

Living for Christ in a Woke Culture

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“The greatest challenge facing every individual today is to remain awake through this social revolution,” challenged Martin Luther King Jr. at Oberlin College in 1965¹, when woke meant only the past participle of awake. Were he to utter those words today, it would not mean the same as it did then. In fact, Merriam Webster's Dictionary added the word “woke” in 2017 defining it as “aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice)” and categorizing it as “chiefly United States slang.”² According to an online Fox News article, woke became “a watch word in parts of the Black community for those who were self-aware, questioning the dominant paradigm and striving for something better,” when Eryka Badu used the line “I stay woke” over and over in her song “Master Teacher” in 2008.³ The word became a rally cry after court cases involving the death of two black men by white men in 2013 and 2014 and another hit song in 2018 called “Stay Woke”.⁴ Being “woke” is the driving force for many people in America today. However, according to Jesus, loving God and loving others should be the driving forces for a Christian.⁵ There was no shifting through the sands of time with the meaning of His words. The basis for His conclusion lay all the way back in the rock solid Word of God in Deuteronomy.⁶ His words held true for the Jews living in a Roman world, and they hold true for us today. The best way to live in a woke world is by the Greatest Commandments – love God and love others.

Although the Bible is always true, not all people claiming to be Christians act like the Bible is the true word of God. The concept of Christianity has changed over time. According to The Ben Smart Blog, there are 40,000 Christian denominations globally.⁷ The United States, a country founded on

1 Nicoal Stow and Nina Clevinger . “Why Does Being Woke Mean? Definition and Meaning Explained.” The US Sun, November 8, 2021. <https://www.thesun.com/news/270341/woke-meaning-culture-definition-what-is-woke-mob/>.

2 “Woke Definition & Meaning.” Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster, 2021 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/woke>.

3 Michael Ruiz. “What Does 'Woke' Mean?” Fox News. FOX News Network, May 30, 2021. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/what-does-woke-mean>.

4 Ruiz.

5 Luke 10:27 (KJV).

6 Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV).

7 Ben Smart. “40,000 Denomination Worldwide-Christianity Divided?” The Ben Smart Blog, October 11, 2019. <http://thebensmartblog.com/2014/02/12/40000denominatons-worldwide-chrsitianity-divided/>.

Christianity, has produced a generation in which 43-percent “don't know, care, or believe God exists” and 38-percent agree revenge is acceptable.⁸ “Many millennial's believe 'an abortion performed to reduced personal economic or emotional discomfort' and 'premarital sex with someone expected to be their future spouse' are 'morally acceptable.’”⁹ All of these beliefs are in sharp contrast to those held by previous generations of Americans. A quick search of the internet shows countless “churches” and well known “Christians” backing LGBTQ+ and Critical Race Theory, ideals directly opposed to the Bible. Syncretism has lead to a new belief system among many which Answers in Genesis refers to as “a religion of sand”,¹⁰ in other words, not a religion built on the solid Rock.

So how do we get back to the Rock solid foundation known as the Bible?

In the words of Christ, loving God and loving others builds a solid foundation. In Luke 10:27 (KJV), a lawyer refers to Deuteronomy 6:5, which Jesus refers to as the Greatest Commandment, when he says, “Thou shalt love the Lord they God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy strength, and with all they mind.” According to Strong's Concordance, heart means inter part of man and refers to one's mind and will.¹¹ In Hebrew, the word soul can be used to mean feelings and desires.¹² We should put God first in our feelings, desires, and will. In our ever day life, we can always desire to love God more or think about his word more often. We also need to love God with all our strength. The original Greek for strength means having force.¹³ We should put God first in all we do and consistently work to please Him.

The lawyer in the story also says the law states to love “thy neighbors as thyself,”¹⁴ so we should put our neighbor's needs above ours. Our neighbor can be anyone, so we should put everyone's

8 Ken Ham. 43% of Millennial's “Don't Know, Care, or Believe God Exists.” Answers in Genesis Answers in Genesis, June 3,2021. <https://answersingenesis.org/culture/43-of-millennials-dont-know-care-or-believe-god-exists/>.

9 Ham.

10 Ham.

11 Bible Hub, 2021. <https://biblehub.com/greek/2588.htm>

12 “H5315-Nepes-Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV) Blue Letter Bible 2021 <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5315/kjv/wlc/0-1/>.

13 Bible Hub, 2021. <https://biblehub.com/greek/2479.htm>

14 Luke 10:27 (KJV).

needs above our own. If our neighbors needs help with their lawns, but we have not mowed ours, we should still help them. Imagine. If everyone put everyone's needs above their own, the world would be a much better place!

One way to get a better view point on loving others is when we look at ourselves as the wretched sinners we are who do not deserve God's grace. In Mark 7 Jesus calls a Gentile woman a dog¹⁵. However, she did not take offense; she humbly accepted the rebuke because she knew her status compared to the One with whom she was talking. She responded even dogs ate the crumbs from the children.¹⁶ Jesus was happy to see the woman realize she was a sinner who did not deserve God's grace and healed her daughter. We should not expect God to grant us anything. Instead we should come humbly before Him, begging Him to forgive our sins. Basically, a right view of God gives us a right view of ourselves, and a right view of ourselves gives us a right view of others. In other words, we are all “dogs”. When we understand this, it is much easier to see the way we should love others because no one is perfect. We should love others the way Christ has loved us.

According to John 13:35, “By this should all men know that ye are me disciples if ye have love one to another.”¹⁷ According to this verse, people will know whether we are disciples of Jesus, or Christians, by our love toward other disciples. People will know we are Christians if we love God enough to love the unlovable like He does. People will know we are Christians if we love God enough not to have an abortion. People will know we are Christians if we love God enough to let our siblings have their way. People will know we are Christians if we love others enough to tell the Gospel to woke Black Lives Matter activists. In order to live a Christ-like life in a woke world, we must love others enough to share the Gospel with them even if we do not like them, even if they had an abortion, even if they hurt us, and, especially, if they are living a woke life.

15 Mark 7:27 (KJV).

16 Mark 7:28 (KJV).

17 John 13:35 (KJV).

When we look at Americans today, we often see a broken, confused, depressed, and woke population who have no real purpose in life because they do not know God. It should be our purpose in life, as Christians, to show Christ' love to these people. This is only possible with a right understanding of who we are and who God is. We are wretched sinners who were condemned to hell if not for God's sacrifice. God is the holy, almighty Creator of the universe. He holds everything in His hands. When we put ourselves on this level and do not try to put ourselves on a level above others, we see that we all need grace, and our hearts will be softened to tell the good news of the Gospel to everyone and make disciples. This is how we should live in a woke world – making disciples of Christ by investing our time and resources into the lives of hurting people, just like the Good Samaritan.

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