

# You'll never be Equal Enough

In *The Twilight of Authority* the famous sociologist Robert Nisbet made a simply, yet profound comment about freedom, justice, and equality.

To paraphrase, he reflected that he could imagine people believing that they would have enough freedom and justice. They knew it wasn't perfect, but life was good enough. Of equality, though, he believed that once that became the overriding goal, people could never have enough of it. In fact, the more equal society became, the fiercer the fights would become about perceived inequality. Eventually the aim for equality would actually tear society apart.

It seems counterintuitive, but upon reflection, it makes sense.

Ever since Christianity's rise in the Roman Empire and its subsequent spread and flourishing throughout Europe, the West largely had a deontological view of equality. It was recognized that people were not innately equal in their abilities or privileges, but rather equality only came through the religious belief that God created a soul in each man, woman, and child and it was the recognition of God's valuing each soul that one was considered equal. Rich or poor, healthy or sick, each person was equal before God.

While walking away from the Christian foundation that shaped the West for over 1,600 years, we kept the idea of equality. The problem is that equality isn't grounded in nature, the reality around us. Severed from its traditional religious understanding, equality has mutated into a rejection of the empirical evidence around us into a goal in and of itself. It has taken on its own ideological identity to which people pseudo-religiously adhere.

If you don't believe it, simply make the point that men and

women aren't equal at an office or school function. Can such an idea even be tolerated? And what if you argue that not all individuals are equal when it comes to brains or brawn? Also, an equal backlash despite the evidence. We want equal opportunity, but inevitably that means unequal outcomes. And unequal outcomes are increasingly not tolerated in today's culture.

And it will only get worse so long as equality, severed from its traditional meaning, is the goal. The reason being is that living itself is a reminder that you are not equal. If the dominant cultural message is "Equality now!", eventually that comes to be understood as equality in all things. How frustrating is it to not see that borne out in real life? Why aren't you Donald Trump or Mark Zuckerberg with billions of dollars? Why aren't you the star discovered by Hollywood? Why do you live in the poor side of town? Why isn't your car new? Why aren't you as happy as your friends seem to be on Facebook?

Beyond frustrating, the inequalities of life in a society aiming for equality can lead to a seething inner rage, a desire to tear down all that which violates the new cultural creed. In a word, unhappiness. The impulse to tear down is what eventually brings about the chaos and destruction that Nisbet referenced.

To make all things equal requires a constant redistribution of goods and people, a limiting of some talents while propelling others who are unworthy. Such a drive, if allowed to run its course, creates utter chaos and only further inspires jealousies and rage. And from chaos comes Caesar, someone who will restore order.

Sadly, that is the way of the world because of our human nature. It may behoove us to reconsider the popular drive for equality, severed from its traditional roots.