

Curious About Evil?

**“but I want you to be wise as to what is good
and innocent as to what is evil.”**

--Romans 16:9b

A recent film, due to its subject matter and the fact that it is in 3-D, has been promoted with the tagline, “Experience a whole new dimension of evil.”

The marketing team that came up with that knew something more than just how to turn a phrase or make a pun. They knew what lies within the human heart. Namely, a nature that is curious about evil.

That was a big part of how Satan caused the fall to begin with. God had made people in a world where they only experienced that which was morally exemplary. Adam and Eve had never seen evil, never heard evil, never spoken evil, never done evil. They were innocent regarding evil. They only had knowledge of good. And God, while giving them the opportunity to choose, commanded them to stay in a state of knowledge of only good.

Along came the devil, basically saying to Eve, “Don't settle for knowing only good. Experience evil, too. Disobey God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You'll be wise like Him, then. Innocence isn't for you—come to know both good and evil, and you won't regret it.”

Of course, they did regret it. Choosing to know evil is choosing to experience death and a loss of the life and peace walking with a Holy God would bring.

Ever since she and her husband made the wrong choice, then, the battle rages within us all. Sometimes it takes religious forms, like in Buddhism, which is all based on the ying-yang philosophy that balancing the amount of light and darkness, good and evil, in your soul, is the road to inner peace. Other times, it shows itself in the temptation to read books, listen to music, or watch films that glorify darkness and curse the light. Gossip often has its roots in a dark desire to know all of the bad things others are doing. Even as Christians, we will be tempted to “look into evil,” if for no more reason than that we're curious to know how bad things can get.

Perhaps we need to be reminded that ***when we seek ways to increase our knowledge of evil, we are playing with fire.*** Because of this tendency in us to want at least a vicarious experience of evil, Paul's closing to the book of Romans contains this warning, **“but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.”** (Rom. 16:9b)

That's a key to peace and fulfillment in your walk with God. Pursue righteousness, mercy, peace, holiness, cleanness of heart and mind. Focus your attention on knowing more about what is good and right and just. And while you focus your attention in that direction, make an effort to avoid feeding the desire to know about evil.

If you ever feel like you're out of touch because you don't keep up with “pop culture,” consider yourself blessed to be innocent, or even ignorant, of the level of evil that is in the world. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you need to rent that film everyone's talking about because you want to experience the chills of a horror flick that takes violence to never-before-seen heights. Don't let yourself be too curious about the portrayals in the latest music videos as the producers of them try to make them more and more pornographic to draw an audience. When your coworkers or classmates are dishing out the dirty details of someone's sinful activities, don't linger to listen.

Sometimes, the enemy might even try to trick us with thoughts like, “You need to know all about the latest things that the world is into, so that you can relate and reach them for Christ.” It might sound logical on the surface, but go to the Lord and tell Him that and see what He says. Ask Him how many people have been reached because they were impressed by some Christian's ability to talk at length about the depths of society's depravity. He might say you don't really need any of that. He might tell you that faith comes by hearing, and by hearing the word of God.

It is good to be out of the loop about wicked things. As followers of Christ, let's try to become more so.