

Chapter 14. The History of Why Nations Collapse Can Teach Us How to Restore Our Own Nation

by [Dr. Graham McLennan](#) with thanks to [Bill Muehlenberg](#)

"Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it."
--- George Santayana, Philosopher

"Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."
--- Romans 12:21

"People who don't know their heritage can easily be persuaded" Karl Marx

Why Nations Fall and What We Can Do To Save Ours

Every civilisation in recorded history has eventually fallen. In recent historical memory alone, China's traditional Confucian monarchy; the Turkish Ottoman Empire; the Royal House of Iran; and the mighty Soviet Empire. All collapsed with sudden totality after allowing major problems to accumulate.

While all these Empires suffered from well recognised structural, social, and economic flaws, few commentators and historians at the time, saw these challenges as threats to the very existence of these societies.

Most people — if they think about it at all — would view the possible decline and fall of modern western civilisation as a highly unlikely proposition. The modern state, with its supposed evolutionary adaptability, its representative democracy, ever-increasing technological development, and fluid market economies, would simply mould and adapt to any internal or external challenges it may face.

This was the alluring proposition of political philosopher [Francis Fukuyama's](#) hugely-influential 1992 work, *The End of History and the Last Man*. He argued that the ascendancy of Western [democracy](#) — which followed the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](#) and the end of the Cold War — meant that human society had reached: *"not just ... the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: That is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western democracy*

as the final form of human government.”¹

Events since that time — the rise of radical Islam; the increasing fragmentation of society, family, and community; the increasing levels of depression, self-harm, and drug abuse in advanced west-ern countries — indicate that this optimism was naïve at best.

Historians looking at the fall of civilisations often use as an example, the once-seemingly unassailable Roman Empire. With its ruthlessly-efficient armies; its technological, economic, cultural, and social sophistication relative to its contemporary challengers; and its ability to adapt and absorb influences from other civilisations and cultures; it provides a rich example of the folly of seeming historical inevitability. With the invaluable benefit of 1500 years of hindsight, reasons for the decline of the Western Roman Empire based at Rome are often listed as including:

- Economic upheavals and the over-reliance on slave labor;
- Geographical and territorial over-expansion and military over-spending;
- Government corruption and political instability;
- The increasing threat from migrating Germanic tribes from the North including the Visigoths, the Franks, Vandals, Burgundians, and Huns;
- Weakening of the Roman legions.

Francis Schaeffer in his book, *How Shall We Then Live* (in commenting on Edward Gibbon’s seminal work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) marked five fatal attributes of Roman society in its slow but inevitable decay from about the third century AD:

- “1. *A mounting acceptance and approval of ostentatious displays of “show” and luxury (affluence);*
2. *Economic disparity creating a widening gap between the very rich and the very poor;*
3. *An excessive obsession with sexual gratification;*
4. *Decline of traditional and formalistic artistic conventions and their increasing substitution with outlandish and absurdist styles betraying little originality and creativity;*
5. *An increasing toleration and desire to “live off the state” without any commensurate social obligations.”²*

To many contemporary observers viewing -- with increasing alarm -- current social and cultural trends of western society entering the third decade of the third millennia AD, this catalogue might sound depressingly familiar.

States don’t fail overnight. The seeds of their destruction are sown deep within their political institutions.

Is it culture, weather, or geography? What about war or some singular event that re-writes history? In their new book, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, authors Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson argue that man, not nature, sows the seeds of his own destruction through political and economic institutions.

“Korea,” they write, “to take just one example, is a remarkably homogeneous nation, yet the people of North Korea are among the poorest on earth while their brothers and sisters in South Korea are among the richest. The south forges a society that created incentives, rewarded innovation, and allowed everyone to participate in economic opportunities...while the lack of property rights by North Korea’s economic institutions make it almost impossible for people to own property; the state owns everything, including nearly all land and capital. Agriculture is organized via collective farms. People work for the ruling Korean Workers’ Party, not themselves, which destroys their incentive to succeed.”³

Commentator Bill Muehlenberg in the contemporary website, *Culture Watch*, observed: “A lot of thought has gone into human mortality, and how we can prolong life. Less thought has gone into the question of why nations die. But nations, like people, do have a beginning, and do have an end. Thus, it is worth looking at the questions of: how and why nations collapse?”

He goes on: *“One common theme that emerges from those who have thought carefully about the decline of nations is that often it is the case that they collapse from within, instead of perishing from without. Thus, Arnold Toynbee could rightly say, Civilizations die from suicide, not murder.”*⁴ (Emphasis added).

Again quoting Muehlenberg, *“British historian, Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) is most famous for his magisterial A Study of History, 1934-1961. In this 12-volume work, he examined the rise and fall of nations remarking: “Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state the United States is in now.”*⁵ *“Given that this observation is more than half a century old, how much more true could it be today?”*^{5A}

Other historians have noted the seemingly suicidal tendencies of nations to self-destruct. American historian Will Durant (1885-1981) said: *“A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself within. The essential causes of Rome’s decline lay in her people, her morals, her class struggle, her failing trade, her bureaucratic despotism, her stifling taxes, her consuming wars.”*⁶ (Emphasis added).

In collaboration with his wife Ariel, Durant penned the monumental 11-volume series, Story of Civilization, between 1935–1975. The two also authored (among other works) the 1968 study, The Lessons of History, which encapsulated many of their observations on the tendency of nations to wither from within.

English writer and historian, Lord Macaulay (1800–1859), made a similar observation about the fate of democracies in a letter to an American friend in the mid-1850s. In this, he theorised that the average “age” of the world’s great democratic nations rarely passed 200 years with each following a similar pattern from prosperity and freedom to dependency and decline:

“From bondage to spiritual faith.

From faith to great courage.

From courage to liberty.

From liberty to abundance.

From abundance to complacency.

From complacency to selfishness.

From selfishness to apathy.

From apathy to dependency.

*And from dependency back again into bondage.”*⁷ May 23, 1857

Questions arising from this supposedly inevitable progression from liberty and abundance to dependency and bondage include: Where are we now in this supposed cycle? In other words, how far along are we at this moment on the road to this seemingly inexorable decay?

For those not just studying history as an academic field, but who also believe that the modern democratic state is the best model for maximising human freedom, prosperity, and happiness, the more important question is: Can we possibly escape this typical collapse? (Emphasis added).

Are We Next?

Muehlenberg continues: *Using Macaulay’s timeline, it is not hard in itself to pinpoint where we are as a society at this moment. Outrageous and publicly tolerated examples of corruption, selfishness, apathy, and decadence are not just accepted but celebrated on social media platforms and in major cultural outlets including in movies and television series.*

For a real-life taste of the current state of society, simply go to a popular news-site or, if you’re old-fashioned enough, open a daily newspaper. Recent lead stories around the world include:

- *Pedophiles in the Netherlands sought registration for a political party to press for lowering the legal age of sexual relations from 16 to 12 and allow child porn and bestiality. The party says it eventually wants to get rid of any age limit on all sexual relations.*

- *Religious symbols such as Bibles, crosses, crucifixes, and scripture are regularly banned in hospitals, schools, and other public places in order to not “offend” non-Christians.”*
- Rioters around the United States in supposedly protesting the violent and unwarranted death of a black criminal by white police officers in Minnesota in mid-2020, randomly destroyed private properties and attacked other civilians, including African Americans. Social media platforms then banned a number of conservative commentators from their sites for calling for a greater police presence and for describing the rioters as anarchists. Many of these arrested during the upheavals were improperly set-free by local district attorneys who professed support for their “cause”.
- A recent [Associated Press](#) (AP) investigation revealed that more than 100 [United Nations](#) (UN) peacekeepers ran a child sex ring in Haiti over a 10-year period and none were ever jailed. The report further found that, during the previous 12 years, there had been almost 2000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers and other UN personnel around the world that were never investigated.

These examples show not only the usual catalogue of human vice, common enough in any age, but also the pervasive culture of conformity, cowardice, and moral compromise among our society’s bulwark institutions. The preparedness of elected officials, bureaucrats, and even churches, to bow to the demands of the mob (*Ochlocracy* — tyranny of the mob, as the ancient Greeks described it) indicates a culture in steep decline.

Bill Muehlenberg in his article on the decline of nations notes:

“An American sociologist and elected Senator once described such events as “Defining Deviancy Down”. Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927–2003) in an important 1993 essay — one that today would see him, ironically enough, evicted from his own party — decried the moral collapse in the West observing: “The amount of deviant behaviour in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can afford to recognize, and that accordingly, we have been redefining deviancy so as to exempt much conduct previously stigmatized, and also quietly raising the ‘normal’ level in categories where behavior is now, (but would have been) abnormal by any earlier standard.”⁸ He asserted that the “saturation” of evil in modern society was so complete that the only way to psychologically cope was to “redefine” it.”

The prophet Isaiah warned of the relabelling of such aberrant behaviors more than 2500 years ago: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness,.....” (Isaiah 5:20)

How did we come to this?

There is a long and short answer to this vexing question. The long answer runs all the way from the ‘Enlightenment’ in 17th century Europe through Marxism and humanism, through the counter-culture of the 1960s, to the modern consumerist society. The short answer is: From about World War I (1914–1918) on, western society has embarked upon an historically dangerous social experiment to see what life is like when we reject God.

The normalisation and celebration of gender dystopia; the epidemic of drug use and physical abuse in western society; and record societal levels of depression and alienation, show that the results are now in. For a society that so freely-discarded the centuries-old virtues of duty, loyalty, hard-work, and faith in God, the bill is now due. We, as a societal whole, sowed the seeds, and are now reaping our own destruction.

Muehlenberg continues: *“One of the world’s greatest modern prophets, former communist and Soviet War hero, (and later Russian gulag prisoner), Alexander Solzhenitsyn, exposed the industrial-scale slaughter and callous indifference to human life in the Soviet Union (USSR), the world’s first post-God society in his seminal work, *The Gulag Archipelago*. He has written passionately and eloquently on this theme and the reasons for the grisly tragedy that has become human history since the start of the 20th century. His assessment is simple and yet profound: “It is because we have forgotten God. That is why all this is happening to us.”⁹ (Emphasis added).*

“This moral, ethical, and societal decline,” Solzhenitsyn said, “is directly connected to our widescale rejection of God.”¹⁰ Historian Will Durant again offers this insight: “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.”¹¹

Celebrated American-British poet and critic, TS Eliot (1888–1965) — author of *The Hollow Men* and *The Waste Land* — essayed an important volume of articles in 1948 (*Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*) where he declared:

“If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready-made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism. We should not live to see the new culture, nor would our great-great-grand-children: and if we did, not one of us would be happy in it.”¹²

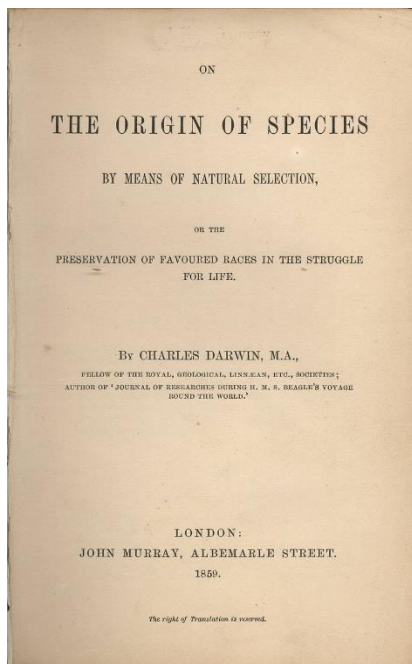
His thesis: Throw out God and the work of “civilization” becomes very difficult if not impossible. Again, Will Durant agrees: “From barbarism to civilization requires a century; from civilization to barbarism needs but a day.”¹³

Dangers of Darwinism

Or... How what we believe, determines outcomes.

Although our road seems to keep leading us back to the fall of Ancient Rome, let’s look instead at a scholarly tome from the mid-1800s that has done almost as much harm to the Christian basis of our society as Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867).

Although not as overtly materialistic and anti-Christian, naturalist Charles Darwin’s opus, *Origin of Species by Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle of Life* (1859) created the myth that humans are simply the end of an evolutionary ladder, a hairless ape.



This work, with its central thesis of “survival of the fittest” proved a rationale for some of the greatest atrocities of the late 19th and 20th centuries, from the desecration of tribal peoples who were considered to be anthropologically a lower level of sub-human, to lynching’s in the Deep South, to Hitler’s holocaust through his belief in a Master Race.

Australia, with its hunter-gather Aboriginal societies surviving thousands of years, was a subject for some of these dehumanising Darwinian theories to be put into practice. [Dr. Carl Wieland](#) of Australia, documents^{13A} one troubling episode that involved a German evolutionist, Amalie Dietrich (nicknamed the “Angel of Black Death”) who came to large Australia pastoral properties in the 1860s asking the station-owner’s permission to shoot indigenous inhabitants for a specimen collection. This then involved removing the skin

from dead aboriginals for stuffing and mounting for the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg. Although evicted from at least one property for this barbarism, she shortly returned home with a number of “specimens”. US evolutionists were also strongly involved in this flourishing “industry” seeking to collect “specimens” of other “sub-humans”.

“Along with museum curators from around the world, some of the top names in British science were involved in this large-scale grave-robbing trade. These included anatomist Sir Richard Owen, anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith, and Charles Darwin himself. Darwin wrote asking for Tasmanian skulls at a time when only four full-blooded Tasmanian Aborigines were left alive, provided, he said, that his request would not “upset” their feelings. As with Dietrich, Museums were not only interested in bones but also in fresh “skins” to provide interesting evolutionary displays when stuffed.”

These 19th century eradicators and grave-robbers though were rank amateurs in comparison to the Darwinian adherents of the 20th century; the fascists of Nazi Germany and the Bolsheviks of the Soviet Union.

Adolf Hitler’s belief in the superiority of the Aryan Master Race (“herrenvolk”), which he directly attributed to Darwinian theory, led to not just the industrial scale slaughter of Jews, Slavs, and gypsies (“Untermensch”) but also eugenics, the killing of the disabled and handicapped.

Let’s not forget that champion of “reproductive rights” in the United States, racist Margaret Sanger who, in the early 1920’s, introduced this Darwinian ideology to America via abortion, the annual termination of millions of lives through killing the unborn. At the 1977 March for Life, Jesse Jackson asked, *“What happens ... to the moral fabric of a nation that accepts the aborting of the life of a baby without a pang of conscience?”*¹⁴

If we humans are in fact, created by God in His image, and we now know how much super-intelligent physical work with atoms plus the immense care that this takes, we have to believe that He is more than a little unhappy with abortions.

How much of the destruction of His work will He tolerate?

The false belief system of evolution has been used since its inception to dull people to the societal benefits of Scripture. Using Darwinism to justify Nazism, Stalinism, the abortion holocaust, indifference to starvation in Africa, or the mal-treatment of indigenous peoples, is all against the wise Godly principles provided for our most enjoyable life.

In Europe — during what we now consider to be the barbaric 17th,18th and 19th centuries — wars tragically cost the lives of several million people each century. But in our more enlightened, 20th century, it was not the more sophisticated weapons that created the untimely deaths of well over 70 million people, but the ideologies driving them to war, including Darwinian theory, Marxism, and the teachings of Friedrich Nietzsche (“God is dead”).

Is there anything that can be done to stop this trend?

For those grieving at our torn society, weeping at the murder of innocents, at a society that celebrates the abuses of the powerful and strong against the weak and defenceless, is it now too late to repair what is broken?

As any engineer knows, the most important part of any building is its foundations. What then is needed now more than ever is a rebuilding of the foundations of our society. As the Psalmist noted: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3) For those willing to take up the tools, the job will not be easy, but for a better future, it must be done.

We as a society need to preserve and expand what is left of the good in our society and to resist those anarchic voices who would take it away from us. We must learn to speak, and to stand alone if need be, against the voices of dark destruction.

The first task is to learn from history in order to avoid repeating, as Santayana said, the major mistakes we encounter there. But it is not enough to just recall the lessons of history. We must be willing to act, to take a stand, to make a difference. We cannot sit on the sidelines, shrinking from the fight, in a time of danger and threat. The greatest poet of the Renaissance, Dante Alighieri in his *Inferno*, wryly observed that: “The hottest level in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in a moral crisis”.¹⁵

At this crucial point in history, we all must get involved. It is not enough just to talk about the problem and define it, shaking our head sadly and avoiding the fray. There are enemies of civilisation who are all-too-involved in continuing to subtly destroy our nations from within.

Muehlenberg states: *But what difference can one person make? Aren't the problems just too big? Legendary anthropologist Margaret Mead said otherwise: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world... indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*¹⁶ Philosopher Edmund Burke also wrote: *"Nobody makes a greater mistake than he, who did nothing, because he could only do a little."*¹⁷ In another context, radical Black Panther activist, Eldridge Cleaver, observed: *"If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."*¹⁸ Another prophet 2000 years ago said: *"You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world."* (Matthew. 5:13)

So, what should we do, as concerned citizens? Often people debate as to whether we should seek personal revival or social reformation. This argument is often presented as an artificial either/or, yes/no, binary choice. But the need of this desperate hour is to do both. We must be a light in a dark world.

It is less than a century since our western democracies enjoyed "The Happy Days" of the 1950's. Personal honor and God-based principles were highly regarded and life was good. The USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada were all considered to be "Christian" nations. That is only 60 to 70 years ago.

To repeat quote Lord Macaulay, after the *"faith, courage, liberty, and abundance"* of the 1950's, we headed into *"complacency, selfishness, apathy, dependency"* (on the state to solve our problems), and now we are facing the *"bondage"* of huge debt and excessive expense.

A major turning point happened in 1963 when an atheist woman named Madelyn Murray (O'Hair) and a few misguided friends were allowed to persuade the Supreme Court of the USA to outlaw prayers and other Godly benefits for American students. Other nations followed, and almost immediately there was a rampant rise in promiscuity, increased sexually transmitted diseases, many more fatherless children, anxiety, depression, drug abuse, increasing crime, and suicides. Many foolishly threw away the faith in our super-intelligent Creator and provider, along with the moral compass He provided for the benefit of all.

Understanding our enemies.

When I trained as an officer during the Vietnam War, one of the "Principles of War" was *"Know Your Enemy."*

We must understand that there is an enemy of us all who works against us, but we can overcome evil with good.

Madelyn Murray O'Hair and friends were only one group whose work began to destroy America from within. The religion of atheistic Humanism expressed in their magazine, *The Humanist*, Jan-Feb 1983: *"The battle for mankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their roles as the proselytisers of a new faith... these teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilising the classroom instead of the pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of educational level - pre - school, day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new - the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism."*¹⁹

One of the many unsubtle quotes of racist Margaret Sanger, the founder and promoter of Planned Parenthood, was, *"The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it."*²⁰ Her work has led to the deaths of millions of unborn babies.

Other destructive thinking ties into the enforced teaching of evolution-only as the cause of life and survival of the fittest. Teachers and professors have been fired for daring to suggest that there may be some intelligence in the way living entities are designed. This is obviously anti-science as it eliminates the foundational science principle of following

the evidence wherever it leads. As we have shown in this book, it takes a super-intelligent and caring force (i.e. "God") to create and maintain living entities. Evolution by definition, having no intelligence, is incapable of causing life

What is not taught or spoken of enough, even in Christian churches, is the understanding of the other super-natural force known as Satan, who subtly tempts unsuspecting individuals and groups into making bad choices.

He can shrewdly make bad things look good (for a while). 'Try some of this new 'candy' (crystal meth). It will make you feel fantastic!' Then, with just one or two 'hits', the unsuspecting individual is trapped into such a horrific addiction that the rest of their usually short life is just a horrendous nightmare.

This is only one of Satan's hundreds of subtle, destructive temptations that are gradually destroying the good life of individuals and our nations.

We have to wake up, understand, and resist this "Public Enemy Number One!"

Our nations are being destroyed from within, and that is where our healing must begin.

History from two to four millennia ago shows that collapsed nations were revived after they called out to the Creator for help.

Today, we even have the spokesman for the atheists of the world, none other than Dr. Richard Dawkins, telling the world through CBN News, "There are no Christians, as far as I know, blowing up buildings. I am not aware of any Christian suicide bombers. I am not aware of any major Christian denomination that believes the penalty for apostasy is death. I have mixed feelings about the decline of Christianity, in so far as Christianity might be a bulwark against something worse." ²¹

It is the Christian community that provided the USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada with strong moral foundations years ago, and it will take a unifying effort by the current and future Christian community in these nations to lead the way in saving our nations from collapse. However, non-Christians have to participate as well if they want our nations to survive and improve.

To start, the restrengthening of the Christian community from its present weaknesses of timidity and retreating before threats, will come from a revitalized understanding of its potential influence-for-good through prayer and action with God's help.

For examples, in the USA, if the expression of "God Bless America," and in Canada's anthem, "God keep our land glorious and free," are treated as prayerful requests rather than arrogant demands, God may listen and respond more favorably, if He receives more of the credit He deserves as our caring provider.

"The son of outspoken atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair publicly apologised to Americans and God for his part in building 'the personal empire' of his mother: Looking back on the 33 years of life I wasted without faith and without God I pray that I may be able to correct just some of the wrong I have created", said William J. Murray of Houston in a letter to the editor of the Austin American-Statesman.

"Murray, who was converted to Christianity since his spilt with his mother in the 1970's, was the plaintiff in a suit filed in Massachusetts that resulted in compulsory prayers being banned from public schools.

"I would like to apologise to the people of Austin for the part I played in the building of the personal empire of Madalyn O'Hair. My efforts to that end were an affront to the people of Austin, the people of the nation and to God, Murray's letter said.

"My crime was two-fold in that I was aware of the wrong of my actions at the time and continued them for the purpose of financial profit. I was continuing to practice the hateful anti-moral way of life I had learned from birth in an atheist home".

"I loathe the idea that I lowered myself to the editing her anti-God magazine", He said.

"Looking back on the 33 years of life I wasted without faith and without God I pray that I may be able to correct just some of the wrong I have created. The part I played as a teenager in removing prayer from public schools was criminal. I removed from our future generations that short time each day which should rightly be reserved for God. In as much as the suit to destroy the tradition of prayer in school was brought in my name. I feel gravely responsible for the resulting destruction of the moral fibre of our youth that it has caused".

----- Dallas Times Herald, May 10, 1980.

The main purposes of this book are firstly, to provide the basic science showing our personal creation and care by the Super-Intelligent Force known as "God;" and secondly, to refresh the reasons for belief and appreciation for His reliable provision of our food, Life, guidance, and wisdom.

We need to get back to knowing our Creator. We need to stop our trivial pursuits and to realise that we are here for a good purpose, and the purpose of our existence is to love and appreciate our Provider and to love our neighbors as ourselves, with all that entails.

Does this make logical sense for a better future for our nations?

Recovery Starts With Us. Let's Do Something !

_____ I can share some ideas from this book with some friends.

_____ I can help my friends and neighbors a little.

_____ I can watch for people who are hurting and see if I can help.

_____ I can seek truth.

_____ I can get to know my Creator better.

_____ I can count my blessings.

_____ I can give God thanks for the many works He performs for me.

_____ I can use the 10 Commandments as my life-guide.

_____ I can see if my favorite school(s) would put the 10 Commandments somewhere visible.

_____ I can join a political party and try to be a good influence.

_____ I can regularly plan with some friends to do something positive for our nation.

Life Applications

1. How can I help my soul mate, parent, or child?

2. How can I get to know my Creator better each day?

3. What are the differences between North and South Korea and what have been some results since 1953 war end?

4. Do you think western civilisation is collapsing? Why or Why not?

5. Will you commit to doing something positive for your nation or neighbor every day? Even a prayer? Maybe even write it down for future interest?

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