



Ducking Reality

-Gary Miller

There are some things we just don't like to think about. Growing old is one example.

So we try to make the process less unpleasant by using more agreeable words to describe it. Old people become *senior citizens*. A memory lapse becomes a *senior moment*. The closing years of our lives become *the golden years*. When our life ends, people will refer to our death as a *passing*.

Regardless of the imaginative terms we use to describe the transition, we will die. Generations come and go, and people live and die as they always have. Man's mortality rate is 100%. That's reality, whether or not we try to duck it.

And yes, tact has a place in helping us respectfully say what needs to be said. But using creative language to subtly shade the truth is dishonest, not to mention deceptive.

God said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). That's pretty plain. We might prefer a little word picture to soften it up a bit: "The fluffy little black lamb that wanders too far from the fold may be victimized by a predator."

That does sound a great deal more agreeable. But did you notice the shift in focus and the change in meaning? God said, "You sin; you die." People say, "You wander; you may get hurt." In the first, God holds us accountable for what we do. The second suggests a predator taking advantage of youthful innocence.

Satan invented this tactic. When God commanded our first parents, Adam and Eve, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He told them disobedience would bring death. When Satan invited them to disobey, he shifted the focus to what they might gain. He told them they would become wise through their disobedience.

Satan's smooth words and enticing images did not change God's reality in the slightest. The forbidden fruit no doubt tasted delicious, but the aftertaste was bitter and enduring. Spiritual death came not only upon Adam and his wife, but it also passed on to their descendants. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

God speaks plainly.

Death is still the stark consequence of sin. We can duck that reality for a time, but eventually we must face it. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Satan still peddles forbidden fruit. It appears luscious and it tastes sweet, but the aftertaste is just as bitter as ever. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). And, "the wages of sin is [still] death" (Romans 6:23).

Any sin might be described as forbidden fruit, but the term seems especially applicable to sexual sins. God established the home on the principle of exclusive fidelity.

"From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh" (Mark 10:6-8). Sex outside of marriage is sin.

For example, Jesus said, “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). That is plain enough. You choose to lust, you accept the consequences of adultery.

However, Satan changes the focus. He invites us to surrender to lust, telling us we will experience greater pleasure and gratification. Just as he did in the garden, he diverts attention from what disobedience will cost us to what we think we will gain.

People believe Satan’s lie. They try to duck reality by coining innocent sounding names for sins: *shacking up, living with, alternative lifestyles, gay rights, free love, and freedom of choice.*

These terms gloss over the sins they describe. They also are dishonest. Describing lust as love pictures it as being free from restraint and consequences. Yet it is attended with heartbreak, dissatisfaction, selfishness, and disease. And people forget that God abhors and promises to judge what they so glibly call alternate lifestyles.

God means what He says.

We can divert attention from truth. We can give innocent-sounding labels to our sins and duck reality for a time. But God’s laws are sure; we cannot escape the consequences of our choices.

“Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12) and He “will render to every man according to his deeds” (Romans 2:6). We will be judged, and that is surer even than old age and death.

TO HAVE YOUR SINS FORGIVEN

TRUST IN JESUS TO SAVE YOU

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

REPENT OF YOUR SIN

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

CONFESS JESUS AS YOUR LORD

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32, 33).

FOLLOW JESUS AS YOUR MASTER

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

FIND REST AND PEACE

“Ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

RECEIVE POWER TO SERVE

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8).

BECOME PART OF A CHURCH

“The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25).