


# A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's roots are massive and spread out over the ground and the ruins. The background shows more stone structures and lush green foliage.

THE FRUIT OF  
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A  
TREE OF LIFE,  
AND HE WHO IS WISE  
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB



# PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL *EVANGELISM* FOUND IN JOHN 4, “THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.”

TAKE

- TAKE THE INITIATIVE! JN. 4:6-9

OFFER

- OFFER GOD’S MERCY! JN. 4:10-14

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL NEEDS! JN. 4:9-10

CONFRONT

- CONFRONT SIN JN! 4:16-18

REJECT

- REJECT FALSE WORSHIP! JN. 4:19-24

REVEAL

- REVEAL CHRIST! JN. 4:25-26

1. THE *CHURCH* AND THE *WORLD*.
2. WHY THE *WORLD HATES*
3. A *RECENT* BATTLE
4. THE *CHURCH* AND *PSEUDO TOLERANCE*
5. *POSTMODERNISM* AND THE *CHURCH*
6. *INTOLERANT TOLERANCE*

# *INTOLERANT TOLERANCE*


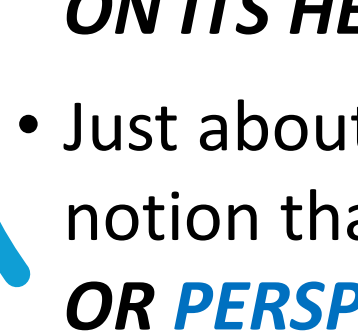
- **POSTMODERNISM'S** veneration of **TOLERANCE** is its most obvious feature. But the version of **"TOLERANCE"** its adherents peddle is actually a twisted and dangerous corruption of *true virtue*.
- Incidentally, tolerance is never mentioned in the Bible as a virtue, except in the sense of **PATIENCE**, **FORBEARANCE**, and **LONGSUFFERING** (cf. **EPH. 4:2**).
- In fact, the contemporary notion of tolerance is a pathetically feeble concept compared to the love Scripture commands Christians to show even to their enemies. **JESUS** said, **"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU"** (LK. 6:27–28; cf. vv. 29–36).

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- When our grandparents spoke of tolerance as a virtue, they had something like that in mind. The word once meant respecting people and treating them kindly even when we believe they are wrong. But the postmodern notion of tolerance means we must never regard anyone else's opinions as wrong.

- ***BIBLICAL TOLERANCE*** IS FOR ***PEOPLE***; ***POSTMODERN TOLERANCE*** IS FOR ***IDEAS***.


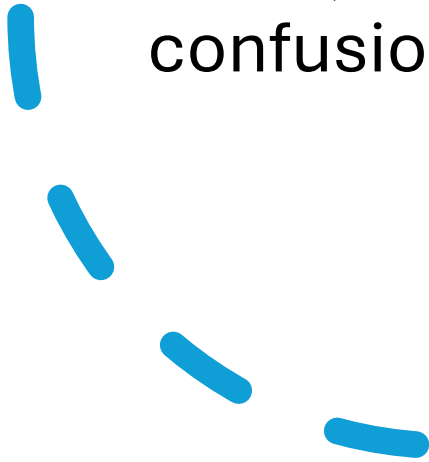
- Accepting every belief as equally valid is hardly a real virtue, but it is practically the only kind of virtue ***postmodernism*** knows anything about. ***TRADITIONAL VIRTUES*** (including ***HUMILITY***, ***SELF-CONTROL***, and ***CHASTITY***) are openly scorned, and even regarded as transgressions, in the world of ***POSTMODERNISM***.

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- Predictably, the beatification of postmodern tolerance has had a disastrous effect on real virtue in our society. In this age of tolerance, what was once forbidden is now encouraged. What was once universally deemed immoral is now celebrated. Marital infidelity and divorce have been normalized. Profanity is commonplace. Abortion, homosexuality, and moral perversions of all kinds are championed by large advocacy groups and enthusiastically promoted by the popular media. ***THE POSTMODERN NOTION OF TOLERANCE IS SYSTEMATICALLY TURNING GENUINE VIRTUE ON ITS HEAD.***
  - Just about the only remaining taboo is the naive and politically incorrect notion that decrying another person's ***ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE, RELIGION, OR PERSPECTIVE IS WRONG.***
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- One major exception to that rule stands out starkly: It is **OK** for **POSTMODERNISTS** to be intolerant of those who claim they know the truth, particularly biblical Christians.
  - ***IN FACT, THOSE WHO FANCY THEMSELVES THE LEADING ADVOCATES OF TOLERANCE TODAY ARE OFTEN THE MOST OUTSPOKEN OPPONENTS OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY.***



- Look on the Internet, for example, and see what the self-styled champions of religious tolerance are saying. ***WHAT YOU'LL FIND IS A GREAT DEAL OF INTOLERANCE FOR BIBLE-BASED CHRISTIANITY.*** In fact, some of the most bitterly anti-Christian material online can be found at sites supposedly promoting religious tolerance.
- Why is that? Why does authentic biblical Christianity find such ferocious opposition from people who think they are paragons of tolerance? It is because the truth claims of Scripture—and particularly Jesus' claim to be the only way to God—are diametrically opposed to the fundamental presuppositions of the postmodern mind. ***THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE REPRESENTS A DEATH BLOW TO THE POSTMODERNIST WORLDVIEW.***
- But as long as Christians are being duped or intimidated into softening the bold claims of Christ and widening the narrow road, ***THE CHURCH WILL MAKE NO HEADWAY AGAINST POSTMODERNISM.***

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- **WE NEED TO RECOVER THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL. WE NEED TO REGAIN OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF GOD'S TRUTH. AND WE NEED TO PROCLAIM BOLDLY THAT CHRIST IS THE ONLY TRUE HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD.**
  - That may not be what people want to hear in this **PSEUDO-TOLERANT** age of **POSTMODERNISM**. But it is true, nonetheless. And precisely because it is true and the gospel of Christ is the only hope for a lost world, it is all the more urgent that we rise above all the voices of confusion in the world and say so.
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# THE *CHURCH* AND *OBJECTIVE* TRUTH

***“YOUR WORD IS TRUTH”*** (JOHN 17:17).

- Those words from *JESUS*, fly in the face of *POSTMODERNISM*—the belief that truth is not perfectly objective. Last time, we saw how this worldview has permeated much of our culture and even the church itself.
- But *AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY* starts with the premise that there is a source of truth outside of us. Specifically, God’s Word is truth (**PSA. 119:151**).
- It is *OBJECTIVELY* TRUE—meaning IT IS TRUE WHETHER IT SPEAKS *SUBJECTIVELY* TO ANY GIVEN INDIVIDUAL OR NOT; IT IS TRUE REGARDLESS OF HOW ANYONE FEELS ABOUT IT; IT IS TRUE FOR EVERYONE UNIVERSALLY AND WITHOUT EXCEPTION; IT IS *ABSOLUTELY* TRUE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- That, of course, contradicts the basic presupposition that governs most people's thinking today. **POSTMODERN PHILOSOPHY** says there is no such thing as **ABSOLUTE TRUTH**—or if there is, it is unknowable. According to **POSTMODERNISM**, truth is nothing more than a fabrication of the human mind—**PEOPLE DETERMINE THEIR OWN REALITY; THEREFORE, NO ONE HAS THE TRUTH.**
- Above all, the **POSTMODERNIST** is convinced that **NO RELIGION** is superior to any other. We are not supposed to think our beliefs are necessarily valid for anyone else. Nor should **ANY** theological position ever be thought of as right or wrong. What I believe is valid for me; and whatever you believe is equally valid for you. **THUS, WE CAN AFFIRM EACH OTHER'S RELIGIONS, EVEN IF OUR BELIEFS FLATLY CONTRADICT ONE ANOTHER. THAT IS THE POSTMODERNIST CREDO.**

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- You may not realize how deeply this sort of thinking has penetrated the modern consciousness, but it has fully taken over the **ACADEMIC** and **SECULAR** world. Two months after the **SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, former US President **BILL CLINTON** gave a speech at Georgetown University in which he suggested that America's own **"ARROGANT SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS"** was partly to blame for making the nation a target of terrorism. Apparently, **CLINTON** believed the whole mess could have been avoided if everyone on both sides had simply realized there is **NO SUCH THING AS ABSOLUTE OR UNIVERSAL TRUTH, AND THEREFORE NO IDEOLOGY IS WORTH FIGHTING OVER.**



- ***“NOBODY’S GOT THE TRUTH,”*** he told students. “You’re at a university which basically believes that no one ever has the whole truth, ever. . . . We are incapable of ever having the whole truth.”
- The terrorists, Clinton suggested, are being brutal and intolerant only because they believe they have the truth, whereas our society’s more tolerant attitudes are rooted in an understanding that absolute truth is unknowable: ***“THEY BELIEVE THEY GOT IT. BECAUSE WE DON’T BELIEVE YOU CAN HAVE THE WHOLE TRUTH, WE THINK EVERYBODY COUNTS.”***
- Those remarks sum up secular society’s current attitude. ***SKEPTICISM*** has been enthroned and consecrated, while ***CONFIDENT FAITH*** has been banished and demonized. The only thing we can be certain about is that we can’t be certain of anything. To hold strong convictions about anything (other than our own inability to discover truth) is deemed inherently ***INTOLERANT***, even ***EVIL***.

- Furthermore, according to the **POSTMODERNIST** way of thinking, there is little point in trying to combat false ideas with true ones. **AFTER ALL, THEY SAY, IF WE CLAIM WE HAVE THE TRUTH, WE BECOME JUST AS EVIL AS THE TERRORISTS.** So instead, the **POSTMODERN** intelligentsia are doing their best to disabuse everyone of the archaic notion **THAT ABSOLUTE, OBJECTIVE TRUTH IS KNOWABLE AT ALL.**
- That view is shaping the world we live in. People have abandoned the quest for **OBJECTIVE TRUTH.** Multitudes literally and wholeheartedly believe they can make their own reality and define their own truth. The popularity of such a philosophy accounts for the rise of **NEW AGE RELIGION** and **IDEOLOGY.**
- **IT ALSO EXPLAINS WHY PEOPLE TODAY ARE MORE SELF-ABSORBED AND NARCISSISTIC THAN PRACTICALLY ANY GENERATION IN HISTORY.**

