

## RECOGNIZING EVIL

6/13/09

Today, we are going to discuss the topic of "recognizing evil." We are not going to spend time today discussing the topic of dealing with evil. We will discuss that at another time. As you meditate upon the idea of dealing with evil, remember the following.

- \* While God doesn't want believers to condemn other people (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:10-12; James 4:11-12; etc.), He does want believers to be discerning (1 Corinthians 2:15; Hebrews 5:14; etc.) the difference between good and evil.
  - \* While believers seek to forgive others for their mistakes and sins, that doesn't change the fact that some actions are more evil than other actions.
  - \* We all see through a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12).
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\*Here are a few scriptures that some people use to justify the notion that "all sin is equal." Some people use these verses to say that we should not notice or differentiate the actions of other people.

James 2:10            whoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all  
Rom. 3:10,11,23 there is none righteous; no, not one -- there is none who understand -- there is none who seek after God -- all have sinned and come short of the glory of God  
Daniel 2:21            God removes kings and sets up kings  
Matt. 7:1-5            Christ taught people to avoid condemning others

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### THE POISON OF "MORAL EQUIVALENCY"

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- \* "Both sides made mistakes"  
"The mistakes were equal"  
"The mistakes were 50/50"
- \* "Both sides have sinned"  
"The sins were equal"  
"The sins were 50/50"
- \* "Both sides practiced evil"  
"The evil was equal"

"The evil was 50/50"

\* A strong example

A man rapes a woman. The woman reacts with anger and slander.  
Are the sins equal?

\* Examples among civil leaders

Two individuals are campaigning for an elected office. One person believes in killing children. The other person believes in raising taxes. Are the actions equal?

Two individuals are being considered as a candidate for a lifetime appointment on the Supreme Court of a government. One person believes in advocating marriages that are not defined in the Bible. The other person believes in advocating the rights of smokers. Are the actions equal?

A civil leader creates a financial deficit for his country. Years later, a different civil leader creates a enormously-larger financial deficit for his country? Are the mistakes equal?

A civil leader becomes involved in an extra-marital relationship that causes the drowning death of another person. A different civil leader has an extra-marital relationship that does not cause the death of anyone. Are the actions equal?

\* Examples in a congregation

Two people give sermons in a congregation. One preaches wrong concepts about grace and law. The other uses the wrong Bible verse in an attempt to support truth. Are the actions equal?

Two people are involved in a conflict in a church congregation. One person threatens lawsuits and engages in regular slander in person, in letters and on the internet. The other person rarely gives his side of the story, but eventually does talk to only a few people. Are the actions equal?

\* Example in business

A person recently took his automobile to two different mechanics. He discovered that one mechanic told him that he needed struts, even though the struts were fine. The other mechanic changed his oil and charged \$5.00 over the estimated amount. Are the actions equal?

\* Examples in a family

A young man is considering two individuals as his prospective wife.

He discovers that one of the young ladies has been sexually active with many people and shows no remorse about it. He discovers that the other young lady is extremely messy. Are the actions equal?

A married couple is dealing with both sides of their family. One side of the family often honors the wishes of the couple with

only a few slip-ups. The other side of the family generally ignores the wishes of the couple altogether. Are the actions equal?

Parents are dealing with the actions of their two twin children. One child habitually lies at school and at home. The other child exaggerates an episode one day. Are the actions equal?

A married couple is having relationship problems. One spouse has a drinking problem that leads to physical abuse. The other person becomes impatient and somewhat disrespectful. Are the actions equal?

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### IS ALL SIN EQUAL?

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\* Consider these verses

Prov. 6:30 a thief who is hungry -- (sometimes, there are  
extenuating circumstances)  
1 John 5:16-17 sin unto death -- sin not unto death

\* Death penalty -- general principles

Deut. 17:6-7 at the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses  
Deut. 17:8-13 did not listen to the judgment of the priests  
Deut. 24:16 the fathers shall not be put to death for the  
children -- neither shall the children be  
put to death for the fathers -- every man  
shall be put to death for his own sins

\* Death penalty -- actions against others

Exod. 21:12 murdered a person  
Exod. 21:15 murdered his father or his mother  
Exod. 21:16 kidnapped a person  
Exod. 21:17 cursed his father or his mother  
Exod. 21:29 if a previously-aggressive ox killed a person  
Exod. 22:2-3 killed a thief during the day  
Exod. 22:19 had sex with an animal  
Lev. 20:9 cursed his father or his mother  
Lev. 20:10 committed adultery  
Lev. 20:11 with father's wife  
Lev. 20:12 with daughter-in-law  
Lev. 20:13 with same sex  
Lev. 20:14 with a mother and a daughter  
Lev. 20:15-16 with a beast  
Lev. 24:17,21 murdered a person  
Num. 35:16-31 the murderer  
Deut. 18:20 false prophet  
Deut. 21:18-21 rebellious son  
Deut. 22:13-21 a new bride who lied about her virginity  
Deut. 22:22 adultery

Deut. 22:23-24 sex with an engaged woman in the city  
Deut. 22:25-26 sex with an engaged woman in the country  
Deut. 24:7 kidnapping

\* Death penalty -- actions against God

Exod. 22:20 sacrificed to another god  
Exod. 22:18 witchcraft  
Exod. 31:14-15 defiled the sabbath -- work on the sabbath day  
Exod. 35:2 did work on the sabbath day  
Lev. 20:2 gave seed unto Molech  
Lev. 20:27 witch or wizard  
Lev. 24:10-16 cursed God -- blasphemed the name of God  
Lev. 24:23 cursed God  
Num. 1:51 a stranger who came near the tabernacle  
Num. 3:10 a stranger who came near the tabernacle  
Num. 3:38 a stranger who came near the tabernacle  
Num. 15:32-36 gathered sticks on the sabbath  
Num. 18:7 a stranger who came near the tabernacle  
Deut. 13:1-5 false prophet and dreamer -- after other gods  
Deut. 13:6-11 family -- after other gods  
Deut. 17:2-7 served other gods

\* A few examples of variation in the penalty

Exod. 21:20 murdering a slave immediately -- punished  
21 if the slave lived for 1-2 days -- not  
punished  
Exod. 21:22 causing a miscarriage, but the woman was not  
badly hurt -- paid damages  
23-25 causing a miscarriage, and the woman  
wässeriously injured -- penalty corresponded directly to the  
damage  
Exod. 21:28 if an ox killed a person -- owner lived  
29 if a previously-aggressive ox killed a person  
-- owner was put to death  
Exod. 22:2-3 killing a thief during the night -- killing a  
thief during the day  
Deut. 22:23-27 sexual activity in the city -- in the country

\* Examples of the penalty corresponding directly  
to the damage

Exod. 21:23-25 life for life -- eye for eye -- tooth for  
tooth -- hand for hand -- foot for foot -  
- burning for burning -- wound for wound  
-- stripe for stripe  
Lev. 24:18-20 killed a beast -- beast for beast -- as he has  
done, so shall it be done to him --  
breach for breach -- eye for eye -- tooth  
for tooth -- as he has caused a blemish  
in a person, so shall it be done to him  
Deut. 19:16-21 penalty for a false witness -- then shall you  
do unto him, as he had thought to have

done unto his brother -- life for life --  
eye for eye -- tooth for tooth -- hand  
for hand -- foot for foot

Matt. 5:38-42            in cases of legal action -- be wise

Matt. 5:25            in cases of legal action -- be wise