

Introduction:

- I want to talk about setting the direction or the course of your life today. This is not a message on how to hear God. It is a message about what you believe and how that affects your life. I want to talk to you about something that is absolutely critical for your faith, life and eternal future. I want to talk to you about absolutes.
- Absolute truth is that which is true for all people, for all places, for all times. Only truth that is absolute, proceeds from the very nature and character of God. *God does not shift like a changing shadow.* James 1:17 *He is the same yesterday, today and forever.* Heb. 13:8 That is not old fashion that is stability.
- Once absolutes are dismissed, liberties are limited. A decline in spiritual fervor and moral purity always leads to the loss of freedom. Without standards based on absolutes, absolutely anything can go.
- Alone in his small plane, the pilot looked uneasily at the heavy, black clouds that were rapidly approaching. His fuel was getting low. Should he turn back? The airfield behind him was further than the one ahead. He decided to continue in spite of the dark clouds ahead. Within minutes he was engulfed in an unbroken grayness that seemed to have no dimensions—no up, no down, no right, no left—only unchanging opaqueness. After a time he began to feel that his plane was climbing. Yet, a glance at his instruments assured him he was flying straight and level. Still, the impression that he was climbing persisted and grew stronger. Had his instruments gone awry? Could he trust them? Suppose they were faulty? Finally, his impressions won. He decided something must have gone wrong with his instruments and that he had better not rely on them. So, he began to “fly by the seat of his pants,” as the saying among pilots goes. A farmer making his way under sullen overcast skies to his barn heard a plane flying dangerously low and, in a few moments, heard the dull explosion that told him it had crashed. What had caused the tragedy? The pilot had an “absolute standard” by which to determine his position— his instruments. However, he decided to trust his impressions and feelings, rather than the instruments. IE. Scuba diving. The entire crowd can't be wrong? What had caused our success? I had an “absolute standard” and followed it. The compass gave me direction.
- *“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”* Judges 17:6; 21:25
 - Israel had no king because they had God as their king. A king holds absolute authority over the lives of his subjects.
 - Because God was not received as their king/leader. They had no absolute authority in their lives. In the search for truth, you need to ask yourself a basic question. I don't care if you're a Christian, a non-Christian, whether you're a Baptist, a Buddhist, Jewish, or whatever; every person eventually has to ask this question in life, either consciously or unconsciously: What is going to be the authority for my life?
 - What's going to be the basis for my beliefs and my behavior? What's going to be the guidebook I rely on?

- What's going to be the standard by which I evaluate my life? What am I going to base my life on?
- What is my authority; the final authority in my life?

I. Problem: The Move From God Centered To Man Centered

A. Biblical world view verses a man centered world view. A Biblical world view, views the world with God at the center. (Everything revolves around God and what He thinks). A man centered world view, views the world with man at the center. (Everything revolves around man and what he thinks).

1. A nationwide survey completed by the Barna Research Group determined that only 4 percent of Americans had a "biblical" worldview. When George Barna looked at the "born- again" believers in America, the results were a dismal 9 percent.
2. Everywhere today you hear the message, "There are no absolutes." "Think what you want; say what you want; do what you want." The philosophy of the multitudes (IE. follow the crowd miss the reef) seems to be that the only absolute is one's own personal values, which means, "Do as you please." It was the same, at times, in the days of the Bible (see Judges 17:6, 21-15).
3. Thus the phrase: "Whatever!" If there is no basis for moral decisions (right or wrong choices), then 'whatever' you choose to do is o.k. Most people do like to believe that they have *some* basis for the decisions they make. So they constructed their own standards:

a) *Science and reason - man centered*

Even though most people have thrown out reason as the source of ultimate truth, some still cling to it. "If I can't see it, hear it, smell it, taste it, touch it and test it, it can't be true," they say.

b) *Popular opinion - man centered.*

You only have to look as far as your FB to know that society thinks popular opinion is a good basis for making decisions. Otherwise, why would our advertisements tell us to "catch the wave" or make the "choice of a new generation"? All these ads appeal to the idea that "everyone is doing it" and that you should, too.

c) *Feelings - man centered*

Emotions are perhaps the most popular basis for making choices today. After all, how can anyone argue with how you feel? If feelings are a good standard for decision-making, then you'll never have to come up with a better defense than, "I did it because I felt like it."

B. As a culture we have moved from decision making based upon biblical moral absolutes of right and wrong to decision making based upon the situation and feelings—situation ethics, cultural emotions. You decide whether it is right or wrong for you but do not impose or share your values with others.

1. It doesn't take a lot of "what if" scenarios to realize that there are *major* problems with all these approaches to decision-making. What if you're asking a question that science can't answer? What if the group changes its opinion? How do you know which one was right? And what if following your feelings leads you to an action with consequences you can't handle? We've gotten ourselves into this *whatever* mess, and it's getting harder and harder to live here.
2. Tolerance has become the number one virtue in America. A transformation in our kids' minds has occurred—from "you love the sinner but hate the sin" (negative tolerance) to "you love the sinner and will praise and respect the sin" (positive tolerance), which teaches that every belief, value, lifestyle, and truth claim is equal. IE. COEXIST IE. "For example, I make the statement, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Tolerance says, "I believe Ronald McDonald is the son of God. Look at all the good—the hospitals and children's homes—he has provided." Under the constitution we both have an equal right to hold these beliefs. Under tolerance both are equal. And if you dare say that the claims of Jesus Christ are greater than those about Ronald McDonald, you are a bigot because you are saying there's hierarchy. And so our kids have shifted from negative tolerance to positive tolerance, and all is equal." Josh McDowell
- C. With man at the center doing what is right in his own eyes, it is no wonder we suddenly have entered a 'fog bank' and start flying by the 'seat of our pants' instead of the absolutes. You are sure to crash given that course of action. So what are we to do?

II. Our Need For Absolutes

- A. What are absolutes? Absolutes are conviction that we believe in our hearts!
 1. Absolute truth is that which is true for all people, for all places, for all times. Only truth that is absolute, proceeds from the very nature and character of God. Absolutes/absolute truths are the instrumentation that help us find our way in an every changing culture without crashing. They help us find the 'reef' of the Lord while others are wondering aimlessly.
 - a) Does God ever change? *"I am the Lord, and I do not change..."* (Malachi 3:6, NLT)
 - b) Does God's Word ever change. *"Your royal laws cannot be changed. Your reign, O Lord, is holy forever and ever."* (Psalm 93:5, NLT)
 - c) Will time change God's Word and meaning? *"Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear."* (Matthew 24:35, NLT)
 2. In a world where it seems that the only thing that counts is one's personal values and how one feels about an issue, the Bible does speak about absolutes/these unchanging things that come from Him.
 3. What are some Biblical absolutes? IE. the 10 commandments. They are not the 10 suggestions. Two commands: Love God, Love others.
 - a) By themselves they are precepts/rules that are to be followed.

- b) Without God as their source they become legalistic rules. Rules with out relationship leads to rebellion. So teach truth, model truth and build relationship.
- c) When one knows God, then the rule is not legalism that puts you into bondage it is an absolute that provides healthy direction in this life. In this 'foggy' world they become instruments of guidance where men have lost their way. IE. Popular opinion says it is o.k. to have sex before marriage or after the school dance. The absolute from the heart of God says, "No!" it protects you.
- B. Absolutes gives us direction because they are unchanging. They will not change with opinions, with feelings, etc. They help us make decisions when we are not sure what to do.
- C. Absolutes give us freedom not limitations. IE. There was time you could leave your house and not lock it. Leave your car and not lock it. You cannot do that anymore. Therefore your freedom become limited because absolutes are no longer esteemed.
- D. Absolutes give us stability.
 1. *"Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation; The fear of the Lord is His treasure."* (Isaiah 33:6, NKJV)
 2. They give us clarity in how to act/decide.
- E. Absolutes gives us convictions or beliefs that we hold to. You live in a culture that is lead by and founded upon feelings and opinions. I want to move you to a life that is founded upon absolutes that lead you to life that is stable. IE. Slavery, abortion.
- F. The 10 commandments are a perfect example of moral absolutes and have yet to be improved upon.
 1. But to have the 10 commandments you must have moral authority/a king. Otherwise, the precept which is the commandment becomes legalistic. The moral authority provides the "WHY?" Parents you have to spend the time leading your children to understand the "why" of a thing...otherwise it becomes legalism for them.
 2. Jewish thought is always asking the questions of the truth. How do I live this? How does this apply? Jesus at age 12 found asking question of the Pharisees.
- G. The thing about morals is that they are truth statements. For example, it is wrong morally to murder someone. It is wrong morally to rape someone. It is wrong morally to steal, etc. Therefore, we can see that moral obligations--right and wrong--seems to be tied to, for lack of a better word, ownership/king...An Authority.

III. Building Good Instrumentation A Path To Absolutes

- A. Learning to trust the instruments. You have to learn to trust God and trust His word.
 1. Know the instruments - know the Word. Know how it works. IE. When Kelly and I were being trained in underwater search and rescue: we sat in class and learned how a compass worked, we learned how to go about finding something lost in water that you couldn't see in, we learned the common mistake people made (so we would not

make them). Secondly we practice on land. Then we practiced blind folded only able to see the compass. Then they took us to a local gravel pit in which you could not see two feet in front of you and we had to complete an underwater course using only our compass.

2. We leaned to trust the instruments. Commit yourself to believing the Truth.
- B. John 6:63, God's word is spirit and it is life. Commit yourself to seeking truth.
 1. "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, *"You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*" (John 8:31-32, NLT)
- C. Eph 4:12-16 equip with truth and speak the truth. Commit Yourself to living truth.
 1. Equip the church to minister to each other and to build the body of Christ up.
 2. Speak the truth in love. *"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church."* (Ephesians 4:15, NLT)
 3. If we do these two things we will not be immature, will not be tossed back and forth, will not be tricked by lies that so clever they sound like truth.
- D. Parents and children's workers you must connect the truth with the One who the truth flows from and you must answer the question "Why?" We must connect with the heart of God.

Conclusion:

- Many of you are standing on the side of the boat ready to jump into the waters of life. The captain of your souls, Jesus, has been training you with the Word and by His Spirit. The question is will you use the absolute instruments given to you?
 - If you do you will find this richness of living this life
 - And in the end you will find the "eternal city" that you have been looking for.
- *"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."* (Proverbs 14:12, NLT) Lets find the path of God and commit to it.