



HOAW Newsletter

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

April 2023

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

The Great Divide

Dr. Greg Bourgond

There is a growing cultural divide in our country between secular progressives and conservative Christians. This divide spans all sectors of our society including social organization, customs, religion, language, government, economy, education, entertainment, and arts. Recent societal issues present a springboard for dissension, argumentativeness, vilification, and violence. Our morality has shifted from universal, axiomatic truth to situational relativism. Hypersensitivity to perceived and real microaggressions often devolves into clarion calls for outsized recognition, restitution, and recompense. Other exacerbating influences such as the diminishment of free speech, abortion rights, the growing culture of victimhood, the ascendancy of wokeism, the promotion of liberal progressive ideology, gender

fluidity and confusion, the justification of violence in the name of equity and equality pursuits, the marginalization and ostracism of conservative Christianity, and the use of a broad brush of racism to quell any counterpoint not in alignment with the prevailing cultural winds, have created an environment ripe for confrontational response.

This should not surprise us as Christians. Paul, in his first letter to his protégé Timothy, cautioned him about the coming drift away from truth. His remarks address false purveyors of the Gospel but can easily be applied to the current times. *"If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about*

words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain (1 Timothy 6:3-5)." In his last letter to Timothy, he warned him about the coming crisis. "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4)."

Many followers of Christ have bought into the cult of the **sacred/secular divide** that compartmentalizes one's faith into two separate worlds. Nancy Pearcey (2008), in her book *Total Truth*, makes the following observations. *"Christians often live in two separate worlds, commuting*

between the private world of family and church (where we can express our faith freely) and the public world (where religious expression is firmly suppressed). But no Christian, in any profession, can be happy when torn in two contrary directions (p.65)." Our faith, she says, is relegated to the private sphere of our life rarely venturing beyond the boundary between the sacred and the secular into the public domain of our lives. Her concern, and mine as well, is the growing impotency of Christianity as a viable counter to secularism in our society. Percy quotes theologian Walter Kasper, "*Secularization did not cause the death of religion, but it did cause it to become but one sector of modern life along with many others. Religion lost its claim to universality and its power of interpretation. That is, Christianity no longer functions as a lens to interpret the whole of reality; it is no longer held as total truth (p.68)."*

So, in effect, we are ceding our ground to secularists. We have been bullied into silence and pushed to the margins of our society. At a time when our voice should be heard on the many destructive influences permeating our culture, we are silent and seemingly satisfied with practicing our faith behind the safety and security of our church doors or the private sanctuary of our homes. Frances Schaffer, widely recognized as one of the most influential Christian thinkers, called this artificial dichotomy of our faith a two-story view of reality. He challenged our thinking by criticizing Christians who have compromised "*their stand on truth and morality until there is almost nothing they will speak out against,*

suggesting that the evangelical church itself has sold out to the world." He is speaking about the sacred/secular divide whose boundary has become almost impenetrable.

Let's look a little deeper. The 'sacred' refers to things pertaining to the spiritual and eternal realm of "God's affairs," or "related to religion." In this '**upper story**' are the activities of prayer, bible study, worship, theology, evangelism, discipleship, spiritual disciplines, devotions and the things we normally embrace on Sundays. The 'secular' refers to things pertaining to the physical and temporal realm of human affairs or anything not related to religion. In this '**lower story**' are the activities work, reason, business, politics, science, economics, mass media, the arts, and social justice initiatives we engage in on the weekdays of our existence. Dr. Christian Overman in *The Virus of the Sacred/Secular Divide*, observes "*Many consider building houses, selling vegetables, and practicing law as 'secular' endeavors, while pastoring a church or doing mission work is a 'sacred' task. In [the biblical] view of things, any sphere of human endeavor may be done in harmony with God or in opposition to Him."*

So, the question I ask, are you living separated lives – a 'siloes' existence that embraces one persona on Sundays and an entirely different persona the rest of the week? What would I observe if I were to follow you unobserved from Sunday through Saturday any given week? Have you bought into the sacred/secular divide? Do you speak boldly of your faith on Sunday or in the privacy of your

home and meekly, if at all, in the marketplace or community? Men have heard me repeatedly say, it used to be quite comfortable to have one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom. However, the gap between the two has grown uncomfortably wide. We are forced with a decision, to stand in bold relief against the backdrop of our culture or acquiesce, folding back into our culture becoming, in effect, transparent with our culture. There is, at this point, nothing in our life to distinguish a difference and nothing in our lives to draw anyone to God's Son.

Schaffer has suggested in the past that Christians should be in leadership roles in every sector of society. Where are they? Where are you? Where am I? Have we compromised our biblical beliefs and values on the altar of expediency? Are we embarrassed about our faith? Are we afraid to give a defense for the hope that is in us? Are we like so many politicians who attempt to identify with voters by espousing values they suggest they share with them? I find it very interesting that I have heard no journalist challenge such declarations by asking the politician what informs, conditions, or establishes the values they say they hold. In other instances, I hear many politicians strenuously assert that the religious beliefs they hold will in no way interfere with how they will govern. What nonsense! There is no way one can behave, for any length of time, in opposition to what they truly believe at the core of their being. What you truly believe and value will manifest itself in overt behavior regardless of attempts not to do so. Who you truly are (your

beingness) will impact how you behave (your doingness).

So, what does Scripture have to say about a **'two-storied'** existence? Let's begin by acknowledging the existence of essentially two domains – the **domain of darkness** and the **domain of light**. Christian Overman, again in his article *The Virus if the Sacred/Secular Divide*, stresses that "the domain of darkness is in conflict with God's design, contrary to His will, not in alignment with the way God intends things to be – evil and wrong." The kingdom of light is in harmony with God's design, fulfilling His will, in alignment with the way God intends things to be – good and right."

To be sure, the Bible indeed recognizes the existence of the secular and the sacred. With regard to the sacred, we, as believers, are members of the kingdom of God and we are citizens of the kingdom (Philippians 3:20-21; Ephesians 2:19-22; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9, 10). With regard to the secular, we are aliens and strangers in the world and are to abstain from sinful desires, which are against our soul (1 Peter 2:11-12). We are not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world (Romans 12:2). We are not to love the world or anything in the world (1 John 2:15-17). In fact, friendship with the world is hatred toward God (James 4:4). The distinction the Bible makes is about our identity and to whom we owe our allegiance. These verses do not demand we compartmentalize our faith however. We are called into the world, to minister to the world, for the sake of the world, but not to be of the world. We are to be 'salt

and 'light' in the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

The Bible further says that all creation (both the sacred and the secular) are God's, and one day all creation will be restored (Romans 8:22). In Ephesians 1:22 we are reminded that, "God placed ALL things under Christ's authority and appointed Him to be head over EVERYTHING. He did this "so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28)." We must also remember that "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11)." These verses suggest as we engage the culture, we should do so with that in mind. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:23-24)." "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)."

If we are to impact the world for Christ, if God has chosen us to facilitate His redemptive purposes in a fallen world (and He has), we must integrate the **upper story (the sacred)** with the **lower story (the secular)**. We must not accept being shunted to the peripheral, to be marginalized. We must give voice to our faith. But to do so requires us to live out what we believe in every sector of society. No one care what you have to say until they observe how you live. And if you live a life of integrity and

authenticity, people will ultimately listen to what you have to say— even if they disagree with you. Why? Because they cannot get past a life well-lived. They might disagree with your beliefs or argue about your faith. But they cannot get past a life well-lived. We have a right to be at the table. We have a responsibility to be at the table. Don't give up your seat at the table of secular discourse. Be prepared to give a defense for the hope that is in you regardless of the reception you might receive.

As one scholar put it, "*The common designations of 'secular' and 'sacred' are overused. A Christian artist will create art to the glory of God: there is nothing overtly 'sacred' about a still-life of a bowl of pears, but there's nothing 'secular' about it, either. A Christian musician will create music to the glory of God. A Christian homemaker will back cookies to the glory of God. A Christian mechanic will fix cars to the glory of God. The possibilities are endless; as we walk in the Spirit, the line between secular and sacred becomes increasingly blurred.*"

OTHER NEWS



Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who God

created you to be.

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

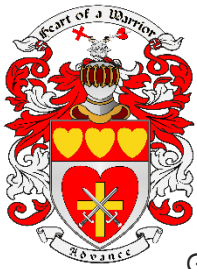
The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.
www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org



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God-honoring lives

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