

# Belief Determines Behavior

by Larry Wynn

<b>TITLE:</b>	Belief Determines Behavior
<b>BIBLE BOOK:</b>	Judges 21 : 25
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Truth; Moral Decline in America; Power to Overcome
<b>SERIES:</b>	The Well Constructed Life
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	It is important for us to note how far we have declined morally in America in the last fifty years. But, there is hope. With God's help, we can reverse the decline. We must return to God and to the truth, if we expect to see a spiritual renewal and moral revival in America.

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## Introduction

What are your values? Your values are the beliefs that shape everything you do in life. Does it really matter what you believe? Your beliefs determine your behavior and your behavior determines what you become. Someone has said it this way, "Your convictions determine your conduct. Your conduct determines your character." Today, we will begin a series of studies together on values you need to build a successful life.

Individual values are like rooms in a house. Each one has special significance and importance. I am building a house. Daily I can watch it take shape. Although it has just been started, I can already imagine where each room will be located. Before any rooms can go up there must be a foundation, a roof and walls. The infrastructure must be in place before the rooms can be built. Without a strong infrastructure the house will not stand. The infrastructure of America's value system is being eaten away. Almost everyone would agree our society is in a stage of moral decline. Surveys reveal that a majority of Americans say the number one problem is not the economy but a decline of moral values.

Today, We Are Going To Look At:

The Problem Of Moral Decline.

The Price Of Moral Decline.

The Power To Overcome Moral Decline.

Lets begin by looking at:

## I. The Problem Of Moral Decline

What Is The Problem? The Answer Can Be Found In The Scripture. Look at Judges 21:25. We have the same problem a nation long ago faced. The problem, as one writer put it, is "Truth Decay".

### A. We No Longer Value Truth In America

### B. There Are Two Things We Value

Convenience: Is It Easy? Pragmatism: Does It Work? Look At The Shift In American Life Over The Past 50 Years Or So. Fifty years ago there was almost universal agreement as to what was right or wrong. People didn't always do what was right, but they would admit they were doing wrong. We have become a generation that doesn't even know right from wrong, because we will not admit there is such a thing. Our attitude is, "it may be wrong for you but not for me."

### C. There Are Three Philosophies That Have Changed Our Views

#### 1. Individualism

Individualism states, "I live for myself. Only I can determine what is right or what is wrong. I am my own god and I will do what is right for me." A survey of top-level executives in America revealed poll results. According to the Wall Street Journal 44% of them, when facing an ethical crisis, consult with themselves. Only 3% consult with God.

#### 2. Secularism

The secularist states, "I don't need god for my life." We have been, for years now, slowly but surely removing god from every area of public life. We have removed him from our schools, government, media, etc. He now only gets Sunday morning. Look at the change. Fifty years ago, the wall in most schoolrooms had the 10 commandments mounted there. We had a standard of moral authority. Classes in public schools began with prayer. A majority of people attended church. Today all that has changed.

Where do our moral values come today? Jerry Springer and other talk show hosts who take the most way out people in our country and parade them as normal liberal politicians who make us believe it is okay to have sex outside marriage, kill unborn babies, and lie under oath. Romans 1 states, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator." Secularism emphasizes materialism, self-worship and ignores corporate worship Of God.

#### 3. Relativism

In relativism there are no absolutes. What is right for you may not necessarily be right for me. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it with all your heart. The relativist says, "Just be sincere."

I flew to Jessup, Georgia this week. What if Robert Cartmill had not put fuel in the plane? What if he said, "I sincerely believe we can make it." Without fuel it wouldn't matter how sincere he was.

When I was in school, if I made a bad grade on a test, my comeback often was, "I meant to study, but..." You know what? I still failed.

Relativism says, "Who are you to tell me I am wrong?" People who really love you tell you when you are blowing it.

The truth is sometimes narrow. Absolutes are absolutely necessary in life. What if traffic laws were relative? What if crime laws were relative? We hear a lot about tolerance. It has been re-defined in our society. At one time it meant, "Although I disagree with you, I will treat you with respect and dignity." Today it means, "Every idea is equally valid and true and every lifestyle is equally right." Ephesians 4 reads, "They are hopelessly confused. Their closed minds are full of darkness. They are far away from the life of God and they don't care any more about right and wrong."

## II. The Price Of Moral Decline

### A. Culture Is Collapsing Around Us

### B. People Are Extremely Unhappy

### C. Children Are Confused

### D. Our Witness Is Weakened

## III. The Power To Overcome Moral Decline

### A. Repair The Foundation Of Your Life

Take a look at your personal life, family life, career life, social life, and worship life. Are there repairs that should be made? And, how do you go about making those repairs? Proverbs 2:9 shows us how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time. God can repair a broken foundation.

### B. Rely On The Truth

To be sure, we must rely on truth in order to overcome moral decline. Someone may ask, "How do I know when something is true?" Truth is universal. If it is true, it applies to everyone. Truth is unchanging.

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