

# A FIRM FOUNDATION IN SHIFTING SAND

## The Clash...and My Commitments

A CLASH is taking place, and a firm foundation is desperately needed. How do we develop this firm foundation?

Jesus made a very clear statement about this. Matthew 7:24-27

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<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

*Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV)*

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1. Everyone who hears these words of mine...
2. and puts them into practice.
3. Therefore:
  - a. Listen to the words of Jesus.
  - b. Put them into practice. (“Trust and Obey”)
  - c. Develop a relationship that transforms our behavior.

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The sand continues to shift.

1. Wars
2. Political Issues
3. Health Concerns
4. Economic Uncertainties
5. Social Changes
6. Views on Sexuality

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Let's listen to these words of Jesus, for they shape the foundation.

*21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"*

*23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

*Matthew 16:21-23 (NIV1984)*

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Let's listen to these words of Jesus, for they shape the foundation.

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

*Matthew 16:24-26 (NIV1984)*

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The Words of Jesus (Matthew 16:24-25) in a Chart/Checklist:

	Listened to the Words of Jesus Today?	Have I Put Them into Practice Today?
Want to be Jesus' disciple		
Deny myself		
Take up my cross (daily)		
Follow Jesus		
Lose my life for Jesus		

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Want to be Jesus' disciple	Yes	Yes
Deny myself	Yes	Yes
Take up my cross (daily)	Yes	Yes
Follow Jesus	Yes	Yes
Lose my life for Jesus	Yes	Yes

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Jesus – his love and commitment to us, his words, his giving us the power to live out his words – is the firm foundation we need.

This is expressed in part in Mt. Vernon's vision statement:

“...with a thirst for righteousness.”

This applies to us today as we have looked at questions about sexuality, and the significant social changes that have taken place in this area of thinking, behavior, and law.

Let's look again at some of these questions.

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From a message by Ken Nafziger, The Church at Timberline:

1. Three components (distinct but related) re: Homosexuality
  - a. Sexual Orientation
  - b. Sexual Identity
  - c. Sexual Behavior (Practice)
2. How choice impacts these:
  - a. Orientation – nurture or nature or both? What part choice?
  - b. Identity = personal choice
  - c. Behavior = personal choice

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Six Views concerning Homosexuality (and there are more):

1. It's sin; simply repent.
2. Come to Christ, and experience his transformation.
3. Be willing to take up your cross and follow Christ.
4. God forgives your sin; it's better to marry than burn; it's okay.
5. Love is from God, and homosexual love is one of his gifts.
6. What right does anyone have to judge anyone else, or to say what is right or wrong for anyone else?

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Here are some key decisions to be made:

1. Who or what is central (center to everything; my attention)?
2. If God is central, what do I believe about the pattern of Jesus: must suffer, experience rejection, die, be buried, be raised again from the dead...?
3. Am I willing to take up my cross and follow Christ – at all cost?
4. How can I do my best – with the help of God's people around me – to live into the design that God originally gave?
5. What will I do to receive the grace and strength God offers?

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### Tips for Engaging in Conversation about Sexuality

1. Recognize that sexual sin is far broader than homosexuality.
2. Walk in humility; be aware of Satan's strategy to destroy (and that pride comes before a fall).
3. Be aware that this is not about you; approval is not the key.
4. Logic and reason will not win the day; love will.

“People don't care how much you know,  
until they know how much you care.”

5. Listen to Jesus, and practice what he says.

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Be Prepared to Address These Issues:

1. “You can’t legislate morality.”
  - a. Truth: No society tolerates chaos.
  - b. Truth: We legislate morality all the time.
2. “We function best when each one does as he/she prefers.”
  - a. Truth: We function best with love and lines (boundaries).
  - b. Truth: We all take part in setting boundaries for each other.
3. The way a person is born / What makes a person happy...is ultimately what matters.

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Understanding the Times: the Vital Need, the Hidden Danger, and the Potential Idolatry of “Civil Rights”

1. Civil rights have been vitally needed; it has been the lack of grace and truth, of justice, that made civil rights essential for our nation.
2. As Christians we need to be at the forefront of respecting all people; all were created by God and are loved by God.
3. What is considered “Civil Rights” is changing.
4. What is considered “Civil Rights” is trumping religious freedom. There is a CLASH of worldviews.

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## The Clash...and My Commitments

Eight Key Questions Answered by Every Worldview:

1. What is real? Really, really real? What is “most basic” real?
2. What is the world around us really like?
3. What is a human being? What is our essence, our core nature?
4. What happens to a person when he or she dies?
5. Can we know anything at all for real? Why? How?
6. Is there right and wrong? What is right and wrong?
7. What gives meaning to human experience, human history?
8. What core commitments for life emerge from the above?

*Adapted from “The Universe Next Door,” fifth edition, by James Sire.*

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HOW DO OUR WORLDVIEWS COMPARE?

	Christian – Biblical	Western Secular Society
<b>Real</b>		
<b>World Around Us</b>		
<b>Human Being</b>		
<b>(When) Dies</b>		
<b>Know</b>		
<b>Right and Wrong</b>		
<b>Meaning</b>		
<b>Commitments</b>		

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### HOW DO OUR WORLDVIEWS COMPARE?

	<b>Christian – Biblical</b>	<b>Western Secular Society</b>
<b>Real</b>	God: Awesome, Creator	Material; What You “See”
<b>World Around Us</b>	Created Sacred; Groaning	Our Material Home
<b>Human Being</b>	Creation; In Image of God	Most Complex Earth Being
<b>(When) Dies</b>	Eternity: Heaven or Hell	Nothing; <i>or</i> “Paradise” for All
<b>Know</b>	Trust in God’s Character	? (Maybe: Can Be Proven)
<b>Right and Wrong</b>	God’s Character/Revelation	Choice; Don’t Interfere; Heart
<b>Meaning</b>	God’s Purpose/Relations.	Self-Fulfillment; Progress
<b>Commitments</b>	Love; Sacrifice; Faith	Be True to Myself

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## The Clash...and My Commitments

THERE IS A CLASH IN THE WAY WE VIEW THE WORLD.

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***The greatest threat to a western secular worldview...is ours.***

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What Are Some IMPLICATIONS of This CLASH?

1. There's tension.
2. There's a battle.
3. It's hard to communicate across the worldviews.
4. Our discussions and disagreements tend to be on the surface issues, and not on the underlying heart issues.
5. We need God's grace!
6. We need to make some clear commitments.

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My Commitment to **EACH PERSON** with Questions of Sexuality

1. I will seek to create a place of safety.
2. I will seek to hear and understand.
3. I will seek to act so that you truly see Jesus.
4. I will seek to not compromise my convictions.
5. I will seek to love you as one created by God.
6. I will seek to share with you the hope found in Jesus.
7. I will seek not to offer platitudes, but to be real.
8. I will seek to express Jesus, from whom come grace and truth.

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My Commitment to **GOD** When Addressing Questions of Sexuality

1. I commit to love you first, above all else, with all I am and have
2. I commit to share your love for each person you've created.
3. I commit to express Jesus, flowing with grace and truth.
4. I commit to honor your holiness above human desire.
5. I commit to asking you to teach me, to lead me in your ways.
6. I commit to obey you at whatever cost.

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### Two Thoughts about the Future

1. If judgment comes to the United States, it won't be because of homosexuality; it will be because we have denied worship of God as our creator, and have begun to worship the creation (in whatever form of idolatry in which this is expressed). (And, yes, in case you're checking, I just referenced homosexuality as idolatry, just as I would fornication, adultery, pornography, greed, lust, ...)
2. I think God wants to call out all sin, and call all of us to radical, total, heart obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord of all.

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Five Key Threads from this Series:

1. God designed the universe, the earth, humanity, relationships...and it was very good.
2. We (humanity – both collectively and individually) distorted God's design...and it's left us hurting, confused, lost.
3. Fortunately, God gives second chances.
4. To benefit from the second chances God gives us we need to let go of the distortions and live into God's design.
5. Jesus loves us and gives us the power to live this out.

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As we come to receive the Lord's Supper, we do so in this way:

1. God, you are good, and your design of us was very good.
2. We (humanity – both collectively and individually) have distorted your design...and it's left us hurting, confused, lost.
3. Lord God, thank you for offering us second chances.
4. I choose to let go of the distortions and live into your design.  
But I can't do so on my own.
5. Jesus, you are God's great second chance. Thank you for loving us (me) & giving us (me) the power to live God's design.