

Carried About By Every Wind

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In Ephesians 4:11-16, the apostle Paul famously explains the reasons for Christ's gift of the ministry to His church: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry" and "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (verse 12). This educational and supportive element is necessary because those He calls out of this world have been steeped for decades in the ideas and behaviors of a society cut off from God. They must learn God's truth and begin living His way. As Paul writes later in the chapter, they must "be renewed in the spirit of [their] mind, and . . . put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:23-24).

In this way, God rears His children to reflect, model, and hold fast to Him, His ideas, His behaviors—a fundamentally and entirely contrary method to what often happens in our modern world. The motto of many current parents seems to be, "I don't want my views to influence my kids. I want them to learn to think for themselves." They will and they do. However, lacking firm principles to guide them, they will believe and do *anything* if it suits them or helps them get ahead.

This lesson is underlined in [a recent finding](#) by Forest Romm and Keven Waldman, psychology researchers at Northwestern University. After polling 1,452 undergraduate students at Northwestern and the University of Michigan, they reported that an astonishing 88 percent of them admitted to pretending to be more progressive than they are to succeed either academically or socially. The findings broke down as follows:

Seventy-eight percent of students told us they self-censor on their beliefs surrounding gender identity; 72 percent on politics; 68 percent on family values. More than 80 percent said they had submitted classwork that misrepresented their views in order to align with professors. For many, this has become second nature—an instinct for academic and professional self-preservation.

Without core principles, these students easily bent with the winds of change, which is one of the primary reasons the apostle Paul gives for the church's educational function: “. . . that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men” (Ephesians 4:14). Their selfish ambitions led them to lie publicly to conform to far-left ideology—and behaviors—rather than to reject their obviously untenable propositions and overtly political, racial, and sexual objectives.

As the study's authors explain:

These students were not cynical, but adaptive. In a campus environment where grades, leadership, and peer belonging often hinge on fluency in performative morality, young adults quickly learn to rehearse what is safe.

The result is not conviction but compliance. And beneath that compliance, something vital is lost.

What is lost is truth, integrity, and moral development. Many polled students expressed relief that the researchers allowed them to express their true beliefs without fear of social or academic punishment. As the authors related, “For students trained to perform [to the dictates of progressive ideologues], the act of telling the truth felt radical.”

Sadly, this habit of pretending does not end once the individual walks off the graduation stage, diploma in hand. It has been ingrained by years of practice, for many of them since high school, and so it continues into their subsequent careers. They will conform to their superiors' ideas and actions to avoid being excluded from the current corporate power structure. Such a habit cannot help but corrode whatever moral core they have left after all the compromising they have done to get ahead.

Where does it end? In a form of nihilism.

A person who drifts with the wind of social and political forces ultimately believes in nothing. Or, as observed from the outside, such a person will fall

for anything. At some point, he or she has no core principles left, as they have all been sacrificed for more money, promotion, or recognition, leading to bitterness, regret, and emptiness, as Solomon eloquently expresses in the book of Ecclesiastes.

So, with nothing to believe in, the next step in the process can be a fatal turn toward destruction, either of self (note the rising rates of suicide) or of targeted institutions (political, military, corporate, religious, educational) thought to be to blame. This turn has already begun happening—so much so that the FBI has recently added a new category of terrorist, the “[nihilistic violent extremist](#).” For instance, the attempted assassination of then-candidate Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, “appears to be a story less about fanatical partisanship than about the crisis of lonely and disconnected young men being radicalized into pure nihilism” (“[The Trump Shooter and the Growing Nihilism of Young Men](#),” Michelle Goldberg, *The New York Times*, July 16, 2024).

Historians warn that the precedents for this are not good. When last an overwhelming leftism produced a populist reaction that eventually plummeted into a surge of nihilism, Western nations produced the Russian Revolution and the rise of Nazi Germany. While a similar authoritarian dictatorship may or may not be the result of this recent round of self-righteous progressivism, it will leave behind a vast populace already conditioned to compromising its values and “going with the flow” of whoever may be in power. It is reminiscent of how God describes the reaction to the rise of the Beast, “And all the world marveled and followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3).

Going along to get along is not the answer. We must have firm convictions about what is true and right and be absolutely unwilling to compromise them for any reason. Moreover, we need to instill the same convictions in our children to help them prepare for even worse deceptions in the future.