

Living as Christians in a Secular World

Robert C. Newman



A Secular World

- ◆ We face some unprecedented situations in today's world:
 - We see real advances in our knowledge of the physical world.
 - We experience real changes in lifestyles due to advances in technology.
- ◆ Yet human nature has not changed:
 - We tend to ignore God.
 - We take advantage of those weaker.
 - We get run over by those stronger.

A Secular World

- ◆ God has not changed:
 - He already knew the end from the beginning.
 - He designed into the universe all the facts we are now discovering...
 - Plus many more we have not yet discovered...
 - Plus many we will never discover before the end of the age.

Living as Christians

- ◆ How are we to live as Christians in times like these?
- ◆ There are many passages we could use to focus our discussion.
- ◆ Consider these two:
 - Micah 6:8
 - Jeremiah 9:23-24

Micah 6:8

Micah 6:8 (NIV) He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NIV) This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

Joseph, Daniel & Moses

As Our Examples

Acting Justly (Diligence)

- ◆ Joseph rose to the top in every situation he faced:
 - As younger son in a big family
 - As slave in Potiphar's household
 - As inmate in Egyptian prison
- ◆ Moses:
 - Little information re/ his growing up in Egypt under Pharoah
 - Certainly he labored diligently on behalf of the Israelites in the wilderness.

Acting Justly (Diligence)

- ◆ Daniel:
 - Similarly for Daniel and his 3 friends in Babylon
 - They showed themselves ten times better than the other civil servants.

Acting Justly (Diligence)

- ◆ Each was (no doubt) given unusual natural gifts from God.
 - Each used them faithfully for Him.
 - They knew this was the right thing to do and they did it.
- ◆ God wants us to use the gifts and opportunities He has given us vigorously, and then He will give us more.

Loving Mercy/Faithfulness (Priorities/Loyalty)

- ◆ Joseph put God first even though it continually seemed to get him in trouble.
 - In his family: He said what he knew to be the truth though it was unpopular.
 - In Potiphar's house: He would not commit adultery because this would be a sin against God & against Potiphar's trust in him.

Loving Mercy/Faithfulness

- ◆ Moses could not restrain himself when he saw his people mistreated.
 - He certainly knew the dangers involved.
 - He was willing to give up all the riches & honors that were his in Egypt to identify himself with his God & with God's despised, enslaved people.

Loving Mercy/Faithfulness

- ◆ Daniel as a young man was willing to risk his career in order to obey God's food laws.
 - His companions risked death to avoid idolatry.
 - As an old man, Daniel risked death rather than stop praying to his God.

Loving Mercy/Faithfulness

- ◆ God may vindicate us in life as he did these three, or in death, as those mentioned in Hebrews 11:35-39.
- ◆ In either case, God wants us to keep in mind & live by the real priorities:
 - Love God with everything we are & have.
 - Love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Walking Humbly (Trusting God)

- ◆ Joseph was willing to humble himself at each disaster in his life, rather than becoming bitter.
 - In his success, he did not become proud & vengeful; nothing to suggest he got back at Potiphar or Potiphar's wife.
 - He used his opportunity with his brothers to bring them to repentance.
 - He always gave God the credit for his abilities & for the events of his life.

Walking Humbly (Trusting God)

- ◆ Moses was doubtless disillusioned by the response he got from his people:
 - Before & after his 40 years in Midian
 - Throughout the wilderness wanderings.
 - Yet he continued to cling to God & to intercede for his people.
 - In his leadership over the people, he showed himself the "humblest man on earth" (Numbers 12:3).

Walking Humbly (Trusting God)

- ◆ Daniel always gave God the credit for his successes.
 - He even showed mercy to the pagan magicians.
 - He, too, did not give up when things seemed to go disastrously for him.
 - The Lord mightily vindicated him through his patience.

Walking Humbly (Trusting God)

- ◆ May God help us to be humble before Him.
- ◆ May we take both the success & disaster that come in our lives as from a loving hand.
- ◆ May we take them as opportunities to serve the God who made everything and who has lovingly given us a chance to do things that will last forever.

Conclusions

Conclusions

- ◆ As Christians in a secular world...
 - Dominated by science & technology
 - By greed & relativistic ethics
- ◆ We need to follow the examples of Joseph, Moses & Daniel.
- ◆ We need to follow the commands of these two Scriptures.

Conclusions

- ◆ We need to do what is right:
 - Science is dealing with God's revelation in nature, which won't contradict God's revelation in the Bible.
 - Sometimes scientific interpreters will be wrong, sometimes Bible interpreters.
 - We can trust God & seek to deal fairly with His revelation in both nature & Scripture.

Conclusions

- ◆ We need to put God 1st, others 2nd, self last.
 - Be loyal to God in all we do.
 - Treat others with fairness, and reach out to them in love.
 - If our colleagues see that we honor God, care for them, and treat our work with the importance it deserves, they will be more likely to listen to our message.

Conclusions

- ◆ We need to trust God in every circumstance.
 - We don't know enough to take things into our own hands, thinking we can do better than God by ignoring His rules.
 - We must humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt us in due time (1 Peter 5:6)



The End