

## ***Public Opinion vs. Truth***

One method that is used to change people's belief is the use of public opinion polls. It's a clever approach because we as humans - for the most part - like to blend in with the rest of society.

Daily we are confronted with "statistics" which are gathered from polls as to whether something is right or wrong. A colorful bar-graph in the corner of a newspaper may inform us that 55 percent of all Americans believe that one's "sexual preference" should not be a factor in determining whether they should be accepted into military; a TV network news program, before going to a commercial, may display a graphic showing that a majority of Americans believe the elderly and infirm ought to be able to commit suicide; a talk-show host may cite the results of a national poll that reveals that most Americans want the public schools to provide their children birth control advice and products. And the list goes on.

We are being fooled if we think this is anything other than an attempt to gradually change people's beliefs. The frightening part is that it's working. People are actually swayed by the results of polls. Confronted day after day that I am out of step with society, I am inclined to think that there must be something wrong with my thinking. Gradually, most people come around to thinking like most others in society.

The fact of the matter is that public opinion has absolutely nothing to do with determining truth. Though polls might be of interest to us, they should not influence our beliefs about right and wrong. A poll taken in Iraq would likely show that most of that nation favors the destruction of America. Does that make it right?

Of course, Christians are aware that our Lord expect us to be different from most of our neighbors. We are warned that we are not to be "conformed to this world" (Rom.12:2). So, it should not affect our convictions when we hear that we are not in the mainstream of our society. Our convictions are based on God's word, which does not change with the polls.

When told that most people believe one thing, let's not be ashamed to say that we believe something else -- and that we believe it because our Creator has revealed the truth on the matter (Rom. 1:16). We need to remember that the vast majority of those polled are running headlong to destruction (Matt.7:13).

I once saw a sign which declared, "The Lord and I make a majority." That sounds good on the surface, but in reality, the Lord makes a majority whether I am with Him or not! It is my task to make sure that I am following Him --not "what seems right" which in reality is "the way of death" (Prov. 14:12).

One final point: What applies to polls of the general public, also applies to polls among brethren. Truth cannot be determined by finding out what most brethren believe and/or practice.

**- by Al Diestelkamp**

---

## ***The Stewardship That Leaves Home***

Have you noticed your children lately? The baby who couldn't do anything but cry last month can now turn over by himself. The toddler who pleaded to be read to last week is suddenly a six year old who independently reads to himself. And the youngster who just yesterday wanted to borrow a crayon, today wants to borrow the car. All too soon, these eternal products of our stewardship will walk out our doors to begin lives of their own, never to return again in the same way.

All of our gifts from God come with a tag attached: "On loan. Manage properly. Be a good steward." *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (1 Cor. 4:21). Our children are near the pinnacle of God's richest gifts. Every parent could say along with Jacob, who when asked about his offspring said, *"They are the children God has graciously given your servant"* (Gen.33:5). Like turning out products at a factory, we parents have scheduling deadlines that must be met. We cannot put a child on hold until we have more time. They will grow up with our having nurtured them in the Lord, or they will grow up without it. But they will grow up. We must strike while the iron is hot, and it is only hot for a few fleeting years.

Do you have a plan for carrying out God's commands to you as a parent? Are you deliberately and purposefully developing and implementing specific strategies that will start your

sons and daughters on the road to maturity in Christ Jesus? Do you realize the urgency and infinite importance of this stewardship, or are you just haphazardly hoping that everything will somehow turn out right?

It would be great to save the world. But we need to begin with our little corner of it. Because one day the Master who owns these children is going to make us give an account for how we managed His precious gifts. *"But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief"* (1 Thess.5:4).

- by Jim King

---

## **Repentance**

Jesus said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Lk. 13:3). Repentance - true repentance - is surely one of the hardest things God has commanded us to do. It is important that we understand what true repentance is.

### **Repentance *is not*:**

- Simply quitting your sin. A man might stop drinking because he can no longer afford it, or stop beating his wife because she has left him, or stop cursing because he lost his voice. The sin has stopped, but no repentance has taken place.
- Hiding your sin. The fact that a person tries to conceal his sin does not prove he has repented. Remember how David tried to hide his sin with Bathsheba?
- Being sorry. Many are sorry for the consequences of their sin, the results of their sin, the pain their sin has caused to themselves or to others. But this sorrow is not real repentance.

**Repentance *is*:** A change of heart that leads to a change of action. Jesus illustrated repentance perfectly in two of his parables. In one He described this situation: *'A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went'* (Matthew 21 :28,29). Do you see it? Clearly there was a change of thinking followed by a change of conduct. Again, Jesus told of the prodigal son who had ruined his life but *"came to himself"* and *"arose and came to his father"* (Luke 15:11-32). His obvious change of attitude prompted him to return to his father's house and confess his unworthiness. This is repentance.

What about you? Have you had this important change of heart that has caused you to turn to God in obedience? Remember, God *"now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30).

- by Greg Gwin