

# Reflections on Reacting to New Normals

One of the very great reasons to major in Good News (the *Bible*) is to retain an understanding of what is right, true and best versus adopting and adapting to new normals that today's "news" hold up and effectively espouse. When news becomes gossip, as much of it is today, celebrity (versus meaningful accomplishments) taking "frontpage," competitiveness rather than cooperation "winning," aberrations, not progress and Better, celebrated . . . and we consume this mental and declining emotional and spiritual junk food more and more (as today's newly defined news certainly has increased dramatically in amount and sources – spurred, undoubtedly by the internet and expanding cable offerings) we should reasonably expect to be impacted and guided by these evolving standards and conventions unless we somehow mitigate and filter them.

As just two examples, in less than ½ a lifetime, the new and accepted normals are for:

1. People, young and old, to live together before they are married:

Census data from 2012 shows that 7.8 million couples are living together without walking down the aisle, compared to 2.9 million in 1996. And two-thirds of couples married in 2012 shared a home together for more than two years before they ever waltzed down an aisle.

Today, discussing cohabitation is about as salacious as watching grass grow. A 2007 USA Today/Gallup poll found that just 27 percent of Americans disapproved of it. The Atlantic MAR 20, 2014 The Science of Cohabitation: A Step Toward Marriage, Not a Rebellion

2. Close to ½ of children, in the US, are now born to unmarried women:

In 1940, 3.8 percent of the babies born in the United States were born to unmarried women. The percentage first went as high as 10 percent in 1969 . . . In 1983, it surpassed 20 percent for the first time, hitting 20.3 percent. In 1992, it exceeded 30 percent for the first time, hitting 30.1 percent. In 2008, 40.6 percent of the babies born in the United States were born to unmarried women.

<https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/terence-p-jeffrey/cdc-babies-born-unmarried-women-exceeded-40-8th-straight-year>

And this in a largely Christian-professing nation!

In both of these (of many possible) examples, in the not so distant past, only "trashy" people would consider either of these "life-styles." Oh, we have certainly justified this, on several (other than what is inherently right or wrong) grounds, which we should expect as more and more of US and OUR children have adopted this new normal.

As in more and more areas of Life where we have adapted to and adopted new normals, it is not clear whether reading the *Bible* less and less has resulted in such great deviations from historical standards or whether we read the *Bible* less and less because, in light on our new normals, the *Bible* becomes obviously less relevant, true and right as if we decide what is right and true, with our polls, rather than God or even the great wisdom of the ages.

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she laid an asteroid. Mark Twain

"But," some may sincerely (or simply as a pretext and excuse) say, "what can we do? I see the slow [a great understatement!] decline, but, after all, this is the news we are 'fed.' And in any case, don't we have to know what is going on – to stay current?"

The short, but nonetheless, simple and adequate answers are:

1. "Stay current? Stay current?" What is more current, relevant and helpful – eggs laid as new normals or blazing and long-standing historical asteroids of Truth?

2. We are responsible for what we allow in our homes, to take our time and mold us. And in any case, it is not difficult, with minimum thought and effort, to filter better and better what we keep out and allow in as good and helpful.

Many of the historical lights of good are dimming with the risk being that they will be extinguished completely as new accepted “normals” increase in depth, breath and rapidity. But we still have the Good News that can keep us in God’s Sonlight – for it is equally true:

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light. <sup>Plato</sup>

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light. <sup>Aristotle</sup>

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God [and His eternal Word!]. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.” <sup>Minnie Haskins</sup>

Life ends relatively soon for everyone. In the interim, there are important and very revealing questions and truths we can ask and evaluate for ourselves, for example:

When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? <sup>Ps 11:3</sup>

The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men. <sup>Ps 12:8</sup>

Judging by our personally-accepted new normal standards, are we being counted, by God, as righteous or wicked?

The answer should be obvious based on whether we are majoring on garbage news or God’s Good News. In most areas and activities of life, there are two ways to improve, very similar to the example of those who improve physically: by eating Better and being more active – replacing lessers with betters – in *Bible* speak, by repenting. We improve by consuming more good while filtering the bad or even less good. We don’t expect to get Better physically (as it relates to our eating) by adding better foods to the junk foods we are currently consuming – this will only make us still fatter and less healthy! The miracles of repenting are that we benefit by:

- i) First, reducing the bad, and then compounding this improvement by
- ii) Second, replacing the prior bad with nourishment.

There are very good reasons to read the *Bible* regularly, many excuses for not reading it and, even if reading the *Bible* habitually, for *Bible* reading to be totally ineffective if done legalistically rather than sincerely to find the personal Good News of God, in it and in prayer, that He is seeking to tell us individually. Or we can choose to read it sporadically and find, like physical exercise, it has little or no lasting effect. We make our individual decisions and reap the unique and personal consequences of our decisions.

But in considering rejecting new normals and returning to historical Good News:

In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't. <sup>Blaise Pascal</sup>

An evil person is like a dirty window, they never let the light shine through. <sup>William Makepeace Thackeray</sup>

Get correct views of life, and learn to see the world in its true light. It will enable you to live pleasantly, to do good, and, when summoned away, to leave without regret. <sup>Robert E. Lee</sup>

Creating and living new normals – how easily and quickly we adopt and adapt to them. Reading God’s Word will keep His light burning in our lives (now and eternally).