

## THE REMEDY FOR EVIL

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Why do human beings create evil? All around us on a daily basis we hear of evil, and we experience evil, and if we look closely enough, we find evil in ourselves. If the evil is not IN us, it is all around us and IN someone we know! Why are humans so predisposed to do evil? And what can be done about it?

There are several ancient words that describe this human condition, this evil of which we speak. In the whole Bible, the word "evil" appears over 700 times. The Bible contains 31, 102 verses. So, the word "evil" appears in approximately 5% of Bible verses! Another word used to describe the same problem is the word "wickedness." It's found 61 times in the Bible. Still a third way in which this human problem is described is with the very familiar word "sin." 441 times this word is found in 390 verses of the Bible. I have given those statistics just to show you that the author of the Bible considers this human problem of evil a tremendous problem! Can humans even imagine a world without evil?

Evil in the world is the reason why there are policemen in every society! However, evil is not just a social problem; it is a personal problem! That's right! Wherever you find an accountable human being, you will find the problem of evil. And when that accountable human practices behavior that is evil then all the other people around him or her are affected by that evil behavior. Evil then becomes a social problem. However, evil is always **rooted** in individual human desire! Why are humans so predisposed to do evil? Because in every human there is found DESIRE. Jesus' brother James put it this way, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. [\(James 1:14-15 ESV\)](#) Human desire is so easily tainted with evil. Most of the time evil desire is related to money!

Jesus' apostle Paul talked about people who assume that "gain is godliness." "Gain" to an individual is improvement, advancement, increase of that which makes a person happy. Money is usually connected with happiness because **we think** money puts happiness within our reach. And so we, like Paul, call "money" "gain", because "money" is our source of improvement.

Well Paul corrected the idea that "gain is godliness." Instead, Paul said, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Are you looking for increase, improvement, advancement? The inspired apostle says that you can find those things with two ingredients, godliness and contentment. Contentment conquers your desires. Just as "evil" begins as a spiritual condition, both contentment and godliness are spiritual conditions. When contentment is in your heart, and godliness in your practice, quiet peace rules in your heart and the result is improvement, increase, and advancement measured spiritually, not physically.

Paul continued by explaining, "We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many (griefs)." (1 Timothy 6:6-10 ESV) Many evils in the world can be traced back to an evil, inappropriate, uncontrollable LOVE for money. You see, the human problem of evil is rooted in a corrupted LOVE.

Love is a spiritual condition. What do you love? What comes first with you? Who do you love? Who comes first with you? Do you have a damaged, perverted love?

Jesus said that the greatest love we can have is the love of God. And of course, that means that we will love godliness. Jesus was asked to identify which of God's requirements for human beings was the greatest, and Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39 ESV) Friends, here is the remedy for Evil! That's right! If we can get our love straightened out, we can conquer evil within us, because evil springs from the corruption of love. And if each individual could suddenly conquer the corruption within them, then society will suddenly change and there would be no need for police officers!

But you are pessimistic, right? You do not believe in the sudden goodness of every person in the world! Why? Because you have had too much experience with evil desire; you have struggled with it yourself! You know your own sins!

And even if you repent of evil, you cannot imagine that every person will chase out selfish evil and replace it with love for God and for neighbor! You have seen evil in humans! You are pessimistic! Well, you're not the only one!

Jesus also is pessimistic when it comes to seeing dramatic change in every human heart! Jesus reduced the discussion of our future to two roads. One road is narrow, the other is wide. One road has a narrow entrance gate; the other has a wide gate. The narrow road leads to life; the wide road leads to destruction. Jesus predicted that the majority of people would pass through the wide gate and into the wide road that leads to spiritual death/destruction. Jesus predicted only a few people would find the narrow gate and travel the narrow road that leads to life. (Matthew 7:13, 14) Friend, will you be one of those few?

But just because you are religious does **not** mean that you will be among the few! That's right! Even religious people can be found in the wide road that leads to death! The old prophet Micah was talking to **religious** people when he described the condition of people in his world, "...Leaders judge for a bribe ...priests teach for a price, and ...prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORD's support and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us." (Micah 3:11 NIV) In a later chapter the old prophet continued, "The faithful have been swept from the land; not one **upright** person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood; they hunt each other with nets. Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accept bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire-- they all conspire together. The best of them is like a brier, the most upright worse than a thorn hedge. The day God visits you has come, the day your watchmen sound the alarm. Now is the time of your confusion." (Micah 7:2-4 NIV) There is coming a day of judgment upon evil. Which side are you on, the side of uprightness or the side of evil? Are you in the narrow road that leads to life, or the wide road that leads to destruction?

Our great God, the LORD and Creator of heaven and earth, the One who loves the human family, has charted a way of escape from the clutches of evil. It is called "redemption." There are in the world those people whom God calls "upright." These people are **not** called "upright" because they are **without sin**! That's right! The word "upright" or "righteous" is a legal term that basically refers to one who the Judge has freed from penalty. The upright person **is** legally guilty. But he or she is freed from the penalty because of redemption. That is, someone else paid

their debt; someone else bore their penalty; a substitution was made; someone else willingly received their punishment, and willingly paid the price for redemption. And who, in all the world, could pay such a tremendous penalty for evil? Well, only the Judge Himself could pay such a price! The Judge bore the penalty, as the Psalmist sang, "Put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." (Psalms 130:7 NIV)

And so, our great God, the LORD and Creator of heaven and earth, the One who loves the human family, **so** loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life. (John 3:16) "In [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us." (Ephesians 1:7-8 NIV) "[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all...." (1 Timothy 2:4-6 ESV)

Friends, great grace flows out in great generosity. God has been generous by providing His own Son as redemption, a ransom, a substitute for our penalty. The wages of sin is death, separation from God, and we deserved it! But God provided a substitute, and that because of His wonderful love, His great grace. Friends, when you realize what it is that God has saved you from, then perhaps gratitude will spring up in your heart. When gratitude springs up, perhaps you will give your life to God through Jesus Christ. When gratitude springs up, you will repent of evil, and be immersed in water to receive the forgiveness promised you. When gratitude swells within your heart, then evil will be crowded out! Satan will then begin anew to bring you into his slavery. But as long as your gratitude, your love for God, continues strong, then you can overcome Satan and Evil. Jesus predicted, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 ESV) Jesus's apostle Paul put it this way, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21 ESV)

Friends, when you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and when you love your neighbor as much as yourself, then you can overcome evil. Jesus Christ has taken your guilt and accepted your penalty. Are you ready to obey Jesus Christ, the gospel of your salvation? Jesus is waiting for your decision to root out

evil with God's great love. Visit a church of Christ near you in order to find help in your quest against evil.