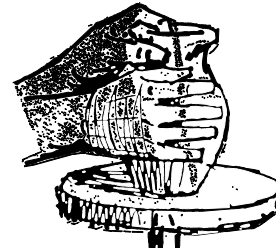


His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works.”*
—Ephesians 2:10



Isaiah 64:8

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Five Moral Boundaries You Don't Want to Cross *by John Hawkins*

To understand evil, we must set aside the comfortable belief that we would never do anything wrong. Instead, we must begin to ask ourselves, what would it take for me to do such things? Assume that it would be possible.”

—Roy Baumeister

Many people consider monsters like Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin somehow uniquely evil. They imagine them as malevolent, abominable, nearly inhuman entities who spent their days scheming to inflict misery on other humans for the sheer sadistic pleasure of it. The truth is much more terrifying: human beings as evil and ruthless as Hitler, Stalin, and Mao are so common that we pass them on the street daily, see them on TV, and may even have the pain of knowing them personally. The real difference between these notorious butchers and the guy in a federal prison is not so much the degree of depravity, but the unchecked power needed to make those darkest desires reality.

Once you set aside Hollywood's caricatured portrait of evil and accept the ordinariness of evil, you see how a “normal person” just like you or me

could embrace evil. Moreover, sometimes the shift from human to fiend can have murky beginnings. Some people step over a line and come back. Others follow that tragic path described by C.S. Lewis: *“The safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”*

Here are a few signposts that will alert you to stop, pause, and take stock to make sure you're not on that gentle slope, slipping away from God, Job 12:5; Ps 73:2; Heb 2:1.

1) An Idea that People Are Objects, I vs. It. We're all sometimes guilty of treating others like objects instead of human beings with families, feelings, and dreams, just like us. Without that ability to objectify other human beings, pornography couldn't exist. It's also one of the reasons for Internet rudeness. When we type something cruel to [janeeschmoe 8765](#), we don't see the crushed look on her face, watch the tears roll down her face, or know that her brother died

last week so she's feeling particularly vulnerable.

Oftentimes, the “morally challenged” among us tend to see themselves as real people, but they look at most others as “things” to be manipulated in any way that benefits them. The thief views a house the way you'd view a gold nugget you found underfoot in a stream instead of thinking about how he's taking things that another human being may have worked for months or years to pay for, Ex 20:13-16. A man who tells a woman he loves her just to seduce her and then never calls again only thinks of her as an object for his gratification as opposed to a person. A professional hit man looks at the targets he kills as a pay day. Ultimately, the perpetrator looks at himself as an “I” and his victim as an “it,” like a coffee maker. Few people have moral qualms about what they do to a coffee maker.

2) An Ends-Justifies-the-Means Mentality. A willingness to use any means to achieve a predetermined utopian “good” end can devastate the lives of other human beings—and even that assumes the “good”

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Five Moral Boundaries: *“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”* —2 Timothy 3:13

outcome is really good. God is the Creator, and He is the only One Who can define what is good, cf. Mt 19:16-17; Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Ps 104:28. Jim Jones, Pol Pot, and the KKK all probably believed what they were doing was right and good. Yet in the end they turned out to be doing evil in pursuit of an evil end; cf. 1 Sam 15:1-29. This is the norm of human history since the beginning of time. A corollary is thinking that as long as I have good intentions, what I did was right. Unintended consequences is often the result.

Theoretically, a person might create a good outcome by using evil means, but it's very difficult and unlikely in the real world, because evil tends to spawn more evil and provoke retribution. Tactics adopted by one side move the other to do the same.

Crossing one moral line usually leads to crossing another and taking things to further extremes. Some of the worst devils you'll ever run across are people who believe themselves to be working for the best ends.

3) A Feeling of Victimization. Certainly people who've been genuinely victimized aren't evil. However, many folks walk around nursing grievances the size of asteroids when their legitimate complaints amount to a pebble. These tend to be some of the nastiest, vilest, most despicable people you'll ever run across because they feel justified in “fighting back” after enduring their “victimization.” A man's wife says something he doesn't like, so he thinks it's okay to smack her in the mouth. Others think their employer treated them unfairly, so they feel justified in stealing from the cash register. They don't feel like it's fair that they're poor, so they feel entitled to sell drugs to kids. Some of the most

malicious people you'll ever run across never take responsibility for anything and perpetually feel as if they're being victimized by invisible, malevolent forces beyond their control, cf. King Ahab, 1 Kg 21:1-16. Adam blamed Eve (and God), and Eve blamed the serpent for their disobedience in Eden, Gen 3:11-13.

4) Escalation and Line Crossing.

There's a Peruvian proverb that says, *“Little by little one walks far.”* Whether you're talking about business, love, or evil, that's very true. Evil begins with



fantasies, poor choices, and small steps, cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; Jer 7:24, and it ends in sin, degeneracy, and cruelty. Do you think that when Nikki Sixx started doing drugs he believed he'd end up on his own couch free-basing instead of going to the funeral of the grandmother who reared him? Do you think when the guards at Auschwitz first started going to work they had any idea they'd help to send a million human beings to the gas chamber? It all started with a step and then another step and then another... *“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,”* 2 Tim 3:13. We deceive ourselves into thinking that one small step (or the first drink or hit) won't matter. Cf. Mt 12:43-45.

5) Refusal to Accept Moral Absolutes. Is it always wrong to torture an animal for pleasure? What about gang rape? How about a 30-year-old man having a “romantic relationship” with a 10-year-old boy? Considering the fact that torturing and killing ani-

mals acts as an early warning sign for serial killers, rape remains a “tactic” of warfare in parts of the world, and groups like NAMBLA actively defend adults who commit statutory rape, more than a few people would say “no” to all three questions. Once you start down the slope, there is nothing along the way to indicate a moral stopping point. It's all about personal choice. “Part of the problem,” says David Popenoe, founder of the Marriage Project at Rutgers University, “is that we've become an ‘anything goes’ society.” **Desensitizing** people about moral standards, especially sexual practices, has been an ongoing tactic that goes back at least a century in the U.S. For example, last week Yale University hosted a “sensitivity training” event by Dr. Jill McDevitt where students were to consider “bestiality, incest, and taking money for sex,” cf. Lev 18:22-25. “Don't judge other people,” urged McDevitt, “because we all have something we are embarrassed about.” This is the false idea of moral equivalency, that is, comparing minor misdeeds with major atrocities, equating something embarrassing with something vile, saying one thing is as bad as another (two wrongs make a right). Equating having a dog as a pet to holding people in Nazi concentration camps is an example of this argument and shows that the person making it has no moral absolutes.

Without any real moral lines in the sand, where everything floats in a grey area justifiable under the right circumstances, then we can very easily slide into levels of depravity most people haven't even imagined possible. But *“the word of our God stands forever,”* Is 40:8; see Job 23:13; Lam 5:19; Hos 13:4; Mal 3:6; 1 Pet 1:25. God and His Word don't change.



Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013
“May you be filled with all the fullness of God,”
Eph 3:19

The Strong Heart Is Not Callous

by Gary Henry

“I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears,” Ps 6:6.

If we think the strong don't feel pain, we know little of what strength is. Soldiers know that courage is not the absence of fear, but fortitude in the face of fear. The truly strong understand that strength is not the absence of pain, but nobility in the face of pain. The truly strong deeply experience pain without giving up either their reverence or their gratitude. They remain honorable, doing their duty despite pain and fear. Rather than going *around* pain, strong people go *through* it. There is no shortcut to any place worth going to.

We usually think of “skill” as the ability to do *difficult* things. If because of natural talent a person finds himself easily able to do things that are difficult for other people, that may be somewhat remarkable. But how much more remarkable it is when someone has the drive and the discipline to do things that he himself finds difficult. In a similar way, it would be no great accomplishment for a person to bear an emotional pain that he didn't really feel. But those who open their hearts and feel the pain this world can inflict, still maintaining a gracious respect and gratitude toward God—those are

the ones with godly strength, Lk 23:34, 47!

When we're suffering, friends may remind us that God's intent is not to shield us from all pain, but to strengthen us so that we can deal with the pain in His right way. Do we really believe that? Perhaps what we believe is something slightly different: that God will help us find a kind of “strength” that will anesthetize us so that we won't feel the pain quite so much. Perhaps we don't really trust God to comfort us or help us to acquire real strength, the kind that protects us without deadening our hearts and rendering us unable to feel what we need to feel, cf. 2 Cor 1: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*”

The immense spiritual strength that Jesus demonstrated did not involve anesthesia. He refused anything to diminish His pain: “*They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink,*” Mt 27:34.

He not only felt the full range of emotions that are the lot of humanity, but He felt them vividly and intensely. Let us aspire to a strength that

is no less alive. Genuine discipleship to the Son of Man will not turn us into unfeeling robots. It will teach us to feel what God feels. God makes our hearts tender when we enter into His covenant, because our hearts are “*circumcised (cut) with the circumcision not made with hands,*” Col 2:11-12, Phil 3:3,10; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Rm 2:29. We weep as He wept. “*We are healed of a suffering only by experiencing it to the full.*” —Marcel Proust



Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

Mark Campbell—home from hospital after hitting head on concrete in a fall; therapy for headaches, earaches

Matt Reames—VA unable last week to insert shunt to drain fluid from his brain (hydrocephalus), the cause of headaches blurred vision, because of low blood ct

Madge Wallace—lung cancer; daily radiation for tumor on top rib to start Wed
Gary Boyd's sister Gail Storz—cancer; in hospital again last week to drain fluid in her lungs

Brittany Tope's mother Gayle Shrull—last radiation for breast cancer last wk
Judy Strand's son Joe Huff—recurrence of neurological symptoms, black-outs, from brain injury he suffered in a 2007 car accident

Jeremy Green—croup, respiratory illness
Family of toddler Axel Charette, who was murdered in Mexico—family has returned to Ridgeway, CO, to grieve

Mina Gonzalez's uncle Charles Hawkins—colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—heart; spinal pain

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; house-bound in cold weather and needs help

Menards—age; **Lloyd**, diabetes;

Virginia, now legally blind from rapid

macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibro

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Job concerns **Andrew Tope** and

Frank Savarese are seeking jobs. **The**

Menards' son is out of work.

Expecting **Marie Carlson**—July 1 girl

Travel **Pat Campbell** is in AR visiting

her parents.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Adultery: When Law and Morality (Used to) Agree

The Colorado Senate moved towards repealing the laws that criminalize adultery or any act that would “promote sexual immorality” last Wednesday. Missing from the legislative debate was any acknowledgment of how such statutes entered the law books in the first place. Throughout most of human history, morality and law were united and in agreement when it came to the destructiveness of adultery and the larger context of sexual immorality in the breakdown of a nation, Ex 20:14; Pr 6:32; Jer 23:14-15; Hos 4:2. Laws criminalizing adultery were adopted because society believed that marriage was central to the state’s existence, and that adultery represented a dagger struck at the heart of the society, as well as the heart of marriage.

Marriage was not considered a mere private arrangement. Every society regulates marriage, and most have adopted clear and punitive sanctions against adultery. But the moral and cultural revolutions of the past few decades have shifted the meaning of marriage from a public institution to a private contract in the U.S. and the West.

As Bill Carmody of Colorado Springs said, repealing the adultery law would be disrespectful to the institution of marriage: “Do we want the state to promote a policy that tells our young people that we no longer believe adultery is inappropriate and wrong?”

But although Rep. Daniel Kagan (Democrat of Cherry Hills Village) noted that adultery was in our law before Colorado was even a state “as a way of... reassuring women who were thinking of moving to Colorado that if their husbands fooled around on them, they would be protected by the law,” he otherwise seemed to be completely unaware that Colorado had once considered adultery to be a sin of public consequence. “Adultery is a matter between a person and their [sic] spouse and their [sic] conscience and their [sic] minister, but not between a person and the full enforcement of the state of Colorado,” he argued: “Let’s keep the police out of our bedrooms.”

Well, the police have not conducted adultery raids in some time. The law in Colorado criminalized adultery, but included no penalty. The law was, at a bare minimum, a reminder of the public nature of marriage and the societal threat of adultery. Our cultural addiction to autonomous individualism has changed all that, but that moral shift should not go unnoticed. We are now reaping the inevitable result of treating marriage as a merely private affair and adultery as a merely private sin. The repeal in Colorado is just a sign of what has already taken place in the larger culture. *By Albert Mohler*

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meets at

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Pastors

Larry Campbell
(303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell
(303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover
(303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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TODAY:

10 am: *"Reasons to Hope in Christ's Resurrection"* by Jim Reingrover

1:30 pm: *"The Church and Human Organizations"* by Caleb Howell

WELCOME: We eagerly and delightedly receive you into our worship today! Your presence here gives us great pleasure and joy, and we are grateful to you and to God for gracing our assembly! If you have needs and want someone to listen, to help, and to pray with you, we're here with open hearts to share God's love and comfort.