

## Wrong Is Wrong!

Proverbs 14:12

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** We live in a time much like the time of the judges (**Judg. 21:25**: *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*).
  - A. Like the time of the judges, our time is a time of declining morals.
  - B. I believe one thing that has contributed mightily to our moral decline is the rise of "PCism."
  - C. One of Satan's most effective weapons is "political correctness"; as he uses it to get us to rationalize improper behavior. For example:
    - (1) Alcoholism and drug addiction are no longer a sin they are "a chemical dependency" and a "disease."
    - (2) Sexual perversion (e.g., homosexuality, transvestite, sadism, etc.) are no longer a sin, but are "an alternative lifestyles."
2. Satan means "adversary, opponent"; therefore, it is absolutely critical that we live so as to "not be ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). The apostle Paul addresses this in several ways:
  - A. Paul told the Corinthians: *"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Cor. 11:3).
  - B. Paul to the Ephesians: *"that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,"* (Eph. 4:14)
  - C. Paul to the Galatians: *"You observe days and months and seasons and years. I I I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain."* (Gal. 4:10-11)
  - D. Paul to the Colossians: *"Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, I 9 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God."* (Col. 2:18-19)
3. **3** Our "modern" society is so good at rationalizing sin.
  - A. It is not popular today to stand up for what is right and say, "wrong is wrong."
  - B. As God's people we must be strong and separate ourselves from the values of the world (**2 Cor. 6:17**: *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."*).
  - C. That being the case we must ever realize that wrong is wrong despite the efforts of so many to excuse their actions.

### II. DISCUSSION:

#### Wrong is wrong...

1. **4** Even if we don't get caught:
  - A. We can fool a lot of people and hide our sin, but let us remember that *"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and good"* (Prov. 15:3).
  - B. The Hebrew writer tells us *"there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account"* (Heb. 4:13).

- C. On that great day, “God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil” (Eccl. 12:14).
- D. We can hide things from men, and we may think we can hide things from God, but the time is coming when “God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” (Rom. 2:16)

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#### 2. **5** Even if its “legal”:

- A. Some commit sin and justify it because “after all it’s not against the law!” (i.e., Not illegal in regards to the laws of men.)
- B. As children of God we certainly answer to the laws of man: *“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God,”* (1 Pet. 2:13-15; Acts 5:29: *“We ought to obey God rather than men.”*)
- C. But, just because something is legal according to the laws of man does not mean God approves (e.g., homosexuality, adultery, abortion, no-fault divorce, drinking alcohol, smoking pot, etc.).
- D. So we must keep several things in mind:
  - (1) God’s standards are different from mans: **Isa. 55:8-9:** *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 9 ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*
  - (2) Man is incapable of directing his own steps: **Jer. 10:23:** *“O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”*
  - (3) Therefore we must let the Lord direct our lives: **Prov. 3:5-7:** *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.”*
  - (4) As we submit ourselves to the Lord and His ways we must always remember that He and His laws always have our best interests in mind: **1 Jn. 5:3:** *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”; Jn. 10:10*

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#### 3. **6** Even if I know God will forgive me:

- A. Sometimes men say (rationalizing sin):
  - ☛ “Just one last drink!” or “Just one last cigarette!”
  - ☛ “I’ll watch internet porn just one more time!”
  - ☛ “I’ll tell just this one more lie.”
  - ☛ “After all, I can confess my sin and God will forgive me!”
- B. It is certainly true that if we confess our sins to God, He will forgive: **1 Jn. 1:9:** *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
- C. But, we can rationalize sin by saying “After all, I can confess my sin and God will forgive me!”
  - (1) Do we really think God will forgive us when we are rationalizing sin in this way? 1 Jn. 1:7
  - (2) God also requires us to truly repent of our sin; for example, Paul preached that we *“should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”* (Acts 26:20)

- (3) If we continually rationalize sin by using the “just one more time” excuse is that doing “works befitting of repentance”? Is that “walking in the light as He is in the light”?

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4. **7** Even if my preacher says its OK:

- A. I can't tell you how many times when I've been studying the Bible with people that they justified some wrong thing by saying, “Well, my preacher (pastor, priest) said it's ‘OK!’”
- B. Such “men of God” remind me of the days of Jeremiah: “*The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so.*” (Jer. 5:31)
- C. Our first allegiance is always to God and He communicates to us through His word.
  - (1) Therefore, regardless of how much we may trust a man (e.g., preacher, pastor, etc.) we must always test what they say with what the scriptures say (1 Pet. 4:11).
  - (2) Paul put it this way: “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*” (1 Cor. 11:1); we should imitate the behavior of any godly saint but only as they “*also imitate Christ.*”
- D. Justifying behavior, attitudes, etc. just because your preacher says it's “OK” also betrays a gross lack of study of God's word on the part of the one using such an excuse.
  - (1) On the contrary, we must always imitate the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
  - (2) There was a time when members of the Lord's church had the reputation of being “walking Bibles” because of their great knowledge of the Scriptures; may we aspire to restore that reputation.

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5. **8** Even if the Bible doesn't specifically condemn it:

- A. Sometimes there are situations that present themselves to us where we have options of acting, but some of those options may be “borderline” insofar as their appearance of being right or wrong are concerned.
- B. In such situations 1 Thessalonians 5:22 applies: “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*”
- C. Such situations often arise in financial dealings, dealings with the opposite sex, or dealings involving favoritism (i.e., favoring friends or relatives under certain situations).
- D. I also think this can involve what we often call “sins of omission” (**Jas. 4:17**: “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*”).

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6. **9** Even if nobody gets hurt:

- A. Some justify sin because they believe the only person it affects is themselves (e.g., smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, etc.).
- B. This is a bogus excuse! Second hand smoke, problems stemming from alcohol use, etc.
  - (1) At the very minimum we all have the responsibility of setting a good example: **Matt. 5:14-16**: “*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*”

- (2) John Donne wrote a poem entitled “No Man Is An Island”; and that is true; our lives touch so many lives, many more than we know.
- (3) Therefore, everything we do and say affects someone.

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#### **7. I Even if we think it is for a good cause:**

- A. Some believe anything is justified as long as it’s for a “good cause” (i.e., situational ethics).
- B. A supposedly honorable purpose does not justify a dishonorable deed or action; the end never justifies the means.
- C. The Apostle Paul made this point to the Romans as it had to do with those who were slandering him: *“And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come’-as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just”* (Rom. 3:8).
- D. Sin is transgression of God’s law (1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17; 2 Jn. 9).
  - (1) But how many times have we heard feeble attempts to justify sin on the basis of: “it is doing so much good,” “it is such a great cause,” or “it feels so good.”
  - (2) For an action to be pleasing in the sight of God, it must be morally and doctrinally right; it must be in accordance with the will of God.
- E. Thus, all that we do must be authorized and justified by Scripture (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17).

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#### **8. I Even if it doesn’t bother our conscience:**

- A. Our conscience is our “inner sense of what is right or wrong in one’s conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action.” (Dictionary.com) It is our “moral governor” if you will.
- B. However, our conscience must be taught and properly trained; if not, it will accept wrong-doing.
  - (1) Remember, the Apostle Paul persecuted Christians and cast them into prison, all with a clear conscience.
 

**Acts 8:3:** *“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.”*

**Acts 26:9-11:** *“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”*
  - (2) But note what he stated to the council as he reflected back on his sinful conduct, *“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day”* (Acts 23:1).
  - (3) At the time Paul did these evil deeds he thought he was doing God’s will; his conscience was “clear” in this regard!
- C. This is why we often do sinful things just as the world does and think nothing of it because our consciences have not been taught correctly.
  - (1) For example, the Bible clearly teaches *“in like manner, also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing’s, but, which is proper for women professing godliness with good works”* (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

- (2) But some female Christians act as if they've never been taught these important principles, hence, they dress more like a harlot than a lady.
  - (a) Some Christians were brought up in an environment where it was perfectly natural to smoke cigarettes, drink alcoholic beverages, dance, etc.; their consciences don't bother them because they have not been taught correctly; it may take them awhile to fully eradicate these sins from their life once they obey the gospel.
  - (b) BTW: This is one reason it is so important for parents to begin instilling a strong sense of biblical values in their children's hearts at a very young age.
  - (c) They will more than likely grow up thinking sin is just fine, giving it no serious thought.
- D. Thus, our conscience is only a safe guide when it has been molded by the Word of God. Also
  - (1) It is very important that we don't override our conscience (good angel on one shoulder, evil angel on the other!).
  - (2) Paul speaks of this danger in 1 Timothy 4:2 when he spoke of some "*having their own conscience seared with a hot iron*" (explain).

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#### 9. **12** Even if we have a good excuse:

##### A. Many make excuses for their sins:

- ☛ "I couldn't help myself!"
- ☛ "I really didn't mean to!"
- ☛ "I only did it this one time!"
- ☛ "God made me that way!"
- ☛ "I'm only human!"

##### B. There are no excuses for committing sin: neither good excuses or bad excuses!

- (1) All sin separates us from God and brings spiritual death! Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23
- (2) Adam thought he had a good excuse: **Gen. 3:12:** "*The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.*"
- (3) Did God accept his excuse?! NO!
- (4) Will God accept our excuses?

**Jas. 1:12-15:** "*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*"

**1 Cor. 10:13:** "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*"

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#### 10. **13** Even if it is commonly considered acceptable:

##### A. Many justify bad behavior, because, after all "everybody is doing it!"

B. But the Bible says, “*You shall not follow a crowd to do evil*” (Ex. 23:2).

- (1) Just think of what has become acceptable in recent years in our present society: social drinking, partying and dancing, gambling, dressing immodestly, using profanity, etc.
- (2) We see all of this, not only in person, but on TV and in the movies.
- (3) Nearly 60 million babies have been murdered since abortion was legalized in America in 1973 and many get an abortion, because after all “everybody else is doing it!”
- (4) And now we are witnessing the acceptance of homosexuality, the legalization of same-sex marriage, and the legalization of marijuana in some states.
- (5) We begin to think “what’s next?”

C. But just because “everybody else is doing it,” or so it seems, doesn’t make it right.

- (1) First of all it is illogical to do something just because other people are doing it.
  - (a) Remember when you used this as an excuse as a kid?
  - (b) What did your parents say? “If everyone was jumping off a cliff would you jump too?”
- (2) But more importantly, the child of God should “*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*” (Prov. 4:14-15; **Prov. 1:10:** “*My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.*”; **Prov. 1:15-16:** “*My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; 16 For their feet run to evil.*”).
- (3) Oh how I wish my parents did a better job of teaching me those lessons when I was a boy!

D. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves entering, walking and traveling along with the ways and practices of the world, rather than turning away from them!

**2 Cor. 6:17:** “*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.*”

**Rom. 12:1-2:** “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”

**Eph. 4:17-20:** “*This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ,*”

E. Let us “*Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil*” (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

## II. CONCLUSION: 14

1. Remember, there is never a right way to do wrong. Wrong is always wrong!
2. As God’s people let us aspire to live pure lives!

**1 Jn. 3:2-3:** “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*”

**2 Cor. 7:1:** “*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*”