

JACK'S CORNER

In lieu of my regular format, I offer the following:

Have you ever heard the story of the group of scientists and researchers who are climbing the Mountain of Knowledge? When they finally reach the top, they are met by a group of theologians already there!

Well, once again, a group of scientists and researchers, this time from prestigious Harvard, Dartmouth and the YMCA, have completed a significant study that (surprise, surprise) confirms that which most of humanity has already known for recorded history. Pardon the sarcasm, but do you ever get tired of people with lots of letters after their names telling us the obvious while acting like they have made a great, insightful discovery? I suppose we should give them the benefit of the doubt. The study confirmed on a molecular/cellular level what most of us have known was true on a spiritual level.

One in five children are “statistically at risk” for depression, suicide, anxiety disorders, addictions, social pathologies, and various emotional problems. Most current models of treatment have looked to medication as the solution. In this new study, the answer is “spirituality”. Not just any spirituality, but specifically “God”. These researchers say they now have scientific evidence (physiological and neurological proof) that the brain is “hardwired” to seek meaning and purpose through the experience of a relationship with God (Not just a “higher power”, but a personal being.) Sadly, they fail to speculate on Who “hardwired” the brain. However, the study concludes that there is a “chemical need” in humans for this “deep connection and meaning”. Children and teens who are part of a religious community and have a relationship with God are statistically at a much lower risk for depression, suicide, anxiety disorders, addictions, social pathologies and other emotional problems. (This confirms older social research on the effects of community and family assets.)

Their recommendation? Since a staggering 96% of American teens say they believe in God, parents and communities should make available and encourage religion. Tragically, this statement is probably a surprise to many. For those of us who have known all along...let's praise God for a victory within the scientific community. Let us also redouble our evangelism efforts and make our church communities places of “deep connection” to God and others. Let us be places where eternal “meaning and purpose” are known, offered to others, and lived out! We are the “light of the world”!!!

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