

Following the Real Jesus: Does The Church Still Matter?

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Galatians 5:19-25;

Ephesians 4:11-12

Following the Real Jesus: The purpose of the church is to make disciples who make disciples.

Does the Church Still Matter?

“What Good is God?”

“One of the things we were asked to look into was what accounted for the success, in fact, the pre-eminence of the West all over the world. We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic, and cultural perspective.

At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system. Next we focused on your economic system. But in the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. That is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this.” - What Good is God?

The Church has shaped the values and conscience of our nation.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” - Declaration of Independence

The values of the Church are not the values of what is natural. Natural = Nature

What didn't come naturally: taking responsibility, forgiveness, graciousness, or generosity.

^{19a} When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: Galatians 5:19a

Sinful nature is obvious or natural. You won't be surprised.

^{19b} sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ^{21a} envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Galatians 5:19b-21a

^{21b} Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Galatians 5:21b

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ^{23a} gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a

Mastery over one's desires and passions.

"It is the virtue which enables people to have such control of themselves that they are fit to be the servants of others." - William Barclay

^{23b} There is no law against these things! Galatians 5:23b

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Galatians 5:24

²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Galatians 5:25

The life/ethic of Jesus and the Church is better. Better than nature. Better than any culture.

Every person has been made in God's image and should be treated as such. We are stewards of this image.

Forgive because God has forgiven you, not because people deserve it. The powerful are responsible to help the powerless.

Loving people we don't like is the ultimate reflection of our Heavenly Father.

The Church is the steward of the message of eternal life and a better life.

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:11-12

Training and Teaching

God's heart is for all to be saved. Make disciples who make disciples. Until there is no place left that Jesus is not known.