

# Normalizing Righteousness

Sunday, September 1, 2019

I want to begin a series of messages centered around this thought... Normalizing Righteousness

Increasingly we live in a world that has normalized 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.

## **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.

**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](#)".

3. Normalization is a fundamental tool to initially indoctrinate and train all potential human service workers . . . physicians, nurses, therapists, teachers

Someone has said: "A wrong deed is right if the majority of people declare it not to be wrong."

Hazen G. Werner, who served as a United Methodist bishop in Ohio, Hong Kong and Taiwan, once said: "There is no more startling phenomenon in our day than the respectabilization of evil."

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 the list goes on...

Much could and has been said about each of these areas. Each day we wake up to new and outlandish stories of how these behaviors have become a part of our everyday lives.

## Illustrations

- Political and legal decisions
- Indoctrination within the school system
- News Media
- Movies and TV
  - Commercials
  - Lead Characters
- Social Media
- The Cultural Environment that surrounds us
  - Homosexuality, Pedophilia, Throuples, Quadrouples,
- Even The Church World

Nevertheless, the process continues where the unthinkable, becomes the radical, and the radical becomes the norm.

I want you to think for just a minute about something you have read, seen or heard about this week which is representative of this truth

But rather than focus solely on these issues 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. But I am not sure that modern Christianity even believes that. For many the call to righteousness is nothing more than an impossibility that leads to extremism and legalism.

First, we need to define righteousness as a whole...

*God is righteous in that he **speaks and Acts in accordance with the purity of his own holy nature;***

*The people of God are called to live righteously, that is, **in conformity to the demands of the covenant and according to God's will** (see [Psalm 1:4-6](#) ; [11:7](#) ; [72:1](#) ; [Isa 1:16-17](#) ). Having within the covenantal relation with God the gift of salvation, they are **to behave as the people of the holy Lord**. Hosea, the prophet of divine love, ties righteousness with mercy, loving kindness, and justice ( [2:19](#) ; [10:12](#) ).*

### **Hosea 10:12 (NIV)**

**12** Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.

John the Baptist called for repentance and righteous *behavior such as is pleasing to God* ( [Luke 3:7-9](#) ).

**Luke 3:8 (NIV)**

**8** Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

*Likewise Jesus presents righteousness as **conformity to the will of God***

**Matthew 5:20 (NIV)**

**20** For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

*Righteousness in the new covenant, is **right thinking, feeling, speaking, and behavior** on the part of disciples of the kingdom, who do what God approves and commands.*

**1 John 3:7 (NIV)**

**7** Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

**1 Timothy 6:11 (NIV)**

**11** But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

**So how can we Normalize Righteousness...**

**1. Stop treating it as something abnormal**

If they have to work that hard at making something normal, then it is not normal.

## **2. Start Living it out in public daily**

### **1 Timothy 2:1-3 (NIV)**

**2** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— **2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **3** This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

## **3. Stop Being Ashamed**

### **2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)**

**7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

### **Romans 1:16 (NIV)**

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

## **4. Start Inviting Others To Join You**

VIDEO: Noah