



The Urgent Need

Our country is at a “Crossroads Moment” in its history. We are steadily heading down a path of ruin unless we stop, make a “U Turn” and head in the direction of the Lord once again.

Moral decline, lack of accountability for leaders, destruction of the family unit, and defiance against God...Does this list sound familiar? This is only a portion of the list of characteristics of every empire that has fallen from power. As you read through Scriptures from the Nation of Israel to the Roman Empire, you witness a warning to every nation, every people, and every person to be humble before the Lord, repent, and follow Him while He is near.

2 Chronicles 7:14 – if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Isaiah 55:6-7 – ⁶“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

America has reached the point where we need a “U Turn” before it is too late. This is essential for today’s culture and the decision we make at this time will impact the rise and fall of future generations. The great news is that there is an answer today and it is found in returning to the Lord. This lesson series will identify the primary areas where we need a “U Turn” in our country and will give you a Biblical response to each situation that we face. We must always remember that God has equipped us with His Word and placed us in this time and place for a “moment such as this.” Now our responsibility is to shine with the Word of God. Albert Mohler sums it up in this manner,

Everything humans build will one day be reduced to ruins, but our lives and our leadership will, in Christ, have eternal consequences and impact.¹

Q U E S T I O N

Why does our country need to experience a “U Turn”?

¹ R. Albert Mohler Jr., “The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters.”

Lesson Plan

The lesson plan for this series will consist of two sections. The first section will consist of 6 weeks of study sessions focused on the topics below. Each session will help you establish an understanding of the need of a “U Turn” for our nation. The second section of our study will be found in another packet along with the study topics.

Lesson	Title	Summary
Lesson #1	Life at the Crossroads	This lesson examines the current state of our country and establishes the need for a spiritual U Turn.
Lesson #2	Rediscover the Word of God	This lesson examines the war on the Word of God from within the church. The Word of God has been redefined in the image of man and now is the time for Biblical truth to be rediscovered and applied.
Lesson #3	Reviving a Biblical Worldview	This lesson examines the need to revive a Biblical worldview in our country. This ultimately starts with establishing Biblical Core Values.
Lesson #4	Restoring Morality	This lesson examines the attack on Biblical morality within our country. We have an opportunity to redeem our culture through a Biblical pursuit of God but not at the price of forsaking Biblical morality.
Lesson #5	Reclaiming Surrendered Ground	This lesson examines the issues where the church has surrendered a Biblical stance in many cases on subjects that must be addressed by the church.
Lesson #6	Redefining Family	This lesson examines the redefinition of family in our current culture. We will examine the Biblical basis of family and why this is essential to the future of our country.

Starting Point

Every journey always begins with a starting point. Our study on the importance of a “U Turn” is no exception. Many people from all backgrounds ranging from Christian to non-Christian alike are asking the question, “**What do we do as a country in a time such as this?**” Everyone recognizes that there is a problem but not everyone understands the cure for the problem.

Making a U-turn implies that you realize you were headed in the wrong direction. It means you need to follow a different path and that you are willing to do so. It represents a course correction in order to arrive at the original destination. U-turns require backtracking along some of the same ground that was just covered, admitting that such ground should never have been traversed.

But making a U-turn without accurate knowledge of how to arrive at the desired destination leaves you no better off than if you had simply continued down the original misguided path. In fact, it might be more painful

because now you realize you're on yet another wrong path and must agonize over making continued progress (again) toward an overtly wrong destination.²

It is critical that our strategy regarding a “U Turn” address the real problem versus the symptoms. This is why we will study the “U Turn” solution from a Biblical perspective. The Big Questions we must ask are simple...

The “U Turn” that must take place in our country begins with the country returning to the Lord. It must be a spiritual “U Turn” in order to bring restoration back to the country. If we desire for this “U Turn” to be a success then it takes a **“Four Step Strategy”** known as **“S.L.A.W.”** that we will examine through this lesson.

- **Step #1 – We Must Stand for Truth**
- **Step #2 – We Must Look for Moments of Application of the Word of God**
- **Step #3 – We Must Ask for God to Move the Heart of the Nation**
- **Step #4 – We Must Walk in the Word of God as a Nation**

This strategy was presented to the nation of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah as they went through a very similar time as ours as a country. Consider for a moment these observations about Jeremiah, the message of the Lord, and the nation of Israel.

- Jeremiah was a man that faced a great crossroad in his life. He had been chosen by God to give a message of repentance and judgment to God’s People because of their rebellion against the Lord, basically the people chose to turn away from Him and His Word and chose to pursue their own will and the way of the world. Any time you seek to appease the world for the sake of the **Three P’s “Power, Popularity, or Prestige”** then you place yourself in opposition to the Lord.
- Jeremiah is known as “the weeping prophet” (cf. 9:1; 13:17; 14:17) because he lived a life of conflict due to the message he delivered about God’s judgment and the coming attack of Babylon.
- Jeremiah was threatened, tried for his life, put in prison, forced to flee from Jehoiakim, publicly humiliated by a false prophet, and thrown into a pit.
- Jeremiah preached the same message for 40 years and the message to God’s People was simple: **Repent and Turn to God or face His Judgment.**

BIG QUESTIONS

What does this “U Turn” look like for our country?

What are the central elements needed for the right kind of “U Turn”?

QUESTION

What are the similarities between the time of Jeremiah and the time in which we live?

God used Jeremiah just like He wants to use Christians today to deliver Four Steps of Restoration to carry out in order to return to Him as found in Jeremiah 6:16-21. Take a moment and read through this passage and highlight the key words and phrases that identify the steps of restoration for a country facing the need of experiencing a “U Turn.”

² George Barna and David Barton, *U-Turn: Reversing America’s March Toward Spiritual Destruction* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014).

Jeremiah 6:16-21 –¹⁶ Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ¹⁷ I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’ ¹⁸ Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. ¹⁹ Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. ²⁰ What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me. ²¹ Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will lay before this people stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble; fathers and sons together, neighbor and friend shall perish.’ ”

Step #1 – We Must Stand for Truth

Establish the Need

As we have already stated, the majority of Americans recognize that we are in desperate need of a “U Turn” as a country. But some individuals need a little more proof. The proof is found in observing that our nation is at a crossroads and it has declined significantly over the last decade in the areas of morality, religion, leadership, courage, humility, and liberty. Sir Alex Fraser Tyler observed several centuries ago that every nation has gone through ten common stages and America is no exception. He observed,

Ten Stages of the Rise and Fall of Every Nation

Stage #1 – Moves from bondage to spiritual faith.

Stage #2 – Moves from spiritual faith to great courage.

Stage #3 – Moves from great courage to liberty.

Stage #4 – Moves from liberty to abundance.

Stage #5 – Moves from abundance to selfishness.

Stage #6 – Moves from selfishness to complacency.

Stage #7 – Moves from complacency to apathy.

Stage #8 – Moves from apathy to moral decay.

Stage #9 – Moves from moral decay to dependence.

Stage #10 – Moves from dependence to bondage.

QUESTION

Where are we at among the “Ten Stages” as a nation?

Why is this important to recognize?

Sir Alex Fraser Tyler: (1742-1813) Scottish jurist and historian

What is the impact of being in the latter part of these stages? The impact is witnessed in the life and pursuit of the people.

74% are dissatisfied with the way things are going in America.

75% are trying to find ways to lead a more meaningful life.

77% say religion is losing its influence on American life.
74% argue that the state of moral values in the nation is getting worse.
72% perceive that America is more divided now than at any other time during their lifetime.
77% percent of Americans are concerned about the future.³

While we examine “Life at the Crossroads” and the state of our country, we observe that the decisions made are taking down a path of destruction, and ruin not restoration and victory. The first step in carrying out a “U Turn” is found in returning to the Word of God and choosing to “Stand for the Word of God” even when it is unpopular. One of the most sobering trends that we observe today is the watering down of the Gospel for the sake of popularity or attendance. John MacArthur labels this pursuit as Christianity Lite as he observes,

It’s Christianity for consumers: Christianity Lite, the redirection, watering down, and misinterpretation of the biblical gospel in an attempt to make it more palatable and popular. It tastes great going down and settles light. It seems to salve your feelings and scratch your itch; it’s custom-tailored to your preferences. But that lightness will never fill you up with the true, saving gospel of Jesus Christ, because it is designed by man and not God, and it is hollow and worthless. In fact, it’s worse than worthless, because people who hear the message of Christianity Lite think they’re hearing the gospel – think they’re being rescued from eternal judgment – when, in fact, they’re being tragically misled.⁴

We must correct this course within the church in order to correct the course of our country. If we desire to accomplish such a task then we must be willing to apply the principles found in Jeremiah 6:16-17. Consider these verses for a moment,

Jeremiah 6:16-17 –¹⁶ Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ¹⁷ I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’

If we look at this text then the Lord gives us advice for seeking direction and the promise that comes with following His direction during those Crossroad moments in life.

The phrase “**ask for the old paths**” (6:16) is a favorite of people who oppose changes in the church and want to maintain a sterile and boring status quo. But “the old ways” refer to God’s truth as revealed in His Word, not to methods of ministry. Note that Jeremiah gave four instructions.⁵

- **Stand at the Crossroads** – The Hebrew Word here carries the idea of an individual that stops in the midst of all the chaos, crowd, and confusion in order to present their decisions and life as an offering.

Psalms 46:10 – Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Q U E S T I O N S

Is this advice still relevant for modern day Christians?

How does it apply today?

³ George Barna and David Barton, *U-Turn: Reversing America’s March Toward Spiritual Destruction* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014).

⁴ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Hard to Believe: The High Cost and Infinite Value of Following Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 2.

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Decisive*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996).

We must ask the question as to what it looks like for us to “Stand for the Word of God” today. One of the most urgent needs in our culture today is that of strong Biblical preaching in every pulpit with the unwavering resolve to stand and proclaim the truth no matter what the cost. Martyn Lloyd Jones observed,

I would say without any hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world also. – **Martyn Lloyd Jones**

It is interesting to notice that the Lord declares that if you choose this path then you will find rest for your souls which literally means that you will have a state of relief from trouble and anxiety during those Crossroad Moments.

Make no mistake, Jesus declares that this path is hard and narrow but you will find the peace you long for following God’s Plan!

Matthew 7:13-14 - ¹³“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

John 16:33 – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

Yet with all of this prompting and directing from the Lord and with all of the promise that He gives, His People, some even today still choose to pursue the praise of man instead of praising God. They say it is “**My Way versus yielding to Yahweh!**” Times have not changed much since Jeremiah’s day. Look at their response.

Jeremiah 6:16-17 – ¹⁶But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ¹⁷I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’

Today, God has sent preachers and teachers of His Word to direct the people of God yet still some churches, some Christians, some leaders, and some countries will go opposite of the direction of the Lord and say we will not pay attention (In Hebrew this phrase means “**We will not Listen.**”)

Why? The power of the praise of people and power of Greed and Money drives many to turn to man instead of God! But heed this warning it will end in disaster. Don’t think that the temptation will not come your way because it will. The question is simple “Will you look to the Word of God for answers?”

Q U E S T I O N S

What does it mean to not “listen or pay attention to God’s Word”?

Step #2 – We Must Look for Moments of Application of the Word of God

The second step that we examine in making a “U Turn” as a nation is found in making sure that Christians have their eyes wide open for moments of Application of the Word of God. Go back to Jeremiah for a moment and reflect upon these words,

Jeremiah 6:16a - ^{16a} Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is...

The understanding of “Looking for the Ancient Paths” is just as important today as it was in the days of Jeremiah. Christians have numerous opportunities to accomplish this principle every day. Consider what the Hebrew word for “Look” means today,

- **Look for the Ancient Paths** – This Hebrew word does not simply mean to look at something with your eyes. It means to pay attention and be ready to learn about a situation with the intention of applying the Word of God at that moment.

The reality is that there is always a danger in choosing not to apply God’s Word. The danger is laid out in Jeremiah 6:18-20 as he states,

Jeremiah 6:18-20 –¹⁸ Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. ¹⁹ Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. ²⁰ What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me.

Q U E S T I O N S

Is this advice still relevant for modern day Christians?

How does it apply today?

This is an eye opening passages that serves as a warning to those who reject the Lord and His ways while they fail to listen to His counsel and direction.

Look at verse 19 for a moment and observe that disaster, ruin, and giving the people over to the desires of their heart are the result of the people of the Lord choosing to...

- **Not pay attention to the Word of God** – The Hebrew word means “to refuse to listen to something or someone.”
- **Rejecting the Word of God** – The Hebrew word means “to despise something or someone.”

Here is the bitter truth stated in verse 20. All of the motions of worship and praise that you go through to keep up the appearance of Christianity ultimately displeases God if He is not pursued with a humble & devoted heart. This means that we can play the part of a Christian but that does not mean that God will reward a pursuit based on hypocrisy. This is the time for authentic Christians to shine today as we observe the reality of our nation. Consider how we can shine as Christians today in light of this evidence,

A major new survey of more than 35,000 Americans finds that the percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly 8% in just 7 years, from **78.4%** in 2007 to **70.6%** in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has jumped more than **6%**, from **16.1% to 22.8%**.

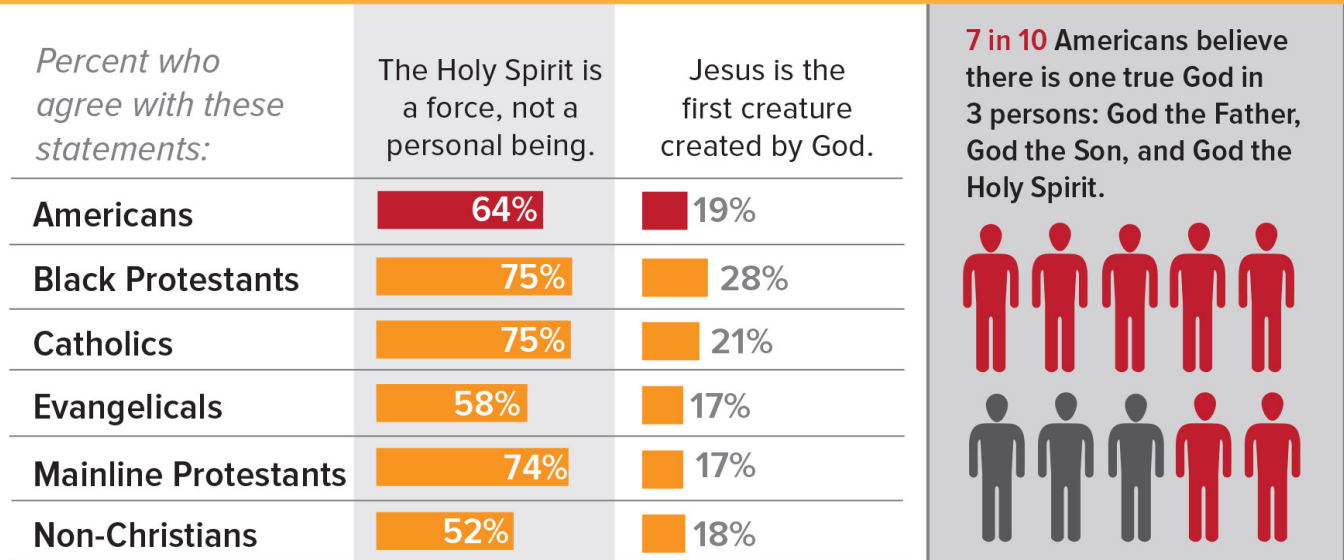
More than **85%** of American adults were raised Christian, but nearly a quarter of those who were raised Christian no longer identify with Christianity. Former Christians represent **19.2%** of U.S. adults overall.⁶

Religious Landscape Study – Pew Research Center, 2014

⁶ **Religious Landscape Study**, Pew Research Center, 2014. - <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

We also observe these views in the article presented by Lifeway Research⁷,

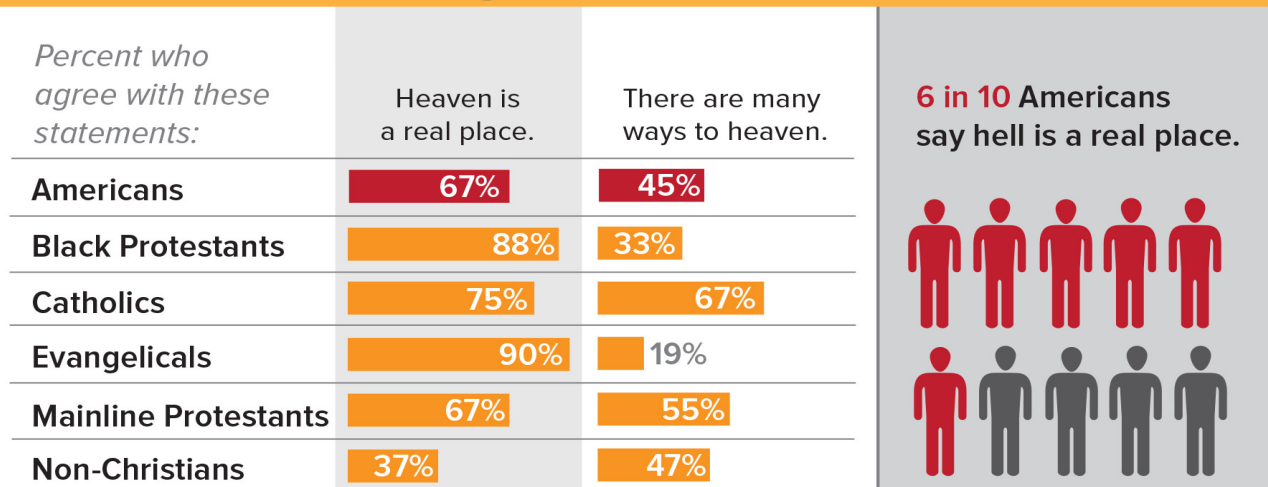
American Theological Views: God



LifewayResearch.com



American Theological Views: Heaven & Hell



LifewayResearch.com



⁷ Bob Smietana, "Americans Believe in Heaven, Hell, and a Little Bit of Heresy." (Lifeway Research, October 28, 2014.) - <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2014/10/28/americans-believe-in-heaven-hell-and-a-little-bit-of-heresy/>

There are many ways for us to respond to our nation with a Biblical application. But this means that we must be willing to apply the Word in our modern times. As we apply the Word of God in obedience, faithfulness, and humility then we will experience the blessing of the Lord in life.

James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Luke 11:28 – But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Step #3 – We Must Ask for God to Move the Heart of the Nation

The third step that we examine as being essential for an authentic “U Turn” as a nation is found as we reflect upon prayer and pursuit. We observe once again in Jeremiah 6:16a,

Jeremiah 6:16a – ^{16a} Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is...”

Q U E S T I O N S

Is this advice still relevant for modern day Christians?

How does it apply today?

The terminology for “Ask for the Ancient Paths” refers to persistent prayer with a longing to honor the Lord.

- **Ask for the Ancient Paths** – The Hebrew word means to desire or want something that you ask for it with humility and longing.

There are numerous ways we can pray for our nation. But it is important that we begin with asking God to restore, revive, and renew our own life. As we pray for God to move in this manner, then we can humbly pray for the revival of the nation. Paul stated it in this manner,

Colossians 4:3 – At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...

Step #4 – We Must Walk in the Word of God as a Nation

The final step that we examine is found in found in “Walking in the Ancient Paths” as found in Jeremiah 6:16a,

Jeremiah 6:16a – ^{16a} Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is...”

Q U E S T I O N S

Is this advice still relevant for modern day Christians?

How does it apply today?

The terminology for “Walk in the Ancient Paths” refers to consciously choosing to live out your faith. Many Christians believe this is essential but few are taking the next step,

- **Walk in the Ancient Paths** – This Hebrew term refers to a conscious choice of action that refers to following God’s Word and His plan above all others even though the road is tough and narrow.

Many Christians believe this is essential but few are taking the next step. Consider one example as that of “Sharing Christ” with others. According to Lifeway Research...⁸

⁸ A chart showing these results and more can be found in Appendix A.

The study conducted by LifeWay Research found 80% of those who attend church one or more times a month, believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, but 61% have not told another person about how to become a Christian in the previous six months. Three-quarters of churchgoers say they feel comfortable in their ability to effectively communicate the gospel, while 12% say they don't feel comfortable telling others about their faith.

Despite a vast majority believing it's their duty to share their faith and having the confidence to do so, 25% say they have shared their faith once or twice, and 14% have shared three or more times over the last six months.⁹

The fields are ready for harvest but few workers are going out into the harvest field. Now is the time for us to "Walk in the Word" and live out our faith.

Conclusion

We have shown the evidence that our country is at a "Crossroads" when it comes to morality, leadership, and social justice. Now is the time for the country to turn back to the Lord in order to experience His blessings once again. Be a voice of truth to a dying culture and choose this day to honor the Lord with the life you live.

⁹ Lifeway Research, "Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do." (Lifeway Research: August 13, 2012) - <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2012/08/13/churchgoers-believe-in-sharing-faith-most-never-do/>

Appendix A

