

A Belief System

REV. STERLING LANDS
SENIOR PASTOR, GREATER CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH



I have often wondered why it is that so many individuals pay so little attention to developing a character-centered belief system. I realize that we live in a society that primarily focuses on looking and feeling good without much consideration for character. This “group-think modality” is seeded, nurtured, and maintained through the various media portals we consume. It’s not that we consciously choose to not develop a character-centered belief system, but that we are devoid of experiential character principles and practices in our daily involvements. We are drowning in an ever-increasing flood of debt, where we have purchased things that we didn’t need with money that we didn’t have to address needs that were not and are not real. Of course, this all sounds like I am attempting to build a case to blame society for our current life dilemmas; that is not the case at all.

We are responsible for the choices that we make. Every choice carries with it at least one consequence. Personal responsibility is when we admit that we are the ones responsible for our choices. We are responsible for the way we choose to think and to feel. While we might not be responsible for all that happens to us, we are responsible for how we respond and how we react.

How we react and respond to life circumstances and life challenges reflects, to a large degree, our belief system. How we behave tells us almost everything about what we believe. Our belief system

is developed in the societal and cultural incubator that we grow up in, and it is colored by the active and passive pressures exerted upon us by individuals that we hold in high regard. Our belief system is the container that holds our character. Our character, ultimately, determines our choices and conduct. Our character directly influences how we react and respond to life circumstances, life challenges, and societal pressures.

Today, our society promotes sex as the antidote to whatever troubles us. Sex is used to sell virtually anything and everything. Sex is presented as the thing that we most need and want as long as we live on planet earth. The promotion of sex includes the freedom and the right of everyone to indulge until their heart is content. The choice to engage in male-female sex earlier and earlier is accompanied by dire consequences. Babies making babies, high abortion rates, single parent houses, unprepared parents, and increasing crisis pregnancies are just some of the consequences of the sex promotion.

If we want improved results, we must invest in improved belief systems. Telling youth and young adults to say no to premarital or extra-marital sex to reduce unplanned pregnancies will not get the job done. There is no safe sex outside of a renewed belief system. We must no longer conform to the current programming. We must renew our belief system and develop character-centered parents. Personal responsibility is not conceivable without a belief system anchored in high moral character. If we want better behavior we must have better beliefs.

Dr. Sterling Lands, II, is the senior pastor of Greater Calvary Bible Church in Austin, TX and The First African Bible Church in DeSoto, TX. He serves as the Presiding Bishop of the Calvary African

REFLECTIONS ON SEX AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Bible Church International, a family of Churches with a single vision and mission. He serves as the president of the African Bible Church International Fellowship, pastors, preachers, and ministries globally united.