

Are We Rewarding Goodness?

As a rule, the more some type of behavior is rewarded, the more of it we will see. Throughout my life, I have heard people openly claim that there are just so few good people anymore. In many ways, I understand what they mean.

In dating, do men reward good, honest women? Do they seek women with good hearts and morals? Or, do men pursue the best-looking woman they can get who will give them sex? How does men's behavior make the good, but physically unattractive woman feel, who never gets asked out?

Do women reward good, honest men? Or do they pursue the guy in a position of power, is successful, exciting, or a little dangerous like the proverbial bad boy. If you ask women about the men they dated when they were younger, nearly all of them will reluctantly admit they pursued jerks.

Sure, men and women generally learn their lesson and pursue better quality people as they age, but how does it make good young men and women feel when they are often excluded in their prime dating years?

Do we admire honest people? Is honesty rewarded?

I know people who claim they don't want an honest politician to represent them. Instead, they prefer someone who will bring government money to the district, or vote in a particular manner.

I have seen politicians caught in outright lies during a campaign. Yet his or her supporters believe that it is better to elect a known liar from their party than someone from another party. Even politicians with criminal records are somehow re-elected. Caught taking a kickback? No problem. They vote for them anyway. Often, corrupt actions do not seem to matter. What does this tell society? What message does this send to honest politicians?

Do we follow celebrities who are moral, honest, decent, or perhaps even – God forbid – goes to church? Or do we prefer the female celebrities who flash their genitals to photographers in an “accidental” wardrobe malfunction? Do we prefer to read about the male celebrity who punches out his girlfriend or the one who remains faithful to his wife for decades?

Years ago, “The Waltons” and “Little House on the Prairie” were popular morals-based television shows. They were also ridiculed. Even today, people still scoff at shows with a Christian emphasis. Yet,

viewers also complain that there is nothing good on television.

Is there too much sex and violence on TV, movies, and video games? Are there too many "Cop Killer" songs, or music degrading women? Then why do we reward them by watching them or listening to them? What does their popularity signal to artists whose art is unprovocative and excellent, yet generally ignored?

A parent once told me that the most important thing for their child is to be popular or good looking. Surprisingly, they added, "Being good? What good does that do them?"

Another woman confided in me that the reason women do not pursue good men is that good men do not get ahead.

Every so often, we hear about lawsuits against people who risked their lives. A hero pulls someone out of a burning building and ends up sued by the victim. What type of signal does this send to a society desperate for heroes?

Do employees get ahead by working hard, being competent, uncomplaining, and assisting other employees in a team effort? Or, do they get ahead by who they know, regardless of the quality of their work?

Who is more popular at the office: the trouble-making gossip or the co-worker who minds their own business?

Anyone who has gone to high school or college knows that star athletes are often given a pass. They can break laws, cheat on tests, or take money. The fact that they did something wrong is often covered up. Tremendous athletic ability trumps poor personal character.

Are we rewarding goodness? If you are like most people, then you probably believe that society is not good. So then, ask yourself: what are you doing to reward good personal behavior?

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