*8 Ways We Normalize the Abnormal*

by Paul David Tripp

## **Scripture Reading - 32**Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

## **What Should Normal Be? The Norm Should Be Love!**

“that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” ([John 13:34](https://www.esv.org/verses/John%2013%3A34/)).

There are things that we cannot allow to be normalized in our everyday responses to one another.

## **1. The normalization of emotionally driven responses.**

Emotions lead you to do and say things that you should not do or say.

You have to be good at saying no (not the cancel culture “no” to other people) Say no to yourself, no to where spontaneous anger leads you, no to where fear may lead you, and no to the hurt that often makes you want to inflict hurt on others.

**19**Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; **20**for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. **21**Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21)

## **2. The normalization of anger-driven responses.**

We are living in an angry culture.

Be very careful of what you post or say, because there are a lot of angry readers and listeners out there who are ready to respond with vengeance.

**25**Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26**Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27**and give no opportunity to the devil. (Ephesians 4:25-27)

## **3. The normalization of disrespectful responses.**

Being theologically correct does not give you the license to be mean. Defending a biblical truth doesn’t make it okay to mock the person you disagree with. Standing for what you are convinced is right does not give you permission to question the thinking and integrity of the person who has taken another position.

**5**The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. **6**Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, **7**desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (1 Timothy 1:5-7)

## **4. The normalization of self-righteous responses.**

Humility makes it hard to be quick to criticize, dismiss, or judge others because you know you’re numbered among them. Self-righteousness turns the human community into a toxic and dangerous place to be, where outrage and judgment are just around the corner and where honesty is dangerous and opinions come at a cost. The truth is that none of us has anything of value that we didn’t receive from our God.

**7**For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

## **5. The normalization of vengeful responses.**

Vengeful anger is always the result of some person trying to do God’s job. There is only one judge of the heart.

**17**Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18**If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19**Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans+12%3A17-21&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28249a)] to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” **20**To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” **21**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:17-21)

## **6. The normalization of individualism.**

We must always respond to one another with the humble recognition that we need one another, responding in ways that strengthen our community, deepen our bonds, and stimulate candid, loving communication.

**20**“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21**that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22**The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23**I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)

## **7. The normalization of the love of controversy.**

Our culture of reactivity is a culture on a hunt for controversy. Theology that doesn’t produce a life of love is bad theology.

**17**But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **18**Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. **19**By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; (1John 3:17-19)

## **8. The normalization of tribalism.**

God works to do in us and through us something that is not natural for us. He works to break down the barriers that separate us from one another.

**28**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A28&version=ESV#fen-ESV-29114a)] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)