

A Race to the Bottom

November 2025

None of us likes to think we are depraved, but we are. Do we need any more evidence in our world today? We are fallen creatures in need of God's help. Unrestrained, we are like animals in search of pleasure and comfort – often in all the wrong places. God sent his son into the world to save us from this unfortunate reality, and he freely gave us the Holy Spirit to provide restraint and control in our lives where there is too often none. If we ignore these offers of help, we will continue to find ourselves chasing all the wrong treasures which will eventually destroy our souls. Today, only 30 percent of Americans worship regularly in church. An equal percentage of people say they have no religious affiliation whatsoever. Many of us have become free agents running from accountability, authority and any kind of regulation. “Don't tell me what to do” is the new cry of our land. As a result, in my opinion, we are headlong in a race towards the bottom of our darkened souls.



Nothing fuels depravity more than a love of money, power, and sex. They are gasoline for our fallen nature. The release of the Epstein files is the tip of the iceberg. God said don't have sex with anyone but your spouse. If you do, you will pay for it one way or the other. Now we have leaders across our country who pursue adultery and other similar activities like sport. Completely unrestrained, Jeffrey Epstein took it up many notches and provided his young female victims to his wealthy friends so they could enjoy his same pleasures. People were obviously fooled by his silver tongue. They believed, like Epstein, that their desires were natural and deserving. But their day of reckoning eventually came and is still coming, like it always does. Their depraved souls are now on full display.

I have just returned from a trip to the Arabian Peninsula. Every time I am there, I am reminded of the lack of respect and regard Islam has for women. According to Islam's Holy Books, women are fundamentally not equal to men. They are inferior. If anything, they are distractions and temptations for men. For these reasons, in many parts of the Arabian Peninsula, women are required to cover themselves completely so that men will not be tempted. Men, on the other hand, are free and unrestrained to follow their desires and exercise their powers. In fact, if a man has enough money, he can pursue and enjoy more than one wife.

One of the more difficult things I have learned from my travels to the Arab world is the amount of enormous power a Muslim man has over his wife and family. In the Arabian Peninsula, tragically, nearly 75 percent of young women are sexually abused within their greater family unit. And none of the men are punished for it. Too often, Arab Muslim women suffer silently and deeply. They have few rights or protections.

However, within this present darkness there are some signs of hope. I have been to Saudi Arabia three times in the last six years. The current crown prince, Muhammad bin Salman, has made many surprising strides towards helping Saudi women gain greater freedoms, though it is on a relative scale. Women are now allowed to drive cars, vote, own a business, and even pursue having a passport. They



are no longer required to have a guardian oversee and dictate their daily travels. During my most recent trip, I noticed that many women were no longer wearing a face covering, or even a head covering. Some women even wore their body coverings more loosely like a cape. I had never seen so many beautiful and smiling faces of Saudi women. The younger women especially were letting their full-length hair be exposed to the sunlight. Now the ball is in the court of men to allow these increasingly liberated women to enjoy greater freedoms and not be victims to their uncontrolled desires.

But sexual abuse was not the only mistreatment observed on this latest trip. Lying was also very evident in our travels. Christianity demands we tell the truth. Jesus modeled it for us. God tells us that playing with truth is extremely unhealthy for the integrity of our souls. Telling the truth maintains our fellowship with God while telling lies rips us apart from that fellowship. Islam, on the other hand, allows lying for the greater purposes of defending its faith and its faithful followers. Unfortunately, this allowance opens the door for Muslims to become unpredictably complicated, hard to understand, and even dangerous. We in America need to be very careful of the same pitfalls of not telling the truth. Lying is becoming more common in our political arenas and other places of daily discourse. What we tell someone today might be contrary to what we tell them tomorrow. That is not being truthful. Nothing grieves Jesus more than when we disregard the instruction, he gave his disciples "...I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6b)

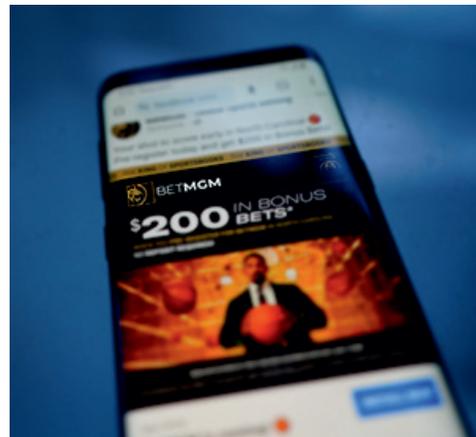
We are at a turning point in America today. As I mentioned, we are pursuing, perhaps unknowingly, a race to the bottom of our souls, often dismissing or ignoring the teachings of Jesus. We are creating a new, dangerous norm. Either we as a people will hit bottom, or God willing, we will find enough strength and renewed faith to pull back and embrace the truth of our depraved nature and need for God.

As the number of billionaires increases in our country, we see what luxury can do to our lives. The ultra rich are increasingly pampered by our consumer culture, allowing themselves to become isolated from the rest of society. They travel privately, dine exclusively, have no neighbors to bother them, and are first in line for every convenience and service. Thankfully, on the other hand, there are still many wealthy people in our country today who are generous, faithful, self-restrained, and exceedingly kind. Unfortunately, though, they are becoming a

faithful, self-restrained, and exceedingly kind. Unfortunately, though, they are becoming a minority. Many of the very wealthy are allowing themselves to become isolated, less empathic, and compassionate to the needs of others.

Following our visit to the Arabian Peninsula, my group and I traveled to the country of Georgia to visit another ministry partner. While there, I heard an incredibly sad story of how Bidzina Ivanisvili, an oligarch sympathetic with Russia, is keeping the entire nation under his wraps, making opponents fearful of making a wrong move. His main political opponent, who has promoted freedom and democracy more than anyone in Georgia, is in jail along with other young college students arrested for demonstrating peacefully. The accumulation of power and money has become Bidzina's guiding principles and nothing is going to get in his way; he is keeping an entire nation from progressing towards greater freedoms and a more compassionate government. Nothing could be further from the life and example of Jesus who lived among the most marginalized of his society, helping them with their daily lives.

Lying, love of money, and abuse of women are not the only ills in our American society today. Gambling and paying college athletes enormous amounts of money are on the verge of ruining our beloved pastime. An alarming number of professional athletes are participating in betting circles, not because they need more money, but because they cannot control their addictive and competitive personalities. They are out of control. They are not asking God daily to help temper their wild desires. They are becoming tragic heroes in our society.



Even worse, people who cannot control their anger sometimes end up fighting with those they disagree with resulting in serious harm and even death. There is much contentiousness in our public discourse today that can lead one person to regard another as "evil" just because they disagree. God went to great lengths to tell us that murder is an affront to his character and against his will; yet an increasing number of unexamined lives today in our country are picking up arms and killing someone with whom they disagree. Is there anything more depraved than a desire to kill your so-called opponent? Innocent lives – the CEO of an insurance company, state legislators in Minnesota, Charlie Kirk, Jewish embassy personnel, children worshipping in a church, to just name a few, have recently lost their lives because anger turned to murder. We have forgotten these words of Jesus, "I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell." (Matthew 5:22)

Normalizing sinful behavior is dangerous business. There is never a good ending. The high become thankful people. And nothing is better for our souls than to be thankful.

My family and I are grateful to you. We hope you, your family, and friends have a joyful and Happy Thanksgiving!

