

Normalizing Righteousness – Part 3 (What Is Normal?)

Sunday, September 22, 2019

We are in the middle of a series of messages dealing with the idea of Normalizing Righteousness

Our key text has been...

Isaiah 5:20, 24 (NIV)

20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

24 ...for they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One.

First we looked at how the world has normalized (called evil good) behaviors that we once considered aberrant or morally wrong, especially from a biblical perspective.

On the other hand, behavior that is based upon biblical truth is quickly becoming viewed as abnormal, intolerant and even wrong. (Good called evil)

Normalization, or social normalization, is the process through which ideas and behaviors that may fall outside of [social norms](#) come to be regarded as "[normal](#)".

This process of normalization has influenced all areas of our society. From politics to, to pornography, to alcohol use, to poverty, to homosexuality, to marriage and divorce, to pre-marital sex and sexual immorality, to language and the use of obscenities, to recreational drug use, and even to behavior such as pedophilia and so many more

the unthinkable, becomes the radical, and the radical becomes the norm.

In contrast to this type of normalization, I said that I want us to begin to think about how we can normalize righteousness, Godliness and biblical morality in our everyday lives. Somehow, we must demonstrate that living according to God's standards and will for our lives is not abnormal, aberrant or intolerant.

So how can we Normalize Righteousness... live in such a way that we reverse the process and call evil, evil and good, good

1. Stop treating it as something abnormal
2. Start Living it out in public daily
3. Stop Being Ashamed
4. Start Inviting Others To Join You

We learned that before we can truly live lives of righteousness, a transformation must take place that changes who we are, how we think and what we do.

Spiritually we may call this getting saved or born again, being set free from sin, delivered, cleansed, forgiven, being made new. It involves a process by which we can actually understand and live in the righteousness that God has created for us and which is normal, right and true

We looked at the story of a leper who came to Jesus and asked to be cleansed from his leprosy His story taught us that in order to be transformed and begin living normal lives of righteousness we need to understand that...

1. He **WANTS** us to be clean (righteous)
2. He **DOES** the Work (Cleansing)
3. We need to Ask
4. We need To **WALK** In It

Today I want to continue by answering this question... What is **NORMAL**?

Now I have to say that answering this question is a continual process in our lives. It is the "Walk in it" part that we were talking about last time. After 45 plus years of trying to walk with God I am still learning and sometimes having to relearn what God's definition of normal is. And that's just it. It is God's definition not ours, and certainly not the worlds

Remember the second part of our key text?

Isaiah 5:20, 24 (NIV)

24 ...for they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One.

In order to reverse this process, we must accept the law of the Lord and Embrace The Word (or truth) of the Holy One

There is a passage in the New Testament that, for me, pictures this struggle

John 18:33-40 New International Version (NIV)

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

38 “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. **39** But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”

40 They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Dismissively Pilate asked the question we are asking today. What is truth? As if to say there is no real truth. Everyone defines what their own truth is. Even though the truth was standing in front of them they chose to define their own truth. In fact, their response to Pilate, “we have no king but Cesar” represents the rejection described by Isaiah 5:24

But what if we truly sought to answer Pilate’s question? Or more appropriately what if we would simply listen to what God’s Word tells us in response to this question?

There is a truth and just as Jesus was the revelation and embodiment of the truth of God’s existence and plan for our lives; so The Word of God is the revelation and embodiment of God’s truth for our lives. He has shown us what normal is. His word teaches us what is good, right and holy

Moses was told to...

Exodus 18:20 New International Version (NIV)

20 Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave.

Hebrews 5:14 says that by constant use we train ourselves to distinguish between good and evil

So, for the next few minutes, let's turn our attention to God's Word and consider his definition of normal

It has long been established that training in identifying counterfeit currency begins with studying genuine money. In other words, we spend our time learning the truth so that we won't be deceived by a lie.

2 Timothy 3:16 New International Version (NIV)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

God's word is filled with principles that teach us what is normal So in answering the question, "What is Normal?" when it comes to righteousness, what better place to begin than with the 10 commandments

Exodus 20 New International Version (NIV)

20 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

(There is only one God and one way to heaven)

John 14:6 New International Version (NIV)

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. **5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **6** but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(God should take first place in our lives)

Matthew 6:24 New International Version (NIV)

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Mark 12:30 New International Version (NIV)

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

(God wants our language to be clean and God Honoring... Representative of His glory)

James 3:9-10 New International Version (NIV)

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. **10** Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

Ephesians 5:4 New International Version (NIV)

4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. **11** For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(Prioritizing Church and Spending Time With God)

Hebrews 10:25 New International Version (NIV)

25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

(Love, Respect and Submission in Relationships)

Ephesians 5 New International Version (NIV)

5 1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 6 New International Version (NIV)

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. **6** Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. **7** Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, **8** because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

13 "You shall not murder.

(The Sanctity of Human Life)

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

(Sexual Purity In All Its Forms)

Ephesians 5:3 New International Version (NIV)

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality

1 Corinthians 6 New International Version (NIV)

9 ...Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men **10** nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Sexual Immorality

12 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. **13** You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. **19** Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

15 “You shall not steal.

(Financial Integrity)

Remember that God calls our failure to honor him with our tithes, stealing as well

Malachi 3:8 New International Version (NIV)

8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

(Truthful and Respectful Speech)

This includes lying, gossiping, backbiting, flattery, exaggeration

Proverbs 26:28 New International Version (NIV)

28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Ephesians 4:31 New International Version (NIV)

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

(Replacing Greed and Jealousy with Thankfulness and Contentment)

Ephesians 5:3-5 New International Version (NIV)

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. **4** Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. **5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

So, what is NORMAL?

It is Thinking, Acting, Believing and Behaving in the way God has shown us He wants us to live everyday of our lives in an ever-increasing and consistent manner.

Romans 12:2 New International Version (NIV)

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Peter 1:14-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

