

Survey Says: The Church Better Repent and Revive. . . and Soon

Saturday 05/14/2022 08:00 AM CT • 54:01

Host: David Wheaton 00:08

The Survey Says: The Church Better Repent and Revive. . .and Soon.

Dr. George Barna joins us today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a non-profit listener-supported radio ministry. Thanks to those of you who give, pray, and encourage us. You can connect with us by calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by visiting TheChristianWorldview.org.

A true follower of Christ has the indwelling Holy Spirit helping them to discern that the professed Bible believing church in America has drifted. The lights go down, and the, "Worship Arts Team," spends 30 minutes or more performing the audience into an emotional quasi spiritual experience. Then, the pastor takes the, "Stage," and roams, gesticulates, and emotes his way or her way through a 25 minute, "Sermon of life coaching," with personal stories, humor, props with a few quasi Christian principles mixed in. So it makes perfect sense why well known researcher Dr. George Barna finds that only 2% of professed Christian parents have a biblical worldview. And just one half of self described Christian parents accept the Bible as the true and trustworthy words of God, or that one out of every four do not bother to praise, worship, or thank God during a typical week. This is a death spiral for the church and for families and even our country. And yet, Christ continues. He promises to build his church, not necessarily the visible brick and mortar kind, but the invisible remnant of true believers.

Dr. George Barna, Director of Research and co-founder of the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, joins us today on The Christian Worldview to discuss his most recent studies, along with an exhortation for each of us to examine ourselves and to repent and revive. Here's the interview with Dr. George Barna. George, thank you for coming on the program today. Tell us how you came to saving faith in Christ. And the follow up to that is, How did you develop such an interest in doing studies and research on cultural trends and Christianity?

Guest: George Barna 02:46

The short answer to how I came to know Christ as my Savior was because of getting married. We went through a premarital counseling program that the church that we wound up getting

married through did not accept as valid. They made us go through another one. And at the end of that, the minister asked if I had questions. I had dozens of them because I really wasn't immersed in the Christian faith at that point. I was still seeking things. I was going to church regularly. But it wasn't very satisfying. So I had a lot of questions. And as I started to ask the questions, the minister finally stood up and pounded his desk and said, That's it. No more questions. Just do what we teach you to do. Be at church when we tell you to be there, and everything will work out fine. Do you understand? And what I understood was that that wasn't the church for me.

So that put us on a quest to find God. We found him in a small, fundamentalist church. We didn't know what fundamentalist was. We didn't know what Protestant was. We didn't know virtually anything. And when I say we, it was my wife to be, and eventually my wife, who went on this journey together, and we went to that fundamentalist church and the pastor did something we'd never seen done before, which was taking the Bible, reading a passage, and then explaining it. And we just thought that was fabulous. So we kept going back to that church. And eventually they explained to us who Jesus was, what he'd done for me, because of my sinful nature and accepting Christ as a result of that. And it's been a wild journey since then. But it's been a great one.

In terms of the research aspect, all of that, my coming to Christ happened while I was in graduate school, and I was getting degrees to learn more about research. I had been a political pollster before I went to grad school and figured that I would get the degrees and then go out and then be a political pollster for the rest of my life. Got the degrees, got out, realized you know what, you can't, well, it's very hard to make a full time living as a political pollster because it's very seasonal, and so wound up working in a big marketing research firm, got hired away by one of their clients who happened to be a Christian marketing and advertising agency. I started up a research division and a direct marketing division for them, and then eventually left that to start the Barna Research Group because I came to recognize I had an opportunity to blend my faith and my professional skills by providing current, accurate, and reliable information in bite sized pieces to churches because nobody was doing that. There was no money in it, really. And so nobody was doing it. But I felt called to do that.

So started the Barna Research Group, sold that in 2009 and currently work at Arizona Christian University, at the cultural Research Center, where our focus is worldview and cultural transformation. So it's been a, again, a long journey, winding one, but a fascinating one for me. And I'm grateful that God found a way to use me.

Host: David Wheaton 06:07

Wow! That certainly is a very fascinating journey. Dr. George Barna joins us today here on The Christian Worldview. Thanks for sharing how God saved you. How old are you now George?

Guest: George Barna 06:19

You know, I heard a comedian once say, it's impolite to ask women how much they weigh, so tell me how old are you? It's kinda like that. Yeah, I'm 67.

Host: David Wheaton 06:29

Okay. So Lord willing, you have a lot of good years ahead of you.

Guest: George Barna 06:32

Let me just tell you, I figure I probably don't. And so really part of this, this task of going to Arizona Christian University, and starting the cultural research center is part of my journey to make sure that I finish well because I think that each of us is called to do that. And I do want to hear well done good and faithful servant when I'm done. So I'm trying to learn from all the research I've done for more than 40 years. I went back a few years ago, realized I'm getting old, don't have that many years left of productive ministry. You know, I mean, the Lord can change that, but on average. And so looked at the last few 100 research studies I've done, took notes on them, tried to figure out what did I learn from these.

And the thing that I learned, David, which you may find interesting, is that the one thing that every survey in that batch that I'd done had in common, and of course, when you do surveys you're trying to solve problems, but the one thing they all have in common is, you know, if the people who are the focus of these surveys had a biblical worldview, none of these problems that I was researching would have existed. That worldview solution would have solved everything else. And it helped me to believe that really everything, every problem that we face in our culture, every problem we face in our personal lives, comes down to being a worldview problem. And so if we can address worldview more succinctly, more intelligently, more strategically, more consistently, we will solve the problems that are all around us because God doesn't want us to be living in the midst of those problems. He wants us to thrive. But in order to do that, the decisions we make, really have to reflect His truth and His principles, and His commands and His ways of living. And so that was a key moment for me in my life. I figured, you know, all the 40 years up to that point, had been a prelude to realizing everything comes down to worldview.

Host: David Wheaton 08:37

It is so true life is just made up of a million big and little decisions and choices. And those decisions and choices are based on something and if they're not based on the Bible, we're going to be living and thinking at odds with what God intends for us. So thank you for stating that summary of what you found in all your research over the years. Dr. George Barna joins us today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Before we get into a couple of your more recent studies about parenting, you have a study you released last year in mid April 2021 about America's dominant worldview syncretism. You say, "A new piece of groundbreaking research by the cultural research center answers the question raised by the initial study, 'If American adults do not have a biblical worldview, what is the dominant worldview among the other 94%?'" In other words, just 6% of US adults have a biblical worldview, your study found. And you talked about it in terms of syncretism. And that's the summary name for a disparate, irreconcilable collection of beliefs and behaviors that define people's lives. It's a cut and paste approach to making sense of and responding to life. Rather than developing an internally consistent and philosophically coherent perspective on life, Americans embrace points of view or actions that feel comfortable or seem most convenient. Those beliefs and behaviors are often inconsistent or even contradictory. But few Americans seem troubled by those failings. You're in your 60s. You've seen a lot of life. How would you compare the worldview in America now to let's say, 25 years ago, or 50 years ago? And how does the worldview of a nation change over time? What changes it?

Guest: George Barna 10:33

Well, great questions. The first thing I'd say is the way that things have changed is partly that Americans now don't think as often as they feel. And so as we make our decisions, for most Americans now it's no longer a matter of going back and trying to determine what is factually accurate or correct or what is right. Instead, what Americans do, is they feel their way through the situation. How will I feel if I do this? How will I feel if I think that it's more so about feelings? We are not a reflective or intellectually sophisticated nation. 50 years ago or so, it would have been that many people would have literally thought, What Does the Bible teach about this? What did I learn at church? What kind of spiritual or religious lessons did my parents try to impart to me? And decisions would have been made on that.

Now we're in a completely different cultural situation, where within families, there's very, very little talk, if any, about matters of faith. Most Americans do not read the Bible. Most Americans have not read the entire Bible, and an increasing proportion of them, neither own nor ever read the Bible. So that kind of Christian presence that was in our culture a half century ago, is long gone at this point. Now it's more about feelings. How did we make that shift? A lot of it has to do with the change in what influences the worldview that we embrace. Again, if we were to go back 50 years, we would find that things were closer to what the Bible says is the way it should be. That being that parents raise their children to believe certain things, and therefore, to act in certain ways. Beliefs and behavior are inextricably tied. At the Cultural Research Center we often use the phrase, "You do what you believe."

And so beliefs matter, because they determine your behavior. "You do what you believe" is right, or proper, or comfortable. Well, in the 1940s, 1950s, maybe even the early 1960s, parents taught their kids the principles, the lessons that they needed to make those kinds of

decisions. That kind of teaching doesn't take place in our homes anymore. The other thing that was happening in the past was that churches prepared parents to do that job. They understood that it was their job to equip parents to be effective representatives of both Christ and the scriptures. But today, our churches across the country don't do that. Again, there are exceptions to that. There are some churches that do. But our research shows that the vast majority of churches do not engage in that kind of equipping.

And given that worldview, a person's worldview is going to emerge, you need one to get through every day. And that's why a person's worldview begins developing at 15 to 18 months of age, and is almost fully formed by the age of 13. You're trying to figure out life and how to deal with it. That's what your worldview helps you do. Well, that means that if your family is not helping you to develop your worldview, and a church is not helping you to do that, something is going to be because that's a vacuum that needs to be filled, it will be filled. And so the change that has taken place in the last half century is what then influences what our worldview becomes. And what we've seen happen is that the media have stepped up and filled most of that vacuum, through television, through movies, through music, through books, through all forms of art and technology and entertainment. Worldview is formed by the messages that those vehicles from those media send to the people who are paying attention to those media.

You've also got schools, you've got government laws, you've got peers, also playing significant roles in that, as the family has lost a lot of its influence, most of its influence. And churches are not really players in that process today.

Host: David Wheaton 15:17

Wow. That's really well said. Thank you for explaining that. George Barna with us today here on The Christian Worldview. You can go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. We have a link over to The Cultural Research Center that George works for and founded with all the different studies they've done. And you will be fascinated by all the different surveys and studies they've done on America's dominant worldview and post modernism and everything. What Americans find attractive about Marxism and what does it mean when people say they are a Christian? So many different things that are really interesting to learn about and telling about the state of our country and the church.

Just go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org and click on that link to go over there. Okay, we need to take a short break for some ministry announcements. You are listening to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. You can support this nonprofit radio ministry by calling 1-888-646-2233, visiting TheChristianWorldview.org, or writing to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Resource: Evidence Study Bible by Ray Comfort 16:22

And God loves you so much. He became a human being, suffered and died on the cross to take the punishment for the sin of the world. That means you don't have to end up in hell. God can legally forgive your sins, because he's the lover of your soul. And then Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. Mario, if you give up the battle and just say God, I'm a rebel, and you repent and trust in Christ, God will forgive every sin you have ever committed and grant you everlasting life as a free gift. Do you believe what I'm saying? [Yes.] It's the gospel truth. I wouldn't lie to you?

Ray Comfort is a tireless Proclaimer of the gospel and a sharp defender of the faith. Did you know that Ray has written a commentary for the Evidence Study Bible, a New King James version that is chock full of evidence for the faith and instruction on evangelism. To purchase the Evidence Study Bible, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Resource: Foreshadows by Steve Miller
 17:22

And if indeed, we succeed in hacking and engineering life, this will be not just the greatest revolution in the history of humanity, this will be the greatest revolution in biology since the very beginning of life 4 billion years ago. Science is replacing evolution by natural selection with evolution by intelligent design, not the intelligent design of some God above the clouds, but our intelligent design.

That was Yuval Noah Harari, a leading adviser to Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum. Dystopian scenarios like this will likely mark the days leading up to the return of Christ. This is why we recommend you order Steve Miller's new book *Foreshadows-12 Mega Clues Jesus' Return Is Nearer Than Ever*. You can get it for a donation of any amount. Just call 1-888-646-2233 or go to TheChristianWorldview.org.

Host: David Wheaton 18:29

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Now back to the interview with Dr. George Barna, the Director of Research and co founder of The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. George, in a more recent study, What do self described Christian parents in America actually believe? And this is almost jumping off your last answer. Just one half of self described Christian parents, that's just 50%, accept the Bible as the true and trust worthy words of God. Now I'm sure how you can be a Christian and believe that, but let's just go on to the next bullet point. Only one out of every three pre teen parents, only 33% of parents of pre teens believe their eternal destiny is dependent upon Jesus Christ alone. In other words, I would find it hard for anyone to actually

be a true believer, the 66% that don't believe that, how can they even be truly saved? Because that's a fundamental tenant of coming to saving faith that Jesus Christ and His claim that He's the way the truth and life and no one comes to the Father except through Him, is absolutely true.

Another bullet point. Fewer than one in five parents, these are Christian professing Christian parents, believe that success is best defined as consistently obeying God's laws and commands. And then merely one out of three you found in your study, one out of three pre teen parents rely upon the Bible as their primary source of moral guidance. I mean, truly just incredible. And so then you ask the question after putting those things, how is it that in a nation that has prided itself on being the centerpiece of global Christianity, that an overwhelming majority of self-identified Christian parents have drifted into what you call this syncretistic worldview, merging philosophies of life, and to a man based worldview with a minimally Christian worldview? Goes on to say that one needs to look no further than the American church. And you went into this in your last answer, which has not only lowered the entry bar, so that it is difficult to identify any beliefs that disqualify one from claiming to be a Christian, but all the while they've been measuring the wrong indicators. So are you referring to the evangelical church there? And explain what you mean by lowering the entry bar.

Guest: George Barna 21:05

Well, one of the things that we found, David, as we talk with pastors across the country, is that they do measure how successful their ministries are. And as we did that research, we discovered there are five things that they measure. How many people show up, how much money they raise, how many programs they offer, how many staff people they hire, and how much square footage they've been able to build out on the campus.

Now, I'm a measurement guy. So I'm always happy to find that people are measuring things to determine how well they're doing. But I also know another truism that we go by is you get what you measure. And so when you measure things like attendance, money, programs, square footage, that has literally nothing to do with discipleship. And so if Jesus died so that we would become more like Him, we would want to follow Him, imitate Him, share Him with the world, you know, the whole idea of being a disciple and making disciples, that's what we ought to be measuring.

Jesus didn't die to fill seats in auditoriums. He didn't die so the church has a bigger real estate portfolio in the community than Home Depot. He died so that our lives would be transformed to be more like His. And if we're not measuring that, we're not going to get that. We're going to get the things that we are measuring, which is how good are we at marketing? Are we getting enough people to come? And so when we look even at children's ministry, it's the same thing. We set the bar low for adults, we've set the bar low for children. What do we consider to be success with ministry to children? We want them to go away happy. Why? Because we want

them to make sure that they bring their parents back next weekend, because we gauge the success of the church, not based on how many children show up, but how many adults show up. And so there's this whole kind of insidious approach to ministry that we've adopted, that really reflects the secular mindset of America, where we measure things with the wrong numbers. So it's unfortunate.

You know, the other thing I would say about setting the bar low, is that we're just happy to have people come in the door. Why? Partly because of the study that we're releasing this week. You haven't actually seen it yet. But we found that in a national study we just finished among pastors of churches across the country, only 37% of them have a biblical worldview. So knowing and teaching and holding people accountable to God's truth principles, is not uppermost in the mind of most pastors, because that's not who they are. They don't possess those as the driving principles in their lives. And so in that way, it seems only natural that our churches have really become about something other than professing God's truth, and enabling people to embrace it.

Host: David Wheaton 24:15

George Barna with us today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, director and co founder of The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. We have the center and all the studies they have done linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

As you mentioned earlier, we are a product of our influences, what or who influences us in life. And so we were talking about the church here, church leadership, we'll say specifically pastors and other elders and deacons, those are also influencers in a church, but let's focus on pastors here for a second. Pastors, who are they influenced by? They come out of seminaries who are made up of professors, and who are they influenced by, the professors? They're influenced by their own local church and pastor. But even beyond that they're influenced by what is called big evangelicalism or big eva for short, whether it's the books that come out of the Christian publishing industry, the unending number of Christian conferences, Christian leadership conferences out there, the Christian influencers that they see online or who write columns for Christianity Today and elsewhere. Is there any sort of historical pattern for breaking out of this closed loop? And what would success look like that we know we're going in the right direction.

Guest: George Barna 25:37

It's interesting as you read the Scriptures to see how God transforms societies or cultures. And one of the things that you notice is that God never waits until he has a majority of people on his side to do a mighty and everlasting work. What He typically does is He'll call out a relatively small group from that culture, or group that the scriptures call a remnant. And these are people who are completely sold out to Him, and who will do what He calls them to do based on His principles. And so as I look at the future of the church in America, it's not going to be a future

that's dependent upon good efforts from pastors, or from seminaries, or, you know, any of those kinds of professional Christian places. It's going to be based on the work of the remnant, really unusual individuals in our country today, people who have chosen to believe God, to believe His Word, and to do everything in their power to try to live in concert with it. It's that remnant that is going to bring our culture back to faith in Christ, back to trust in the scriptures, back to accountability for God's principles in their lives. That's I think, who we have to be looking at.

Host: David Wheaton 27:07

And that's actually good news. Because you're not waiting for someone else to get it right. You're looking to yourself to say, Where am I? Am I right with God and how am I living my life? And how can I become more sanctified? More like Christ? So really, revival starts inside each and every one of us. Dr. George Barna joins us today here on the Christian Worldview. I want to just read one portion of another study, just I won't read the whole thing here, but among the key beliefs you say and behaviors that born again Christian parents missed the mark on are the foundational biblical worldview belief is that absolute moral truth exists.

Determining right from wrong is not up to each individual, but it's derived from biblical teaching and principles. Only 30% of born again parents embrace the existence of Bible based, absolute moral truth. Second bullet point. The biblical worldview defines success as consistent obedience to God. Fewer than 4 out of 10 parents of preteens hold that view. The biblical worldview teaches that human life is sacred. This viewpoint is held by just 1/3 of born again parents and you see what's going on with the supreme court right now and you see the messaging and the tweets coming out from so called Christian leaders that don't seem very glad about what's taking place, that abortion, Roe v Wade is going to be overturned. And so the question is, is this idea of having such a low percentage of professing Christians who actually have a biblical worldview, is it George, is it an intellectual issue? They just need to get smarter, get more information, and then they'll get it? Or is it more volitional? Is that their desires of their heart are something other than what God's Word says?

Guest: George Barna 28:54

Yeah, David, I would suggest that it's the latter. And that goes back to something I mentioned earlier in our conversation about the fact that people today are driven by emotion rather than intellect. Most Americans do not believe that there's any such thing as fact. But they do believe that feelings are something that they can trust. Now, we know empirically, that's not the case. But yeah, in answer to your question, it would be more volitional.

However, having said that, I'll say that the chances of it switching back to America becoming a nation where people are more driven by intellect is increasingly unlikely, largely because we are not studying the things that will help us to know truth. So for instance, one of the claims

that I could make and support at nauseam with data is that Americans are biblically illiterate, even if they wanted to have a Biblical worldview today, they wouldn't know where to start. Because they don't read the Bible, they don't study the Bible, they don't memorize the Bible, they don't grasp the grand narrative of the Bible. And at the same time, you've got many different worldviews, whether it's post modernism or Marxism or Eastern mysticism. There are plenty of them out there, as you talked about over the course of time, that draw us away from our reliance on the God who created us for an understanding of the truth that should propel us forward in life. So until we get to a place where Americans are willing to not just be led by the emotion of the moment, but are willing to actually take a little bit of time to perhaps study something, to reflect on something, to perhaps observe the outcomes of different approaches to life, we're probably going to be in the mess that we're in now.

Host: David Wheaton 31:00

George, what do you think about the way the evangelical church seems to subsume the more popular secular ideologies of our day? You know, whether it's the issue of, "Social justice, which is kind of a Christian word for Critical Race Theory, the move toward having women in teaching over men roles in churches, that's becoming a very big one now, you know, once in the liberal denominations, but now more Southern Baptist and other Protestant denominations. Or the issue that you can be a professing Christian and harbor homosexual desires and you don't have to overcome those through the power of the Spirit. That's just who you are. These are clearly unbiblical notions, beliefs, ideologies, but are being pushed right in and welcomed actually right into the evangelical church. How can that be stopped, or pushed back on when it sounds like you don't think there are the defenses there from pastors and leadership that are going to say, no further?

Guest: George Barna 32:07

First of all, we're in a situation where most self identify Christians do not believe that the Bible provides us with absolute moral truths or principles. So right away, it comes back to what do I feel? Secondly, what we've done is we've defined love, which we are as Christians are meant to embody in our culture, but we've redefined it to be making other people happy. And so that being the case, it's no longer about truth, or righteousness, or God's ideas of justice. It's all about, let me compromise whatever is important to make the other person feel loved.

And then add to that something I alluded to earlier, which is that when you have churches that define success, essentially as popularity, the ability to track people and money, well, that means that truth principles cannot be absolute. They can't be standardized. They always have to be circumstantial in order to remain popular, because you want to be successful. And that's how you see success.

So when you start adding all of these things together, what we've really done is we've undermined the future of the Christian Church as we've known it. Repentance is going to have to be a part of our future. Revival and renewal will have to be part of our future. It's not going to come easily. It's going to take some real strong leadership by those people who are part of the remnant and who are not willing to compromise God's truths and principles in order to be what is truly successful, that is consistently obedient to Him.

Host: David Wheaton 34:03

So true, George, that we need repentance and revival. So what is your parting exhortation to the individual listener today on how they can have this kind of authentic belief and lifestyle in the way they live out their Christian life? What would you exhort us to do with what you've told us today? Okay, George Barna will answer that question after this brief break. Would you like to help The Christian Worldview continue broadcasting on the radio station, website or app on which you are listening today? You can become a Christian Worldview Partner by calling 1-888-646-2233, visiting TheChristianWorldview.org, or writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Resource: Evidence Study Bible by Ray Comfort 34:50

And God loves you so much. He became a human being, suffered and died on the cross to take the punishment for the sin of the world. That means you don't have to end up in hell. God can legally forgive your sins because he's the lover of your soul. And then Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. Mario, if you give up the battle and just say, God, I'm a rebel, and you repent and trust in Christ, God will forgive every sin you've ever committed and grant you everlasting life as a free gift. Do you believe what I'm saying? [Marion-Yes]. It's the gospel truth. I wouldn't lie to you.

Ray Comfort is a tireless proclaimer of the gospel and a sharp defender of the faith. Did you know that Ray has written a commentary for the Evidence Study Bible, a New King James version that is chock full of evidence for the faith and instruction on evangelism? To purchase the Evidence Study Bible, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

**Featured Resource: God vs. Government
 35:52**

Pastor James Coates was arrested and sent to prison a couple of weeks ago in Canada. What did he do? He held a church service.

And it isn't the government's responsibility to protect us from a virus. What's their responsibility? To protect our God given rights.

Two days after that sermon, Pastor James Coates was arrested and imprisoned. He has now co authored an important book titled, God vs, Government Taking a Biblical Stand When Christ & Compliance Collide. God vs. Government is 208 pages, softcover and retails for \$17.99. You can order a copy for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Host: David Wheaton 36:57

Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Transcripts and Short Takes are also available. Now back to the interview with Dr. George Barna as we discuss the topic, The Survey Says: The Church Better Repent and Revive. . .and Soon. George, what is your parting exhortation to the individual listener today on how they can have this kind of authentic belief and lifestyle in the way they live out their Christian life? What would you exhort us to do with what you've told us today?

Guest: George Barna 37:40

The first thing I think all of us ought to be doing regularly is self assessment. Trying to figure out are the things that I'm saying the things that I'm doing the things that I'm thinking, do they really reflect biblical principles? Because if they don't, then I need to change myself. I need to ask the Holy Spirit to do whatever is necessary to get me to where I need to be, so that I am more Christ like. Then I've got to recognize my primary calling here on Earth is to make disciples. So I have to think about, how can I do that most effectively?

And part of that is going to be recognizing that I ought to be ministering to children, because that's where a person's worldview develops. And they're going to take that worldview that they develop as a child, through their entire adult life with them. So what happens before the age of 13 determines, for the most part whether or not they're going to be a disciple of Christ. And toward that end, I also have to recognize that so much of my influence on others, isn't just what I say, but it's in what I do. Part of the reason why children are not becoming disciples of Jesus today, is because they're watching their parents, who may talk a good game, but they don't live a good game. And children we found in this research, are watching their parents, they're seeing the contradictions, and they're saying, as they're trying to figure out, who am I? How should I live? What's right and wrong? They're looking at their parents and they're confused, and they're saying, you know, I guess my parents don't get it either. And so this faith that maybe they've been suggesting, to me, Christianity, probably not the right faith to go for. It hasn't helped them to figure it out. It probably won't help me to figure it out.

And that's why they then turn to movies and television and music and video games and other sources of media. Because if nothing else, those things convey a consistent message. And so

those of us who want to be servants of the living God, bringing other people to Christ, disciplining them, we have to be very certain that our behavior is consistent with the principles that we profess. Otherwise, our witness is undermined.

Host: David Wheaton 40:09

Well said. Thank you for concluding that way, George, and thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. Thank you for all these great studies you've done. This is important information that Christians and pastors need to be looking at and taking very seriously and making corrections where necessary. All of God's best and grace to you, George.

Guest: George Barna 40:29

Thanks so much, David. I appreciate it.

Host: David Wheaton 40:31

Well I hope you gained from that interview with Dr. George Barna. He had some really convicting things to say and if you missed any of the interview, I would encourage you to go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Or you can subscribe for free on the podcast app on your phone. Just search for The Christian Worldview.

Now there is a simple and scary reason why professing Christians, as we're talking about today, and even pastors don't have a biblical worldview and thus, their children reject Christianity. The simple reason is this and it's phrased in terms of a riddle. All possessors are professors, but not all professors are possessors. What does that mean? Well, it simply means that those who possess genuine saving faith will profess it, but not all who profess faith in Christ genuinely possess it.

This is based right from what Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter seven, starting in verse 21, where he says, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter." And Jesus says in verse 22, "Many will say to Me on that day, [Judgment Day], Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in Your name, cast out demons, and in Your name, perform many miracles?" To which Jesus responds, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

So according to Jesus, it's very possible to profess that Jesus is your Lord, and do religious things, but yet have Christ on judgment day say, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" And that's why I said, this is a scary situation, because people who profess Christ may not genuinely possess him, and therefore will be subject to his judgment on Judgement Day. And so Christ further explained this, in the parable of the wheat, and the tares in Matthew chapter 13. First the parable itself, Jesus presented another parable to them

saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And then the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? And he said to them, An enemy has done this. The slave said to him, do you want us then to go and gather them up? But he said, No. For while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, first gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Okay, so let's move on to how Christ explains what this parable means and how it illuminates what George Barna was talking about today. Verse 36, Matthew 13. Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And Jesus said, "The one who sews the good seed is the Son of Man. [That's Christ Himself]. And the field is the world, and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, true believers, and the tares are the sons of the evil one. [So the tares are professing Christians who aren't truly saved]. And the enemy who sowed them is the devil. And the harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are angels. So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.[Verse 41] The son of man[again Christ] will send forth his angels and they will gather out of His kingdom, all stumbling blocks [these are the tares] and those who commit lawlessness and will throw them into the furnace of fire. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, then the righteous [the wheat] will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." That's from Matthew 13, in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

So again, the sower of good seed, the good seed being true believers is Christ Himself. The field is the world and that field can be divided into two groups. Sons of the kingdom, and Sons of the evil one. Sons of the kingdom are true believers and Sons of the evil one are professing believers, but they do not belong to the kingdom of God. They're not genuinely saved. And the tares are in one of two categories. They're either deceived about their true spiritual state of not being right with God, or they're actually deceivers. They know it, and are still carrying on to undermine the kingdom of God. Either way, though, they are sons of the evil one, Satan. And interestingly enough, as this parable talks about slaves, the slaves of the sower are true believers. They're true Christians who were sleeping. Did you notice that? They weren't alert to what was taking place that the sons of the evil one, that tares were being sown into the field, but then they recognize that something has gone wrong, and they have a desire to do something about it. But God says, "Let me separate the wheat from the tares on judgment day so that believers aren't harmed by uprooting them when you try to uproot the tares."

This is a hard truth for Christians to accept that not all who profess faith in Christ actually possess it. But alas, it is the truth. Jesus said a little earlier in the Gospel of Matthew, in Matthew chapter seven, he said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. Verse 14. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Now because of the evangelical churches pattern of making the gate, the entry point wide, easy believe-ism, just accept Jesus, raise your hand, sign a card, with no understanding of sin, righteousness and judgment and the way broad, making the methodology very broad, very close to the world, this will lead to tares outnumbering wheat, true believers within the church. And I think that goes a long way toward explaining why the evangelical church is the way it is today.

George Barna actually just released another study about pastors and their worldview. And he found that only 4 out of 10, 41% of pastors, senior pastors have a biblical worldview. And it goes straight down from there. 28% of associate pastors have a biblical worldview, and only 12% of youth pastors have a biblical worldview. And then at the very bottom, our executive pastors, only 4% of executive pastors have consistently biblical beliefs and behaviors. Again, totally shocking, but explains a lot. George Barna said in the interview something like we need to solve the worldview problem in the church. And that's true.

But the worldview problem is actually a salvation problem. You can't have and won't want a biblical worldview unless you are truly born again. So we need to recalibrate how we think about the professing church, and well known pastors and authors and conference speakers, and not assume, "Because they're popular and our church does a Bible study from his or her book, that they should be trusted." Those who have a pattern of saying and doing things that aren't in line with scripture should be suspect. That doesn't mean it's our primary focus to uproot them. But we need to be discerning like the Bereans in the book of Acts.

The true gospel must be explained and believed for someone to be truly saved. That first God is the Creator, He is holy, He is just, He is going to be the judge of all people someday, and that man is sinful and separated from God. And we've earned death, physical and spiritual death by our sin, and God will be the judge of all sinners, but that Jesus Christ was sent by God to earth to live a perfect life, and then to die as a sacrifice on the cross for the sins of those who would believe. And that belief in Him is the only way to be right with God, and that we must repent of our sin and believe in Him, repent and believe that's not two separate things, those who truly believe in Christ, it implies that you understand that you're a sinner and you need to turn from your sin. That's what belief implies. So whether you want to say repent and believe or just believe, it doesn't really matter as long as the belief implies that you have turned from your sin and turned to God.

And then there must be evidence of that faith. Faith without works isn't true saving faith, James says. There must be a heart desire to pursue sanctification to become more like Jesus Christ. So all of us today, me included, need to follow what Paul said, and II Corinthians 13:5. Test yourself to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves. Or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you-unless, indeed, you fail the test? The test is this. What am I trusting in to be right with God? Is it completely 100% the work of Christ on my behalf on the cross? Or is it my believing in Jesus, plus the things I do like go to church or other things I think are going to make me right with God? Is there evidence that I believe that in my life? Do I have a desire to read God's Word on a regular basis, to grow closer to God, to know him better? That is the point of reading the Word-to know God better so that you can love Him more and serve him more? Do I actually do that? Am I an active member of a local church where the Bible is preached faithfully and in its entirety?

We need to get out of the vortex of big evangelicalism which just produces shallow quasi Christians. And quasi is defined as; Apparently something, but not really. Professing Christians, but don't possess genuine saving faith. A true believer has God on his or her mind nearly all the time. How can I obey Him? How can I not sin against Him? What does He want from me? You cannot have a love for the world and a love for Christ. That's serving two masters. The tares in the parable, they're gonna try to straddle the fence, because their hearts are divided between the world and a God they want Him to be. But as George Barna said, God doesn't wait till He has a majority. He works through His remnant. So let's be the remnant. Let's be truly saved, believing in the true gospel. Let's be pursuing sanctification, holiness, and let's live and speak boldly for Jesus Christ as His ambassadors while we are on this earth. Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview.

Host: David Wheaton 52:23

Thanks also to our listeners for funding today's program. In just a moment, there will be lots of information on how you can connect with this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's not be discouraged, but encouraged. We may be living in a church era where there is lots of compromise, maybe more tares than wheat. But the Bible says, Jesus Christ and His Word, they're the same yesterday, and today and forever. Let's anchor ourselves on that truth. So until next time, "Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!"

Host: David Wheaton 53:00

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, What must I do to be saved? Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer

Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.