



Of Seeds and Flowers



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Silenced by Tolerance

The Day of Silence is an annual event observed in more than 5,000 public schools. Promoted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, the event urges students to participate in a protest against discrimination. Many students will hand out cards that say: "Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I am participating in the Day of Silence, protesting the silence faced by the LGBTQ people..." - **a legitimate protest.**

However, an irony has arisen in recent years, as students wearing T-shirts with messages indicating disagreement with that event have been suspended from school for doing so. One message is tolerated; the other is not. One group is allowed to speak because of tolerance; the other is **silenced in the name of tolerance.**

Such reverse discrimination is common these days, since "tolerance" has become a major goal in schools, government and media. However, few people recognize the NEW and VERY PREJUDICED way the word tolerance is used these days.

The new definition:

Tolerance traditionally has MEANT to *recognize and respect another's beliefs, practices and so on*, without necessarily agreeing or sympathizing. **TOLERANCE IS A GOOD THING!!!!**

Today's definition of tolerance is vastly different. Based on the **assumption that all truth is relative** (a view held by 66% of the American public, according to The Barna Group), the new definition of tolerance means to consider everyone's beliefs, values, lifestyle and truth claims as equally valid. So not only does everyone have an equal right to his beliefs, but all beliefs are equal, demanding praise and endorsement of those beliefs, values and lifestyle by everyone.

This new tolerance gets complicated, doesn't it? It demands an illogical mind!!

- 1) In a belief system where the chief virtue is tolerance, the cardinal sin is, of course, intolerance.
- 2) Because the **new tolerance** is based on the assumption that **all truth is relative**, it becomes not only permissible but also demanded to be intolerant toward those people who do not agree that truth is relative.
- 3) For the people who believe that truth is relative they have to now be *firmly intolerant* towards all people who believe in objective truth and that clear moral standards do exist. This "truth is relative" position is why many institutions and **especially many college and university professors** agree with and promote all sorts of views and behaviors while at the same time condemn or silence those who disagree.

Colleges in the U.S. are some of the most intolerant of our institutions with respect to free thought. Anyone who even mildly objects to the "group think" (actually more feelings than thought) interpretation of reality is quickly silenced or marginalized. Young people used to go to college to debate, to test their ideas, to challenge their own thinking, to reason, but these days the quickest way to shut down a discussion is to vilify your opponent. "If you can't attack a person's argument, attack their character." - Cicero

Love's response:

Such a monumental cultural shift presents a great challenge to even the most trained and clever thinker. But it is a challenge that can - and must - be met.

St. Paul urges Christians to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). This biblical prescription has never been timelier. LOVE the person FIRST, only then, speak the truth. In fact, speaking the truth in love is not only timely but also critical. For our culture to survive, we must recover - without embarrassment or apology - the basic belief in truth. This means *embracing all people but not all beliefs*. It means listening to and learning from **all people but not necessarily agreeing with them**. We have to speak the truth courageously, gently, firmly, clearly with a compassionate and humble spirit.

Christians are subject to a much higher standard than tolerance. **"Do everything in love."** (1 Corinthians 16: 14)

The **New Tolerance** says, "You must approve of what I do I believe and what I say". Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will love you even when your behavior offends me."

The **New Tolerance** says, "You must agree with me; my understanding of right and wrong" Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will speak the objective truth, because I believe the truth really sets people free."

The **New Tolerance** says, "You must allow me to have my way." Love responds, "I must do something harder; I will encourage you to continue to search for the truth, as I share ideas with you, because I truly love you. "Tough stuff"

True tolerance seeks to be inoffensive; love takes risks. Love costs everything.

Objective truth has become a thing of the past. We now have designer truth, designer morality. Truth has become a matter of opinion; morality a matter of preference. All decisions are made on present feelings, experience and circumstances. Fake News!

Principles, truth, hard evidence, facts, logic, clear thinking, research, the study of ethics and sound Judeo-Christian morality are no longer in control. *Truth is now whatever everyone or anyone wants it to be.* Today, in America, feelings are king. If it feels good, do it. If it doesn't feel good don't do it or deny it exists. **Political Correctness is death dealing!**

"We must not give in to evil that has grown respectable with age." Henry David Thoreau
Gently, firmly, lovingly we have to resist the pressure of our failing culture.

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

A little girl was standing with her grandfather by an old-fashioned open well. They had just lowered a bucket and had drawn some water to drink. "Grandfather," asked the little girl, "where does God live?"

The old man picked up his little granddaughter and held her over the open well. "Look down into the well," he said, "and tell me what you see."

"I see a reflection of myself," said the little girl. "*And that's where God lives,*" said the grandfather. **"He lives in you."**

Live your life in such a way that the only possible explanation is that God exists! It is not about information, but transformation. Transformed people, transform people

Heaven and Hell-The Real Difference

A man spoke with the Lord about heaven and hell. The Lord said to the man, "Come, I will show you Hell." They entered a room where a group of people sat around a huge pot of stew. Everyone was famished, desperate and starving. Each held a spoon that reached the pot, but each spoon had a handle so much longer than their own arm that it could not be used to get the stew into their own mouths. The suffering was terrible.

"Come, now I will show you heaven," the Lord said. They entered another room, identical to the first-the pot of stew, the group of people, the long-handled spoons. But there everyone was happy and well-nourished. I don't understand," said the man. "Why are they happy here when they were miserable in the other room and everything was the same?" The Lord smiled. "*Ah, it is simple,*" he said. "*Here they have learned to feed each other.*" Ann Landers

SOMETIME AH SITS AND THINKS! - AND SOMETIME AH **JUST SITS!** *BEING* COMES BEFORE DOING! **DO NOTHING WELL.** WE humans were created in the very "image and likeness of God. Genesis 1:26. OUR DNA IS DIVINE.

The only thing that separates us from the love of God is the thought that we are separated from His love.

On October 13th we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mary's apparition to the three children at Fatima. On October 13th 1917, about 70,000 people witnessed the "Miracle of the Sun". This miracle, scientifically verified, and the Blessed Mother's message to the world are TRULY worth checking on the internet. "I must declare that, never, before or after have I observed similar atmospheric or solar phenomena." Prof. Jose Maria de Garrett Faculty of Sciences Coimbra Portugal.

VISION AND REALITY

Sharpen the Axe

Once upon a time, a very strong woodcutter asked for a job in a timber merchant and he got it. The pay was really good and so was the work condition. For those reasons, the woodcutter was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area where he supposed to work. The first day, the woodcutter brought 18 trees. "Congratulations," the boss said. "Go on that way!"

Very motivated by the boss words, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring 15 trees. The third day he tried even harder, but he could only bring 10 trees. Day after day he was bringing less and less trees.

"I must be losing my strength", the woodcutter thought. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on.

"When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked. "Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut trees..."

Reflection:

Sometimes our lives are like that. We get so busy that we don't take time to sharpen the "axe". In today's world, it seems that *everyone is busier than ever, but less happy than ever.*

Why is that? Could it be that we have forgotten how to stay "sharp"? There's nothing wrong with activity and hard work. But we should not get so busy that we neglect the truly important things in life, like our personal life, taking time to get close to our Creator, giving more time for our family, taking time to read, to relax, to "waste time with God" etc.

If we don't take the time to sharpen the "axe", we will become dull and lose our effectiveness. **Transformed people, transform people.** Busyness and laziness are the enemy.

"Once I knew that God existed I knew that I had to give my whole life to Him." Charles de Foucauld

"The one thing we absolutely owe to God is not to worry." Charles de Foucauld

OLD AGE DISEASES

Early, middle and senior-middle age are the times to prevent ancient diseases such as prickly impatience, touchy irritability, moody grumpiness, pessimistic cynicism of youth, and sickly nostalgia for the good old days. In your early aging years, swear a vow never to indulge in any one of them. Strictly scrutinize your speech to guard against a sneak infection of even a small debilitating virus. If you are already advanced in age and infected with one or more, then perform repeated, radical self-surgeries. As soon as you catch yourself complaining about anything, instantly yank out your griping like it was a painful rotten tooth.

Growing old is mandatory. Growing up is optional.

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Speaking Softly

The person who dives for pearls is never satisfied to come up with shells. Neither should those who aim at virtue be satisfied with honors and reputation. The *more virtue parades itself, the more it desires to be seen and acclaimed*, the less likely it is to be real and true.

True virtue and personal attractiveness are not rooted and supported in pride, self-sufficiency, and vanity. These produce a life lived strictly for show. It blooms brilliantly and quickly withers away. Having the appearance of virtue may be fine for those who do not seek it, who accept it **indifferently**, and who **do not mistake the shell for the pearl**. But it can become very dangerous and hurtful to those who cling to it, and take delight in it.

For if someone is truly wise, truly learned, truly generous and noble, their gifts will flower in true humility and modesty. A really great soul will not waste itself on such empty goods as rank, honor, and form. It has higher aspirations. Francis DeSales

"The logic of worldly success rests on a fallacy; the strange error that our perfection depends on the thoughts and applause of other people! A weird life it is, indeed, to be living always in somebody else's imagination, as if that were the only place in which one could at last become real!" Thomas Merton, "The Seven Story Mountain".

"I" IS THE SMALLEST WORD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. "I TRAVELLED TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE AND WAS SURPRISED TO FIND I WASN'T THERE". YOUR "EGO" IS NOT YOUR AMIGO!

"UNLESS THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE, THEY LABOR IN VAIN WHO BUILD IT."



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