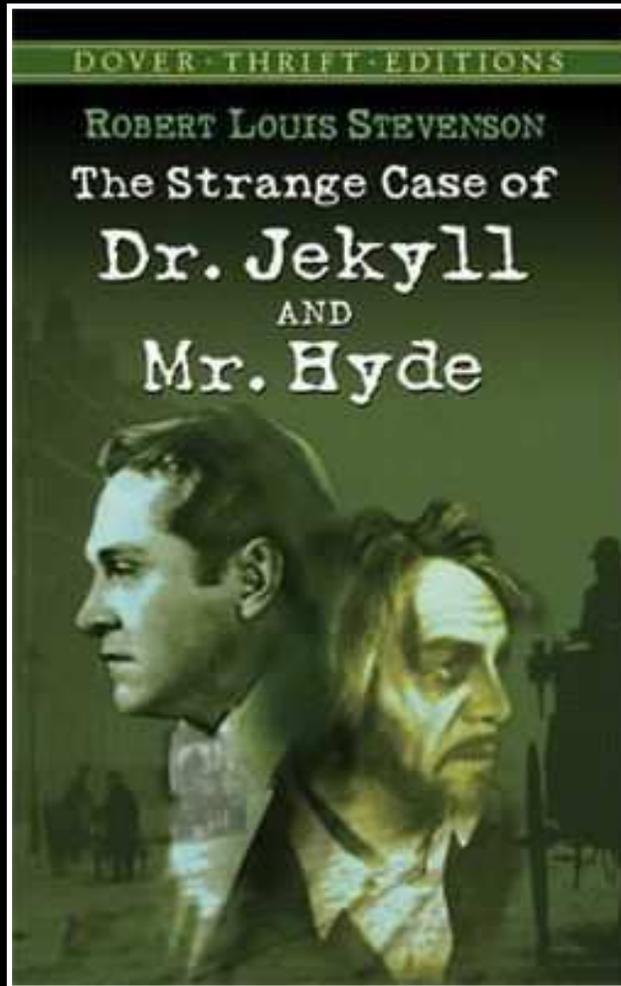


Understanding & Utilizing Christian Integrity: Moving Beyond Amoral Schizophrenia



By Calvin Best – Preached 01/07/18 – Abilene Bible Church

In this presentation, I will argue that all human beings suffer from a type of ethical or amoral schizophrenia - the Jekyll & Hyde Syndrome - as a result of the Fall and Original Sin. I will also argue that Christ Jesus has provided for us in His Sermon on the Mount in conjunction with the Ten Commandments a magnificent, unearned, and extraordinary solution to this non-regenerate, destabilizing condition.



*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll
& Mr. Hyde*

Written by Robert Louis Stevenson

Published in 1886

Good vs. evil is basically the novel's biggest theme. More specifically, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is easily viewed as an allegory about the good and evil that exist in all men, and about our struggle with these two sides of the human personality. In this book, then, the battle between good and evil rages within the individual. The question is which is superior. Since Hyde seems to be taking over, one could argue that evil is stronger than good. However, Hyde does end up dead at the end of the story, perhaps suggesting a weakness or failure of evil. The big question, of course, is whether or not good can be separated from evil, or whether the two are forever intertwined.

Integrity can be difficult to understand. Here's a good definition (that I included in my amoral schizophrenia essay) from Merriam-Webster:

1. A firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: incorruptibility;
2. An unimpaired condition: soundness;
3. The quality or state of being complete or undivided: completeness

Number three is the most helpful to our discussion in that it has to do with the Jekyll & Hyde Syndrome whereby a person says one thing and does another or is two-faced – also known in institutional settings as corruption and fraud. When a person, institution, or company does that, we often say they are engaging in a contradiction: a proposition, statement, or phrase that asserts or implies both the truth and falsity of something but does so simultaneously. In other words, an institution violates their own mission statement and/or breaks the law but claims they have not done so or uses rationalizations to justify their unethical conduct instead of integrity.

How does a person or institution reconcile a contradiction since the latter compromises integrity?

We need to understand a few things about the use of basic logic in order to reconcile a contradiction with integrity rather than with a lie or rationalization.

Let's say a parent makes the following proposition to his or her child:

And let's keep in mind that a proposition can be defined as "a statement in which something is affirmed or denied so that it can be characterized as either true or false."

Parent to bored child: "If the weather is decent, I will take you to the park." What if the parent does not follow through? Why the change of plans? We can, through basic logic, examine the situation as follows:

If p, then q where "if p" is the first part of the proposition above, and "then q" is the proposed result. Now, to negate that proposal, the logic goes like this: if not q, then not p . . . (that's called a contrapositive)

If the weather is decent, I will take you to the park.

If p, then q

I will not take you to the park if the weather is not decent.

If not q, then not p

What if the weather was decent, perhaps even excellent, and the parent still did not do as promised? Perhaps something came up? Perhaps there was a massive earthquake that afternoon and the park was sucked into the earth? Perhaps the parent simply changed his or her mind because he/she is often unreliable. What if the parent told the child something like this: "Sean, we cannot go to the park because I just remembered that I'm expecting an important phone call this afternoon on the ground line from my new boss." Hm

What I'm getting at is that the parent may have reconciled the contradiction of not going to the park since it was a good day to do so with a rationalization or lie rather than with the truth.

Let's take this up several orders of magnitude

Let's take a look at High Stakes, Standardized testing from the Texas Education Agency . . .



**State of Texas Assessments
of Academic Readiness**

What is standardized testing?

George Bush & No Child Left Behind

College Readiness & International Competitiveness

TEKS or Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills

Tests & Scores

Example of College Graduation Rates from West Central Texas Public School

Back to if p, then q and if not q, then not p

If standardized tests improve college readiness and international competitiveness, then we should continue to use them.

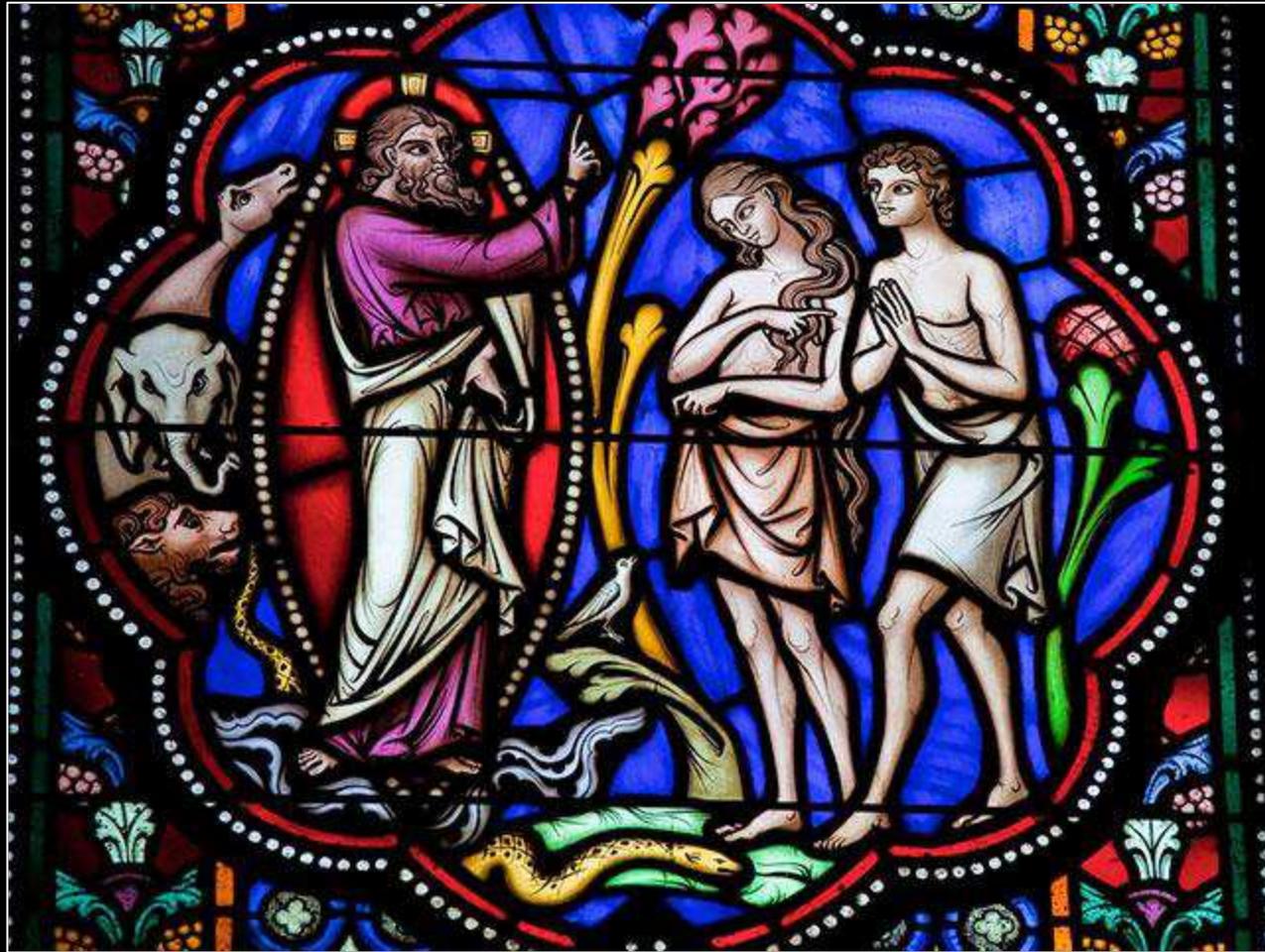
We should not continue to use standardized tests if they do not improve college readiness or international competitiveness.

We know the answer; therefore, we are in the very regrettable position of . . .

If not p, we do q anyway, which equals amoral schizophrenia or functional insanity.

Standardized, high stakes tests do not work but we continue to use them . . .

Let's now examine the first breach of human integrity: Adam & Eve – please turn to Genesis 2:21, and we will read up to and through Genesis 3:24



My contention is that we need to understand that we are broken in terms of integrity and in need of reconciliation to God, and that's been our dilemma since Adam & Eve. Amoral schizophrenia, or what I also call the Jekyll & Hyde Syndrome, and it could be called "Sin"drome, is a problem for all people and all societies, and it's really serious. This is not an academic or light issue. We really do face, stated another way, functional insanity.

Let's look briefly at the problem of ideology, which is based on abstraction, and I have an essay about that issue or challenge also in Pilgrims-21.

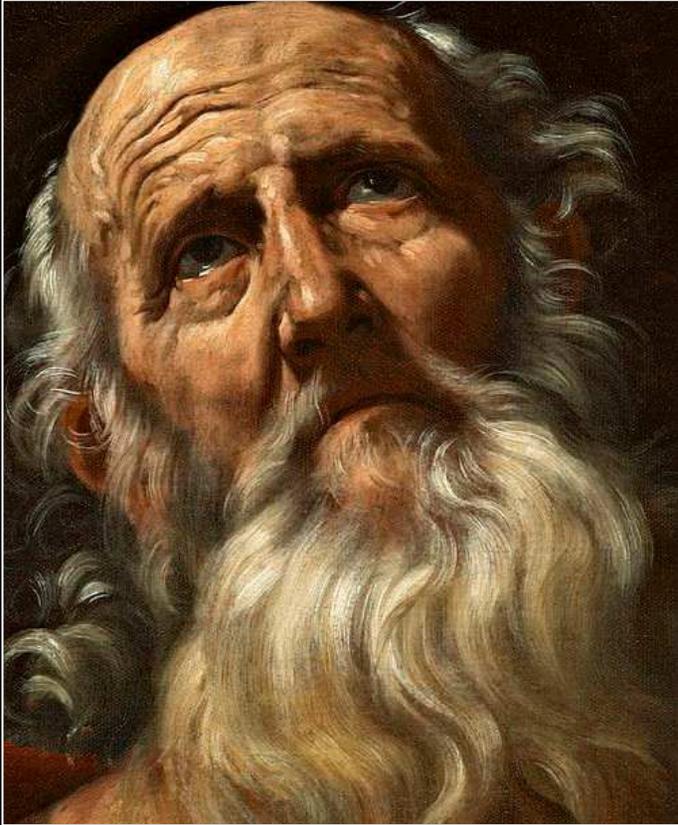


Modern Art: what's the main problem with it?

In reality, function determines form and not vice versa.

Abstraction drives modern art, and that's why so many people are frustrated with it.

Does that apply to Christianity?



Work by Guido Reni – 17th
Century Italian Painter



Work by Leonid Afremov - 1955

How to avoid abstraction and enjoy full engagement with all its joys and challenges.

The Learning Sequence

Extra-Curricular: Athletics, Band, Theater Arts, Ag-Science, Art, Etc.

Theory or essential aspects of the course: what is to be taught or learned. In Texas, this area is called the TEKS or Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills	Coaches and/or teachers present the thing to be learned. That might be demonstrating effective ball handling or best practices for drawing, setting the ball, or working with show cattle, and so on.	Relevant practice: students actually practice the skill; for example, in band, students rehearse the song; in athletics, students practice a specific skill or play.	Performance: students and/or athletes literally perform the skill in front of an audience. Playing varsity football on a Friday night at a packed stadium is very real. The same can be said of all performances.
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Traditional, Academic Classroom: Science, English, Math, Social Studies, Etc.

Theory or essential aspects of the course: what is to be taught or learned. In Texas, this area is called the TEKS or Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills	Teachers present the skill or knowledge area to be learned. That might be how to write an effective sentence, find an inequality in Algebra, see chemical changes in science, and so on.	Here's where the differences begin to make themselves known to students: practice is often not experiential. Listening is typically the main thing the student does.	Here's the second main difference: students rarely if ever "perform" the learning in front of an audience; rather, they engage in assignments mainly for the teacher: tests, worksheets, etc.
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This issue of abstraction or theory without application did not use to be so powerful in that life was exceedingly harsh until recently. There were, in other words, plenty of forcing factors to cause people to live in reality rather than virtual reality, and the latter requires integrity. Can you imagine walking up to factory workers at a New England textile mill in 1835 and asking them, during their 12-14 hour shift, what their thoughts were on penicillin, Amazon purchasing policies, Chrome versus Internet Explorer, children's rights, Medicare, retirement funds, transgender bathrooms, and plastic surgery? How bout asking them for fashion news, the latest movie offerings, and their thoughts about Princess Di, and the newest Cadillac and smart phone ads; what about air conditioning, Mr./Ms. Jenner, and taking a knee at professional football games?

Life now is so incredibly different from what it used to be that we are almost in the position of Lewis & Clark and the men of the Corps of Discovery in 1804, as they had more in common with ancient Romans than with their own grandchildren. Some of their children, but definitely their grandkids, could travel to the Pacific Ocean by train, sending and receiving telegrams along the way, eating at restaurants, reading the newspaper in a comfortable seat, winding their way through the Rocky Mountains.

Christianity has faced these concerns as well with mega-churches, Club-Christ trends, and post-modern cherry-picking of the Bible – all of which have little connection to the integrity that Jesus taught. How bout Success Theology via Joel Olsteen and “Your Best Life Now.” Christ reconciled us to His integrity, according to God's Plan. Do we heed his call?

What do we do? How can we repair this broken condition of ours? How can we “engage” Christianity so that it’s not just another ideology? How can we avoid the abstraction and cerebral-ness of what we just showed a few slides ago – the very thing that kills academic instruction all too often for kids and teachers?

Christ Jesus shows us how, but it’s not simply a matter, not in my opinion anyway, of saying, even sincerely, that “I accept Jesus Christ as My Lord & Savior.” Now that is the most important “first” step toward reconciliation with God, but there’s still a necessary and subsequent mechanism concerning what we do next – one that creates Christian Integrity over the course of a believer’s entire life. What is that mechanism? Before Jesus it was for the Jews the Ten Commandments and the Law. Now that we Christian gentiles have been grafted onto the Vine, it is the Ten Commandments plus the Beatitudes. Together, they generate the mechanism into which we can sink our teeth, so to speak. Studying and implementing those two with all our heart and soul is the thing or mechanism that we call sanctification. That’s what moves us from natural, sinful man who suffers from amoral schizophrenia much of the time, into a child of God who actively seeks or even quests for Integrity through meekness, conforming his will to Christ’s. Regenerate men and women, with Christ, rebuild their characters through Christian Integrity as they co-labor with Jesus. We will fail from time to time this side of Heaven, of course, but we continually grow and thrive in Christ because He taught us how to do that collaboratively with Him through His Word and with each other right here in this church.

Arguably, the best example of Christian Integrity follows:

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should **do** to you: **do** ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12

All people want to be treated by others through the perfect, divine integrity of The Golden Rule, yet so many do not feel compelled to follow it themselves in terms of how they treat others, which is the core issue with amoral schizophrenia and its glaring contradictions. Again, Christian integrity solves that global crisis as much as possible this side of Heaven.

If p, then q . . .

If I seek to live my life with Christian Integrity, then I will internalize and utilize the Biblical Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes in all aspects of living.

If not q, then not p . . .

I will not internalize and not utilize the Biblical Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes if I do not seek to live my life with Christian Integrity in all aspects of living.

You see, that's really the challenging part of being a true, orthodox Christian. The latter is not a shifting ideology such as communism, fascism, utopianism, socialism, and so on. It's also not an academic abstraction that we can choose when convenient not to follow. Rather, it's a way of life that requires that we conform our character to the Ten Commandments and to the Beatitudes as Christ presented them in The Sermon on the Mount. It's a counterintuitive way of life at first, especially as virtual reality pushes against us, but it changes our character from the natural man or woman who suffers (due to original sin) from the Jekyll & Hyde Syndrome and subsequent contradictions and hypocrisy to that new man or woman who seeks to hear in the end these incredible, fantastic words from our Lord: "Well done, Good & Faithful Servant!"

With regard to atheistic thinking, the Bible says in Romans 1:20 . . .

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Something similar can be said as well concerning the mechanism that Christ Jesus gave to us in the Beatitudes: we also, right now in 2018, are without excuse concerning amoral schizophrenia and sin in general, for not only are we not the chance products of blind evolution, stumbling through a sad, hopeless existence, we are the recipients of Christ's restorative Grace, and that gift of reconciliation came with a set of clear, character-logical marching orders . . . The Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments.

Let us praise Christ Jesus and thank Him for the mechanism that transforms us to become as much like Him as we can this side of Heaven, and let us help one another right here in our Christian church as best we can!

I sincerely believe that the degree to which I conform my sinful character to be like Christ through the already stated mechanisms is the degree to which I also work to extend His Kingdom and assist all people in that mission. This whole process also helps me to be a much better witness.

Why the world, but especially the United States, rejects Christian Integrity and prefers that we Christians simply practice, if we must, a very quite, safe, limited, and private faith:

1. Bi-Cameral Consciousness & Evolution
2. Academia embraces #1, so it's actually much worse than we thought. They pity us . . . perhaps.
3. Sin (now choices made in freedom) can be seen as relativistic exploration and simply normal and historically verifiable.
4. Everyone is a cultural anthropologist, doing the Joseph Campbell Dance (The Power of Myth) of getting back behind everything so that we have the new master narrative.
5. Everything now is a relativistic, master narrative until the next new master narrative.
6. American Separation of Church & State – A Huge Lie
7. CBS said, “Warm Feelings” for their “Holiday” Message

Let us conclude this overall presentation concerning Christian Integrity with an exceedingly important reminder . . .

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

-- Matthew 7:5 King James

Arrogance is a very bad witness, contradicts the Beatitudes, and, therefore, compromises Christian Integrity.

It's better for us to work on our own integrity through Christ than to think we are the judge of other's who, like us, are a work in progress. That does not mean that we ignore sin, head to the nearest monastery, or buy a fourth mansion, but it also means that we are not God. Rather, we are His Disciples in Christ, and His Witness – His Application versus The World's Relativistic Theories.

Let's lift each other up, being servant-leaders to each other via Christian Integrity and to the greater community. Let's make our faith active in similar manner to the way athletes, musicians, welders, and mechanics put their skills to work, living out their enterprise rather than keeping it abstract and intellectual. Let our Christian "function" be our Christian "form!" Let's commit to Christian Integrity since Christ, Himself, said, "For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light." I think that famous statement means that Christian Integrity really does provide for us True North on the Compass of Life and that is a Great Blessing!

Amen! ☺