

Exposing Enemies Within the Church: A Seven-Session Bible Study Series
“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11).

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Session 2: Social justice and biblical justice are as different as night and day.

The online resource page for this debriefing is available at
<https://www.discoverbedrocktruth.org/dbrp02/>.

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone,
“it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.”
—Lewis Carroll^{1,2}—

The Douglass-Clark House is a historic home located in Gallatin, Tennessee, northeast of Nashville. It is listed in the National Register of Historic places. It “was established as a home in 1786, when Tennessee was still part of North Carolina, by Elmore Douglass.” The home also “was used as an early courthouse for the young [Sumner] county,” which was founded in 1786 as well. “Future president Andrew Jackson made several trips to the house to practice law during court hearings from 1788-1790.”³

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From 2011 through 2014, the home went through a restoration process and now welcomes visitors who wish to explore America’s past. During the restoration, a bottle that originally contained “Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup” was discovered.⁴ “Mrs. Winslow’s Syrup” was a deadly potion, but at the time many believed it to be the very thing its manufactures and marketers claimed it was — both harmless and helpful. The discovery of the bottle gave rise to questions about who among the infants and young children at the Douglass-Clark House were given the syrup.

As we have indicated, in this instance, the word “soothing” is misleading in the worst sort of way. It The syrup *was* soothing, but it also was deadly. In 1849 Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup initially was promoted as a remedy for babies who were fussy and discontent, especially as a result of teething.

Having studied teething⁵ and other similar discomforts that make infants and toddlers restless and fussy, 19th-century midwife and children’s nurse⁶ Charlotte N. Winslow created a “medicine” that would calm any child.⁷ In 1844, she passed her formula along to Jeremiah Curtis, her son-in-law, who was a Maine druggist. He and his business partner, Benjamin A. Perkins, marketed and sold the potion under the name “Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup.” During the 1850s, Curtis and Perkins moved their business to New York City.

The syrup was advertised and used widely. In 1868, sales were estimated to be at one-and-a-half million bottles annually⁸ — and Charlotte Winslow’s formula worked! Sadly, though, the reason it worked is quite ominous: “This ‘soothing syrup’...had menacing ingredients lurking inside the bottle, including 65mg per ounce of morphine as well as alcohol.” It was sold during an era when ingredients were not listed on bottles or in any packaging that was used, and dosages of Mrs. Winslow’s Syrup were “potentially fatal.”⁹

Here are additional details.

A teaspoonful of the syrup...had the morphine content equal to that of approximately twenty drops of laudanum. Given that the 1873 edition of *The Health Reformer* suggested that babies six months of age receive no more than two to three drops of laudanum, the dosages listed on the bottles of Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup are alarming: For a child under one month old, the recommendation was 6 to 10 drops; children three months old were to be dosed half a teaspoon; and children six months old and up were to be given a teaspoonful three or four times a day! The recommended dosage for children with dysentery followed the amounts outlined above but was to be repeated every two hours until visual improvement was noticed. A teaspoonful of the syrup would have contained enough morphine to kill the average child, so it isn’t hard to understand why so many babies who were given Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup went to sleep only to never wake back up again, coining the syrup’s nickname, “the baby killer”. There is no statistic of the number of children that died from the use of soothing syrup, as many caregivers did not link the death to the syrup or they chose not to reveal the use of the syrup, but thousands of children are believed to have died from overdoses or from morphine addiction and withdrawal.¹⁰

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The Pure Food and Drug Act passed in 1906 and took effect in 1907.¹¹ It requires drug manufacturers to list ingredients on the packaging materials for their products. In 1911, the American Medical Association officially warned that Mrs. Winslow’s was dangerous to infants — but it wasn’t until 1930 that the product was taken off the market.¹²

→ *What lies have you believed — and paid a heavy price for believing?*

The Cost of Believing a Lie

During the 19th century in America, medical science was in its infancy. We know a great deal more today about specific treatments and their effects than doctors and pharmacists understood then. I’m not trying to excuse anyone, but I am attempting to describe the larger picture of what happened. Even so, the deaths that occurred as a result of believing a falsehood were horribly tragic, and they vividly illustrate the potentially high cost of believing a myth or an outright lie. Good intentions typically make no difference in the outcomes of such situations.

→ *Good intentions are great but counterproductive if the actions resulting from them work against the goals one has in mind. Nevertheless, good intentions and focusing on good intentions make people feel good, regardless of results. These realities remind us of our primary issue — the social justice movement. To a large extent, the fuel for social justice is emotional. Why do you think this is the case?*

→ *In our day, sound bites and emotional rhetoric typically win people over. People rarely think through the implications of what they are drawn to support. How can we who know enough to be wary of the social justice narrative encourage others to think objectively and act rationally rather than act on the basis of feelings and feel-good rhetoric?*

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Lying Violates the Ninth Commandment (and Lying Is What Social Justice Crusaders Do)

Behind all of the innocent, misguided, and ignorant promotions of social justice tenets are Marxist leaders who intentionally are promoting lies. They are guilty of violating the Ninth Commandment against bearing false witness. They want you to believe that the social justice movement is all about justice and fairness, but it isn't. It's actually about violating God-given property rights and engaging in theft, just as we talked about in our last debriefing. This is inherently *unjust*! Moreover, as we have said, the social justice movement and its leaders are promoting lies, and a dangerous ones, at that.

At bare minimum, the social justice movement consistently breaks or advocates consistently breaking three of the Ten Commandments — the Eighth Commandment against stealing, the Tenth Commandment against coveting, and the Ninth Commandment against lying.

Unfortunately, many people, including a great many Christians, have fallen for the deception; and some evangelicals are actively promoting it. The documentary film *Enemies Within the Church* exposes the nature of the spiritual war currently engulfing the church, as well as a good number of important players in this critical spiritual battle. The curriculum with which you are interacting also is a tool designed to enlighten and equip Bible-believing Christians.

The good news is that a number of conservatives, including numerous Christian cultural observers, aren't buying the rhetoric. In the PragerU video titled “Social Justice Isn't Justice.” Allie Stuckey forthrightly declares, “Justice is getting what you deserve without favor. Social justice is getting what you don't deserve because you *are* favored.”^{13,14}

Justice is getting what you deserve without favor. Social justice is getting what you don't deserve because you *are* favored.
—Allie Stuckey, in the PragerU video titled “Social Justice Isn't Justice”—

→ *In light of Allie Stuckey's observation, how can social justice crusaders continue to get away with calling what they are promoting through the social justice movement “justice”?*

In his book on social justice titled *Stand: Christianity Vs Social Justice*, Pastor Jon Benzinger cites Colson Center for Christian Worldview President John Stonestreet when he writes,

Because God is just (Deut. 32:4) and perfectly practices justice (Dan. 4:37), he requires his people to practice justice as well (Ps. 82:3, 112:5, Mic. 6:8). Now, while it may seem that social justice is actual justice, as John Stonestreet, the President of the Colson Center, once said to me on our *Redeeming Truth* podcast, “It's no good having the same vocabulary if you're using different dictionaries.” The phrase *social justice* has nothing to do with true justice. It conveniently dodges definition. The phrase is used to excuse injustice while hiding behind the word *justice* and redefining what it actually is. Practically speaking, it ends up meaning whatever political change progressives (i.e., socialists) support.¹⁵

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Not a New Tactic

A post published at wordfoundations.com in October of 2021 exposes the egregious tactic of redefining words.¹⁶ It's a strategy that's all about deceiving people: “We live in a world in which a television news reporter can stand in front of a burning building, maintain a straight face, look into the camera, and tell his audience that the nearby protest was ‘mostly peaceful’ or something similar....” On the **online resource page** for this debriefing, we've posted a video to prove it. Visit <https://www.discoverbedrocktruth.org/dbrp02/>.

A bit later, the article continues, “Make no mistake. Leftists have been on a mission to redefine words, and they've been doing it for decades.”¹⁸ Significantly, “The word *justice* has perhaps been the most important word the left has redefined.” As we will see during our next Bible study session and the debriefing for that session, another important word the left has redefined is the word *love*.

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On page 21 of *Social Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and Gospel*, Dr. Calvin Beisner writes that “sometimes...when people speak of social justice, they mean a social order that aims at equality of *opportunity* or even of *outcome*.”¹⁹ These actually are the redistributive objectives social justice leaders with nefarious intentions are working to meet. Beisner continues,

But this equality of either opportunity or outcome can be achieved only by violating the very criteria of Biblical justice—impartiality, proportionality, desert, and conformity with a righteous standard. Yet, “equality of outcome” is the primary sense in which the Progressive movement has used the term for over a century. This sort of “social justice” necessarily asserts *positive* rights and leads inexorably to the violation of *negative* rights. In a sense, “social justice” is really, by Biblical criteria, *injustice*.²⁰

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Remember this from our debriefing for Session 1:

Negative rights are the rights we enjoy because government is restricted from forbidding or hindering personal activity. Positive rights are “rights” that are secured when government intervenes in citizens’ lives to give them resources or to otherwise enable them to do or to have certain things. Generally speaking, America’s Founders and early leaders upheld the former, and in only a few instances the latter (such as an individual’s right to a trial by jury). Accordingly, they drafted and ratified the Bill of Rights to the US Constitution, which secured foundational rights of citizens through government *limitations*.

It is difficult to imagine how something as unjust as the social justice narrative could be promoted in the name of *justice*. But here we are. As Jesus said, The devil “was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44, NIV).

→ *Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) was the lead propagandist of the Nazi Party in Germany. He said, “It would not be impossible to prove with sufficient repetition and a psychological understanding of the people concerned that a square is in fact a circle. They are mere words, and words can be molded until they clothe ideas and disguise.”²¹ Of course, in this instance, the “proof” also would be a lie. Why are people so prone to believe lies?*

→ *By contrast, Jesus said, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). A truth’s being obvious or self-evident does not necessarily mean people readily will believe it. How can Christians and the church help people, especially other Christians, recognize and reject popular lies, and recognize and believe obvious truths? How can Christians and the church sharpen their ability to believe truths that aren’t as obvious, yet extremely important?*

→ *How can the truth be liberating and painful (difficult to accept) at the same time?*

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→ Americans, and especially American Christians, need to rediscover and make the case for absolute truth. Relativism says people can “make up their own truth,” but a belief in absolute truth contends that standards of right and wrong apply to all people, at all times, under all circumstances. Relativism might make people feel good, but it doesn’t make sense. Make a list of several reasons relativism can’t be viable.^{22,23}

→ Josh McDowell once said that relativism renders the wheat fields of Kansas no different from the ovens of Auschwitz. What did he mean?

Naïve? If so, Naïve Is a Description and not an Excuse; Christian Leaders Should Have Known Better

In 1983, Dr. Ronald Nash²⁴ released his important book *Social Justice and the Christian Church*. Nineteen years later, in 2002, Academic Renewal Press republished the book, apparently without any changes. Dr. Nash was a very perceptive observer, and he viewed the world through the lens of Scripture. Here are some of his observations about evangelical social justice crusaders and their passions. These statements demonstrate clearly how emotions mislead, and how, unchecked, they ultimately can and will promote and reinforce myths and even lies. Remember that Dr. Nash wrote these words shortly before his book was first published in 1983 (bullets have been added):

The present state of the evangelical debate is characterized by a noticeable swing to the left on the part of many evangelical intellectuals. Almost without exception, the major evangelical books about social justice that have appeared since 1960 have been authored by writers who reject and condemn political conservatism as a cruel, heartless, and uncaring movement totally out of step with an informed biblical view. Most recent evangelical publications on the subject insist that the Christian’s undisputed obligation to demonstrate

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love for the needy obliges him to adopt liberal statist means to aid the poor. This assertion is supplemented by allegations that because political conservatism lacks compassion for the poor and allegedly fails to support programs to alleviate poverty, hunger and need, it is an unacceptable option for the evangelical....

- [Yet, s]erious questions can be raised about the evangelical liberal’s grasp of the complex social, political and economic foundations of justice.
- The liberal evangelical is often inattentive to important distinctions in the notion of justice;
- he fails to see how his claims draw him into an unavoidable and dangerous dependence upon a coercive state;
- he is blind to the fact that many of his preferred programs to help the poor end up being self-defeating; and
- he is unaware of the confusion that pervades his interpretation of the biblical teaching about justice.

It is important to challenge the liberal assumption that social, political and economic conservatism is necessarily tied to a lack of compassion for the poor. Many evangelicals who are politically conservative oppose liberalism because they believe it is clear that liberal programs end up doing far more harm than good to the poor.²⁵

Government actually is *incapable* of being compassionate because it is a bureaucracy, not a human being. Further, government is *incapable* of engaging in charity. Charity, by definition, is voluntary assistance contributed from one’s own resources. The state has no wealth or resources it has worked and labored to produce on its own; any resources it has or redistributes, it *took* from individuals who produced them through their own hard work and wise use of opportunities, wealth, and material goods. This is not to say that all taxes constitute theft, because some government services (such as law enforcement, fire protection, and library services) are legitimate. Government redistribution of wealth in the name of “justice” is not.

→ *American Founding Father James Madison said, “Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government.” What would happen to a politician who said this today? Can you explain how a person can believe this about government and still be compassionate? What would you say?*

→ *What evidence does Dr. Nash cite that the social justice movement’s recommendations, when implemented, don’t work?*

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→ How can Dr. Nash's statements be used in an appeal to evangelicals to think with their heads and avoid merely being guided by their hearts and acting on their feelings?

Some Social Justice Crusaders in the Church Are Real Enemies

In Matthew 13:24-30,37-43, Jesus presented and explained His parable of the wheat and the tares, or weeds. Here are those two passages.

13²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ” ...

13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

³⁷ He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

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While “The field is the world” (v. 38), it is clear that “the sons of the kingdom” and “the sons of the wicked one” must intermingle and encounter one another, not only in the world, but also in the church, at least on certain occasions. Further, it’s clear from numerous passages of Scripture that worldly ideas can and sometimes do seep into the church,

- especially when “the sons of the wicked one” make strategic inroads,
- but also on numerous occasions when those who would gladly mislead believers *aren’t able* to make all the inroads Satan wants them to make.

In other words, believers always need to be on the alert. In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul wrote (emphasis added),

^{1:6} I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but **there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.** ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

In 2 Peter 2:1-3, the apostle Peter warned,

^{2:1} But there were also false prophets among the people, **even as there will be false teachers among you**, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ **By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;** for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

None of this should not surprise us. In 1 John 2:18-19, the apostle John wrote,

^{2:18} Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, **even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.** ¹⁹ **They went out from us**, but they were not of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;** but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

The Challenge Before Us

→ *Let’s return to Matthew 13:24-30,37-43. For what reason did Jesus indicate it was best to wait until after the harvest to separate the wheat from the weeds rather than pulling the weeds out right away?*

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→ What kinds of things are required of the wheat — “the sons of the kingdom” — because they must “grow together” with the weeds — “the sons of the wicked one”?

In response to this last question, I can think of several traits or qualities genuine believers need. Among them are

- discernment
- wisdom
- alertness
- patience
- a biblical worldview
- knowledge and understanding of the truth in general and of the gospel in particular
- awareness of philosophical and cultural trends
- grounding in the basic, fundamental teachings of Christianity

Cultivate this Quality

While all of these are important, I want to direct your attention to one quality that is sorely needed that believers tend to neglect. Jesus offered a parable about its importance in Luke 16:1-13. Although the steward in Jesus’ parable was dishonest, he was shrewd; and Jesus commended him for his shrewdness. Then, in verse 8, He said, “For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”

Shrewdness is the one trait that is characteristic of Satan that believers should cultivate and exercise. **Item 2.1DB** showcases a short article that makes this case. Read it, study it, and respond to the following statements and questions. Item 2.1DB will reappear as Item 5.3DB during the Debriefing for Session 5

→ For what reasons might it be true that “the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”?

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→ Explain why being shrewd doesn't have to mean being sinful. Explain how shrewdness can be used to honor God.

→ Name some instances in which Jesus was shrewd. What other godly Bible characters demonstrated shrewdness?

→ How can a godly form of shrewdness be cultivated?

→ Why would shrewdness be especially effective in combatting the false teachings of the social justice movement?

→ All of us readily understand how a lie can be a tool of someone who is shrewd; the steward in Jesus' parable told multiple lies. When wielded by a shrewd yet godly individual, how can the truth be even more powerful?

→ Of the Ten Commandments, name the three that the social justice movement and its adherents violate explicitly and regularly, or that they encourage others to violate.

→ This debriefing has focused on the high cost of believing a lie. Enumerate several ways in which the social justice narrative promotes specific falsehoods and lies. What are some of the costs and potential costs of believing these lies?

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→ *Explain how the social justice narrative and those who propagate it promote injustice.*

Next Time, During Session 3

In Sessions 3, 4, and 5 we will explore some of the specific false teachings that are a part of or related to the social justice movement. **Situationism** is first on the list — and it’s a big one! In fact, in the next Bible study session you might learn that you have been influenced by this ideology (which sometimes is called situation ethics) to a far greater degree than you’ve ever realized.

Stay alert, and pray that God would illuminate your mind, stir your heart, and draw you closer to Him.

In the meantime, read and meditate on Psalm 19:7-11.

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Notes:

¹<https://www.discoverbedrocktruth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/humpty-dumpty-when-i-use-a-word-768x833-1.pdf>

²<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/347219>

³<https://visitsumnerntn.com/place/douglass-clark-house/>

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⁴<https://www.douglassclarkhouseblog.com/blog/mrs-winslows-soothing-syrup>

⁵<https://www.wordfoundations.com/2018/02/08/myths-that-led-to-recognition-of-same-sex-marriage-in-the-united-states-part-3-2/>

⁶<http://www.odysseysvirtualmuseum.com/products/Mrs.-Winslow's-Soothing-Syrup-Bottle.html>

⁷<http://www.peachridgeglass.com/2013/01/mrs-winslows-soothing-syrup-oooh-so-soothing/>

⁸<https://www.douglassclarkhouseblog.com/blog/mrs-winslows-soothing-syrup>

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰<https://museumofhealthcare.blog/mrs-winslows-soothing-syrup-the-baby-killer/>

¹¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure_Food_and_Drug_Act

¹²<https://www.douglassclarkhouseblog.com/blog/mrs-winslows-soothing-syrup>

¹³<https://www.prageru.com/video/social-justice-isnt-justice>

¹⁴https://assets.ctfassets.net/qnesrjodfi80/74FERVOgnpdXxYRmq0DVYf/aea2f40d3b63640c8c35a3917f691587/Stuckey-Social_Justice_Isnt_Justice-Transcript.pdf or <https://bit.ly/3yWCwmi>

¹⁵Jon Benzinger, *Stand: Christianity Vs Social Justice* (Douglasville, GA: G3 Press, 2022), 18.

^{16,17}<https://www.wordfoundations.com/2021/10/15/redefining-justice/>

¹⁸<https://www.wordfoundations.com/2020/08/14/avoid-quicksand-part-01/>

^{19,20}<https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF13E133.pdf>, p. 21.

²¹<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/358112>

²²One reason relativism “doesn’t hold water” is that it says absolutes don’t exist — yet the statement that “absolutes don’t exist” is assumed to be an absolute. Relativism is self-contradictory. Another example: If two people can make up their own “truth” and one person’s “truth” contradicts the other person’s, then both can be wrong, or one can be right and the other wrong — but both cannot simultaneously be right. Emotions, however, don’t inform people of these realities; and today, people make a great many decisions based on how they “feel.” Christians must learn to make the case that wise people don’t merely “follow their hearts,” but will “use their heads.” We will explore this theme further during Session 3, our next Bible study session.

²³If absolutes don’t exist, the terms *fact* and *fiction*, *truth* and *lies*, *real* and *fake* — all of these — are meaningless. Relativism plants people’s feet “firmly in mid-air.” People who claim to be relativists

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can’t live consistently as relativists, however. Instead, they act on things they know to be true. They won’t jump out of a 12th-story window, for instance, or dive into a pool they know has been completely drained. Even so, they still make a great many decisions based on feelings rather than facts. This is inconsistent, and ultimately, irrational. The rational thing to do is to reject relativism in favor of a belief in absolute truth.

²⁴<https://www.discoverbedrocktruth.org/dr-nash-describes-capitalism/>

²⁵Ronald Nash, *Social Justice and the Christian Church* (Academic Renewal Press, 2002), 4-5, 6-7.