



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Outback Steakhouse has figured out how to market to our generation; their tagline says it all: **"No Rules; Just Right."** That's our cultural mantra: *I won't respect any rules, but I do expect my rights.*

Someone (else) has taken the time to codify what they've called "The Guy Rules." You won't hear them on **Oprah** or **The View**, but they are operative in intergender relationships, everywhere. The highlights: *"Learn to work the toilet seat. You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down. We need it up, you need it down. You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down!* Shopping is not a sport. And no, we are never going to think of it that way. *Crying is blackmail.* Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it. That's what we do. Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for. *A headache that lasts for 17 months is a problem: see a doctor!* Anything we said six months ago is inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments become null and void after seven days. *If you think you're fat, you probably are: don't ask us!* If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one. *If it itches, it will be scratched: we do that.* If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," we will act like nothing's wrong. We know you are lying, but it's just not worth the hassle. *I am in shape. Round is a shape!*



Yes, I know, I have to sleep on the couch to-night; but did you know men really don't mind that? *It's like camping...*

George Barna's research says that a bunch of Americans say they are "saved" (40%), but half of those willingly admit they have no connection to a local church. Ask unchurched people - the saved ones, and the lost ones - why church isn't on their GPS frequent destinations list, and the answer is often common: *"I'm not into rules..."* Some churches have turned toward *marketing* instead of *ministry* to offer an environment where they won't try to restrict your beliefs or your behaviors.

Tell me: if there aren't boundaries around doctrines or disciplines, how do you explain Paul's counsel to his young protégé, Timothy, whom he left to pastor the church in Ephesus? From his letter: *"Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set*

an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching." (1 Timothy 4:11-13)

Let me make it really short-and-sweet: unchurched Christians are destined to be underachievers. Why? God put some leaders in the Kingdom whose primary charter is to operate in the environment we call "the local church." Their concise assignment: **command and teach**. Command involves *behaviors*; teach involves *beliefs*. If a Christian thinks that they can be maximized without operating in a like-minded faith community (*church*) where there are rules ("*a prescribed guide for conduct or action*") and doctrines ("*a body of principles within a system of belief*"), they are exhibiting a profound ignorance of the Scriptures.

If Barna calls, say "yes" to born-again. When they press for your church attendance data, tell them that you're not AWOL; you understand why involvement in the Body of Christ, assembled, is a non-negotiable, mission-critical commitment. *You're there*.

A member of my local church, and will be 'til I head for Home,

Bob Shank

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