

...The ABC's of Yasab — CONVICTIONS

yāšabַּ יָשַׁב - The Game of Dwelling on Earth – Pt. 6

February 18, 2024

Psalms 24:3-6 *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?*

And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ *He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.*

⁵ *He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

⁶ *Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah*

Convictions

What are "convictions"?

Conviction (def) = *a fixed or firmly held belief, opinion, etc; a state of being convinced* (**British English Dictionary**)

It is not uncommon for beliefs to bend over time or to have variations from one culture to the next. ...But the Rapid Rate of Such Severe Change in Our Lifetime is UNPRECEDENTED!

"The origins of this book lie in my curiosity about how and why a particular statement has come to be regarded as coherent and meaningful: "I am a woman trapped in a man's body." My grandfather died in 1994, less than thirty years ago, and yet, had he ever heard that sentence uttered in his presence, I have little doubt that he would have burst out laughing and considered it a piece of incoherent gibberish. And yet today it is a sentence that many in our society regard as not only meaningful but so significant that to deny it or question it in some way is to reveal oneself as stupid, immoral, or subject to yet another irrational phobia. ...In short, to move from the commonplace thinking of my grandfather's world to that of today demands a host of key shifts in popular beliefs in these and other areas. It is the story of those shifts—or, perhaps better, of the background to those shifts—that I seek to address in subsequent chapters." **Trueman, Carl R.** *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (pp. 19-20). Crossway.

"In *The Nones: Where They Came From, Who They Are, and Where They Are Going*, Ryan P. Burge details a comprehensive picture of an increasingly significant group—Americans who say they have no religious affiliation. ...The growth of the nones in American society has been dramatic. In 1972, just 5 percent of Americans claimed "no religion" on the General Social Survey. In 2018, that number rose to 23.7 percent, making the nones as numerous as both evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics. Every indication is that the nones will be the largest religious group in the United States in the next decade. (from ryanburge.net)

There were 14% of America in 2008. ...Amongst 18 to 22 year olds one third of them identify as nothing in particular." **Ryan Burge** (from The Carey Nieuwhoff Podcast Episode 624)

In the United States, we are currently experiencing the largest and fastest religious shift in the history of our country, as tens of millions of formerly regular Christian worshipers nationwide have decided they no longer desire to attend church at all. These are what we now call the dechurched. About 40 million adults in America today used to go to church but no longer do, which accounts for around 16 percent ¹ of our adult population. For the first time in the eight decades that Gallup has tracked American religious membership, more adults in the United States do not attend church than attend church. ² This is not a gradual shift; it is a jolting one. (p. 3).

More people have left the church in the last twenty-five years than all the new people who became Christians from the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening, and Billy Graham crusades combined.¹² Adding to the alarm is the fact that this phenomenon has rapidly increased since the mid-1990s. **Jim Davis, Michael Graham, *The Great Dechurching*** (p. 5). Zondervan.

WHY so much "shift" in Our Lifetime? ...One Thing (among many) that is Critical to Consider—The "IDEAS" & "BELIEFS" that sit in people's lives are NO LONGER "CONVICTIONS"

These shifts raise a question about what we "Believe" and how firmly our beliefs are held!! ...Am I CONVINCED? ...Do I Have CONVICTIONS? ...or... Do I Have Casual Considerations??

Why is this so critical to include on the short list of priorities in doing life today? (among my basic "ABC's")
Because of the Age in Which We Live! ...The "Information Age" is an age that has fostered "Countless, Casual Considerations"—an Infinity Pool of OPTIONS made available to your Preferences.

How Does This Happen in Culture? ...Step 1 - Detach Ideas from ONE Ultimate Authority!

...Step 2 - Elevate the Ultimateness of the Individual Self ...OUTCOME: My Ideas & Beliefs Don't Answer to Anything FIRM or ABSOLUTE—Thus, Beliefs are Always Flexible!!

But the Bible Presents CONVICTIONS! ...Not Suggestions or Options to be Evaluated and Tweaked by US!!

Psalms 24:3-4 *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?*

And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ *He who has clean ['blameless, guiltless'] hands and a pure ['empty, clear'] heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false ['vain, vanity, empty'] and does not swear deceitfully.*

⁵ *He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness ['rightness, to be right'] from the God of his salvation. ['deliverance, rescue, safety']*

⁶ *Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah*

This verse ASSUMES some very basic life concepts are in play in your understanding— Concepts like "CLEAN & Dirty" ... "PURE & Impure" ... "FALSE & Meaningful" ... "DECEITFUL & Truthful" ... "RIGHTEOUSNESS" ... "SALVATION"

Psalm 15 *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?*

Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

² *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart;*

³ *who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

⁴ *in whose eyes a vile person is despised, ['contempt, disdain'] but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*

- v. 2 ...Contains "absolutes"--something that reports back to an ULTIMATE Source (not a culturally shaped trend)
- v. 4 ...Convictions generate DISCERNMENT ...Convictions 'oppose and even despise" things!!

Do you have Convictions about What "Love" is?

Romans 12:9 *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

Philippians 1:9-11 *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

The Collapse of Convictions

The Bible Clearly Explains this "Sociological Phenomena" that has Rapidly Accelerated in Our Lifetime!!

Romans 1:16-29 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools,²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

²⁴ *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

²⁶ *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

²⁸ *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.*

Convictionless Deconstruction & Drift

"The dechurching phenomenon is a tremendous source of pain for many at the familial level. I (Mike) was talking with a woman recently who has four adult children. They all grew up in the church and in Christian schools. This woman is one of the kindest, godliest, and sincerest people I have ever known. She is a fabulous mom and overall person. However, three of her four kids don't go to church and are completely done with Christianity. Imagine her pain. ...We have spent countless pastoral hours talking, praying, and agonizing with parents and grandparents who are in anguish over their family members who have left the church." **Jim Davis, Michael Graham, *The Great Dechurching* (p. 9).**

...**The "GOSPEL" is 'ABSOLUTELY Good News'** ...and part of that reason is because it Provides Definitions that Are Ultimate (That don't shift, change, or even disappear)!! ...for words like ..."Salvation" ... "Righteousness" ... "Ungodliness" ... "Truth"

What is Your "CONVICTION" about 'SALVATION'?

John 14:6 *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me."*

Acts 4:12 *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

What is Your Basis for Saying You or Anything is "Righteous" (Right w/ God)?

Romans 1:17 *For in it the righteousness of God*

What has God Revealed and Defined about "Ungodliness"—that Informs Your "CONVICTIONS"

About abortion ...About the roles of men & women ...About the consumption of alcohol ...About social justice ...About sexual engagement and expression ...or sexual identity ...About entertainment choices ...About whether you come to church on Sunday

When You go to Play yāšaḇ in 2024 are you attempting to play with "Casual Considerations" or with "Convictions"?