**DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME**

***A Look At Situation Ethics***

Paul was slanderously reported to be teaching the doctrine that says, "***Let us do evil that good may come***?” (Romans 3:8). He was appalled at such a gross misunderstanding of his preaching. Nothing could be further from the truth! Paul was no professor of Situation Ethics.

Situation Ethics is actually a new term used for an old belief. For centuries, even millenniums, Satan has used the philosophy that says, “sin is not always wrong, but in fact can be a good thing under the right situation.” *The ends justify the means* is another way to describe it. The old-fashioned and outdated term of “sin” is discarded for more modern and chic terms in order to embrace the action you want to believe in.

For example, a Situation Ethics believer would no longer describe divorce as something God hates (see Malachi 2:16) because it’s more loving to leave your spouse instead of hurting the kids psychologically by their hearing their parents argue all the time. Or, homosexuality is acceptable because it frees the person from his bondage of any stigma of wrong, freeing him to be happy and gay.

In fact, the Situation Ethics believer could easily justify the breaking of the entire Ten Commandments without breaking a sweat. You can steal to feed the hungry. You could lie to protect a friend. You could commit adultery because your mate is so selfish and cruel. You can lust and covet because “it doesn’t hurt anyone else.” Anything and everything can be acceptable as long as you can somehow, someway say “***good may come***.”

In 1966 Joseph Fletcher, an Episcopalian priest, who later became an atheist, wrote a bestselling book called *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*. The preface describes the contents perfectly:

"A manifesto of individual freedom and individual responsibility, elaborated within an ethic of love, which extricates modern man from rigid, archaic rules and codes. Proclaiming that any moral system is too shallow and petty to provide answers, the author outlines a methodology for decision-making which presupposes individual responsibility and declares that every man must decide for himself what is right.”

If that sounds familiar it is because you’ve seen that somewhere before. Judges 17:6 and 21:25 both state Israel’s own situation ethics with these words: *“In those days there was no king in Israel;* ***everyone did what was right in his own eyes****.”* That is situation ethics in a nutshell.

Mr. Fletcher gives an example in his book of a situation in which adultery is supposedly an act of unselfish love. During WW2 a wife was separated from her family in a concentration camp. The only way she could be released was by being pregnant. She seduced a German guard into a relationship that led to her becoming pregnant. This allowed her to be released and returned to her husband and children. He said the “situation” permitted adultery because it was motivated by love for her family.

One problem (actually, there are several). Did Mr. Fletcher think about the long-term consequences in that “situation?” What about the guilt factor? What about VD (venereal disease)? What about the real father of that child? What about how the child would respond later in life? What about how her husband would think about her infidelity and the impact on their marriage? You see, it’s not as clean and clear as Mr. Fletcher makes it sound.

Speaking of clear, let’s make this very clear – THE BIBLE NOWHERE JUSTIFIES SITUATION ETHICS! Is that understood? Good. Now, let’s prove it.

If God allowed for evil to be done that good may come, poor Uzzah, who steadied the falling ark of God, would not have been struck dead (2 Sam. 6).

King Saul would not have lost his kingdom for sacrificing to God before his battle with an enemy (I Sam. 13).

Saul of Tarsus was living “*in all good conscience*” before God in his pursuit of Christians, yet was blinded for such evil (Acts 9, 22, 26).

On and on we could go with examples of people who thought they were doing right but were punished by God.

If Situation Ethics can be justified, then it contradicts so many scriptures, thus making the entire Bible a laughable joke! “*O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps*” (Jer. 10:23). “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death*” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

The Beatles made it sound so simple with their #1 hit song in 1967.

*“All you need is love, All you need is love, All you need is love, love, Love is all you need.”*

Brethren, let us be very careful not to fall into Satan’s trap by excusing our sinful actions with some convoluted twisting of logic. God will not hear of it, and neither should we. The Beatles were wrong. Joseph Fletcher was wrong. The Israelites were wrong. Everyone is wrong who thinks man can define ethics by his own standard of right and wrong. Be content to simply “do good” that good may come.

*Coram Deo*

– Rick