

Proverbs-Evil/Righteousness

When I was a kid, for the first several years that I remember watching TV, it was all black and white. My dad owned a radio and TV repair shop so we always had a TV. My dad seemed pretty disinterested in keeping our own TV working properly, but we always had one.

Maybe it was originally because of the lack of color, but the good guys, like Roy Rogers and the Lone Ranger, always wore white hats, and the bad guys always wore black hats.

([Youtube.com “The Lone Ranger opening”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TheLoneRangerOpening)) There was never any doubt, no matter what you were watching or how imperfect the signal and picture were, who the good guys and the bad guys were.

Jump ahead a few decades. Now the hats are all different shapes and colors and I don't think it's just because we have HD, LCD, digital, cable, color TV. Somewhere between Gene Autrey and the Twilight saga the shades and colors of good and evil have become quite blurred. In truth, it has nothing to do with color in our TVs and movies. TV and movies are just a reflection of our culture and our culture is seeing an unprecedented tolerance for, and even glorification of, evil and sin.

Dracula was a bad dude. He didn't wear a black hat, but he wore a black suit with a black cape. You knew from the beginning that he was evil and to be feared. I can't tell you how many times I've watched a TV show or movie lately and honestly wondered who the good guys were. It looked to me like everyone was bad.

The recognition and celebration by most Americans of the annual event called Halloween is another example of the glorification of evil in America. The quantity and magnitude of month long decorations, parties and movies, culminating with “trick or treat” is coming close to rivaling Christmas, the celebration of the birth of our Savior. Something is seriously wrong with our nation’s perception, as a whole, of the seriousness and consequences of sin and evil. We justify and even celebrate our sins and the sins of others. If we could see ourselves as God, in His holy righteousness, sees us, we would realize that we are not as good as we think we are.

Proverbs has much to say about the dangers and pitfalls of giving into the enticements of sin and evil. We would all be very wise to heed the warnings...

8 Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction, and don’t reject your mother’s teaching, **9** for they will be a garland of grace on your head and a [gold] chain around your neck. **10** My son, if sinners entice you, don’t be persuaded. **11** If they say—“Come with us! Let’s set an ambush and kill someone. Let’s attack some innocent person just for fun! **12** Let’s swallow them alive, like Sheol, still healthy as they go down to the Pit. **13** We’ll find all kinds of valuable property and fill our houses with plunder. **14** Throw in your lot with us, and we’ll all share our money” — **15** my son, don’t travel that road with them or set foot on their path, **16** because their feet run toward trouble and they hurry to commit murder. **17** It is foolish to spread a net where any bird can see it, **18** but they set an ambush to kill

themselves; they attack their own lives. ¹⁹ Such are the paths of all who pursue gain dishonestly; it takes the lives of those who profit from it. **Prov 1:8-19 (HCSB)**

Avoid evil:

Listen to instruction Assumption: parents are instructing children in all the ways of righteousness according to scripture.

Parents/grandparents: Take very serious the fact that everything, not only that you teach, but that you say and do is being absorbed by little, and not so little, ears and eyes. (Caleb)

We have a clear and awesome command to hang the truth of God's commands around the necks of our children and grandchildren and remind them constantly of what God wants and requires for their lives. Yes, the church can and does serve a vital role in assisting in that process but the primary responsibility lies in the home. Our kids need to be hearing the truth of God's commands, the difference between good and evil, being taught every day in our homes and they need to see these same truths fleshed out in the way we live.

I'm afraid with most families nowadays having both parents working full-time jobs that by the time mom and dad get home, if both parents are even in the home, they are too tired to do anything constructive and spiritual with and for their kids, especially when you add in all the other stuff we get our kids into. Our nation has grown to rely on the schools, the daycares,

and some the church to teach our kids about right and wrong. That's not going to get it done, especially since all those organizations except the church are scared to death to even mention the name of Jesus much less any of the teachings of scripture.

And what about children whose parents are living ungodly lives and/or are even teaching their children to do and be evil? ...Like the mothers of the two teenage daughters who arranged for and stood by observing as their daughters tried to beat the tar out of each other.... Or, in Colorado the 7 year old boy wants to get into the girl scouts and his mother is pushing for it. Those are some sick mamas. Interesting: there is not mention of a father in either of the stories.

We need to triple our efforts to bombard our kids minds with the holy, righteous good things of God. We must distinguish, in a way they can understand it, between what is truly good, wholesome and pure and what is evil, satanic, and wicked.

²¹ For a man's ways are before the LORD's eyes, and He considers all his paths. ²² A wicked man's iniquities entrap him; he is entangled in the ropes of his own sin. ²³ He will die because there is no instruction, and be lost because of his great stupidity. **Prov 5:21-23 (HCSB)**

Do you want this proverb to be true about your children or grandchildren? Listen to the description of the virtuous woman.....

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and loving instruction is on her tongue. **27** She watches over the activities of her household **Prov 31:26-27 (HCSB)**

Students- I know this goes against the grain of every fiber of your teenage, earthly being, but crave biblical, moral instruction. If your parents claim to be followers of Christ, firmly request that they instruct you in and demonstrate to you the ways of Christ. It is their God given duty to lead you away from evil and into faith and righteousness and it is your duty to listen, learn, and grow. If you have Christian parents who are doing this, thank God and them!

If your parents are not followers of Christ, you must seek out godly instruction on your own. The tough thing is that, even if you don't have Christian parents, you will still be accountable for what you've done with Jesus and how you've lived your life no matter who and what your parents are. It will be futile on the day you stand before God to say, "My parents never taught me about this stuff." It is obviously a great advantage to have Christian parents, but you are still accountable to God regardless of whether either parent loves God or not. So, seek godly, biblical instruction. Thirst for wisdom, knowledge, and discretion.

13 Hold on to instruction; don't let go. Guard it, for it is your life. **14** Don't set foot on the path of the wicked; don't proceed in the way of evil ones. **15** Avoid it; don't travel on it. Turn away from it, and pass it by. **16** For they can't sleep unless they have done what is evil; they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble. **17** They eat

the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.
Prov 4:13-17 (HCSB)

³³ Listen to instruction and be wise; don't ignore it. Prov 8:33 (HCSB)

¹ A wise son [hears his] father's instruction, but a mocker doesn't listen to rebuke. Prov 13:1 (HCSB)

⁵ A fool despises his father's instruction, but a person who heeds correction is sensible.^[6] Prov 15:5 (HCSB)

²⁰ Listen to counsel and receive instruction so that you may be wise in later life.^[23] Prov 19:20 (HCSB)

Don't be persuaded by sinners

You can be doing your daily devotions religiously. You may be lapping up all the instruction you can get from your parents, grandparents, Sunday school teachers, youth pastor, pastor, Christian books, and of course the bible like a thirsty dog on a hot summer day, but if you are choosing to allow yourself to be influenced by sinful, evil, ungodly, unfaithful, wicked people, all or most of that instruction is for the most part in vain.

In my opinion and experience of 33 years of serving the Lord particularly through youth ministry, it is not drugs, alcohol, premarital sex, or any other form of ungodly, self-destructive forms of living that have destroyed so many young, beautiful, potentially magnificent lives. Most, if not all of the time, these destructive behaviors are simply a consequence of that foolish,

thoughtless, and sometimes single decision: who you decide to allow to be the primary influencers in your life.

20 The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm. **Prov 13:20 (HCSB)**

I've heard arguments otherwise like, "I'm who I am. Nobody can change me." Bologna! You might be able to say that if you are 70 or 80 but I doubt it. Fact: People influence people for good and bad. You are influenced by people and you have influence on people. The trillion dollar question is what kind of people do you choose to allow to influence you and how do you use your influence on them.

24 Don't make friends with an angry man, and don't be a companion of a hot-tempered man, **25** or you will learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare. **Prov 22:24-25 (HCSB)**

If you're a new or immature believer it may be the only wise and safe thing to do to totally disassociate with all unbelievers and maybe even some weak believers.

When I started getting serious about my faith at around age 21, I started hanging out with a guy in the church I was going to. He was a pretty nice guy and there was not really anything particularly evil about him that I remember, but he wasn't being much of a positive influence on my walk with Christ. I realized that and began to disassociate myself from him. Then, the Lord put another friend in my life, at the same church, that had a major part in jump starting my faith and realizing God's call on my life. He got me excited about Christian music. He was the

first one I shared with about God calling me into ministry. He stood with me when Loretta and I got married.

17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.[Ⓛ]
Prov 27:17 (HCSB)

At every growth level of our Christian life we must choose all our relationships carefully. Early in our faith journey, who we marry, all our close friends, even our distant friends, and our church, must serve to sharpen us, not pull us down. If any one relationship is turning us toward evil and away from God and His righteous, run like punter about to be caught with the football still in his hands.

If you have listened long and seriously to godly instruction and for an extended period in your Christian life you have wisely chosen to only allow yourself to be influenced by people who sharpen you, then you may be ready to begin a ministry of sharpening others, using your influence for good in the kingdom of God to bring others away from evil and toward Christ and His goodness. You still must maintain a strong majority of people who sharpen you, hold you accountable, and protect you from evil, but you, under Holy Spirit direction, may be led to an individual whom you can use your character and influence to deliver them from evil and hell.

Let's take a stand against, at least in our own circle of influence, the presence and power of evil that seems to be growing all around us. Without Christ, we are powerless, but if we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil and the evil he is infecting our culture with, he will flee like a granny with a snake in her garden.

If you don't purposely, intentionally, constantly resist evil, it will overcome you. Listen to instruction. Choose carefully whom you allow to influence you. Then, let's all stand against the growing tide of evil that is permeating every element of our culture.

You and I are powerless against evil without Christ. Do you know Him? Does He know you? How are your friends influencing you? How are you influencing your friends?