we cultivate these imaginations. We cultivate them. What is it that I long for? What is it? Because my longing ends up aiming my loves, my longing will reshape our loves, and these are things. There are times we have to chasten our longings. It's wrong for me to do this. What I need to long for is this instead.

Third, what are my loyalties? The question of loves is intimacies. The question of longings is imagination. The question of loyalties is commitment. Anybody here too busy like me? OK. So, this is good because it gives us a built-in excuse, right? Whenever anyone asks us to do something that we don't want to do, what do we say? "I just don't have enough time. I don't have enough money." But, it's amazing how we always find the time and the money for what we really want to do. Is that fair enough?

So, this is the question of loyalties. What makes us commit? What makes us commit? Let me bring this down to something that's really been convict-

ing with me. If you're interested at all in the tech world, in the computer world, in the Internet, virtual realities, cell phone, iPhone world, you need to look up the work of a woman named Sherry Turkle, T-U-R-K-L-E. Sherry Turkle is a psychiatrist at MIT, and she has been wrestling since the '80s with what computers are doing to us as humans.

In the early days, she was an early adopter. She loved technology. She thought it was great. She predicted things like what the Internet would bring to us. It's amazing stuff that she's done. In the latter years, her last book is written in 2011, and now, she's no longer optimistic. She's pretty pessimistic. I think it's because she has a teenage daughter. Her last book is called *Alone Together*. That says it all, doesn't it?

Because our loyalties are fostered. Let me tell you how it affects me. If you would ask me right now, "Hey, John. Which do you love more, your daughters or your cell phone?" What would I say? Daughters. If you took me out in the ocean on a boat and you said, "OK. One of them's gotta go in the water. You got to throw over one of your daughters or your iPhone." Which one is going to go in the ocean? I have said that to the students this summer. They were like, "Can your daughter swim?" I was like, "Come on." Boneheads.

But, I would throw the iPhone in every time, right? But every day that I go home, after being on this thing all day, it sits there and it buzzes or it dings or something and I make a decision. I make a decision whether to put this down and pick up my kid or put my kid down and pick up my phone, right? You see what it's doing? This thing has cultivated loyalty from us. You know that

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 30

this can happen? Honestly, if we watch too much, I think, kind of crazy, angry conspiracy theory sort of things — that the world's going to come to an end — it cultivates a loyalty to that stuff. So, we have to find a conspiracy everywhere we look. If you're not a little bit conspiratorial these days, you're not paying attention, but do you understand what I'm saying? It can cultivate a loyalty to despair instead of a loyalty to hope and things like that.

Fourth, what are my labors? This is just how hard do we work at what? What gets my efforts and my energies? Scripture says it's a shame for someone to win the whole world and lose his own soul. Vince Lombardi said, "I'm not afraid of losing. I'm afraid of winning at something that doesn't matter," right? What's worth the time, energy, and attention?

The fifth one is just this, what are my liturgies? Liturgies is, obviously, a loaded word maybe for some of us who grew up in particular denominations or Christian expressions or so on, but all that means is that what are these rhythms of life that we have. Liturgy is a rhythm of worship, and you know what? Every denomination has liturgy. If you don't have any other liturgy except using just as I am and having [inaudible] at the end, that's a liturgy because it cultivates you. I grew up in an environment like that. What it taught me — and non-intentionally and no one would ever say that — but what it taught me was the time that God speaks to you is at the end of the service with every head bowed and every eye closed.

So, I started to think that would be the moment I was most tense because I like [inaudible] doesn't speak to me

because I don't want to change. Then, it didn't. I was like, "Sweet. I'm off of another hook. I'm off the hook for another week." Right? Nobody would have ever said that, but this is the sort of things that it cultivates. We do liturgies all the time, I think, in our society. Isn't it bizarre? Isn't it bizarre that the day after we spend giving thanks as a nation and eating a lot of turkey and playing football, we then trample security guards for flat-screen TVs? You might see the irony in this. Why? Because there's a cultural rhythm that takes place called the Christmas season.

I think one of the deepest liturgy changes that needs to happen for Christians is for us to remember to get out of that consumeristic Christmas thing. This is why the ancient church gave us Advent 40 days to prepare for this. You need to prepare for this. Here's what it is. These rhythms make us convinced that consumerism and the ability to buy stuff in order to make us happy is actually true. There's a whole lot of Christians that decorate their consumerism with a Christmas Eve candlelight service. What would it be like to renegotiate our liturgies so that we're in just a different rhythm?

This was the idea, by the way, behind the church calendar is that there's a different rhythm. There's a different rhythm to the world. There's a different rhythm. These rhythms are very powerful because we start believing and seeing and becoming something that we don't want to do. You know what? This is absolutely true of our students. We want our students to be culturally engaged. We don't want them to be culturally captive. We've got to help them get into different rhythms.

We have a generation of students, for example, who have been so liturgized into life on a cell phone. They don't know how to look people in the eye and have a good, honest conversation, but you know what? None of their peers do, too. So, here's the upside. If we can teach them in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, and in the land of the yuppie young leaders where no one looks you in the eye, look your employer in the eye and you'll get a promotion. You see what I'm saying?

This is low-hanging fruit, seriously, in a land where a generation of young people are being cultivated to be eternal adolescents. You know the National Economy of Sciences defines adolescence as the age between 11 and 30, right? It's just this extended adolescence. Here's what's great. If we as Christians were gloomy about our culture, if we as Christians can liturgize our kids to skip adolescence and just jump right into becoming an adult, like they do in every other country in the history of the world, it's really true. In most countries in the history of the world, you went from being a kid to being a what — adult. You say, "Well, now teenagers have these brain things that aren't there." Yes, that's true. That's true. Neurologists have looked into the teenage brain and not all the connections are there, and it's the connections that actually help you stop doing risky behavior and things like that.

But you know what? Cultures actually just got that, and so they treated these young people as adults, and you know what that meant? The brain things were connected. If you treat 13-year-olds and 30-year-olds as adolescents, the connections are never made. So, these liturgies,

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 31

I think, really matter.

Now, I think the habit thing is a really helpful thing. I think Aristotle brings a lot to it. I'll give you a quick lesson, maybe, a quick hand, on how to use these five questions. First of all, spend 45 minutes by yourself in prayer before God and just answer the questions. Secondly, go to someone you know and you trust — your spouse, your mentor, your friend — and say, “Answer these questions for me. What do you think I really love more than anything else?” Scripture says faithful are the what of a friend? — the wounds of a friend. There's a lot of good stuff. If you want to be wise, you walk with the wise, right? Iron sharpens what? Iron, right? This is the way to do this.

Secondly, if you have kids, this can be great discipleship stuff. Honestly, I know there's some worldview test out there that you can take. I really don't buy many of them because you know what? We have a generation now of kids. This is the new stage of worldview and apologetics development. We have a bunch of Christian school and home-schooled kids who bought into apologetics and worldview and that sort of stuff, and you know what? They know how to answer all the questions. A lot of them do, but they're addicted to porn. They're jerks. They don't know how to love each other. They don't know how to care for each other. They don't know how to talk to people like human beings. It's got to be at both ends. So, this is a great, I think, mentoring thing for your kids. Do it with them.

OK. Let me give you the one last voice in this matter because I don't think habits get us near enough to where we need to go. Plus, I'm John

Stonestreet. Someone will tell you about C.S. Lewis. OK. That's the way it goes. C.S. Lewis said for every new book, read three old ones, and I say for every new one, read three C.S. Lewis books. OK. There you go.

Lewis wrote a phenomenal book. How many guys have read Lewis, at least, something? You guys have read *Mere Christianity*? All right. You guys have not read *Mere Christianity*? OK. Let's give them a dirty look. I was kidding. How about *Abolition of Man*? Anybody read *Abolition of Man*? Here's your next reading assignment. Ready? Read *Abolition of Man*. It's a toughie but you can do it, all right? If nothing else, Google “Men Without Chests.” “Men Without Chests” is the first chapter of *Abolition of Man* and you can actually get it on the Internet.

“Men Without Chests” is one of Lewis' I think, best articles. By the way, *Abolition of Man* is one of those rare books that's far more true today than it's ever been. It's just amazing how much this book speaks to where we're at. In “Men Without Chests,” Lewis is complaining about the British educational system because he says the British educational system fills kids' heads with knowledge and their bellies with passion, but it does nothing to cultivate the chest. What on earth is he talking about?

He's also going back to Aristotle because Aristotle said that the head was the seat of the reason and the belly is the seat of the passion. What it means to have a good citizen is for the people whose heads govern their bellies, because you don't want people whose bellies govern their heads, right, so the heads govern their bellies. Aristotle

thought you could get that through the cultivation of good habits. Now, I think that helps, but have you ever been in a real big battle between your belly and your head? Who usually wins? The belly wins, right?

Mike Miller says this in the film series. They were talking about *Abolition of Man*. Mike said, “Imagine that the belly is like an 800-pound gorilla and it's down there going, “Feed me. Feed me. I want, I want, I want. Feed me. Feed me.” The head is an 80-pound professor with a bow tie and he's up there going, “You know we ought not do this because...” Who wins between the gorilla and the nerdy professor? Right. There you go. The gorilla wins every time.

So, what Lewis said is you have to have a chest. Now, what does he mean by this? Here's a line from “Men Without Chests.” He said, “It still remains true that no justification of virtue will enable a man to be virtuous.” In other words, just because you know the right thing doesn't mean you will what? Do the right thing. Without the aid of what? — trained emotions. Let's add that to the list. You want one of the most countercultural things that you can influence the next generation in, that would separate them in a leadership capacity from their peers, is you help them realize that they're not a victim of their emotions.

C.S. Lewis said this. He said, “The most dangerous ideas in a society aren't the ones that are argued but the ones that are assumed.” The most assumed idea in our culture is if I feel like it, I have no choice. I must obey. Lewis says you can train your emotions. We tell the students that. Listen. We're all going to make a decision. The decision is this, and by the way, it's not a decision you

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 32

make once. It's a decision you got to make over and over and over. Either you will allow your feelings to reshape your understanding of truth, or you will allow truth to reshape your feelings. "Without the aid of trained emotions, the intellect is powerless against the animal organism. The head rules the belly through the chest. It may be even said that it is by this middle element that man is man, for by his intellect, he is mere spirit, and by his appetite, mere animal."

Here's the other reason I love Lewis. If you read him and you have a hard time with him, you could always go to Narnia. No, you can. If you try *Mere Christianity* and it bogs you down, *The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe*, OK? Same thing. Read "Men Without Chests." If you struggle with it, you go to Narnia. You go to the *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, which has one of the best opening lines of any books in history where it says, "His name was Eustace Clarence Scrubb and he almost deserved it," right? So this is Eustace. Who is Eustace? Eustace is the boy without a chest, right? He is the boy and we meet him.

You know this because just like in "Men Without Chests," Lewis complains about the British educational system. As soon as you meet Eustace, Lewis complains about the British educational system. Eustace is the snotty-nosed, yuppie little kid who calls his parents by their first name because they've been taught that he's equals with them. He knows lots of facts, but it's very useless, like he knows all the stuff about boats but he doesn't know anything about being on a boat or helping on a boat or living with other

people on a boat. That's really unfortunate because he gets sucked through the picture in the story and he lands in an ocean and the only thing nearby to pick him up is a boat.

My favorite part of this is when Lewis talks about how he never learned about dragons. Lewis just thinks this is dreadful. What are they teaching these kids these days if they're not teaching them about dragons? And in another place, I think it was Lewis, I think [inaudible] says something similar. He said that little boys need to know about dragons for two reasons. They need to know that dragons actually exist and they need to know that dragons can be beaten. But Eustace doesn't know anything about dragons, which is unfortunate, because his heart, his longings, his liturgies, his loyalties, have been set in such a direction that he actually becomes who he is becoming and he gets turned into a dragon.

Now, juxtaposed beside Eustace in this entire story is another character in Narnia who does have a chest, a huge chest. He always does the right thing even if it's going to be hard. He fights for honor even if he's going to lose. He defends women because it's just what you do. He's a great character. He's my daughter's favorite, probably yours. Mine's Puddleglum, but this one comes in a close second and that is Reepicheep, the mouse.

Reepicheep and Eustace don't get along so well at the beginning, right? Eustace thinks he's better than Reepicheep because Reepicheep is a small little rodent, so he decides to pick him up and swing him around by his tail, which is a really bad idea because Reepicheep's really good with the sword.

As soon as he hits the ground, he pulls out his sword and he starts smacking Eustace around with it. But even though Eustace gets really angry at Reepicheep at that moment, you get this underlying theme.

I think it's really cool how Lewis does this because there are just these hands that Reepicheep started to mentor Eustace. When Eustace becomes a dragon, Reepicheep is the one that keeps going up the mountain to hang out with him every single day. Then, you have one of those great redemption scenes at Narnia and Eustace becomes a boy again. Eustace suddenly has emerged as a boy, but he's not a boy without a chest. He's now a boy with a chest. He keeps that chest to the rest of Narnia, right?

I think in that story of Reepicheep and Eustace, you see a lot of what Lewis thinks it takes to become a person of virtue, to become a person with a well-ordered heart, with a moral imagination, with trained emotions. Where does it come from? What does it mean to cultivate our chest? Let me hit a couple of key points that I think you get out of that story.

The first one is you have to know what is true good. I would add, what is beautiful. This is the problem with Eustace. It wasn't because he didn't know stuff. He just didn't know *why* stuff was stuff. It's not that he didn't know facts. It's that he didn't know the stuff that was ultimately important. Christians, we've got to do this with this generation of kids who're entering a culture of sexual brokenness. They need to know more than just that premarital sex is wrong. They actually need to know what sex is.

When we start talking to this generation about religious liberty, they look

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 33

back with blank stares. They don't know what religious liberty is. But if they don't know what religious liberty is, it's not worth defending. They don't know what marriage is. If they don't know what marriage is, it's not worth defending. There has to be the true, the good, and the beautiful. There's got to be that big why, and especially in our culture because the dominant "virtue" of our culture isn't a virtue at all. It's just tolerance because when you lose the idea that there's an ideal, that there's this ultimate good, true, beautiful reality that we're pursuing, it's what's in the mind of God. If we lose that, then everyone's values are on equal planes.

So, we've substituted virtue. We've substituted the knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, the striving for what's right, the striving for this big picture of things. We've substituted it for tolerance. This is what Dorothy Sayers wrote. She was a contemporary of Lewis, and the word, she said, "It is called tolerance but in hell, it is called despair, the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there's nothing for which it will die."

Christian, we can't be moralists, and what I mean by that is we can't just tell people what's wrong with the world. We have to propose what is good and true and beautiful. The other things I heard Chuck say over and over and over since he wrote the book *The Faith* is that Christianity never imposes. It proposes. It proposes. Look. This is what it's all about. Look, this is God. This is truth. This is beauty. This is goodness. This

is marriage. This is wholeness. This is redemption. This is fullness.

Lewis also tells us that knowledge isn't enough. We can know what's true and good, but you only become a good person by doing good things. You have to practice what is true and what is good. Here's another way to think about it. Lewis taught us that the chest is a muscle, deep, deep philosophical truth. If you want to be a weight lifter, you have to lift weights. I've tried all the other ways. I really have. It hasn't worked, right? You can go to the gym, walk around with [inaudible] over your shoulders, sipping a Gatorade or the vitamin water, right? You can take steroids. You can do everything. I didn't try that, by the way, just to be clear. [chuckle] Can you strike that? I did not try that.

You can dress the part, but you're not a weight lifter unless you actually what? Lift weights, right? You have to actually exercise the virtue. Of all people who taught us this, Friedrich Nietzsche, the great atheist of the 19th century, said the essential thing in heaven and earth is that there should be a long obedience in the same direction. Of course, Nietzsche didn't care which direction you went into. He just said go in the direction. But what he realized was this, is that life is a series of next steps, next steps, next steps, next steps. You might imagine me. At Summit, we have these students that are 16 to 24, and they're asking a lot of those "what's next" questions.

One of those important things, I think, they need to know and get is this, is that God's will for their life is not what they're going to do one day. It's what they're going to do next. The most

important decision is next because you don't get somewhere down the line. You don't get to where Darrow Miller has gotten in influencing nations just by deciding to do it one day. You actually have to do the next thing and the next thing and the next thing well. We have to realize, really, you know what? If we want to help rebuild culture, the question is what am I going to do with the next opportunity? What am I going to do with the next election? What am I going to do with the next neighbor that I have a conversation with? What am I going to do with the next one, the next one, the next one, the next one? Life is a long obedience in the same direction.

Third, we know the Christian worldview teaches us that we will not do what's right all the time. We will not do what's right often. The next decision, we will flop. So, this is the third thing, I think, we get and we get this from this brilliant story of Eustace, meaning the great lion, and that is we have to practice repentance.

There's this scene there after Eustace has been a dragon for quite some time and the lion shows up. He's there beside the pool of water. He's getting more and more uncomfortable with his skin, and this band is around his wrist that he didn't want to lose, the gold band. So, the lion says, "Clean yourself." [inaudible] to try to wipe off all these scales, and the more he tries to wipe them off, the more that are there. He tries and he tries furiously until he's absolutely exhausted. He's gotten nowhere because he can't do it himself.

What does the lion do? Lion, the great Aslan, pulls out his claws and rips and rips and rips and rips and rips and rips off the dragon flesh and throws him

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 34

into the pond and he emerges now as a boy. This is the repentance. It's not that we decide to do what's better. It's that we go to our loving, kind, heavenly Father and we say, "I'm sorry."

Repentance is one of those things in the Christian community that we need to practice. When I was growing up in that [inaudible] thing, I got the impression that I should only repent because I feel like it. The truth is, you should repent so that you'll feel like it. You should repent because it's there, because God is offering it to you. In fact, Scripture says that repentance is proof that God is kind to us. It's His kindness that leads us to repentance.

The reason repentance is such a brilliant part of this and you talk about cultural reform. Let me give you a thought here. I've been studying this book that was written by two gay activists in 1989 called *After the Ball*. [I told some of you] about this offline. In 1989, the first line in their book was, "The gay revolution has failed in 1989." In 1989, the gay movement thought it had failed. It hasn't failed today. Can we agree on this? OK.

They start laying out this game plan. It's called, "After the Ball." At the end, they say, "OK. Now, we get to the hard stuff. We are our own worst enemies." They literally called the gay community to change, as the gay community could achieve the gay liberation that they saw. It's unbelievable. There comes a time as a Christian community where we've got to stop looking at the culture and say, "This is how bad it is, how bad it is, how bad it is," and we've got to start looking at ourselves and go, "What is it that we need to confess and repent of?"

There's no reason why we shouldn't

repent, right? We have this idea that repentance is the walk of shame. It's not. You know what happens in repentance — two things. Number one, God makes you right with Himself. Isn't God kind to do that? There's no reason for Him to do that and He does that. The second reason we need to repent is because repentance is a moral work-out. In other words, it's an exercise. Have you ever done something wrong and hidden it? Raise your hands, [sinners]. I know you have. Me, too.

If you hid your wrongdoing and you got away with it, well, you're more or less likely to do it again. More, because you got away with it, right? But if you did something wrong and you came under conviction or you got caught and came under conviction, were you more or less likely to do it again? Less, right? That's the power of repentance, right? There's a great scene from *Les Mis*, not in the movie, in the book. Anybody read the book, *Les Mis*? Yes?

In the movie, you know. If you saw the movie, the older one with Liam Neeson not the new musical, there's a brilliant scene there where Jean Valjean, the career criminal, is forgiven by the priest and his life changes. In the movie, the priest forgives him for stealing the silver and hands him more silver. He's blown away so he runs out onto the mountain top and he sings a song, right? That's what happens in real life and that's what happens.

In the book, however, you know what happens? Remember what happens immediately after the priest forgives him? He walks out and a little boy has dropped a coin, a dollar, and he steps on it. He smacks the kid and sends him on his way. You're like, "You just got

forgiven and you just smacked and stole a dollar from a little kid?" Victor Hugo says, "But for the first time, it was like he was lifted out of his body and he was able to look down at the beast that he had created for so long."

Here's the great line that Hugo said, "He had done a thing of which he was no longer capable." Isn't that powerful? So, this act of grace and mercy of the priest led him to this point of repentance and he realized. It took that moment to realize, "Wait a minute. That's not who I want to be. That's not who I am anymore." This is what repentance does. It's not just a change of mind. It's a change of orientation and it's a moral work-out.

OK. So, practice repentance. That means this thing — if we're going to build virtue and accountability and so on, and virtue and character and to sustain the freedom that we want — we have to have space for accountability. Let me give you a line from Chuck Colson. He would say this, "There's no limit to the human capacity for self-deception." There isn't. We won't repent by ourselves. We won't do what's right for ourselves.

One of the most insidious things that's happening with pornography is that it cultivates the habits of a generation to think that sex is a merely privatized act and no one else has any business in my privatized sex life. That, by the way, gave us same-sex marriage. You see what I mean? This idea of accountability — we've got to become accountable. The classic example of that is just really up the road here with Ted Haggard. Ted Haggard was the pastor of New Life Church here in town, just a huge ministry doing all kinds of amaz-

becoming people of virtue

a lecture by john stonestreet, continued from page 35

ing things, and had a huge fall. He stood in front of his congregation, or he didn't stand in front of his congregation. He was, basically, found out that he was having liaisons with a gay prostitute and smoking meth. It was huge issue. You might remember it, all over the news.

The apology letter that was read for him on Sunday morning, the next Sunday, said this, "When I stopped communicating about my problems, the darkness overtook me." That's what isolation does. It really does. I remember the morning that broke. The next day, I was teaching classes at Bryan College in Tennessee and I told the story. Some of them knew who they were, so I described how big his ministry was and how he's on national TV and how he's the president of National Association of Evangelicals and the other stuff.

There was a kid in the back of the class and he kept asking all these questions. I said, "Why are you asking all these questions?" He goes, "Wait a minute. You mean to tell me it's a 1,400-member church. He's on national TV and he was a major figure. He was talking about gay marriage and he was doing that?" I was like, "Yes. That's what the story was." Here's what he said and I want to be crass with this. This is what he said. He goes, "That guy was dumb." I don't think he was being disrespectful. I think he was just saying something that is extremely true about life in the world, which is, sin makes us dumb. Sin makes us foolish. There's a reason, right?

Proverbs calls sin what — folly. It just doesn't make sense. That's the power of accountability. If you want to start building out the middle of society like Wilberforce did, you go back and look at how Wilberforce built networks and

the sort of work that he did and the way he called people to morality and virtue and this sort of stuff. We will not have freedom if we do not become a virtuous people again. We can't expect them to become virtuous if what? We are not virtuous.

The problem is not just out there. The problem is in here, all right? Thanks. I've really enjoyed my time with you, guys. I'll be around off and on today and then, tonight, at the banquet. Thanks. [audience applause]

Male Voice: John, thank you so much. ... What would be the impact if 100 people in this room, if I, go back and start doing these things on a regular basis?

John: It's that ripple effect in communities. It's the middle. I'm just so convinced that Christians can change the culture by aiming for the middle. I really think so, but it's not going to happen just because we force them to do what we want. That never works, right? But, I'll throw this in too. This is just interesting. I may have mentioned this at first. I can't remember. But, last year, three different European Parliamentary movements were promoted to ban pornography, right? We did a breakpoint yesterday. Most people think porn is immoral, most people.

Have you seen the numbers of the users? In other words, there's this time when a lack of virtue caves in on itself. Augustine called sin ... It becomes self-destructive reality. So, that's the power. It's not going to be this fight between our morality and your morality forever. That morality's going to collapse. It's just this. It can't be sustained.