

# Heart's intent: source of evil

It is said that one of the Fathers of the Protestant Reformation prayed, "God, bless us; yea, even curse us, but please be not silent." His words carry with them the recognition of a

be in danger of the judgment." He went on: "You have heard... 'You shall not commit adultery,' but I say unto you, that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

In other words, thinking is doing. The intent of the heart is what produces the actions that harm and kill, and so the heart must be healed for evil to be stopped. To not kill is good, but to not *intend* to kill is even better. Likewise, it is admirable to refrain from sexual promiscuity, but this does little good for the soul if one mentally rapes any woman in view.

Whence originates this noble standard of conduct with which we can truly live in harmony. I'm afraid it finds its meaning only as a direct communication from the mind of an infinite and loving God.

Francis Schaeffer devoted much of his life to arguing that without this "absolute reference point," life does not make sense, and moral behavior has no basis. The gods of the Romans and Greeks were not big enough. The reason of man is not big enough. Science and "progress" are not big enough. Only God is. Only God fills the vacuum in our lives.

Philosophers who excluded God from their ideologies have often come to realize the futility of life without Him. Nietzsche, for instance, in his famous "God is dead" passage, lamented: "Whither is God?... I shall tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. . . Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?" Nietzsche's warning is, if we kill God, what do we replace Him with? What is left. If we kill God, do we not kill ourselves?

A worthy question. And one that cannot be ignored in these dark days. This is not to say necessarily that "evil is on the rise," or that the "good old days" were better. But as C.S. Lewis pointed out, suffering is not increased by mere arithmetic. As long as a single student is murdered; as long as a single Serb or Albanian or American loses their life in Yugoslavia, there exists a condition in the human heart called evil.

This evil is in you. It is in me. It is a Mr. Hyde to the Dr. Jekyll of the noblest individual. It finds its cure in one source—the Way, the Truth, and the Life. *I show you a more excellent way.*

## THE ALTAR OF AN UNKNOWN GOD

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basic human need, one that has been neglected and denied in the world of today.

This neglect is more than a theological nuisance or theoretical conundrum. The casualties in this war are our very hearts, minds, and lives—at the risk of sounding overly theological one might even say our souls.

It is redundant at this point to mention that nearly a score of high school students were gunned down by two young men in Littleton, Colorado. Throughout our nation, thinkers and journalists alike are weighing in with analyses of the tragedy, and wrestling with the dilemma of evil in our world.

We should indeed ponder the causes that brought two boys to such a catastrophic course of action, and by all means mourn the dead, examining the incident is somewhat like bailing water without plugging the leak.

The "Trenchcoat Mafia" who shot their classmates and took their own lives do not comprise the entirety of the face of evil, nor even does Hitler on whose birthday the slaughter fell. They are only that iceberg tip of evil which happened to make headlines. Evil is every one of us. Before we rush to lament the atrocities of rapists and killers, we would do well to examine the thoughts and motives of our individual hearts.

For it is there that evil begins. In our society of legality and liability, we tend to think of evil as merely that which is outwardly expressed—the cutting word said, the harm done, the murder committed. But two millennia ago, a peasant Nazarene in the Mediterranean Basin put forth a different standard.

"You have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'You shall not kill, and whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment,'" said he, "but I say unto you, that whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall

“As long as a single student is murdered... there exists a condition in the human heart that can only be called evil”



# Are movie ratings what they seem?

It was a calm, quiet night at the movie theater. I was reading a book and enjoying the down time between shows. Suddenly, the thick doors of the auditorium swung

As our society progresses, we become increasingly more tolerant and more lenient in what we allow ourselves to watch, and what we allow our children to watch. A movie with an R-rating in the 1960s would seem mild in comparison to what receives an R-rating today.

It is interesting to ponder how or why we have arrived at this point in entertainment where everything is sensationalized and nothing is left to the imagination. It is my opinion that society has become so desensitized to foul language, acts of violence and sexual displays,

Another problem that plagues the rating system is its inconsistency. One movie will receive an R-rating because a man is murdered and his body is found in a pool of blood. Another movie will receive a PG-13-rating, even though the film is littered with blatant and inappropriate language, graphic violence and explicit sexual content. A committee decides the ratings, but the guidelines for each category are broad and easily manipulated. It is not easy to trust a rating system that bases its ratings on bendable rules and politics. A well-known director can request a certain rating and the MPAA will attempt to make the movie fit in the desired mold.

As a film watcher, I always check the content of a movie before buying my ticket. Whether the rating is PG, PG-13 or R, I want to guard my life and my mind from watching junk.

Movies are not real life. They portray a skewed vision of relationships, violence, sex, drugs...the list could go on and on. The more we subject ourselves to this false reality, we will become blind to the truth. When the rating system was started, it gave film makers a window of opportunity to push the limits. Now, 30 years later, we must suffer the consequences of opening that window wider.

## A VIEW FROM THE SOAPBOX

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open and a woman, dragging her two children behind her, stormed out into the lobby.

"Can I help you?" I asked.

She raised her eyebrows and threw up her hands. "I am outraged at the movie industry. How dare they rate a movie like that PG! That was entirely inappropriate for my children."

I wanted to ask her why she didn't research the movie beforehand, or what exactly she found offensive. However, I knew that this concerned mother had a point. Even G movies aren't safe for a general audience anymore.

Due to this experience, I began to think about our rating system. What does a rating mean if it isn't reliable?

The rating for each movie is decided by a group of people belonging to the MPAA. The original purpose of the MPAA, when it was created in 1922, was to censor the material in films before their release. People were worried that the films were becoming too "rowdy" and they needed to be regulated.

Decades later, filmmakers felt that the MPAA shouldn't have the right to censor films. This was an infringement on their first amendment rights, they said. So, the rating system was established. Its purpose was to categorize films, so filmmakers wouldn't have to edit their material for general audiences.

This rating system was supposed to solve problems—it was supposed to make things better. I happen to believe that it only created more problems.

we are not easily shocked anymore. Therefore, the movie industry must walk the line and push the boundaries in order to consider itself as a success.

However, if someone intervenes and tries to make guidelines that the industry must follow, they are persecuted and slandered. Setting rules is an infringement of the first amendment; yet, if a movie contains a sex scene too explicit for an R-rating, the material must be removed before the movie can be released. Is not this called censorship? Are we kidding ourselves by saying we have freedom of speech?

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