

# It's Called "The World" For A Reason!

Joe Slater

This past January 28 marked 45 years that I have been blessed to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ full time. If you had told me 45 years ago that in America today we would have not only same-sex "marriage" but public schools being forced to permit biological males to use the girls' restrooms and locker rooms, I would have thought you were an over-the-top alarmist. I look back now, however, and ask myself, "Why are you surprised?"

I understand the consternation my brethren express as we watch our country sink deeper and deeper into the moral cesspool. But again, why are we surprised? Less than 40 years after the church began Paul warned Timothy that "*evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*" (2 Timothy 3:13). Don't we know better than to think that applied only in the first century A.D.? John told his readers, "*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one*" (1 John 5:19).

It's called "the world" for a reason! "World" refers not to a ball of rock, water, etc., but to everyone and everything opposed to God. We err when we expect the world to behave like Christians should! God has called us to be genuinely counter culture by living and teaching so as to display a stark contrast to the world's darkness.

We ought to be alarmed when those wearing the name of Christ adopt the standards of the world. A few years ago, a major university associated with churches of Christ deliberately (though unsuccessfully) attempted to bring two "chaplains" on board from an openly LGBTQ+ church in the DFW area. More recently a church of Christ (?) in Connecticut identified itself as fully LGBTQ+ inclusive.

Here is something you may have seen on social media: "Jesus ate with sinners, not because He wanted to appear inclusive, tolerant, and accepting, but to call them to a changed and fruitful life. Jesus calls for transformation of life, not for affirmation of identity." Amen and Amen!

# The Walking Stick

A few weeks ago, a dear old friend asked if I would make him a walking stick. I went to the barn and found a maple stick that I've had drying for several years. Taking it to the workshop, I peeled the bark away, sawed off the knots, and sanded it down smooth. Several coats of finish were then added along with a paracord wrap for a handle. I even took the wood burner and put his initials near the top. I believe it will be a good walking staff and serve him well.

The walking stick is a great tool for the walker and can lend great assistance. The use of a walking stick or staff has been around for a long, long time. Early in the biblical record, Jacob said that he used his staff to assist him in crossing over Jordan (Genesis 32:10). In many ways, the use of a staff can be compared to the Bible, God's word.

The shepherd's staff provided protection and comfort to the flock (Psalm 23:4), God's word gives us comfort as well with His promises of love, forgiveness, and eternal life. The walking stick can prevent the traveler from stumbling and falling. Developing the godly characteristics described in the bible will also prevent us from spiritual stumbling (2 Peter 1:2-10). The staff can also be used as a weapon to ward off danger. Having God's word in our minds and hearts will help us defeat the devil when he tries to destroy our faith (1 Peter 5:8). A good, strong walking stick can serve you for many years. The inspired Scriptures, once learned and applied, can and will take us through our lives and into eternity (2 Timothy 3:15).

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

**When Satan seems to be making progress in this world, remember that this world is all he has left.**

--Kevin Rhodes (Bedford, TX)

# Proving The Will Of God

When you were in school, didn't you just love it when your math teacher would give you a problem to solve and say, "Show your work"? That meant she wanted you not just to give the correct answer, but to demonstrate the process by which you came to that answer.

Christians are commanded to "*prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*" by our righteous lives (Romans 12:2b). It's good to know the Bible answer, but are we showing it in our lives? And how exactly are we to do that? Romans 12:1-2 gives us a clear answer!

**By Living Sacrificially** (Romans 12:1). Sacrifice is key to the Christian life because our God is sacrificial. The highest form of love is shown by sacrifice (John 3:16; 15:13). That's why Paul tells us to present ourselves to God as a "*living sacrifice*." In other words, live sacrificially so others can be drawn to Christ!

**By Not Conforming to the World** (Romans 12:2). Before we became Christians, we were part of the world (Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:17-20). The church, however, is admonished to be separate from the world (2 Corinthians 14-17). Don't allow the world to pour you into its mold!

**By Being Transformed** (Romans 12:2). God wants us to be poured into the mold of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18) and to be clothed with Him (Romans 13:14). We are to be shaped day by day into the image of His Son!

Do you know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God? Then show your work!

--Matt Clifton (Judsonia, AR)