

MIDDLE GROUND

Middle Ground in the Workplace

- The Clearly Wrong Choice

- Sinful - Easiest - Leads to Eternal Death - Requires no Faith at all - Doesn't require us to admit that God even exists, to say nothing about the fact that He is at work in our lives

- The Clearly Right Choice

- Righteous - Hardest - Leads to Eternal Life - Requires a large amount of Faith - Requires us to accept that God is in control of our lives, and that He cares for us

- The Middle Ground

- Neither Sinful nor Righteous - Complicated - **CAN** lead to either Eternal Life or Death - Depending on how you deal with complications - Appears to require less faith in the beginning... But, often evolves into something very complicated that will test you to your limits - Usually requires us to have Faith that God is alive and active... But, we often feel that we need to help out a little bit... Often doesn't provide the rich level of reward that doing Right does...

- Again, our purpose today is:

- 1) To remind us to keep looking for what is Clearly Right and what is Clearly Wrong, and to discuss the Middle Ground areas that are neither Right nor Wrong
- 2) To remind us that complications will come into our lives whenever we chose the Middle Ground
- 3) To encourage us to strive for the higher ground, and not be so happy to accept the Middle Ground in our lives

- We've looked at some of the choices that we make in our lives at home...

- We concentrated mainly on Marriage / Divorce... That's a big one...

- There are tons of other little ones that can be our downfall also...
 - Television:
 - Clearly, NOT WATCHING it, is right... No one could find fault...
 - Clearly, the Playboy Channel is wrong...
 - In the middle are all kinds of things like the News, PBS, Sports, etc. that are neither Right nor Wrong of themselves
 - The Internet, Literature, Music...
 - All things that are neither Good or Bad within themselves...
 - But, have the ability to be turned into something quite wrong...
- We need to remember that there exists better choices...
- Now it's time to go to work...
- Deciding what is Clearly Wrong, is simple:
- 1st Timothy 5:8:
 - 8 - But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
- Clearly, we all HAVE to work...
 - We have to provide for our families...
 - Or else we are worse than an infidel
- When we try to look at what is Clearly Right, we really have to ask some serious questions about "Work" altogether...
- Is EVERY job we take less than the ideal?
- While, the scriptures do tend to show employment as a fundamental...
- 1st Thessalonians 4:11-12:
 - 11 - And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

- 12 - That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.
- There is also another message...
- Mark 16:15-16:
 - 15 - And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
 - 16 - He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
- The examples we have of Jesus, Paul, and the Apostles from the New Testament, are of people to whom the service of the Lord was primary over their responsibilities to any other occupation...
- An argument could be made that by accepting ANY job, we are already choosing the Middle Ground...
- The Clearly Right choice would be to devote our lives to God's Work...
 - The Bible Mission is constantly looking for interested couples to do missionary work...
 - This is a career choice, not just a short term opportunity...
 - The Bible Mission is prepared to support workers indefinitely. They are looking for people who want to chose that as a way of life...
 - With all of the interest generated from Bible Reading Seminars, there is a huge amount of domestic mission work that needs to be done also...
- Before we completely ignore this option...
 - Let's remember that growing up, going to college, and getting a "job" is not the only option available to us...
 - It's not a wrong option...
 - Or, is it necessarily a right option either...
- Having a Job is simply the choice that most of us chose...
 - Choosing this Middle Ground will bring with it complications...

- We will be challenged to make further choices that can themselves be Right or Wrong...
- We have the opportunity for failure and ultimately Death, and the opportunity for success and Eternal Life. This alternative may appear to be easier at first, but, often evolves into something very complicated that tests us - Usually requires us to have Faith that God is alive and active... But, unfortunately, we often feel that we need to help out a little bit...
- One of the complications that comes with choosing a career, over a more spiritual pursuit, is the actual choosing of the career...
- It's obvious that some jobs are not acceptable for a servant of Christ...
 - Policeman, stripper, Bomb Designer, etc...
 - Those are easy not to chose...
- Something interesting struck me several years ago, while having a conversation about these "questionable occupations"...
- A Brother was talking about working in jobs that support these "questionable occupations", and how this is just as wrong...
- Pick a gun up at the local Police Station Evidence Locker that has been used in the murder of someone... And trace back everyone who has been involved in the "stream of commerce" that brought that weapon to the killer's hands, and I think you can clearly illustrate the concept...
- Someone started a company for the manufacture of handguns
- Someone went to work for this company, turning a lathe and shaping the guns
- Someone had the responsibility of testing the weapon and performing quality control inspections to make sure it worked "properly"
- Someone went into the wholesale distribution business to distribute these guns to gun shops
- Somebody else went into the business of selling the guns to the public, and opened a gun shop
- Someone was hired to hit the streets, meet the gun shop owner and write up orders
- Someone packaged it, and shipped it to the gun shop

- Then...
 - Finally... The bad guy came in, bought it, and shot someone...
- Everyone of them probably consoled themselves that night by thinking that “Guns don’t kill people, people do...”
 - But, nonetheless...
 - I don’t think that my conscience would allow me to take any one of their jobs...
- But, what really struck me as we were talking about working in jobs that support these “questionable occupations”...
 - Was... Where do you draw the line?
- The first thought that comes to my mind, is that some poor agent had to write the insurance on both the gun manufacturer and the gun shop... I know that I wouldn’t, but would that be wrong?
 - What if you don’t write the Products Liability, but just the Health Insurance?
- Somebody provides these businesses paper products, computers, and office supplies (and likewise, somebody manufactures these items...)
- Somebody provides tax services, accounting services, janitorial services, advertising design services, and all kinds of other services to them...
- And what about the “Blood Money”?
 - Someone is selling groceries, clothing, and household appliances to all of the owners and employees who made their money by providing a weapon of death to a killer...
 - Where do you draw the line?
- Kellie was a travel agent...
 - Her biggest client was an Aerospace Company that was busy building ICBM’s during the early ‘80’s.
- My dad was a draftsman in little, old Springfield, Vermont... Come to find out one night he’s watching “60 Minutes” 20 years later, and finds out that one of the ball bearing projects he worked on was secretly sold to the Russians, and was an integral part of the guidance system in the missiles they were aiming at Americans...

- We sell Entertainment Insurance... While I won't knowingly do business with someone in the Pornography Industry, we have over 300 customers, and I just know that somebody, somewhere, sometime...
- Is there any job that isn't complicated?
- Home-schoolers always dream about raising our kids on a farm...
 - Surely, that would be a bucolic, simple life with no complications!
 - Nope! Stress to provide an income for your family in an uncertain farming market, versus the sense of security that a salary provides
- Being a Teacher wouldn't offer any spiritual complications...
 - Nope! Unions, swearing an oath, pledging allegiance
- EVERY job brings with it complications...
- Even if you do find an occupation that seems harmless, every business lives and dies with the threat of legal action today...
 - Malpractice, debt collection, wrongful employment practices...
- What do we do?
 - We live with it!
- That's our curse in this world...
- Adam was told,
- Genesis 3:19:
 - 19 - In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground...
- It is our position to have to work...
 - To be placed in this trial of complicated choices and decisions...
 - To be found to be Faithful...
 - Honest...
 - Trustworthy...

- Reliable...
- Diligent...
- These are our real challenges at work...
- Ephesians 6:5-8:
 - 5 - Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
 - 6 - Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;
 - 7 - With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:
 - 8 - Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
- We need to work diligently at whatever position we find ourselves...
- But, let's not forget that there is another road out there...
 - There is ample support available for those that chose the road of service in God's Vineyard...
- For those of us, who chose the road, of settling down, raising a family, and providing a "good life" for them...
 - Of travelling and retirement plans...
 - We have NOT chosen wrongly...
 - We will just see more complications in our life because of our choice...
- We need to expect this
 - To be prepared for these complications and challenges when they come
- These are complications and challenges that we must face, and conquer, in order to serve our Lord in Eternity...