

Where Do We Go From Here?

Sunday, January 21, 2018
10:30 AM

INTRODUCTION

Once again let's start with our two key scriptures that address our need to seek direction from God

Joshua 3:1-4 (NIV)

Crossing the Jordan

3 Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. **2** After three days the officers went throughout the camp, **3** giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. **4** Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before..."

Jeremiah 6:16-17 (NIV)

16 This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.' **17** I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.'

In our desire to seek God's direction for this new year, we have identified several ancient paths, good ways, proven truths by which we should travel

- 1. God is on the throne and is in control... Trust Him with all you heart and He will direct your paths**
- 2. The devil is still at work... Resist him and he will flee from you**
- 3. Our days are numbered... Some of us may not be here next year... Live with that in mind**
- 4. The Word of God is necessary food and brings nourishment to our souls**
- 5. You must be born again**
- 6. There is encouragement through the Fellowship of Believers**
- 7. Prayer is powerful and brings us into the presence of God**
- 8. The great commission is still God's Mission and should be ours**
- 9. Love is still the greatest commandment**
- 10. Forgiveness is not optional**

As we wrap things up over the next 2 weeks, there are 5 more proven principles of God that I want to share with you - 2 this week and 3 more next week.

Today I want to address two areas that are vital if we want to live under the blessings of God. Two areas that many people don't want to talk about anymore. Ancient paths of God which are considered by many in the church to be outdated, irrelevant and unnecessary.

Yet I believe that it is our rejection of these two truths that cause many to live under a curse. So please don't tune me out but take time to listen closely to these good ways that God has given us

* God blesses the tithe

Malachi 3:6-12 (NIV)

6 "I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. **7** Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' **8** "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' *"In tithes and offerings. **9** You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. **10** Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. *Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. **11** I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. **12** "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.**

Some people will immediately declare : "That's an Old Testament principle"

But the New Testament also reveals that this is a way in which God wants us to walk

Luke 6:38 (NIV)

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 11:42 (NIV)

42 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

Notice that Jesus acknowledged the practice of tithing as something that should be done

He also called attention to an act of giving that stood out from all the rest

Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. **42** But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. **43** Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. **44** They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Paul commended the Macedonian churches for their commitment to giving and urged the Corinthians to follow their example.

2 Corinthians 8:1-12 (NIV)

8 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. **2** In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. **3** For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, **4** they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. **5** And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. **6** So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. **7** But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. **8** I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. **9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. **10** And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. **11** Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. **12** For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

Many people get caught up in the argument of whether or not Tithing is commanded and whether or not there is a set amount

Personally, I believe that there is scriptural precedent for a 10% tithe being the minimum that we should willingly give to The Lord. I also believe in the principle of first fruits giving.

But it's not a matter of reducing the principle to one of works based salvation but rather, knowing that giving recognizes our dependence upon the Lord's provision and demonstrates our trust in His plan. Who would think that by giving some away we will actually have more? It is a matter of following that which God says He will bless

Some will accuse me of preaching on tithing simply because I want more money... I don't want more money, I want you to be blessed...

I have had people ask me how our church is able to be financially stable and do the things we do even though we are small. Especially how we are able to support so many Missionaries.

Even as a Board we often stand amazed at what we are able to accomplish and still pay our bills.

The church is blessed because we have people who faithfully support the work of God... The church is blessed because we tithe 10% on every undesignated dollar that comes into the church.

The Church is blessed because you have elders who believe in taking good care of their Pastor...

1 Timothy 5:17-18 (ESV)

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. **18** For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

One final thought about this pathway...

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

The principle of God blessing the tithe is not limited to money... We can tithe our time, our talents and our treasures. As we do so willingly, cheerfully and with faith in the Lord, we will be blessed "*A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over,*"

The next pathway is also one that can bring great blessing or cursing into our lives.

* Sexual purity is essential

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NIRV)

9 Don't you know that people who do wrong will not receive God's kingdom? Don't be fooled. **Those who commit sexual sins will not receive the kingdom.** Neither will those who worship statues of gods or commit adultery. Neither will men who sleep with other men. **10** Neither will thieves or those who always want more and more. Neither will those

who are often drunk or tell lies or cheat. People who live like that will not receive God's kingdom.

Hebrews 13:4 (NIV)

4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and **all the sexually immoral.**

1 Corinthians 6:18 (NIRV)

18 Keep far away from sexual sins. All the other sins a person commits are outside the body. But sexual sins are sins against their own body.

Yet, in great numbers today, many Christians have chosen to ignore God's pathway of Sexual purity.

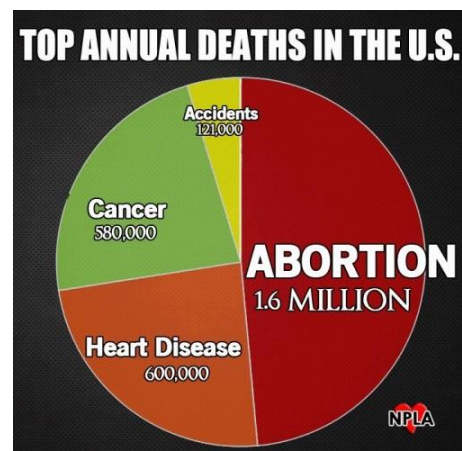
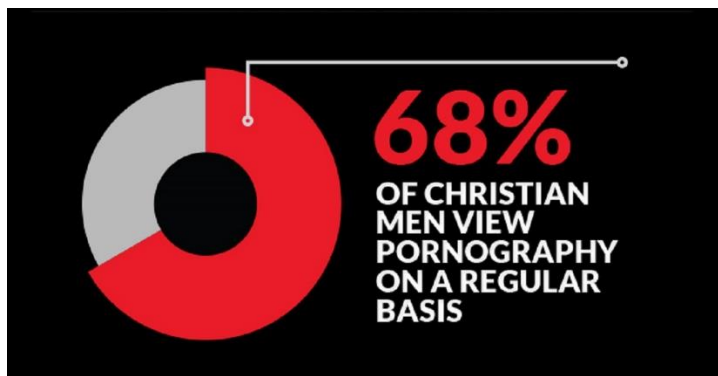
At best we may acquiesce to the immorality of Adultery (unless there is some sort of self-felt justification), we may cringe slightly at the issue of divorce; but fewer and fewer see any problems with a wide range of other sexual purity issues.

For instance our younger Christians are consistently having sex before marriage, living together without being married and are very sympathetic and even accepting of homosexuality as being within the bounds of acceptable Christian behavior.

But it's not just our young people who are struggling with Sexual Purity. Pornography is an epidemic of unbridled proportions within the Church

Recently released [statistics](#) from a leading Internet porn provider reveal alarming numbers with regard to accessing porn: 4.5 billion hours of porn were watched worldwide in 2015, with over 21 billion visits to the site in question or its network of websites.

- From <<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/new-survey-of-porn-use-shows-startling-stats-for-men-and-women>>



In 2007, Nielsen/NetRatings [found](#) that approximately 13 million American women click on pornographic sites each month. They make up an estimated one in three visitors to adult entertainment websites.

- From <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2013/october/secret-womens-porn-problem.html>>

Matthew 5:27-28 (NIV)

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **28** But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

That doesn't even take into account inappropriate, provocative and suggestive clothing, Gender identity or a myriad of other issues which fall into the category of Sexual purity. Here too God has given us direction, but we are not willing to listen.

Don't get me wrong. I believe that God created sex as something that is good beautiful and to be enjoyed. In fact, I think many of the couples that I do marriage counseling with are surprised by the attention and frankness that I give to the sexual relationship and how much I encourage them to enjoy what God has given them. But when we remove ourselves from God's plan we incur a curse upon ourselves.

That's why so many relationships fail, so many people get hurt, so many sexually transmitted diseases, so many divorces, so many single parent families, so much immorality, so much abuse, a sex trafficking problem, so many unwed pregnancies, so much abortion. We are living under the curse of ignoring God's call to sexual purity.

We should be sexually pure...

- In our thought life
- In the way we dress
- In our life choices

Jeremiah said that God has appointed watchmen to sound the trumpet for us, to give us His direction so that we will know which way to go. I call you today to acknowledge these good paths that God has given us and walk in the blessing that they will bring to your life