

We Are Opposites!

Our Lives Must Oppose the World Around Us

People are content when they find themselves surrounded by others who act as they do. We naturally mimic others. Anyone who has had children knows this: a baby copies what an adult does. You smile at him, and he smiles back at you. That is how they learn as they grow. We are “hard-wired” to be that way, and it is how we learn from our parents and peers.

Thus, we grow up to be like those around us, to mimic the words and actions of those with whom we associate. One might say we become part of a “herd” that behaves a certain way, and when one of us deviates from that standardized herd behavior we stand out because we are different. We may even be persecuted or ostracized by others in the herd because we are different.

Such is the case for all of us. We are born into a society over which we had no control. It greeted us before we can even remember, and continued to teach us through the examples of others with whom we associated as we grew up.

This is not denying that there were inborn proclivities to our behavior and moral code which are sequestered deep within our consciences, that somehow convicted us concerning right and wrong. Yet, the influence of our peers — and of all of those around us — has been profoundly powerful in shaping our moral certitude. We grew up as products of the world, taught by forces either good or evil, which God has called the “old man.”

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ...” (Ephesians 4:20-22).

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds ...” (Colossians 3:9).

The Scriptures speak of this “old man” as being the person that you became before your calling. It is the person that was moulded by the forces of society all around us, a society whose foundation is built upon the shifting, unstable sands of Satan himself, the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). It is this powerful spirit who opposes our heavenly Father that has fabricated a world and society in which virtually everything is tainted and corrupted by his influence: “... the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world ...” (Revelation 12:9), a spirit whose wiles we wrestle with, against his principalities, rulers of darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

The World’s Standards



The “old person”



The “new person”

With the entire world being deceived by this spiritual power of darkness, we see as a result a standard of morality that penetrates every facet of our civilized world. The Adversary's tentacles are everywhere, and have influenced people to construct the world we now have: our government, education, business, religion, entertainment, construction, agriculture ... every aspect of our world. Yet, in spite of — or because of — these standards we are told to “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

With a world designed and built around Satan's patterns — cities, farmlands, schools, media, roadways, businesses, and the like — it may be discomfoting to be told, having been called out of this world, to not participate in it ... to be in it but not of it (John 17:14-16). That is a very difficult calling, since we by nature are hard-wired to follow the example of leaders and others around us.

Yet, for us, the elect, there is a remedy. We have been given the complete blueprints to build a new house ... one built upon a rock, not upon sand. We are told to tread a pathway that is narrow and difficult to negotiate, but which is possible to tread because the Eternal Living God is holding our hand.

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Let us examine these many ways in which we are to be opposites of the world, to think, speak, and act in ways opposed to the present culture's standards. We will try to break these “opposites” down into categories for the sake of discussion.

Overall Views

The World's System

God's Opposing System

Darkness

Light (II Corinthians 4:4; I John 1:5: *phos*, “luminousness”)

Evil

Good (Psalm 143:10: *towb*, “good”; Matthew 19:17: *agathos*, “good”)

Sin

Righteousness (Genesis 15:6: *tsdaqah*, “rightness, moral virtue”; Proverbs 8:20; Matthew 6:33: *dikaiosume*, “the character of being right or just”)

Personal Conduct

The World's System

God's Opposing System

Fruits of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)

Fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Isaiah 66:2)

Adultery	Fornication
Uncleanness	Lewdness
Idolatry	Sorcery
Hatred	Contentions
Jealousies	Outbursts of wrathness
Selfishness	Dissensions
Heresies	Envy
Murders	Drunkenness
Revelries	Pride

Love	Joy
Peace	Longsuffering
Kindness	Goodness
Faithfulness	Gentleness
Self-control	Humility

Pain and Suffering in Life

The World's System

Cover up or eliminate pain with drugs, alcohol, etc.

God's Opposing System

Pain and *suffering* are essential (Romans 8:17: *sumpascho*, "to suffer with, to experience pain jointly")

Reaction When Wronged

The World's System

Return evil with evil; seek revenge

God's Opposing System

Return evil with good to those who spitefully use you (Romans 12:17-21)

Approach Towards Truth

The World's System

Lying is okay if it helps you achieve your goals

God's Opposing System

Truth is always the correct path to follow (Psalm 25:5: *emeth*, "certainty trustworthiness"; John 8:32: *aletheia*, "true, not concealed")

View Towards Others

The World's System

Get for the self

God's Opposing System

Give and serve to others in need (Luke 6:36: *didomi*, "to give"; Galatians 5:13: *douleuo*, "to be a slave to")

Approach Towards Laws

The World's System

Breaking of laws is acceptable if it helps you reach your goals

God's Opposing System

Law-breaking is always wrong (Psalm 119:97: *towrah*, "precept, statute"; Romans 7:21-23: *nomos*, "law")

View Towards Leadership

The World's System

Ruling by fear and force
Lording it over other people

God's Opposing System

Leading by love and service (Luke 22:24-27)
Considering others better than oneself (Philippians 2:3-5)

View Towards Wealth and Worth

The World's System

More money and things are to be desired, and are a measure of one's worth.

The greatest has the most

God's Opposing System

True wealth resides not in material things, but in spiritual things, wherein lies one's worth (Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:16-21)

The greatest is the least (Luke 9:48)

Vision of Future Life

The World's System

No future

God's Opposing System

Eternal life in the spirit (Hebrew 12:2; I thessalonians 4:15-18)

Whom God Chooses Out of the World (I Corinthians 1:26-29)

The World's System

Wise (*sophus*, "wise")

Mighty and strong (*dunatos*, "powerful, capable")

Notable

Noble (*eugenes*, "well born, high in rank")

Things that are

Enemies of God

Friends of the world

God's Opposing System

Foolish (*moros*, "dull or stupid")

Weak (*asthenes*, "without strength, feeble")

Base and despised

Common people

Things that are not

Enemies of Satan

Friends of God

Views of the Social Order

The World's System

God's Opposing System

Economics

Merchandising and profit (Matthew 19:23-24; Revelation 18:15, 23)

Giving according to need (Leviticus 25:35; Luke 6:30)

Education

Humanism: you are god

Knowledge based on the foundation of truth ... God (John 17:17)

Government-run schools

Schooling originating with the family (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

Entertainment and Music

Competition in sports, exercise the senses in films

Cooperation and joy (Colossians 3:16)

Land tenure and housing

Cities and urbanization, taxes, government ownership

People close to the land, no taxes, families given land by God (Isaiah 5:8; Micah 4:4)

Clothing

Provocative, poor quality, synthetic

Modest, high quality, natural fibers (I Peter 3:3-5; Leviticus 19:19)

Government

Hierarchies: few leaders ruling over people
Control by dictators who dictate laws

Family associations, people serving one another
Rule through submission to God's laws (I John 5:3; Luke 22:25-27)

Communications

Government control; propoganda to support the leaders Local freedom, communicating truth (Proverbs 8:7; Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:15, 25; II Corinthians 3:17)

Health care

Doctors, hospitals, and drugs (*sorcery, phar-makeia*, “drugs or magic”), surgery Health through diet, lifestyle, and divine heling (Exodus 15:26; James 5:14-15; Revelation 21:3-4; Isaiah 65:20)

Business and banking

Large, centrally-controlled corporations controlled by money Small, family-operated entities (Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10)
Interest Regulated by personal need
No interest (Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19-20)

Views of the Future World

The World’s System

God’s Opposing System

Nature of the environment

Man can adjust the climate, genetics, and all of life	God will institute His Kingdom and its climate and life forms (Acts 3:19-21)
Thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17; 5:29; <i>arar</i> , “to curse”)	All plants have a purpose; no thorns (Genesis 8:21; Amos 9:13)
Predaceous and harmful animals, insects, reptiles, etc.	No more predaceous creatures (Isaiah 11:6-9; compare with Genesis 2:19-20)
Weather: storms, cold winters, deserts, etc.	Amicable climate worldwide (Genesis 2:5-6; Micah 4:4)
Disasters continue: fires, earthquakes, etc.	No more disasters (Micah 4:4; Philippians 4:7-9)
Authoritarian rule by the few: World Economic Forum Agenda 2030	Rulership by Jesus Christ and the sanits (Revelation 3:21; 20:4; 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:17)

Be An Opposite

We see in this world an overreaching power — Satan the devil — who has infected every nook and cranny of society worldwide, injecting deception and death wherever he goes in his quest to subvert and demolish the illustrious plan of the Father for all of us ... those made in His image, whose purpose is to replace this evil Adversary who rules the world and is trying to install his own system ... one based on his carnal and dictatorial system. He wishes to destroy the health, joy, and liberty of mankind made in the Eternal’s image. He hates this glorious plan, and will do everything he can to annihilate it, focusing his wrath especially upon the hopes and dreams of the elect who will join Jesus Christ in rebuilding the earth to an Edenic wonder once Christ returns.

The Adversary achieves his ignominious ends by progressively influencing civilization over the centuries to serve the false gods that he creates. Thus we have a record of the Baals, Ashteroths, and other false gods that people have been coerced into worshipping rather than the true God of Israel. In fact, the cult of humanism — “man is god” — has ascended to a lofty pinnacle within modern education, which really is little different than the course Adam and Eve took when

they took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:1-6). Man deciding for himself what is right or wrong is the source of all of mankind's suffering since the beginning of this eon.

Nowhere is the curse of man making himself into a god more flagrant than within governments. These constructs have consistently devolved into dictatorships and other forms of authoritarian rule. They have in common the characteristic of the few ruling the many, through fear and force, striving to enslave people to the dictates of the leaders who act as gods over them, enticing the population to look to them for safety and protection amidst threats of war, disease, and other plagues.

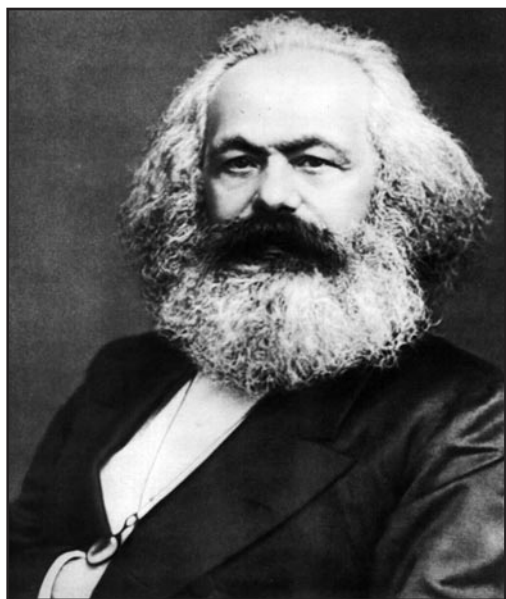
To be a servant of the living God is to combat the temptation to fall prey to making a god of oneself, or to following a dictator, whose motives are patterned after Satan himself. It is thus the objective of those professing God's spirit to oppose one's own selfish desires to become a god, and to object to leaders who attempt to force people to worship these leaders. Rather,

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lies in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

As Paul states in Romans 6:6, we crucify the old man that the body of sin may be done away, and we are no longer slaves to sin. Having died with Christ we are freed from sin, and death no longer holds dominion over us (Romans 6:7-9). As we read earlier in this paper, the old man is put away, along with its self-serving lusts, and we are a new creature.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

As we oppose this world of sin, and governments that try to coerce us to follow the ways of selfishness, suffering is an inevitable result. Such grief and suffering is an essential part of our lives, for we are joint-heirs with Christ of eternal life, "... if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17). Everyone on earth suffers to one degree or another, the good as well as the evil, and "... it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (I Peter 3:17).



Karl Marx is the modern author of Communism, a political philosophy from Satan's playbook designed to enslave mankind.

As we oppose the world and its ways, we will continue to be plagued with trouble, but that is to be expected.

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:18-20).

Remember that the sufferings caused by being an opposite in this world are not worthy of being compared to the glory in the spirit realm that will be revealed in due time. Let us wait patiently for the return of our Savior, and experience the unspeakable joy that will accompany His arrival to initiate a new age of peace and abundance!

Paul W. Syltje — January 27, 2021