Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXXV | September 28, 2025 | No. 39

Strong Character - Absolute Truth

(Jerry Fite)

Character is defined as *"moral force; integrity."* The combination sums up the attributes that make man upright, and a blessing in any society for all times. Character responds accordingly to a moral force from within, not from outside influences. It has been well said that character is what you do when no one else is watching – integrity indeed! What happens when the deep sense of right and wrong which generates moral force is based upon relevancy, and not absolutes?

James Hunger, twenty-five years ago, addressed this question in his book: *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil.* He saw a decline in character in America. Mr. Hunter wrote, *"...educators misled by psychology, treat morality in terms of preferences, supposing that the inherently moral self should be liberated to make autonomous decisions. That never works...history and experience show that morality stems from strongly held, socially shared beliefs about absolute rights and wrongs."*

The craziness of "the moral self" being liberated by one's "autonomous self" has surfaced today with biological boys and girls thinking that their determination to transgender gives them the moral right to enter the opposite sex's school locker rooms. Sadly, the value of human life has deteriorated to the point that an assassin's bullet is just as moral as a reasoned argument in public discourse.

David Wells in his 2005 book, *Above All Earthly Pow'rs: Christ in a Postmodern World* wrote most Americans *"do not believe in the existence of truth, which is absolute and enduring and to which appeal can be made."* He warned the church is undoing itself in its *"de-emphasis on doctrine and a decline on serious preaching."* How does it bode well for the church when she no longer emphasizes *"sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:10-11),* and a new generation no longer knows the boundaries of the *"doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9)* ?

The Bible asserts *"the truth"* already exists and we *"can know"* it if we, as Jesus says, *"abide in My word" (John 8:31-32).* Molded by the Lord's truth, one can develop the character of telling the truth instead of lying; working to share with others instead of stealing from others; and edifying others with uplifting words instead of polluting minds with corrupt speech *(Ephesians 4:25-29).*

When these demands of God are no longer considered absolute, one may give in to lying when it helps protect his or her job; justify stealing from others when it allows one to satisfy hunger; and succumb to corrupt speech when it is socially accepted.

Paul's "moral force" and "integrity" was forged in absolute truth. He knew God's eternal purpose for saving man was communicated through the *"the word of the truth of the gospel" (Ephesians 1:13).* He declared any "good news" that differed from the "gospel" delivered to Paul through the Holy Spirit was a "perversion" of the gospel *(Galatians 1:7).* Paul tolerated the teaching of the necessity of circumcision for salvation "no, not for an hour." He manifested such strength of character, making sure the "truth of the gospel might continue" with the churches.

Believing the absolute truth that Jesus is Lord *(Acts 2:36),* leads to the demand of doing what He says *(Luke 6:46).* If Jesus is no longer the absolute Lord, then we do not have to absolutely do His will. Strong dependable character will be lost in the heap of weak relevancy- Not good for society or the church.