

BreakPoint - An Unstable Balance Wanting It Both Ways



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[If you can not stand up for a 2 parent, heterosexual family, then where, pray tell, is this moral high ground they see someone taking a stand on?] Our Society

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BreakPoint with Charles Colson

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For nearly a decade, the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, an excellent group on the University of Virginia campus headed by respected Christian sociologist James Davison Hunter, has been conducting a "Survey of American Political Culture." This survey **measures changes** in the "**ideals, beliefs, and values**" that "**bind Americans together and direct their common actions.**"

What emerges from the latest installment of the survey is a portrait of a **culture that wants to have it both ways and doesn't understand why that's not possible.**

According to the survey, "most Americans seek some balance or tension between commonality and diversity." They want **both a shared moral consensus and the freedom to choose their own values.**

For example, 60 percent of respondents envisioned a future where "Americans will be more unified in their moral commitments." **Seventy-one percent saw Americans becoming more, not less, religious.** And an overwhelming number aspired to an America where the "**lines between good and bad will be firmer**" and to a society where people "**stand strongly behind their personal convictions.**"

That sounds good. But, at the same time, 60 percent of the respondents said that, in the future, "**American families will take many forms.**" That's right -- 60 percent do not support the most important moral commitment to the traditional family. And the respondents' ideas about a more religious America did not include the religious tradition that created our way of life: Christianity. Three-quarters of them preferred a "mix of people of many faiths."

[**Wait a minute. If we are going to come together, be more religious, and understand more clearly the distinctions between good and evil and even have people standing up for their convictions, then why the continued erosion of the family? If you can not stand up for a 2 parent, heterosexual family, then where, pray tell, is this moral high ground they see someone taking a stand on?**]

The **survey results may seem schizophrenic** but, in one sense, they are understandable.

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What they are is an illustration of Americans' confusion over what it takes to make a good society.

Take the attitudes towards religion. The results reflect the **shift away from traditional religion**, like Christianity, to what Americans have come to call **vaguely "spirituality."** This shift enables people to enjoy the **emotional and psychological benefits of religion without any restrictions on personal freedom.**

[Ah, yes, the Tame god.]

The problem is that's there no evidence that this kind of religion can build the kind of society for which the respondents yearn. On the contrary, **the "firm line" they desire between good and bad comes from people subordinating their own opinions and desires to the requirements of their faith.** As James Davison Hunter points out, it's this submission and accountability to religious tradition that is the real source of morality.

[As we have discovered, there is a difference between inalienable rights and man's rights. God is the source of the inalienable rights as He has built this into us. Man's rights come from the mind of man which give wings to his wants and desires.

Where do you believe morality comes from?

How can any person, group, culture, nation, or organization claim their morality is greater than another's?

From God?

From god?

From reason?

From experience?]

Similarly, the **authority of the family to teach and reinforce moral standards is undermined by the insistence that it can take any form we choose.** Like religion, the family's power to teach is rooted in the belief that it is the individual who must conform to its requirements and not the other way around. This binding of conscience is where the power to **"stand strongly"** comes from.

[So what is greater?

The individual or the family?

The individual or Christ?

The individual's view of Right/Wrong verses --- what?

Where does this striving to break away from moral structures come from?

Can it rightly be described that way?]

Thus, a future in which the traditional family and religion play less of a role is a future where moral commonality is less, not more, likely. Helping people to see this and other flaws in their thinking is one of the primary goals of good apologetics and of BreakPoint. People have to be made to **see where postmodern thinking leads: It promises moral freedom, but produces moral chaos.**

[It seems we've been here before, philosophically speaking. We haven't seemed to learn anything either. Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat it.]



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