

THE PROBLEM WITH PRIDE – June 2022

May 30th was Memorial *Day* – the one moment each year when our country stops to honor those who have given their lives for our freedom. And now we are on to Pride *Month*. This is the more fashionable time when politicians, journalists, educators, celebrities, corporations and even many clergy come together to celebrate and affirm LGBTQIA2S+ and other marginalized people in our society. I have mixed feelings about this.

I appreciate the compassion and concern for people who don't fit in and are often ignored and rejected by this world. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors and to show special care for the weakest and most vulnerable among us. Furthermore, we believe that every man, woman and child has been made in the image of God and is of sacred worth. That includes people of every race, age and class, regardless of their religion, politics or preferences. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect.

However, I do have a few objections to the Pride movement and the conventional wisdom of our age:

Pride is not a virtue. Pride is the “queen of vices” and the “original sin” of mankind and the devil himself. We are warned again and again that “pride goes before destruction” (Prov. 16:18) and “God opposes the proud” (James 4:6) and “whoever exalts himself will be humbled.” (Matt. 23:12) Even when we do something worthy of praise, we are instructed to “let another praise you, and not your own mouth.” (Prov. 27:2) It is cruel to encourage anyone (especially those already marginalized) to praise and exalt themselves. Rather, let us all humble ourselves before the Lord and let Him lift us up in due time.

Unconditional affirmation is not love. We all need encouragement and a kind word. However, because our instincts and hearts so often lead us astray, every one of us needs good counsel and correction. In fact, the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (Heb. 12:6) “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” (Prov. 27:6) It is a hateful thing to affirm any foolish or harmful choices of others. Where we see danger, we *must* speak the truth in love, especially to those longing for love and meaning in this life.

Self-expression is not the way to life. We are all longing for a greater purpose in this life. However, the way to abundant life is not by self-expression, but rather by self-denial. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:24-25) This is the secret to true happiness: experiencing the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation and then living a life of love and sacrifice for others.

It is June and the Pride flags are everywhere, in every business, on every street. Thousands will march in the Pride parades and many more will attend the pride dances, drag queen story hours and other events at our schools, libraries, and even churches. Meanwhile, fewer and fewer people are showing any interest in (or even understanding of) Memorial Day. This is the only day we honor the servicemen and women who humbled themselves for service, submitted themselves to constant correction, and willingly laid down their very lives for our welfare. These are the ones who are deserving of our honor and attention, for they have shown us the way to life, joy and lasting peace. Let us all repent of our pride and follow their example.