

DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY

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By Jim
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I write quite a bit about "doing things God's way." But I'm not sure it's always understood. We live out our lives paying attention mostly to the people and things around us and either ignoring or minimizing events and people from half a world away. But the nature of the times is that what seems foreign and unimportant can quickly become a threat to us and to our nation. Look how quickly the ISIS issue leapt from the Middle East virtually into our homes.

First, I want to establish the difference between individuals and nations doing things God's way. In the final analysis there is nothing but individual acts or decisions made by individuals who may be politically or economically important. But when these individual acts become national policy carried out through threats of military action, they become national ways of failing to do God's will--otherwise known as national sin.

We do this because of the biblical prophetic imperative to "Cry aloud, don't spare, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their disobedience, and to the house of Jacob their sins." As Dr. Phil so often says: "You can't deal with something you won't face." We don't effectively deal with national sin because we usually will not define it or admit it exists.

If we wish to do things God's way, we could begin with these actions:

STOP
treating God's earth as a bottomless garbage dump and source of unlimited free wealth. Begin thanking God for earth's bounty and use it as God intended---as a source of blessing and sufficiency for all people, not just those who control and abuse it.

STOP grossly commercializing and debauching the Sabbath. Begin using it as a day of rest, worship and communion with each other, God and nature.

STOP blaming the poor for their poverty and denying responsibility by pretending that poverty cannot be ended because both Moses and Jesus said that the poor are ever with us. About 30 Bible verses attribute poverty to personal failures. About 2,000 others blame the domination systems of earth for poverty. And Jesus and Moses didn't mean that poverty couldn't be solved, but that it wouldn't be as long as leaders refuse to consider God's Jubilee laws for equitable distribution of wealth. So you choose: What causes poverty?

STOP treating workers as if they were merely expendable factors of production to be hired as cheaply as possible. Begin viewing workers as necessary social capital deserving of a fair return on investment like other productive factors.

STOP "devising evil by law," whether in the form of excessive tax rewards, subsidies, trade agreements, administrative decisions, of whatever other form it may take. Begin by making justice the cornerstone of all law and legal decisions.

STOP minimizing in our churches the existence of sin and the tragic consequences that follow. Begin by "speaking truth to power," as is the prophetic way modeled by much Scripture.

STOP supporting entertainment celebrating and encouraging human depravity and amoral values. Begin by turning off your TV when the garbage is aired, and cease patronizing those programs where most of it appears.

STOP oppressing debtors. Begin by speaking out in person or on social media when you see debtors being oppressed through unfair laws or practices.

STOP mistreating minority groups. Begin by treating them with justice, love, and mercy as Jesus taught. If you must judge them, then do it according to

behavior, not racial or cultural background.

STOP substituting

military power for moral authority. Begin by accepting as an item of moral value that power does not make right, nor do armies atone for injustice and domination.

STOP

apologizing for the excesses and outrageous arrogance of rich and powerful people who create evil. What they do is not "cool"; nor is it necessary to carry on trade and commerce. Begin by advocating justice and equity, not injustice and inequity.