



My kids have asked me more than once if they could run up the down escalator. I usually fight off the urge to lead the way and say something quite profound and adult-ish and parent-ish, if not just a little dull-ish. As a matter of fact, the one time I lost such a battle (or was it that I won the battle), my run was promptly stopped by a camping department clerk looking as if she had just said something profound – when really, it sounded very adult-ish, parent-ish and quite dull-ish.

It finally occurred to me that, as Christians, my kids have been running up the down escalator.

When God first created, he concluded that it was good – in fact, he said that it was *“very good”* (Genesis 1:31). Just a few generations later he was ready to start all over again: *“the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart”* (Genesis 6:5-6). A couple thousand years later, in the days of David, not much had changed: *“God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one”* (Psalm 53:2-3). Fast-forward another two thousand years and the apostle Paul writes of a creation, *“subjected to futility...”* hoping to be, *“set free from its bondage to corruption...”* (Romans 8:20-21).

When God first created, culture like an up escalator, naturally approached Him.

When humanity first sinned – choosing to live in his own strength, his own understanding and for his own glory, the polarity of the escalator’s motor was reversed and now culture naturally moves downward away from God.

Christ warned, *“The way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many... the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few”* (Matthew 7:13-14). He also said of his followers, *“The world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world”* (John 17:14). Paul later reflected on such a life when he explained that as children of God we are, *“Fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him”* (Romans 8:17).

To become a Christian is not a petition for God to divinely bless our descent. To become a Christian is to follow Christ – to turn counter-culturally against the flow within us and around us toward life in ascent with God. It will be a hard Way! But, it is the Way!

Bumps and bruises, struggles and attacks, will come to those who choose against the wide and easy flow – to those who would run up the down escalator. How easy it would be to just not. How easy to go with the flow. How easy to succumb to a delusion of awaiting elevators at the bottom. But we are called to turn... to ascend... to endure... to live.

And for such a life, there is no neutral ground. To stop climbing is to descend with the masses. We must choose every day to live life toward God, to live against the flow of culture, to run up the down escalator. Difficult? You bet. Hated? I’m afraid Suffering? No doubt. Glorious? Mmmm... Yes!

