



## Ground Zero for a Cultural Clash

by Tim Tripp

July 18th

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While there may be many issues where secular culture and conservative Christianity clash, there is one issue where the chasm has been steadily growing. The issue revolves around sexuality. We live in a sexually permissive society but not one without boundaries. While the expression of sexuality among unmarried, consenting adults is widely accepted by secular culture and even by some religious groups, adultery is still frowned upon in large part. They advocate permissiveness within limits. Everyone believes that there should be limits to acceptable sexual expression but differ on what those limitations should be.

The differences come down to what we value. Secular culture values the freedom of choice and allowing people to live as they wish within culturally accepted limits. Conservative Christianity values the acceptance of and surrender to the law of God and commands of Christ. Cultural limits expand and contract with world events and hot button issues. The commands of Christ do not change. It is clear that the ever changing cultural perspective is moving further away from scripture and the law of God. The tendency has been for Christian practice and beliefs to lag behind culture but move with it. However, it is getting to the point where secular culture in America is moving beyond where conservative Christianity can tread. That being the case, the chasm between conservative Christianity and secular culture will continue to rapidly expand. That widening expanse highlights the differences between the two groups making them more prominent and making relationships across the divide increasingly challenging. That expanse establishes issues of sexuality as ground zero for a cultural clash.

In First Corinthians chapter six, the apostle Paul taught that Christians should flee sexual immorality (v. 18) reminding them that as followers of Jesus, they have been bought through the sacrifice of Jesus (v.19-20) and pledged their bodies to be used in his service. He indicated that they surrendered their freedom of choice when they committed to following Jesus. For followers of Jesus, morality is defined by God's will and design, not their own. If they choose to follow Jesus, they accept his ways and his commands. There is no flexibility in that. Christians still make mistakes but they can never call something right that God has labeled as wrong.

That presents a problem. While we should always accept people who are broken and sinful, our goal is to move them to spiritual maturity; to guide them to be transformed into the image of Christ. Paul makes it clear that someone cannot claim to follow Jesus and knowingly participate in sin without seeing the need to change. Adherence to a Biblical model for behavior and requiring change in an area that is deemed a freedom by culture, appears to secular culture to be robbing people of freedom which violates a very important cultural value.

Christians need to remember that we are joined in a spiritual battle. Our fight is against the spiritual forces of darkness, not against those who have been spiritually duped. To be sure, we must stand our ground where the Bible speaks but we must also remember to teach the truth in love and be humble before the world. Our public protests and social media rants do little to change the cultural perspective. The cultural gap will surely continue to widen. Only our love paired with God's power will bridge it. The battle belongs to the Lord.

## DIOS LE BENDIGA! (God Bless You!)

by Aris Ortiz

What is happiness?

In Romans 12:2, we can find the answer: Romans 12:2 NIV " Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---his good, pleasing and perfect will". Those words speak happiness. Most of the time we are so concerned and preoccupied about what "others" will think about our life that we do not hear the Voice of God, but man's voice because we see them all around us, and we think that we will be judged wrong and we don't want that. So we sacrifice our mind, soul and body for the approval of men and not from God, and we live a life heavy with sadness, sorrow and unhappiness inside of us. The Lord is calling us to be free, to enjoy his creation, to produce fruits and be obedient to him. Satan is working hard to make our life miserable, sour, painful and complicated, and he does that by presenting us with the lie, the fake, the fleshy pleasure, the easy way to make us addicted so we can become dependent on him. By renewing our minds in the Lord, by the Lord and for the Lord, you and I will find joy, freedom and happiness not only for this life, but for the rest of eternity. We are the ones who have and make the decision. We are the ones who decide which way we will take. We are the ones who choose whom we will accept, obey and follow. What we know so far is that God wants our happiness. It is on us to make the decision.

Blessings my West Side Family!

## Gathering Times

Sunday Morning 10 Am Worship  
& Kids for Christ  
ages 1yr-5th grade

In- Person Adult/Teen Bible Study  
Wednesdays 6:30pm - Room 3

Friendship Cafe and Conversational Christianity  
Sunday Mornings at 8:45

In- person Adult Bible Study on Ephesians  
Sunday Mornings at 9am beginning July 18

## West Side News

### **Upcoming Service Projects:**

Mark your calendars - **Saturday, July 31st** is  
**Serve Day at the Student Center.** Several  
projects to be done - More details to come!

**August 14 & 21** will be clean - up work days **at West Side!**

More details coming soon. Questions? See Jerry Yates

### **Sunday Night in the Park**

Tonight at 5pm we will have a Cookout &  
Ice Cream Social in Old Post Park !!

Bring lawn chairs, games, side dishes and  
especially Home -made Ice Cream!

*Hamburgers and Drinks will be provided.*

There are plenty of electrical outlets - perfect  
for those Ice Cream Freezers!

This will be a great time of fellowship and fun!

Hope to see you there!

### Friendship Cafe

**We need more volunteers to bring donuts or  
muffins to the Friendship Cafe on Sundays. More  
volunteers means less work for each one! If you  
are willing to help, please let Cindy Jones know.**

Sign up for WS emails at  
[westsidear.org/subscribe](http://westsidear.org/subscribe)

## **Week of: 7-11-2021**

**Weekly Giving: \$ 16,143**

Attendance

**Weekly Budget:\$ 13,820**

Sunday AM - 386

**YTD Giving: \$ 391,327**

Wednesday PM - 57

**YTD Budget: \$ 386,953**

## Family Illness and Recovery

Lydia Franklin is improving. Please continue to keep her in  
your prayers.

Carol White's sister Sharon has entered palliative care.  
Please pray for Sharon and her husband Garry as well as  
Carol and the rest of the family during this difficult time.

Pat Kee is recovering at home following a recent  
appendectomy. Please keep her in your prayers for a full  
and rapid recovery.

Amy Vanderheiden will have knee surgery on Monday July  
26th. Please keep her in your prayers for a successful  
surgery and a full and rapid recovery.

### **Sympathy:**

We extend our sympathy to Nittie Goodwin and family in the  
recent loss of her father, Rex Roberts, of Ohio. Please keep  
the family in your prayers for comfort and peace.

## Other News

### Baptism

Congratulations to Veronica Standridge who was baptized last  
Sunday!

### Welcome Baby!!

Congratulations to Joshua and Shelby Burke on the birth of  
their daughter Jaceylynn Patricia! Proud Grandparents are  
Heath and Catherine Brashear and proud Great -Grandpa

**Love. Share. Disciple.**