

THE BEACON BEAM

July 2019

TRUTH APPLIED TO LIFE

CHRISTIANS IN THE AGE OF TRUMP

By Greg Barkman



Donald Trump is the most unusual president I've ever known. He is the exact opposite of a professional politician, and he seems to care nothing about tradition, protocol, and the normally expected behavior of high office. Donald Trump excites strong reactions, pro and con. Although we've always had presidents who were strongly opposed, I've never seen one who engenders the degree of animosity that is daily directed against President Trump. And yet, he has throngs of strong supporters whose enthusiasm exceeds that of almost any previous president. What are we to make of this? More importantly, what are Christians to think about this president who is so completely unlike any president before him? I've lost track of the number of articles I've read scolding Christians for supporting a president who is so un-Christian-like in so many ways. Are Christians hypocritical if they support a man like this? Let's think our way through this question.

HIS CHARACTER. No one denies that Donald Trump has a long history of sexual immorality. Besides being a serial husband with several divorces and re-marriages, he has a reputation

for womanizing. In addition, his reputation as a businessman is shady. His habit of refusing to pay debts is legendary, and he is notorious for using bankruptcy as a standard business tactic. Furthermore, he is careless in speech, one who does not hold truth in high regard. Combine all of that with an over-sized ego and enormous pride, and you know this is not the type of person Christians can respect. It's no wonder non-Christians believe that Christians who support Trump are hypocrites. In many ways, Donald Trump is as un-Christian as it's possible to be.

HIS POLICIES. Trump's crude behavior is what makes it so surprising that most of his policies are shared by conservative evangelical Christians. Donald Trump is probably the most pro-life president ever. He not only says so, but actually backs up his words with actions. Imagine that! A politician who does what he says. Can Christians be blamed if they find that refreshing? He is pro-capitalist. Trump understands that the best way to help the greatest number of Americans economically is to unleash the power of free-enterprise. Under his admin-

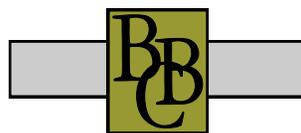
istration, more people are gainfully employed than at any time in American history, with the greatest gains being among minorities. Many politicians talk about helping the poor and disadvantaged. This president is actually doing something about it by harnessing the energy of capitalism to give more people the dignity and rewards of honest labor than any president before him. What's not to like about that? This president is a friend of religious freedom, and has defended Christianity against attacks. We haven't seen that for a while.

President Trump is a strong defender of the rule of law. That's really the heart of the immigration debate. Should we ignore our laws, or enforce them? Congress has the power to change immigration laws, but chooses not to, and then complains about a president who endeavors to enforce laws as they exist. (Which is exactly what every President swears to do when he takes the oath of office.) It seems simple to me—if you don't like a law, change it. That's what legislatures are for. If you are not willing to change it, stop opposing those who seek to enforce

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Gregory N. Barkman, *Senior Pastor*
Michael R. Karns, *Minister of Christian Education*
Robert F. LaTour, *Minister of Families*
Gregory L. Phillips, *Minister of Music*

Sunday

Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

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it! Are we a nation of laws, or not? Christians understand the importance of this issue. If we flout immigration laws today, what laws will we ignore tomorrow? How long until the United States becomes a lawless nation without stability or safety? I fear we are getting closer every day.

There is also the issue of Federal Judges, beginning with the Supreme Court, but including other courts as well. President Trump has appointed a good number of jurists who are committed to interpreting the United States Constitution and federal laws as they are written, not twisting the language like putty to make them mean whatever a particular political position wishes them to say. We've already gone a long ways down the road of eviscerating the US Constitution. Is it too late to regain lost ground? Please understand there are legal ways to change laws as well as the Constitution. If you want change, follow the rules to make it happen. Every citizen has that right, but please don't use the courts to circumvent legitimate legislative processes to achieve results unethically. President Trump is slowly returning integrity to our courts. Surely every Christian can applaud this achievement.

HIS BEHAVIOR. Most Christians find President Trump's personal behavior troubling. He is mean spirited and vicious when attacking his enemies, and he has a very long list of enemies. His penchant for name calling is barely matched by a playground full of grade school children. Every day seems to bring a new round of insults and divisive rhetoric. This caustic environment wears upon one's soul. Yes, I know that his political opponents are equally to blame. I don't have the answer, but I'd love to see a greater measure of restraint coming from both sides of the aisle. President Trump is erratic, saying one thing today, and the opposite tomorrow. Please! Can anyone convince this man to tame his tongue? He is

truly his own worst enemy.

HIS SUPPORT. So why do so many Christians support Trump? It's not because of his likeable personality, nor his ability to inspire the best within us. It's not because they like the barrage of mean-spirited attacks and constant bickering, much of which is totally unnecessary. It's not because Christians view Trump as a Christian, and would be honored to have him as a fellow church member. I suspect most Christians would cringe at the thought of having Donald Trump as a member of their church. So why do they support him? Because most of his policies are in line with what they believe, and there have been few presidents able or willing to advance these policies effectively. Trump gets things done.

What are the alternatives? Every presidential election offers two, and only two candidates who can realistically win. Third party candidates siphon votes from major party candidates, but they cannot gain office. Every election boils down to the lesser of two evils to some extent. The perfect candidate has never appeared on the ballot and never will. Are Christians so naïve as to support a polite and polished candidate whose agenda is the exact opposite of what they believe? Nice is fine, but results are what's important in politics. Many Christians believe it's better to have a nasty reprobate who fights for what's right, than a pleasing personality whose smooth talk is only hot air, and whose actions are opposite his words. Which is better, a bad man who accomplishes good things, or a relatively good man who promotes bad policies? That, my quizzical non-Christian friends, is why so many Christians support Trump. It's not because they like him as a person or admire him as a Christian, but because they believe he stands for most of the right things, and is actually able to accomplish many of the policies he embraces.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY. Whether you like Trump or not, if you are a Christian, you have a God-given responsibility to pray for him (I Timothy 2:1, 2). I pray for him nearly every day. I pray for his salvation. I pray he will acquire greater wisdom and self-control. I pray for other government officials as well, but above all else, I pray for revival. What we need in America more than any candidate or political party is for God to bring us to our knees, and then give us a sincere desire to honor His Word. Anything less will accomplish little. May God save America!

Abortion, the American Holocaust

by Bob LaTour

The title of this article is taken from a book written in 1981 by the late Kent Kelly, a pastor. He likened the killing of the unborn to the slaughter of Jews during the Holocaust. According to Kelly, the 1978 Edition of World Book Encyclopedia totaled American deaths from all of the wars in which our country had fought at 1,205,291 lives. During that same time frame, abortion had ended the lives of over 8,000,000 babies! “Since 1973, when Roe v. Wade was decided, over 57 million babies have been denied the right to life. This tragedy is a devastating mark upon our culture, and even more sickening is that there is an entire industry profiting from each child killed in the womb.”¹

An in-depth article by the American Center for Law and Justice about abortion states that “The pro-abortion Left has unleashed a new assault on the lives of babies. They’ve fully embraced abortion on demand at any point in pregnancy and possibly even after birth. Their evil is being enacted into law and exposed all at the same time. On the heels of New York passing one of the most barbaric abortion laws in U.S. history, allowing abortions up until the moment of birth, a similar bill in Virginia could be even more devastating.”

Since then, headlines about abortion have dominated the news-- “*Dark day: Illinois lawmakers pass abortion bill far worse than New York’s.*” “*Nevada advances abortion decriminalization bill amid protests over Alabama’s abortion ban.*” “*North Carolina Legislature Fails to Overturn Governor’s Veto of Anti-Abortion Bill.*” There is an inevitable showdown brewing that will eventu-

ally end up in the Supreme Court. One side touts the conflict as a battle over women’s reproductive rights and rallies under the misleading banner of Pro-Choice. The other side believes it to be a battle to protect the defenseless lives of human babies at all stages of their development and rallies under the banner of Pro-Life.

Like other battles involving moral issues, those who want to broaden what is considered acceptable when it comes to abortion started out small (first trimester) and persistently pushed until what began as a

**Biblical Christianity
and “Pro-Choice are
antithetical.**

**True Christians must
know what God says
about all human life.**

“little mouse” has morphed into a “full-sized rat.” The most recent legislation in some states abolishes abortion while in other states abortion has been expanded to include the repeal of partial birth abortion bans. “We’re not going back,” said Sen. Melinda Bush, who sponsored the bill in the Illinois Senate, as she argued for the bill. “We’re not going back to coat hangers, we’re not going back to dying. We’re not going back. And I am proud to say Illinois is a beacon for women’s rights, for human rights.” Human rights? Really? That brings to the forefront, a fundamental question. When does a fetus become a human? Alarming, in some states the answer may not even

matter if post-birth killing of an unwanted baby is allowed. If you are a “*new creation in Christ*” (a Christian) the answer is clear in the inspired, inerrant, all-sufficient Word of God by which you are supposed to order your life. Read for yourself a sampling of what the Bible says about God and the unborn.

In Genesis 17-21, God repeatedly told Abraham that Sarah would have a son according to the time of life and that he was to call him Isaac. David wrote of God, “For You formed my inward parts; You covered [wove] me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them.”² In Psalm 127, Solomon wrote, “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward.” God said of Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”³ The angel of the Lord said to Zacharias who was advanced in years, “Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.”⁴ The angel Gabriel said to Mary, “You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.” When Elizabeth visited Mary, the babe (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is

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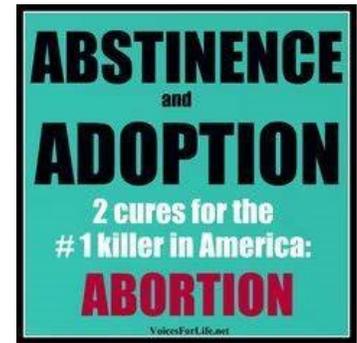
the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.” Paul wrote of himself, “God separated me from my mother’s womb and called *me* through His grace.”⁵

All of these instances demonstrate that God knows individuals prior to their conception, let alone their birth. They were not just a glob of cells with the potential of becoming human. They were human! Exodus 21:22-24 clearly instructs that if a woman is struck when men fight, and she delivers her baby prematurely, the one who struck her will give compensation as decided by judges; however, if the baby dies, *the penalty is capital punishment*. Life for life because a human being had been killed. The bottom line? God considers the accidental killing of a child at any stage

of development murder. Christians should likewise! If God calls for capital punishment for the accidental death of a baby, it should be evident what His judgment would be towards the pre-meditated killing of an innocent baby? There is a frightening payday coming for abortionists and for those who advocate it. May God rescue our nation from the American Holocaust!

- 1 Alliance Defending Freedom
- 2 Genesis 17:19; 18:10; 21:2-3 Psalm 139:16
- 3 Jeremiah 1:5
- 4 Luke 1:13
- 5 Galatians 1:15

For further information-- Randy Alcorn’s book, *ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments* is a lengthy resource that covers a variety of topics in this critically important battle in the culture wars. Also, the following Catholic site has an alarming article. <https://www.lifesitenews.com> and type Illinois in the search. An article from Harvard Law School is likewise helpful. <https://stream.org/harvard-law-journal-unborn-babies-are-constitutional-persons>



Your Addiction to Being Online? It’s Part of the Design

It’s a point that I cannot stress enough, and it’s one that I think should be far more common, prevalent, and pressing than it is today. Silicon Valley is constantly in the process of manipulating your brain chemistry to suit its ends. Deliberately and directly. Tech companies spend untold millions of dollars engineering ways to alter your mind. The way online life changes the way you think is not an accident; it is the result of a very conscious and nefarious decision by powerful corporations to monetize the malleability of our psychological selves. When you feel like you can’t stop checking Facebook every 5 minutes, when you stare at your iPhone despite knowing you’re being rude in doing so, when you lie awake at night on Instagram even though you’ve made up your conscious mind not to do so . . . these things are happening because engineers have set out to manipulate you. They have control over you. Real control. None of it is an accident, and all of it is done because it is profitable.

Justin Taylor is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute with a degree in church music. He is the author of several gospel-centered books and is the executive vice president for book publishing at Crossway. He blogs at *Between Two Worlds*.

The day started out as most Fridays do, with a brief discussion about where to go for breakfast. Our day off begins with breakfast out, and breakfast out usually means pancakes or waffles. There aren't a lot of choices when it comes to finding good pancakes, so the discussion is never a long one. If the weather is lovely, we might do a time splurge and drive to Mimi's in Greensboro. That is why we were in Greensboro when we got the call from CPI reporting motion detected in the family room at our house. No, there are no pets or balloons, so the police were called. Fully expecting this to be a false alarm we considered stopping at the grocery store on our way, but thought better and headed home. It was a scene similar to one from ten years ago, with a back door entry, but this door, chosen for its security rating, made a lot bigger mess when broken. The door and the lock really did live up to expectations, but so did the glass. It was shattered and scattered. Everywhere. No one expects the glass not to break.

Bypassing laptops sitting in the den, the thieves went straight to the master bedroom where they found my jewelry, cleaning out all but the hanging necklaces that were obviously costume quality, taking not only the jewelry but the containers and even the drawers that held it. It had been only three weeks since I spent an afternoon cleaning out and organizing my jewelry, hoping the cast-offs would earn a few pennies for my grandchildren who were preparing for a yard sale. Little did I know that almost everything I owned will probably end up tossed in the trash somewhere. The thieves were after gold and most of the gold pieces I own were missed in their rush (thankfully!) and they will realize little benefit from what they took.

There were three family pieces for which I grieve. My grandmother's cameo, her engagement ring, and my mother's engagement ring. I've been wishing I'd worn them more. The cameo was carved all in one piece, a gentle blush pink surrounded by lacy gold filigree. The clasp wasn't secure so I didn't wear it for fear of losing it. Grandmother's engagement ring was a beautiful solitaire, a large ruby in a gold setting. Mother's ring, nothing like it, was a small diamond in a silver setting. There was a lot of contrast in those two engagement rings, and they reflected the positions of the two men who had purchased them for their brides to be.

My grandfather was a butcher and owned his own butcher shop. He was known as 'the Main Street Butcher' in Harrisonburg, Illinois. He would have married my grandmother sometime in 1915, dating the ring back to more than 100 years ago. My father, on the other hand, was the son of a small-time farmer, and he was headed for Bible college and the ministry. My parents were married in the early 1940's and the ring styles were not terribly unlike styles I see today. But Mother's ring was mostly setting, the diamond barely a chip. My grandparents were probably not considered wealthy, but would have been described as 'comfortable'. Purchasing an engagement ring in those circumstances would not have made this groom 'uncomfortable.' But my parents would very likely have fit the category of 'poor' and any ring would have been a challenge to the budget of the young man. And by the time Dad was asking for my mother's hand in marriage, my grandparents were now in the ministry. Grandpa Kielhorn became a Presbyterian minister, and one who forfeited financial security in the denomination by becoming the

first to give up his pulpit in the face of apostasy. Dad, whose father was not a believer in Christ, found a godly father-in-law in my grandfather. His mother, who passed away not long after his marriage, was replaced by his mother-in-law. His love for them was evident.

What do those rings say about these two men? You might say they reflect what they were, but you would be wrong to say they reflect WHO they were. One, for a time, a man with plenty, the other a man of no means. But that is not who they were. They were both men of riches, the kind of riches that are the best passed on to their children. These were riches that 'rust cannot destroy and thieves cannot break in and steal.' It's unlikely I'll ever see those rings again but what I inherited from them is priceless and permanently in my possession.

It's said that children seldom reminisce about what their parents bought for them, rather, their treasured memories are the times spent together. Whatever your age...or the ages of your children or grandchildren...make your time with them pleasant and precious, and the estate you leave to them one of eternal value.

David Powlison, MDiv, PhD, was a faculty member and counselor at the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF) with over thirty year of experience. He wrote several books, including *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*, *Seeing with New Eyes*, and *Speaking Truth in Love*.

David Powlison died peacefully at his home in Glenside, Pennsylvania, at 11 a.m. (Eastern Time) on Friday, June 7, 2019 after suffering from pancreatic cancer.

Powlison: 5 Questions to Ask When You Are Suffering

Justin Taylor

When he engages your suffering, the all-wise God typically creates a dynamic interplay of five questions.

1. What hardship are you facing?
2. What life-giving word from him speaks to you?
3. What input do wise friends give you?
4. How can you honestly wrestle your way toward trusting him?
5. What should you do next?

. . . Walk this through for yourself.

1. What hardship are you facing?

The first question is easy to answer, because life lands on your head with something hard. What are you facing? If you've chosen a crushing, multi-dimensional affliction, perhaps start with one small slice of the far larger problem. God's ways with us always respect that we can only take the next step. No leaping tall buildings at a single bound.

2. What life-giving word from him speaks to you?

The second question has many possible answers.

Do you already have in mind something true from and about our God that speaks relevantly to you in your situation? . . .

What has been helpful to you in the past?

Or do you need something fresh about who the Lord is?

Read in parts of Scripture where suffering provides the backdrop. Psalms, Job, 2 Corinthians, and 1 Peter are the usual suspects. But many parts of Scripture touch on our afflictions.

Is there a song that reminds you of who you are in his sight?

A psalm that honestly relates to God in the middle of a struggle?

A teaching point from a sermon or book that speaks to how God works in affliction?

A promise of what the Lord will do in the future?

3. What input do wise friends give you?

The third question is very important, but can be complicated to answer.

You need other people. It's easy to forget this, and try to fly solo through hard times.

Who can walk with you?

Ask yourself:

“Who is the person I most trust?

Who will handle with care the fine china of my honest struggles?

Who will draw me out and listen well?

Who keeps confidences, prays thoughtfully, and is willing to speak candidly with godly wisdom?

Who is the most sensible, straightforward, humble, believing, experienced, courageous person I know?”

None of your friends is perfect! But God puts imperfect people in our lives who are also wise, caring, and trustworthy—the kind of person you want to be for others.

Who can share the burden with you, will cast your cares on God, will encourage you?

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Part of the complexity of Question 3 comes because other people can be foolish—even very foolish. They can be like Job’s counselors, and treat you wrong. They might offer bad counsel. They might make foolish promises that aren’t at all true about God and how he works within tough situations. They might be meddlesome and just try to fix you. They might be untrustworthy, and prone to gossip. So you can’t ask just anyone to walk with you. . . .

4. How can you honestly wrestle your way toward trusting him?

The fourth question gets you wrestling to make what is true your own.

Wrestle to remember and take to heart truth that is easy to forget. Seek the Lord honestly.

In turning toward him, you will likely be turning away from instinctive and habitual sins. Anxiety? Anger? Despair? Escapism? He is merciful. He opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Don’t be afraid to tell the Lord the truth about your sufferings, your sins, your desires for mercy, your struggle. Dozens of psalms have walked that road.

Ask your Father to give you his Holy Spirit. All wisdom, trust, peace, courage, love, endurance, hope is a fruit of his personal touch.

Honest wrestling is not magic. It’s not “claiming the victory.” It’s not finding a religious truism to short-circuit the process. And it’s not wallowing in heartache and self-pity. God is taking us in his direction. Ask. Seek. Knock. He found you first, and he is willing to be found.

5. What should you do next?

The fifth question gets you thinking about the practical “What now?”

In significant suffering, the problem is always much bigger than what you are called to do now. I couldn’t fix the distressing things that had happened that day, but I could make a couple of phone calls. Katharina von Schlegel couldn’t bring back her beloved friends, but she could put her soul’s struggle into a poem that we still sing, “**Be still, my soul.**”

What is a small, but significant next step? It may be as simple as getting up from prayer and calling a friend, or doing the laundry, or paying your bills, or going to work, or taking a personal day to walk in the park.

Justin Taylor is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute with a degree in church music. He is the author of several gospel-centered books and is the executive vice president for book publishing at Crossway. He blogs at *Between Two Worlds*.

THE BEACON BROADCAST

Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN) 9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA) 10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA) 10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC) 12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC) 2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA) 10:00 a.m.
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA) 10:00 a.m.
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC) 7:15 a.m.
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA) 5:00 a.m.
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA) 5:00 a.m.

Sunday

WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC) 9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC) 10:30 a.m.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA) 10:30 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards 9:30 p.m.
1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)

Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV) 10:05 a.m.
10:05 p.m.

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY

CALENDAR

04 Independence Day
Church Office Closed
05 Montana Mission Team
~Departs~
09 Elders/Deacons Meeting
10 Wednesday Fellowship Meal
12 Montana Mission Team
~Returns~
13 Teen Homeplace Ministry
14 Lord's Table
17 Teen/Parent Focus
21 Members Meeting

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

02 Darryl McElhannon
03 Johnny Faust
04 Donnan Faucette
 Tommy Marley
05 Texie Owens
12 Linda Zachary
14 Jon Kucewicz
16 Frances Easley
19 Little Norris
21 Bob Caldwell
 Bruce Councilman
23 Ryan Cardwell
27 Michael Abernathy
 Randy Phillips
 Joan Zensen
28 Leann McElhannon
30 Jamie Beck
31 Mike Redd

MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

06 Lila Green*
07 Eunjoo Andersen
08 David Andersen
09 Tim Bixby
12 Wanda Taylor
14 Hannah Green
20 David Cassells
 Amy Jensen
25 Chris Hill
27 Kathy Bertsch

*Children of Missionaries

*We express our heartfelt
sympathy to the families of:*

Gloria Deas
Troy Weaver

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