

I. Sources of human evil

A. Evil is in the heart looking for opportunities to gain without loss

B. Evil experienced (being sinned against) is often used as the heart's excuse for committing evil or harmful responses in return

Self-injury, suicidal, schizophrenic, murderous, hateful, prostitution

C. Evil may be learned in multiple environments (so family is not the only influence): by example, influence, reading, movies, family, peers, governments & officials, schools and leaders, employers and co-workers. God commanded Israel to separate from evil-doers and idol-worshipping nations due to the ease of learning their ways and sinning like they did.

II. God's Limitations on evil by common grace: Families are not as evil as they could be

A. God ordains governments to restrain family evil, to punish evil and praise good. In some cases restraining family evil involves punishment of a family member or removal of the innocent from evil influence.

^{ESV} 1 Peter 2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as *sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.*

^{ESV} Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.³ For *rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.* Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, *an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

Government laws have some dim reflections of punishments for people who break the 5-9 commandments.

B) Families may limit the impact of intended evil by conscience and common grace

III. How the Gospel transforms us . . .

A. Leave your old life: The Gospel transforms you out of your former way of life & desires learned from family and other evil environments

^{ESV} Ephesians 4:22 to put off your old self, *which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,*²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

including the most serious social sins learned in family or learned in gangs or wherever (1 Cor 6:9-11 sexual sins, murder, stealing, lying)

including the socially acceptable sins that have been practiced and encouraged by most families in this culture (Exod 20:3-6 idolatry & ancestor worship, 13 abortion, 17 coveting; 1 Tim 6:10 love of money; Deut 10:12-13 fear of man, academic idolatry with critical perfectionism)

The Gospel transforms us by Christ's cross

As a sacrifice for my particular sins through faith in his blood (Rom 3:24-26)

As a historical union with Christ's cross-death as death to my sinful desires (Gal 2:20-21; 6:14; Rom 6:6)

B. Learn the new obedience from the heart

^{ESV} Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin *have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed*,¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now *present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification*.²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, *the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life*.²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Gospel transforms us by Christ's resurrection

As a demonstration that he was sinless and righteous as death could not hold him in the grave, so my faith in God raising him by the Holy Spirit credits his sinlessness and his righteousness to me (Rom 1:4; 4:24-25; 10:9-10).

As the same life-giving Spirit enlivens me to live the transformed life as a slave of righteousness (Rom 8:9-11; 6:11-19; 12:1-2)

C. The Gospel transforms you through a new family influence:

Enter into the family life of the Trinity

^{ESV} Ephesians 5:1 Therefore *be imitators of God, as beloved children*.² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Christ's life as the example to follow

Enter into the family life of the visible church

Apostles as the fathers (1 Cor 4:15-16)

Evangelists, elders & deacons as the guides, the living standard of godliness (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:20-23; 1 Tim 3; Tit 1)

D. The Gospel gives wisdom to choose your new spheres of family influence

Should you join together with _____ as friends?

Where we have the option of choosing or refusing to associate with sinners, we consider several things from the broader NT perspective, which no longer encourages artificial separation from external evil:

Associational Evangelism: Our own maturity and strength to maintain faithful witness to non-Christians in association with evil (1 Tim 6:11; 1 Cor 5:9-10; Rev 12:11)

Associational pure fellowship: Our corporate witness to holiness and diligence as those who call themselves Christians (1 Cor 5:11; 2 Thess 3:14) Evil experienced by children in families that call themselves Christian, but deny that in practice, is especially damaging to the child's proper appreciation of Christian relational attractiveness.

^{ESV} Joshua 23:12 For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that *you associate with them and they with you*,¹³ know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, *but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes*, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.¹¹ But now I am writing to you *not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one.*

Associational Conspiracy: Direct appeal to join their evil plans (Deut 13:12-18; Prov 1:10ff)

^{ESV} Proverbs 20:19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.

E. The Gospel gives encouragement for resistance: Evil examples observed do not always replicate in you

When the example is hated, the pattern will not be easily learned

When criticism against the evil example is made by respected people (teachers, pastors, relatives, parent, sibling)

When the sin may have been tried, but the conscience was tender to God and the heart was led to repent

**F. The Gospel gives resources to respond in godly ways to suffering
Evil experienced (being sinned against) will not always produce evil or harmful response, and can never be an excuse for sin**

Joseph, Jesus, Paul, Rev 12:11

James 1:2-16 shows the direct connection between suffering trials and the source of temptation coming from within, not from the trial or from God.

Romans 12:19-21 shows that evil experienced from enemies is never an excuse for taking revenge, and instead we are to return good for evil.

1 Peter 2:12-3:18 shows that godly responses to evil experiences are expected as the norm for Christians