

To Reject the Gospel Is to Reject the Love of God; the Biblical Illiteracy of Mainline Christianity; “Outsiders”: 16–29-Year Olds Attitude toward Christianity

- 13) The justice of God must condemn what the righteousness of God rejects. Efforts to acquire salvation through works is rejected by the righteousness of God and thus condemned by justice.
 - 14) The love of God for the human race is expressed by His provision of a solution to mankind’s sinful condition in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who rejects salvation through faith in the Person and work of Christ in favor of his own works is guilty of rejecting the love of God.
 - 15) Consequently, salvation by works is maladjustment to the integrity of God. His justice, which is man’s point of contract with the integrity of God, must reject such an individual.
 - 16) Although assuming himself to be saved he is instead condemned and will receive eternal punishment in the lake of fire because he rejected the love of God.
 - 17) Salvation by works is the typical delusion held by every religion and draws a clear distinction between Christianity and religion.
 - 18) In religion, man uses his human works to gain approbation from God. In Christianity, God does the work and man is the beneficiary through faith in Christ and works are not a part of the equation.
 - 19) Consequently, throughout the United States today there are millions of people who attend Protestant churches that are lost and in need of a Savior for one of two reasons (1) the church teaches a flawed gospel to which they subscribe, or (2) the individual parishioner rejects the church’s accurate gospel in place of salvation by works.
45. The problems we presently face in this country are due to the tragedy that has occurred in its local churches. False gospels result in a failure to evangelize the lost which over time results in a staggering number of unbelievers.
46. This has been recently documented in our current study. I remind you of the appalling statistics accumulated by The Barna Group in its survey of the beliefs of churchgoing denominational members that documented a profound lack of belief in essential Christian doctrines. I quote from our study of Sunday, January 4, of this year:

In his study of [the beliefs of mainline Protestants \(including Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians\)](#), [George] Barna documented a rejection of key Christian doctrines. [Only 35% of mainline Protestant church members believe Christ was sinless](#) [65% do not]; [34% believe the Bible is totally accurate](#) [66% do not]; [27% agree that works don’t earn heaven](#) [73% do]; [and 20% believe Satan is real](#) [80% do not].

Denominations which are more evangelical report higher levels of commitment to key theological truths than their mainline counterparts, but large percentages of people in these more theologically conservative churches still deny essential Christian doctrines.¹

47. It is somewhat encouraging to learn from the Barna survey that nondenominational churches have much higher percentages but the percentage of nondenominational churches compared to mainline churches is quite small:

Of nondenominational Christian churches, Barna reports that 48% believe Satan is real; 60% say works don't earn heaven; 63% affirm the sinlessness of Christ; and 70% believe the Bible is totally accurate.²

48. A recent publication presents an analysis of the opinions Americans under thirty have about present-day Christianity. It is written by David Kinnaman, president of The Barna Group, and Gabe Lyons, founder of the Fermi Project. One of the book's charts is entitled:

The Struggle of Young Churchgoers

Question: Here are some words or phrases that people could use to describe a religious faith. Please indicate if you think each of these phrases describes present-day Christianity.

(Outsiders [atheists, agnostics, those affiliated with a faith other than Christianity (such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Mormonism, and so on), and other unchurched adults who are not born-again Christians. [from p. 17], 440; Christian churchgoers, 305 [745]; percent who say each term describes Christianity "a lot" or "some".)

<u>Among Americans ages 16-29:</u>	<u>Outsiders</u>	<u>Churchgoers</u>
Antihomosexual	91%	80%
Judgmental	87%	52%
Hypocritical—saying one thing, doing another	85%	47%
Old-fashioned	78%	36%
Too involved in politics	75%	50%
Out of touch with reality	72%	32%
Insensitive to others	70%	29%
Boring	68%	27%
No accepting of other faiths	64%	39%
Confusing	61%	44% ³

¹ Michael J. Vlach, "Crisis in America's Churches: Bible Knowledge at All-Time Low," *Theological Studies.org*, c. 2004. <http://www.theologicalstudies.citymax.com/page/page/1573625.htm>.

² Ibid.

³ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 17, 34.

49. The left column indicates that unbelievers have an overwhelmingly negative view of Christianity but how their views are formed would be an interesting survey as well. There could have been many factors that influenced the views of each individual interviewed. The culture, led by Progressive ideology, has cast a negative pall over Christianity as part of its “long march.” But it is also true that many in Christianity do have such views as are expressed in the categories indicated.
50. The fact is Christianity is a term that identifies a belief system. But a Christian, biblically speaking, is someone who has placed his faith in Christ for salvation and eternal life. Each believer is at a different stage of spiritual growth and the analysis of each one of them would produce a different outcome.
51. The real question to be answered is not what unbelievers “think” of Christianity but rather what the biblical worldview *should be* of individual believers. So let’s try that approach:
- 1) **Homosexuals.** The believer should express unconditional love toward these individuals. God has all the facts and it is His business to manage their behavior patterns. The Bible clearly identifies homosexuality as a sin; a behavior that is destructive to the individual and eventually has a negative impact on the society which openly accepts it as “another lifestyle.” History illustrates the veracity of this biblical worldview. Only doctrine can successfully manage any behavior pattern, so the starting point for the unbeliever is salvation and for the believer, doctrine. The duty of the believer toward the homosexual is prayer and his attitude toward homosexuality is to personally reject it.
 - 2) **Judgmental.** It is sinful to judge others. However, it is impossible not to observe what others say and do. The Bible is the source for determining what is right and what is wrong. A believer with knowledge of biblical norms and standards is able to discern the wrongdoing of others.

Therefore, being judgmental is sinful, but discernment is imperative for knowing how to evaluate people, identify charlatans, recognize the lie, avoid dangerous people, be aware of pick-up lines, and to make good decisions about whom to associate with.

- 3) **Hypocritical.** Hypocrisy is a sin and is common among those who have no established set of norms and standards. The common accusation of the unbeliever or disgruntled believer is that Christians put on airs of superiority as if they were better than others. Well this is true. Many believers do this, assuming that their sins are more acceptable than those of others. But the Bible advocates humility. This enables a believer to accept the fact he is a sinner saved by grace. Sinning, making mistakes, and doing wrong things are common to man. If the unbeliever expects Christians to be perfect, then he is requiring them to live up to standards he does not impose upon himself. He is either being hypocritical himself or he is practicing the Alinsky tactic of trying to lift us by our own petard.
- 4) **Old-fashioned.** Now whatever does this mean? I can only guess that this 16-29 age-group is in personal opposition to anyone who attends church, studies the Bible, and develops a biblical worldview which many Progressives consider to be old-fashioned. We're not old-fashioned at Grace Doctrine Church, were just traditionalists who are free-exercising.