

“The Values Pyramid – Part II”¹

Last month I described how a “values pyramid” would have Biblical values as its base, these would influence the next layer of cultural values, and finally, the top is governmental and societal institutions. In this paradigm, government is expected to fulfill its role of incentivizing and strengthening the healthy moral values the culture is based on. Unfortunately, over the last generation the pyramid has become inverted. Now government is one of the most influential forces in our nation: on one hand doing great damage by removing godly Christian influence from the public arena; and on the other hand refusing to restrain evil (abortion, homosexuality, pornography, indecency, divorce, gambling, etc.). As a result, not only is Christian influence being relegated to the shadows of society but it’s increasingly being blamed for what’s wrong in the world.

Given this amazing reversal – is it any wonder we may begin to despair? I’ll admit I’ve been very discouraged at times, even questioning whether our Biblical salt and light mandate makes sense any longer. Should I just try to work hard, share the gospel as opportunities arise, and leave the rest to God? When I start thinking this way, I have to remind myself of some key principles that have refreshed me over the years.

First, God, not man, is sovereign in all the affairs of man (Acts 17:26-27). God’s will and purpose win out every time, and if the ever threatening darkness brings about a more refined and matured Body of Christ – praise God! As our stand for righteousness becomes more difficult, the easy-believers, lukewarm and the unrighteous in our midst will either turn from their compromised ways, or leave. Either way, the Body of Christ will emerge stronger, more purified, energized and faithful to our calling in this world.

Second, we’re only commanded to be faithful in our labors, not to guarantee results. It’s God that will ensure the gates of hell will not prevail against us (Matt 16:18). He uses us as his instruments to bring glory to Himself, not to us. If our labors are focused on pursuing righteousness and good works to glorify God throughout our community and nation, then our labors will be blessed one way or another (Isa 55:9-11).

Third, man’s conscience can still be pierced with facts, logic and especially with God’s truths (Rom 2:14-16). When discouraged, we tend to see only those that are hardened to the gospel, or that denigrate godly virtue and exalt wickedness. But God has placed a conscience in every one of us, and that conscience can be incited to acknowledge what is good and to reject evil. Look around, there’s still an amazing amount of good being done, even by non-Christians. If we don’t

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allow ourselves to be misled by a biased media we'll see that by God's common grace "good" is still popular and can continue to grow (Matt 5:45).

Fourth, we can be assured that God's truths are timeless and are just as applicable to this modern "enlightened" day as when first written. Our challenge is to apply them in a faithful manner to the land we find ourselves living in. Praise God for those that faithfully proclaim Biblical truths and equip believers to engage our nation's corrosive culture for the common good. Though we know God's word is powerful, and will accomplish the purposes for which it is sent (Isa 55:11), we must still be well educated on the issues of the day and prepared to be good messengers of applicable truth. As our credibility grows, so will opportunities to share the gift of life – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Can we create a properly aligned values pyramid that's consistent with a Biblical worldview? Can we understand the prominent issues of the age and how God's word applies? Can we once more bring Biblical credibility to a dying world that is desperate for the gospel and answers to its problems? I believe we can. Will it take time - of course – we didn't get to where we're at over night. Are our pastors and spiritual leaders up for the task? I see many encouraging signs in San Diego that give me tremendous confidence that many now "get it". The level of maturity in Christian leaders has mushroomed in the last few years, yielding church involvement on a scale unseen for decades. It can be done, but we must stay the course. If current spiritual leadership is in denial, or compromises in proclaiming the full counsel of God in proclaiming the gospel and being salt and light in all of its manifestations – then the Lord will raise up leaders that will. In the meantime, study Eph 6:10-18 and prepare to do battle with the enemy, the one that likes the pyramid the way it is.

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