

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Acts 6:1-7  
Lesson #11  
Fear not  
12/11/2022

Is human nature good or evil?

## Marred Magnificence



Is the Parthenon beautiful or ugly?



## Social Justice

Christians “render to Caesar” as they respect **God’s Image** in themselves and others.

- Irrational fear represses it.
- Empathetic listening releases it.

The foundation for social justice is respect for the “**image of God**” in every human

*Genesis 1:27*

“God **created man in his own image**, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

*John 1*

“4 In him was life, and **the life was the Light of men.** . .

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world **enlightens every man.**”

*2 Corinthians 4:4*

“the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, **who is the image of God.**”

*John 14:20*

“In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and **you in Me, and I in you.**”

*James 3:9*

“With it (the tongue) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been **made in the likeness of God;**”

the  
**IMAGE OF GOD**



inspires the individual human soul to respect the lives of all humans.

# The SPIRIT OF ADVENT

Jes **US**

is being somebody that helps somebody feel like somebody

6



is a powerful negative force in repressing God's image.

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"Despite the biblical passages exhorting followers of Christ to "fear not," it is possible to write an entire history of American evangelicalism as the story of Christians who have failed to overcome fear." **John Fea** (historian)

7

**Unrealized hope is the seedbed of anxiety.**

Genesis 3:5

"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,"



9

**The fear of death is the fear of missing out on life.**

Hebrews 2:15

"(That Jesus) might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."



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- Distancing - Distorting - Discriminating

↑ - Protect self more      ↓ - Care for others less

pressure of an inhospitable environment

posture of an insecure soul

To address social justice we must express the Image of God, by **managing our fears.**

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*Acts 6*

“1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” 5 And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

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*Acts 6*

“1 Now at this **time** while the disciples were **increasing** in number,

- **Changing circumstances bring challenges.**

a **complaint** arose on the part of the **Hellenistic** Jews against the native **Hebrews**, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.”

- **Social conflicts will become evident over time.**

**Physical homogeny may bring superficial peace**

**but it does not build the Body of Christ.**

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- **Shepherds give attention** and an ear to the cry of suffering sheep.

- **Shepherds grow antenna, not horns - view “social complaints” as opportunities for modeling “Body Life” ministry.**

“2 And **the twelve summoned the congregation** of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.”

- **Shepherds saw their role as:**
  1. clarifying the direction, goals, and roles
  2. equipping and trusting the sheep to minister
  3. overseeing and endorsing the work

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3 But **select from among you**, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom **we may put in charge of this task**. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

- **Shepherds shepherd by empowering the sheep with guidance, authority, trust and freedom to address the challenges.**

*Ephesians 4:11-12*

“He gave some as Apostles ... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”

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“5 And the statement **found approval with the whole congregation**,”

- **The community’s approval** of the plan is key to its success.

and **they chose Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and **Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas** and **Nicolas**, a proselyte from Antioch.

- **The offended participated** in the plan to resolve the injustice.
- **NOTE: The names are Greek** suggesting that the group was made up of the “oppressed”.

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“6 And these they **brought before the apostles**; and after praying, they **laid their hands on them**.”

- **The approval of God’s shepherds** was sought and received.

“7 And the word of God kept on **spreading**; and the number of the disciples continued to **increase** greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

- **Wise leadership brings health & growth by seeing issues as opportunities (not an obstacle) to show and spread the Christian message.**

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## This could have gone very wrong.

1. The Apostles could have given in to the fear of losing control or not knowing what to do.
2. The Hellenists could have given in to the fear of abusive power, leaving them victims of a care-less, hypocritical, faith community.
3. The Hebrews could have given in to the fear of losing a comfortable place in the church.
4. The church could have given in to the fear of a blemished image that needed to be covered up.

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## Berean peacemakers crib sheet for social justice

- Expect social injustice in a fallen world.
- Don't view whistleblowers as wolves.
- View diversity as an asset.
- Grow antennae, not horns.
- Focus on the dignity of humanity.
- Empower & equip the "have-nots".
- Work from a posture of FAITH not FEAR.

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*John 14:27*

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**"

**Berean's should be fearless, peacemakers, salt shakers, and light spreaders.**

*Galatians 6:10*

"So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

**Social Justice starts within the church but it should not stop there.**

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## The SPIRIT OF ADVENT

Jes US

is being somebody  
that helps somebody  
feel like somebody

21

*Matthew 1:23*

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name **IMMANUEL**, which translated means **"GOD WITH US."**"

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## A Berean's look at ...



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