

1 John 5:19-21 “Is Satan Rocking Us to Sleep?”

8.30.17

We will conclude our study in 1 John and for me at least, it's been a fabulous study! I've always found this book to be so comforting and reassuring for my faith. It's been a great time! In fact, I looked back and we actually started our study on March the 8th and so, after almost 6 months, we'll finish tonight.

Now let's be reminded why John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this epistle. He was seeking to remind the persecuted believers of Asia Minor of the truth of the gospel that would dispel the lies of false preachers who were confusing the believers. These false teachers have been spreading lies about how to be saved. They tried to muddy the waters and draw people to themselves by saying that Jesus wasn't fully divine. They taught a religious “mysticism” that said you could only know salvation based on the divine light in your own soul. In other words, if you “believe in yourself,” you could find salvation through yourself. So, the believers became very confused. They began to ask, “Can I know for sure I'm saved and that I'm going to heaven?” Therefore, the premise and summary of this little epistle can be really summed up in just one verse:

1 John 5:13

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

I don't know about you, but I want to know what's going to happen to me when I die. Don't you? It's pretty important to me! But, you see, according to Jesus, in order for us to know that we're going to live after we die, we have to have faith and believe in Him. The question is: do we believe Jesus is telling the truth? Have we oriented our lives to the point that our belief system is centered on the facts of Jesus Christ? Do we recognize Him as THE TRUTH? Do we really believe Him when He said in John 14:6.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

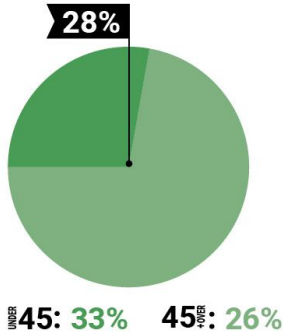
Do you believe this? Did you know fewer and fewer Christians believe Jesus is the only way today? It's true and I'll show it to you. You see for the first century believers, by this time, Jesus has been gone for about 50 years and people are becoming more and more confused about what is actually the truth. And I believe the same thing is happening today, 20 centuries later. Take a look at these recent findings from Barna Research about the “New Spirituality:”

NEW SPIRITUALITY

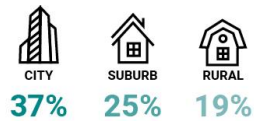
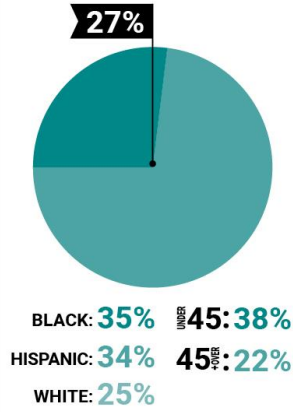
(% among practicing Christians who strongly agree)



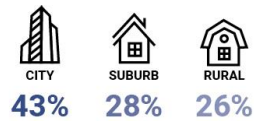
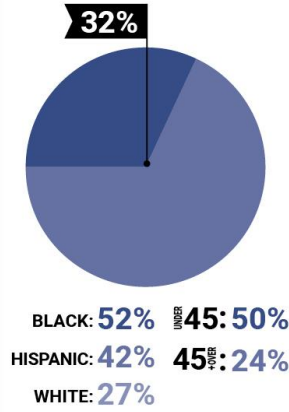
All people pray to the same god or spirit, no matter what name they use for that spiritual being



Meaning and purpose come from becoming one with all that is



If you do good, you will receive good. If you do bad, you will receive bad



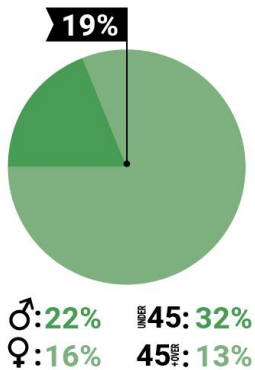
n=1,456 (practicing Christians) | March 2017

POSTMODERNISM

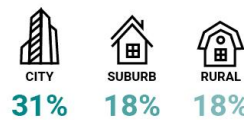
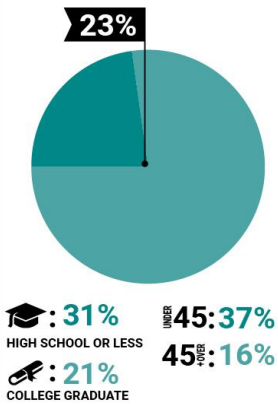
(% among practicing Christians who strongly agree)



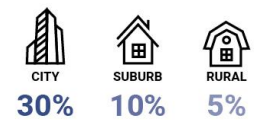
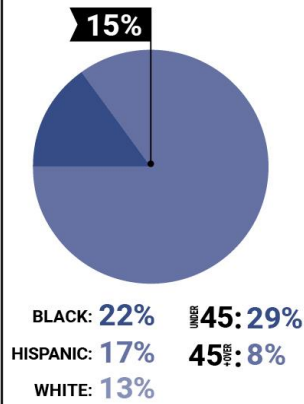
No one can know for certain what meaning and purpose there is to life



What is morally right or wrong depends on what an individual believes



If your beliefs offend someone or hurt their feelings, it is wrong



n=1,456 (practicing Christians) | March 2017

THE MORALITY OF SELF-FULFILLMENT

(Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.)

% "completely" + "somewhat" agree	% all U.S. adults	% practicing Christians
The best way to find yourself is by looking within yourself	91	76
People should not criticize someone else's life choices	89	76
To be fulfilled in life, you should pursue the things you desire most	86	72
The highest goal of life is to enjoy it as much as possible	84	67
People can believe whatever they want, as long as those beliefs don't affect society	79	61
Any kind of sexual expression between two consenting adults is acceptable	69	40

Barna

OmniPoll | August 2015 | N=1,000

Church family, there has always been and there will always be a battle of ideas about what real truth is. But, today...we're moving at warp speed in accepting that which is false...even as Christians. Now look at the Scripture for tonight and we'll see the remedy for this thinking...

1 John 5:19-21

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

What a strange way to end the epistle. Keep yourselves from idols. Wow! Of all the ways to end this letter, he ends it that way. Why? I believe it's because of where John had spent so much of his life...combating this...



This is a reconstructed model of the Temple of Diana in Istanbul, Turkey, which is not far from where 1st century Ephesus was located. Take a look at the map...see Ephesus, left side.



The Apostle John had spent many years there trying to help lead that church to denounce the sexual perversion that was being performed in the Temple of Diana on behalf of the false idols of the goddess Diana. John knew all about that which was fake versus true, authentic versus real. So, in this epistle he's trying to help the believers understand what is TRUE versus what is FAISE...what is "Real versus Fake." That's why he said:

1 John 5:21

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

The great Bible Commentator, Warren Wiersbe describes our culture in light of what is real versus what is fake...reality versus falsity.

"Christians live in an atmosphere of reality. Most unsaved people live in an atmosphere of pretense and sham. Christians don't simply choose between good and bad, they choose between true and false. An idol represents that which is false and empty; and a person who lives for idols will himself become false and empty. What is an idol? Whatever controls our lives and calls the signals, is our god. To the unsaved of the world, the Christian life is unreal and the worldly life is real. This is because a man of the world lives by what he sees and feels (things) and not by what God says in His Word." Warren Wiersbe, Bible Commentator

So, why and how does this happen? That people come to a place to accept that which is falkse. Well, John tells us...

1 John 5:19

19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

We've talked about this many times... Remember, Satan and the use of him is part of God's plan of redemption. Remember, God cast Satan to the earth because Lucifer, in his pride and arrogance, wanted to be God. So, Satan is on this earth and he's been given limited power for a limited time. Yet, one day God will show him and the demonic world His Almighty power when He destroys them and casts them into the Lake of Fire forever. But, until then, Satan is seeking to put us to sleep.

The word “lies” in verse 19, speaks of a baby who has been rocked to sleep. Think of it this way...see this mom rocking her baby to sleep...



Imagine it's Satan sitting there rocking us to sleep. In fact, I was reading J. Vernon McGee's commentary and he titled a message on this subject, "When The Devil Puts The Baby to Sleep."

In the message, Dr. McGee talks about how Satan has the world asleep to the truth, as if he's saying, "Shhh. You sleep...I've got everything handled. Shh!" This is a scary and an insidiously evil thing to consider and yet, I believe Satan is lulling the Church in America asleep today. It's as if he's saying, "*Shh! Keep quiet. Don't you wake people up. Shh! Keep quiet! We want people in the churches to stay comfortable and groggy, that will keep them dead in their sins...chained to the lies that they can live in sin and still know joy and peace.*" Church, Satan doesn't want people awakened to the truth. We must remember who are Enemy is!

You see, there is a battle for knowledge today and this battle has been waged since the Garden of Eden. The Apostle Paul was writing to the church at Corinth and they were being deceived by false teachers and idolatry and he said this:

2 Corinthians 11:3

3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

He would tell the church at Corinth:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Church, this is critical and it's the very essence of the battle before every generation of Christians... WILL WE EMBRACE, EMBODY AND PASS ON THE TRUTH TO THE NEXT GENERATION OR WILL IT BE LOST? Will we be put to sleep by Satan?

The Apostle Paul would also write to Timothy, who was also trying to serve in that pagan city of Ephesus with the Temple of Diana. He'd write at the end of his first letter.

1 Timothy 6:20-21

²⁰ O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," ²¹ for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Can you see the similarity to 1 John 5:21...

1 John 5:21

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Church family, I'll tell ya...in light of this passage, I've done a lot of thinking about the state of Christianity in our culture today. And I'm convinced Satan has almost tranquilized us to death. How? Well, there are many ways, but I believe one of the main ways he's doing today is that we're simply "entertaining ourselves to death."

Think about the amount of screen time that the average person encounters each day. Think of all the time staring at screens. Phone screens, computer screens, TV screens. It's called: "Living by the squares." I believe we're Netflixing and using "social media" to the point that we're entertaining ourselves into oblivion. Let me give you an example.

I read about where the reality-TV star Kylie Jenner is going to have a new show on Snapchat called, "Ask Kylie." (Honestly, I didn't know that much about her...but...)



She was voted by *Time* magazine as one of "The Most Influential Teens of 2014 and 2015." She's now 20 years old. She is one of the top-10 most followed people on Instagram. She is listed on the *Forbes Celebrity 100 list*, making her the youngest person to be featured on that list ever. On her new Snapchat show she will answer fans' questions to things like this: "**How hard is it to start your own makeup line?**" and "**How do you decide whom to date?**" One commentator commented about the article by saying:

#FirstWorldProblems

Nobody is concerned about this in Zimbabwe. They're just concerned about eating.

Here's the point...we are entertaining ourselves with trivialities. And Satan is rocking us to sleep. And parents, it's this kind of stuff that is so shallow, and we're at least partly responsible for the fame of the "Kylie Jenners" of the world, because we give our kids smartphones when they're 7 with no rules and no parameters. We might as well give them a loaded gun. With a smartphone and the internet, we've just connected our children to the sewer of Satan's hell. And most have no safeguards on those phones!

Church, we need to understand what is subtly happening in Christendom today. Are you listening? **We look just like the world.** That's what's happening! We're just like the world in that we're so inwardly focused that we can't see beyond our phones and our entertainment. We're having little to

no impact on the culture. We're just fluttering away our lives away...looking forward to the next "fun thing," or "adventure" or vacation or concert or fling!

Let me ask you something: "What breaks your heart? What makes you cry? What makes you laugh? That's what motivates you. No ask yourself...am I being motivated for the Kingdom of Christ? Am I using the skills and abilities that the Lord has given to me so that I might be used for His kingdom? Are you using your gifts, talents, abilities, money, home, cars...for the kingdom? Or has Satan rocked you to sleep?

Look at verses 20 and 21 and let's be reminded of God's plan for our lives.

1 John 5:20-21

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Listen, church family...it's this simple: Satan wants to deceive. He wants us to waste our lives and he wants to make us sleepy and groggy and unsure of ourselves...like we're in a "sleepy stupor." And if by chance we do begin to stir, he wants to make us afraid to stand for the truth. He wants us to feel intimidated and afraid...especially our young people. He wants them to think they're going to be seen as haters or bigots or uncaring or unmerciful because they have convictions based on the teachings of Scripture and will stand up and proclaim the truth to a sleeping world!

Listen church, there is a battle for our minds and the minds of our children, tonight. Will we follow the truth of God's Word and the understanding that the world has been ordered by God, or will we follow idols? How are we going to think?

Listen, whether people realize it or not, everything they do in life is built on a single foundation: WHAT THEY THINK AND BELIEVE ABOUT GOD. Think about this...every thought, and every attitude and every decision and goal...every relationship...even the choice of our hobbies and careers...even how we handle success and deal with setbacks will be determined by what we think about God.

So, what do we do? How do we wake up? Well, I call it the "smelling salts" of Christianity. We must: **Admit, we've got a problem and then Invest in things of Christ.**

First we must **ADMIT** that we have a problem.

Parents, I was reading about a man who had dinner with three Christian University presidents and several professors recently. They explained to the man that even though most of the kids attending their Christian Universities came out of evangelical churches and a "youth group culture," their theological background was "shockingly thin." One professor commented, "We do the best we can, but we only have them for four years...and you can't make up for all those deficiencies in that short period of time." He went on to say, "Most of our students are theologically illiterate and know very little about their faith, the Bible, or what Jesus taught in general."

Let's admit it...we simply don't do much teaching with our kids about the Bible or even have many discussions about Christianity. But, if we're going to wake up we've got to admit that what we've

actually been teaching our kids is not a pursuit of God, but instead a pursuit of idols called: money, possessions, education, athletics and material success.

Parents I'm afraid we've been lulled to sleep by Satan's deception about how we even educate our children and the purpose of it. You see, I'm convinced we use education today and knowledge today as ends to justify a means. We use education and learning as ways to make our kids smart so they can go to college and get a good education (and loads of debt) and then get a good job...to pay off that load of debt, so they can have a comfortable life. We most often spend more time talking to our kids about college and getting a good education than anything Christian. Oh, we sprinkle their lives with a little bit of church here and there, when we have time and they're not playing ball and gone every other weekend...we might even say a blessing over a meal from time to time...and we SAY we're raising our kids in a Christian home.

Well, what's Christian about that? They say every home is a classroom. I agree! So what is yours teaching? How much Christian teaching is taking place in your home? What is distinctly Christian about what goes on in your home night in and night out...during the week? Do you do anything more than saying a blessing over your meal? If that's all you do, then you don't have a Christian home. No! You've got an American home with a little sprinkle of God and Satan is sitting on our front porches, rocking us to sleep!

Church, we've got to do better...

INVEST

We've got to spend time in teaching and training and talking about the things of God in our homes and turn off some of the squares from time to time. How else can the truth of Jesus be transmitted?

Folks, we have got to invest and take control of our homes. We've got to take control of the TV and the smart phones and Netflix and the internet password, and the amount of time our kids are spending on mindless trivialities. We've got to help our children develop for the truth. But, don't ever forget, they'll never have a greater appetite for the truth than you've got.

What is the goal of this life Church? To get to the next one, right? Isn't Jesus and His kingdom to be the goal of our lives? Listen, never forget the reason we're here today is because the Church of Jesus Christ can't be destroyed. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Never forget that! But, never forget what it cost Jesus and our spiritual ancestors to bring us this Gospel. We had to have warriors and for many of them...it cost them everything...including their lives. Yes...

1 John 5:19-21

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
