

THOUGHTS

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SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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Thoughts
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PRAYING TO ALEXA

In a recent news article, a father shared the shock at hearing his daughter at bedtime prayers offer up, “Dear Alexa...” The really shocking aspect of this account was it being related by a Christian father! Make no mistake, children today are being “branded” by big corporations through technology and social media. Parents and grandparents must be the authority for Truth, and we must be demonstrating whatever patterns we idealize. Hypocrisy in neglecting to practice faith can be fatal for our children’s faith.

Children who have grown up with smart technology tend to see it as the solution and knowledge giver. AI (Artificial Intelligence) will increasingly be seen by them as the source for life knowledge. As we know, corporations often times with an anti-Christian worldview bias are programming such AI. We must educate our children to screen all input, whether human or through a video screen, through the worldview of Christianity. More than ever, Christian parents must *demonstrate* faith to their children, they will be ripe pickings for being led away from the Christian worldview.

MOM’S MINIVAN AND THE STREET’S LYRICS

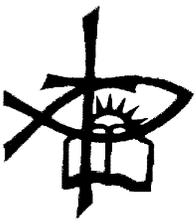
I roll up to a stop sign, window down as I enjoy one of the last gorgeous Fall days, and I hear a hip hop beat and repeated suggestive lyrics, “... I’ll show you a good time.” I look over at the driver; it’s a young woman with face fixated on her cell phone and the music filling what seems to be her parents’ (who knows whether she even has *two* of them at home) minivan. This was disappointing especially since the vehicle had a prominent “ML” emblem on the back, the local sticker indicating student(s) attending Martin Luther High School, my alma mater.

Christians seem oblivious nowadays to the spiritual warfare raging around them. One might hope that a family working to educate their children in a Christian atmosphere would not elect to listen to lurid themes in music, but sadly it happens with sickening regularity.

Over the years I have heard some of my 8th grade confirmation class children singing worldly lyrics as though there was nothing wrong with it. In every instance they claim they don’t know what the lyrics mean, but when I state they will bring in the printed lyrics to class the following week and we will assess them as a class, they backpedal and cringe at the thought. They know, just as the young woman in the van with “ML” knows. It’s a defiant attitude that we will do whatever we want, God be damned.

Social media and relentless marketing attempt to turn Christians into slightly nicer looking trash cans for the garbage being created by media giants.

To that end, **I WILL HAPPILY BOYCOTT NIKE.** I don’t need my sports apparel company to fancy itself a political machine. Please join me in that boycott.



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DIDN'T DAVID TRUST GOD?

The shepherd boy David, when preparing to meet the giant, Goliath, in battle prepared this way, "Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine (2 Samuel 17:40)." Why did David have to take five stones? Didn't he trust God?

Wisdom that God gives is a mix of confidence in the Father, and understanding of the frailty, weakness, and fallibility of the human nature. I have seen the devastation that comes from a person putting full confidence in God when God has not declared that he will work in the manner the believer is expecting. These people failed to take into account the potential for others' resistance to God's will.

David had great confidence in his skills as a marksman, but he was not so arrogant as to think he needed only one stone! Like the wise women who took enough oil for their lamps, (see Matthew 25:1-13), expecting God's blessing is an inexact science. We may *think* we know God's holy will, but often it does not happen precisely as we wish. Thus, five stones. David would have been a fool had he not been a skilled marksman with a slingshot. Years of intense practice at the slingshot made him a formidable opponent to enemies, animal or human. Should we think that we will be granted success if we neglect the work necessary to be skilled in doing the job God has for us? David's hard work and God's favor come together in the combination of extreme skill and extreme confidence that God can slay giants!

KNOWS NO LIMITS; "SELFIE AWARENESS"

Rather than self-esteem coming from a proper source, our faith in God, which teaches us our inherent self-worth as a person made in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26-27), a *camera* is increasingly dictating the sense of self-worth among teens. A new phrase, "selfie awareness," describes how Millennials who have grown up in the age of social media, are seeing their double chin in self-images and are seeking medical procedures to eliminate it!

Phones now have filters to adjust digital images, including elimination of a double chin. People are realizing they look better without the double chin, so facial plastic surgery procedures have risen 13% in one year! Costs of such procedures range from \$1,000 to more than \$3,600.

The effect of this self-absorption goes far beyond the end of the chin; increasing narcissism will result in more dollars spent on frivolous pursuits, less acceptance of defects in others, and less money available to give to the Lord or the poor. Of all people Christians should be pursuing healthy lifestyle to maintain the temple of the Holy Spirit, but refraining from such egotistical procedures that are conducted to gain the adoration of the sinful world!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder