

Normalizing Righteousness

Sunday, October 13, 2019

A few weeks ago I introduced the idea of Normalizing Righteousness based on the concept of Social Normalization or the process through which ideas and behaviors that may fall outside of [social norms](#) come to be regarded as "[normal](#)".

From the worlds perspective this means that ideas and behaviors that are contrary to God's Word have, overtime, come to be accepted as normal and acceptable. On the other hand, what God has declared to be good and right is now regarded as outdated, abnormal and even wrong

It is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophetic declaration...

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.

My challenge has been to reverse that process by making righteousness a normal part of our everyday lives

We talked about the process of normalization...

- **Stop treating it as something abnormal**
- **Start Living it out in public daily**
- **Stop Being Ashamed**
- **Start Inviting Others to Join You**

Next, we said that there must be a willingness and talked about Jesus willingness to transform our hearts and minds as he saves us, delivers us, cleanses us, sets us free, forgives us, and makes us new.

- **He WANTS us to be clean (righteous)**
- **He DOES the Work (Cleansing)**

There must also be a willingness on our part...

- **We need to ASK**
- **We need To WALK in It**

Then we turned our attention to answering the question "What is Truth?" As we sought to get **God's definition of normal**, His ...decrees and instructions, and that show us the way we are to live and how we are to behave. (Exodus 18:20)

NORMAL IS...

- One God and One Way to Heaven
- God in First Place
- Clean and God Honoring Language
- Prioritizing Church and Spending Time with God
- Love, Respect and Submission in Relationships
- The Sanctity of Human Life
- Sexual Purity in All Its Forms
- Financial Integrity
- Truthful & Respectful Speech
- Thankfulness and Contentment

We also said that in order to Normalize Righteousness we would have to DEFEAT THE LIES that twist what Righteousness is. We do that by

- Confronting the Lies
- Recognizing the Source of The Lies
- Immersing Ourselves in The Truth
- Trusting God for The Impossible

Last week we admitted that Normalizing Righteousness... ISN'T EASY

NORMAL ISN'T EASY...

1. It's a confusing world
2. You'll be going against the cultural grain
3. You have to take a stand
4. You may feel like you're standing alone
5. You will face misunderstanding, ridicule, resentment, hatred and persecution
6. You have to change your way of thinking and living
7. The Challenges are huge

I asked us to take one more Sunday to talk and share among ourselves...

Practical Ways to Normalize Righteousness

Key Texts:

Matthew 5:14-16 New International Version (NIV)

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Peter 2:11-12 New International Version (NIV)

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. **12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Thoughts to Consider

1. There will never be an exhaustive list
2. These should continue to be works in progress
3. These are not meant to be legalistic rules that save us, or which are applied in judgement against others

CATEGORY: Language

PRINCIPLE: Respect and Honor God and others with what comes out of our mouths.

SCRIPTURES:

James 1:26 (NIV)

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless

PRACTICAL INCORPORATION:

- train ourselves not to take the Lords name in vain.
- Refuse to join in the worlds frivolous use of profanity.
- *Not using foul language or cuss words* (Fernanda Carner)
- Establish accountability with friends. (Cursing jar)
- Use the name of Jesus in personal way, in the midst of our conversations.
- Refrain from gossip, backbiting etc...

CATEGORY: Relationships, Dating, Marriage

PRINCIPLE: Respecting the boundaries and order that God has established for relationships.

SCRIPTURES:

Ephesians 6:1 New International Version (NIV)

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Proverbs 18:24 New International Version (NIV)

24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Genesis 2:24 New International Version (NIV)

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Ephesians 5:22, 25 New International Version (NIV)

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

PRACTICAL INCORPORATION:

- *I try to be sure that every relationship in my life is with a God-fearing person. In that way, I am always learning from them, and reinforcing good behaviors each time we are together. I have some truly great Christian friends who really help me through struggles, and don't let me go down the road of blame, gossip or "cattiness" (Becky Hudick)*
- *Dates don't happen in the bedroom (Dana Deaton)*
- *Boyfriends don't get husband privileges (Dana Deaton)*
- Refuse to live together before Marriage
- Marriage is for one man and one woman
- Testimony from Glenn Carter

CATEGORY: Entertainment

PRINCIPLE: What comes into our eyes and ears affects our hearts

SCRIPTURES:

Psalms 101:2-4 New International Version (NIV)

2 I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart. **3** I will not look with approval on anything

that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. **4** The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil.

PRACTICAL INCORPORATION:

- *Listen to Christian music and choose Christian radio over secular music no matter who I'm with. (Sandi Buda)*
- *Some thoughts... Never R rated movies... Set aside explicit novels... Cancel cable... These are some things I've done. Sometimes it takes a strong mindset to say no to these choices. Supposedly the best movies are R rated and everyone talks about them. I just smile then. (Patrice Roberts)*
- Refuse to watch shows that support and trivialize issues that are contrary to God's Word
- *PG movies are getting so bad with everything, & what they are normalizing. When I was a young Christian, I didn't even have a TV, because I didn't want to be polluted. It's coming a time that we will have to put away our media devices so we can hear from God. (Paula Gilroy)*

CATEGORY: Modesty

PRINCIPLE: Our appearance makes a strong statement about who we are

SCRIPTURES:

1 Peter 3:3-4 New International Version (NIV)

3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. **4** Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

PRACTICAL INCORPORATION:

- Beauty comes from the inside
- Consider what statement you are trying to make with the choices you make
- Remember Paul's statement that if something he does causes his brother to sin, he would no longer do it
- Modesty is more than just clothing
- Remember that we are representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ
- *I wanted to share that when I was a young Christian, I tried to be so perfect, with living righteously and that it was a struggle. Then, the Pastor at the time told me serving God and living for Him, is a natural, normal thing, God made us to do that. It is not a struggle. I stopped trying so hard & God helped me be who He made me to be. Then the Holy Spirit showed me how I should dress. I purposed in my mind &*

heart, that I am different & will never fit into the world, its whims, fads, fashion. So, if I buy something, I always tried to make it more righteous looking. I like being different & set apart, not going with the flow of the world. I am not perfect; Jesus is still working on me like all of us. (Paula Gilroy)

CATEGORY: Integrity

PRINCIPLE: We need to be sincere, honest and truthful in all that we do.

SCRIPTURES:

Proverbs 11:3 New International Version (NIV)

3 The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

PRACTICAL INCORPORATION:

- Don't lie, cheat or steal
- If you're on the clock, don't misuse your time for personal stuff
- Don't cheat on your taxes
- Return lost items that you may find