

Does The End Justify The Means?

Joe Slater

King Jeroboam, the first king of divided Israel, didn't invent the philosophy that "the end justifies the means." He was neither the first nor the last to use it. But he certainly did exemplify it. Fearing that his subjects would switch their loyalty to the king of Judah if they went to Jerusalem to worship as God had commanded, Jeroboam built two golden calves and stationed them at the northern and southern extremities of his domain. *"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt"* (1 Kings 12:28).

Ironically, the very reason God gave Jeroboam the ten northern tribes was because of Solomon's idolatry. God promised to give Jeroboam an enduring dynasty if he did right like David rather than following Solomon's lead (1 Kings 11:35-38). But instead of trusting God to keep His word, Jeroboam rationalized his sin by claiming it would keep his subjects loyal. Now his name lives in infamy as *"Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin"* (1 Kings 13:11).

Cheating on a test is wrong. "But the good grade will help me get into a prestigious university!" It's still wrong.

Lying on an insurance claim is wrong. "But I've paid premiums for years, and I really need the money!" It's still wrong.

Watering down the gospel and corrupting worship are wrong. "But we can attract a bigger crowd that way so we can reach them with the gospel!" It's still wrong, not to mention counterproductive.

No matter how noble the cause, it's never right to do a wrong thing.

What If...

What if elders were criticized only for violations of Scripture, and not for matters of judgment with which we don't agree?

What if preachers were criticized only for preaching error, and not for sermon length or pulpit presence?

What if Deacons received offers to help rather than complaints?

What if congregations weren't judged by their weakest members, but by their strongest members? **What if** they weren't criticized for the good things they didn't do, but were praised for the good things they did do?

—Steve Higginbotham (via Facebook)

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GREETINGS

Coach Gene Stallings had a severely handicapped son, Mark, now deceased. In spite of his handicaps, Mark had a bubbly, cheery personality and was loved by everyone who knew him. Coach Stallings said, "When Mark was asked, 'How are you?', he invariably responded, 'I'm fine.'" Coach said, "If Mark can always be 'fine,' we all can."

Dave Ramsay, as you may know, responds to "How are you?" with "Better than I deserve!"

A Southern Gospel Spiritual suggests an answer I would like to give: "I'm drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed."

How are you?

-- Cecil May, Jr. (via Preacher Talk)

Social Distancing

To start off this article, I was going to make up a joke about social distancing, but this was as close as I could get! (Give it some thought, it will come to you.)

Now that we are starting to get more and more out into society, we are asked to pay special attention to the social distancing measures that are in place. This is to prevent viral contraction of COVID-19 and becoming infected. The recommended distance to stay away from others is 6 feet. This is common sense.

There is another "social distancing" that God wants us to do. He wants us to social (and private) distance from sin. God knows that if we get too close to sin's fire, we will get burned. Satan wants us to sin and turn our backs on God. That's why he tempts us so – for he knows that temptation can lead to sin and sin to spiritual death (James 1:14-15). That's why God wants us to practice social distancing from sin – so that we do not become spiritually infected.

The Bible is replete in warning us to practice social distancing from sin:

"Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on." (Pro. 4:14-15).

"For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God...Therefore do not be partakers with them." (Eph. 5:5-7)

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).

"Do not...share in other people's sins" (1 Tim. 5:22)

"Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22)

"Abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22)

--Edd Sterchi (Campellsville, KY)