

Whatever Happened to Actions Speak Louder than Words?

In Jesus' Parable of the Two Sons, a father asked his first son to go and work in the vineyard. His first son said he would not, but then changed his mind and went to work. The father then asked his second son the same thing. The second son replied that he would go, but did not.

After telling this parable to the people, Jesus asked them which of the two sons did their father's wishes. They agreed it was the first son.

Now, it doesn't matter if you believe that Jesus was the Messiah, or if you don't believe in God at all. My point is to compare people's wisdom. Despite scant literacy or any formal education, the plebes of the first century were able to recognize that people's actions are more important than their words.

I wonder how our highly educated, sophisticated, technological culture today fare when faced with comparable scenarios?

Every year there are conferences to discuss the problem of Climate Change and CO2 emissions. Participants from all over the world attend these conferences. Some are able to arrive at the destination by train, but most fly there. The attendees include presidents, Prime Ministers, royalty, celebrities, CEOs, and many others.

It is fair to assume that few poor people attend such conferences. I actually know a few people who have never been on an airplane. They, like most people I know, have relatively small carbon footprints. Some of them question the science behind Climate Change, and are thus considered Deniers, and part of the problem.

The attendees of Climate Change Conferences emit enormous amounts of CO2 just traveling there. Some estimate that the amount is thousands of metric tons. Many live in large estates with private jets, heated swimming pools, and luxury vehicles. Countless people admire those rich dignitaries, despite their hypocrisy.

How many politicians routinely blast Wall Street, yet invest in the stock market, accept their political contributions, and charge huge fees to give speeches to Wall Street firms? How many of them have offshore bank accounts that are not taxable, yet lecture the rest of us about fairness and paying our taxes? How many politicians condemn the amount of money necessary to run a campaign, but have no problem

extending their hand to accept any donation?

Politicians love to fight for more budget spending – belittling those who oppose such increases as misers, Scrooges, and cheapskates. Yet, government money comes out of the pockets of the people. So why then do politicians take credit for such spending, as if the money were their own? Worse, many politicians' personal charitable giving is appallingly low.

There are politicians who support, praise, and take money from unions. Yet they do not allow union workers in their own businesses, and even fire employees who attempt to form one.

There are politicians who charge others with racism, yet their own minority hiring record is abysmal. They condemn those who oppose estate taxes, yet tie up their own money in non-taxable trust funds for their own children to inherit.

The Hollywood celebrity culture also engages in such hypocrisy. They advocate more gun control laws, yet their films often contain an excessive amount of shooting. They too possess limousines, private airplanes, huge mansions, and heated swimming pools, while lecturing the rest of us about our carbon emissions. Many support a living wage for union workers, yet film their projects in Canada with lower-paid actors, and less onerous union rules.

Despite all such egregious acts of hypocrisy, the people mentioned above have numerous, enthusiastic supporters – supporters who honor words and ignore actions.

The uneducated peasants of first century Judea, Galilee, and Samaria were able to grasp the concept that "actions speak louder than words." With that, they demonstrate greater wisdom than our educated, sophisticated twenty-first century men and women today.

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