

## #222 "The Rationalizations of Evil"

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Every day the evil in the world seems to multiply. David's pain is palpable when he says to God in Psalm 12:1, "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men." Although God alone ultimately knows the true state of the hearts of mankind, it seems that surveys and polls continue to come out that show an increasing rate of moral decay. For example, one recent poll concluded that almost forty percent of Americans were said to believe that the institution of marriage was obsolete [1]. With so many living together, so many broken homes, and so many living in "alternative" lifestyles, the definition of family is under fire. When people stop fearing God and looking to Him for direction and bowing to Him as those under authority, they lose all of their bearings, they forget axiomatic truth, and they suffer unimaginable moral decay. This is exactly what is happening. People are looking to themselves ultimately for truth, for answers, for pleasure, and for life. They will fail and find only sin, death, and emptiness of heart. Throw out God, and marriage will go right out the window with Him along with any other God-ordained institution or principle of conduct. People become vulnerable to anything and everything when the moral center has been removed. Such is the danger of the rationalization of evil.

In some of the early Psalms, particularly Psalm 10, 11, and 12, the Psalmist takes a look at some of the behind-the-scenes thinking processes that happen in the heart of people, leading them astray and into moral decay.

First, David says that the wicked person denies the existence or at least the relevance of the God of the Bible. Psalm 10:4 says, "The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "'There is no God.'" Psalm 14:1 repeats this theme, saying, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" Regardless of whether individuals consider themselves to be actual atheists, the point is that, before the wickedness is indulged in, people must reckon to themselves that God is absent, irrelevant, or non-existent. Since He doesn't exist or have anything to say about their lives, as the thinking goes, there is no point in bothering to seek out what God has to say about anything. As a result, people do their own thing and follow the evil desires of their own hearts.

This following of their own desires and ignoring what God has to say inevitably leads to pride. In Psalm 10:6, the arrogant man says, "I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity." Pride comes before the fall. Those who think that prosperity is theirs forever because they have earned it and have the power to keep it are so wrong. Only God has all authority and power to preserve, protect, and keep. These people actually convince themselves that they share the divine powers of God of being all-powerful. With God out of the picture, they can in their own minds be their own god. How can this not lead to pride?

Now that they have complete authority, power, and license in their own minds to be able to do the evil that they wish, they go ahead and do it. But though the conscience can be suppressed and defiled, it

cannot be totally eradicated. Thus, the wicked person who is now knee-deep in sin must convince himself that his conscience is wrong. In Psalm 10:11, the wicked man says to himself, "God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it." These people think that they can get away with anything because they can fool people. Thus, they assume that they can fool God. They think that He is either too dumb to remember, too lazy to judge, too weak to care, or too blind to see. All are attacks on the divine nature of God, and God won't forget their acts.

Fourthly, the wicked tell themselves that there is no eternal consequence for their evil. In Psalm 10:13, the Psalmist asks, "Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, 'You will not require it.'" This is an attack on the integrity of God, and it is a belief that He will not keep His promise to judge the actions of men. It is a passive, careless view of the coming judgment. Without eternal consequences, men are bound to do anything that the devil desires them to do. With no eternal deterrent, the depths of evil that they can commit become without bounds.

If there is no fear of God to deter them, that only leaves the fear of man, a far less potent and comprehensive check on the sin nature. Even though they are not concerned about God and eternal judgment, they still have to make sure that they avoid any snares of men, such as lawsuits, getting arrested, getting robbed, etc. Psalm 12:4 says, speaking of the thinking process of the wicked, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" Notice that "lord" has a small case "l". They have no divine Lord that they fear, and they don't even believe any other human can make them submit. They have no Lord or lord in their own mind. They think they can get out of any trouble or predicament. If the fear of God won't keep these people in check, maybe the civil institutions will. Then again, maybe they won't. What if, across the board, the police force, judges, lawyers, and politicians are evil, too? Society then becomes even more unjust, evil, oppressive, and dangerous than it already is.

The world can talk all it wants about God not existing, morality being subjective, or evil being a religious invention. However, the wicked person must rationalize God and His promised wrath away. This is why they are culpable and deserving of hell (Romans 1:32). As believers, we are prone to rationalize as well. We can begin to think that God understands our sin because life is hard or some other lame excuse. The reality is that sin is sin, and God hates it. We need to remember that God loves us enough to have taken out His wrath on Christ so that we could be forgiven. As those who have been granted grace, we need to by faith walk in it. Praise God for His mercy, and may He enable us to keep our reasoning sound amidst a twisted and God-forsaking culture. May He enable us to graciously remind the wicked of their many unwise rationalizations and point them to Jesus.

[1] [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101118/ap\\_on\\_go\\_ot/us\\_declining\\_marriage](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101118/ap_on_go_ot/us_declining_marriage)