

**According to a new survey from Probe Ministries, born-again Christians have experienced a "startling degradation" in their biblical beliefs during the past decade.** Summarizing the organization's 2020 "Religious Views & Practices Survey," president Kerby Anderson says, "Pastors and church leaders just can't assume any longer that the members of their Church or Christian organization have a Biblical worldview."

The survey, which included more than 3,000 Americans between age 18 and 55, reveals that born-again Protestants experienced their greatest level of decline in Bible-based beliefs from 2010 to 2020. During that decade, the percentage of people who agreed with core Christian doctrines fell from 47% of the population to 25% of the population. Although people often label themselves as born-again Christians, says Anderson, they still "can have a false view of Jesus Christ and embrace a pluralistic worldview." Among professing U.S. born-again Christians between the ages of 18 and 39, more than 60% said there's more than one way to salvation; including Jesus, Buddha, and Muhammad. More than 30% of the respondents said that Jesus sinned while living on earth or they're not sure whether He did. The drop in Bible-based beliefs among young adults – from 15% to 5% – was especially "remarkable and devastating." You can read that article by clicking [here](#).

Those statistics remind us that the people of our world, particularly younger people, are moving away from traditional Christian beliefs, values and practices. They also remind us that we Christians have to "up our game" in regards to passing on our faith to the younger people around us in our lives. Because if we don't we may begin to experience what the Israelites experienced during the days of the Judges. Judges 2:10 says, *"After that (Joshua's) generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things He had done for Israel."*

Why has there been this "falling away from the faith" in our day and time? One reason has been because today's people are more educated than in previous generations, and education causes people to look at and sometimes affirm other systems of belief. And like we learned several weeks ago as we began the WRITTEN IN STONE series, some people begin to worship the "god of education" more than they worship the "God who brings us salvation."

Another reason for this "falling away from the faith" in our day and time has been because of technology and the fact that the internet has expanded our cultural and social arenas of life. This has caused us to get to know, like and even affirm people with religious beliefs and lifestyles that are different from those espoused by traditional Christianity.

A third reason for this "falling away from the faith" is because there's an agenda in the world to deconstruct and destroy the Christian faith. A lot of that happens in educational institutions as well as in political, social and financial arenas. That's because lots of people don't want to live within the boundaries of Christian values and principles like the ones we're learning in our WRITTEN IN STONE sermon series that's based on the 10 Commandments.

The primary reason, however, that there has been this "falling away from the faith" is the hypocrisy of Christians. When people, particularly younger people, look at us and see that we're living defeated, discouraged and carnal lives rather than vibrant, victorious, and spiritual lives, they begin to think that "if our faith doesn't work for us, why should they believe that it will work for them."

So, what can we do to encourage and equip our children and other people's children to pursue deepening their relationship with the Lord and strengthening their faith? One, we have to be committed ourselves to living for the Lord regardless of how others around us are living. Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16 that we Christians are to be "salt and light" in the midst of a hungry and dark world, and that we're to "let our light shine for all to see so that they may see our 'good works' and then glorify our Father who is in Heaven."

Two, we need to be sure to constantly share our faith stories with the young people in our lives. They need to hear our stories of how Jesus has transformed us, provided for us and protected us, worked on our behalf, and utilized us to help and minister to others. If we share those stories with them, they will be more prone to seek after some of those experiences for themselves.

Three, we need to point out to them when ungodliness brings failure, and when godliness brings success. Too often the young people of our day idolize the celebrities of our culture because of their fame, accomplishments, or financial success. But they're not aware of the failures those celebrities have experienced in other areas of their lives – often the most important areas of life.

Four, we need to practice the basics of the Christian faith before them, and with them. The young people around us need to see us praying, reading the Bible, sharing our faith, giving generously, engaging in the Christian community (Life Groups), serving in ministry, and being faithful in corporate worship services. Our being consistent and passionate about the basics of the Christian faith will help them to see that they need to put these practices into place in their lives as well.

In this past Sunday's sermon, some of our Pastors and I told the stories of the Judean Kings Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz (2 Chronicles 26-28). King Uzziah loved the Lord, but he allowed an incident to cause him to stop going to the Temple to worship God. His son Jotham also

loved the Lord, but he never went to the Temple to worship the Lord because his father had stopped going. His son, Ahaz, then took his place as king, but he was very different from his father and grandfather. The Bible says that *"Ahaz reigned 16 yrs in Jerusalem and did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord. He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Himmom, and even sacrificed his children to a god of fire."* Can you believe that? In 3 short generations, we go from a godly man close to the Lord to a good man to an evil man who sacrificed his own children. That's what happens when we don't live for the Lord like He's called us to live for Him or worship Him like He wants us to worship Him. When we put other things and other people before God, it brings us harm. But it also brings harm to those around us.

I actually think this is a great time in history for Christians to rise up and make a difference in the lives of the young people around us in our world. We can no longer just rely on our Church or Christian leaders to lead our Children to the Lord or keep them walking with the Lord. But if we will each commit to doing our part of loving the Lord and living for Him, and passing on our faith to those around us, God will use us to make a difference in the lives of those around us. Probe Ministries also said in their article: *"We cannot forget that the percent of Biblical worldview Christians in the Roman Empire in AD 60 was much less than 1% of the population. 300 years later, virtually the entire empire was at least nominally Christian."* You see, if we will rise up and pursue the Lord and minister to others like never before, we can change people's lives and the culture around us just like those early Christians were able to do.

**We love you at Celebration Church.**



Gratefully yours,

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