

Righteous Indignation

Righteous indignation is a lost art; and it is an art to be sure since the one who employs such a response to an evil incident or an indecent event opens him- or herself up to the most vitriolic of accusations. Pointing out evil is being “judgmental,” they judge. Recommending repentance invites not only scorn but also the rancid recommendation of self-examination; we are all sinners after all. And, how dare anyone call sin by name for fear of “offending” (cf. John 7:24; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 4:14; et al.).

God was given to divine wrath on many occasions (Exodus 32:11; Deuteronomy 9:7; Ezekiel 22:31; et al.) and, to the shock and dismay of many religious people, pointedly states that there are some things He hates. “The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth” (Psalm 11:5). When worship was wrong, God said: “Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them” (Isaiah 1:14). Particularly apropos to our society would be the careless, apathetic disregard for marriage vows in light of God’s revelation: “For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away” (Malachi 2:16). Indeed, there are things that God will not tolerate.

The unsavory (to some) kicker is that God does not merely recommend this divine hatred to His children; He demands it of them. Therefore, “A righteous man hateth lying” (Proverbs 13:5) and “he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days” (Proverbs 28:16). Also, “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul” (Proverbs 29:24). God even reveals His divine “hate list” through Solomon (Proverbs 6:16-19).

A quick disclaimer might be in order at this point. This righteous expression of distaste is not the preference; it is not as if one who declares repugnance toward sin is thrilled with the experience or that it ever becomes enjoyable. God frequently begged and pleaded, “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18:31). Likewise, Christians do not salivate in anticipation of the next bite of sinner sandwich. Quite the contrary, we “restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). Nevertheless, the motivation behind righteous indignation is a committed, convicted, and conveyed hatred of sin.

I realize that such a bold condemnation of sin is a bit too real for those milquetoast souls who prefer the pettifoggery of sugar-plum-fairy Christianity, but here is God’s divine mandate: He expects His people to rise up in rejection and condemnation of sin (Ephesians 5:11). Those who cry “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11) are anathema to God and to God’s people (Revelation 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Only those who have the capacity for righteous indignation will find fellowship with God, here and in eternity.

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