

This Spiritual War Is Raging Over You Right Now

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950. When did it end? The truth is, as of this writing all these years later, it technically still hasn't ended. A ceasefire was agreed to in July 1953, but there was no peace treaty. The negotiations over the ceasefire created a "demilitarized zone," or DMZ. This strip of land runs 160 miles across the Korean peninsula and is roughly 2.5 miles wide. The irony is that there's nothing "demilitarized" about the DMZ. It's one of the most heavily armed places on the planet. Both North and South Korea have troops massed on their own sides of the DMZ, fully equipped for war.

We act as though there's a neutral zone between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man, where both sides can live in safety, with and from each other. As with the DMZ, however, there is always a fight brewing, either visibly or under the surface. And more often than we would like, war breaks out.

The Bible calls this the battle between our flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). One side of the DMZ calls for us to live for our selfish passions, the other side to do what pleases and honors Christ. Abraham Kuyper saw through this lie of "successfully" living with duplicity. One guy one place, another guy elsewhere.

Kuyper was an extraordinary man. In his native Netherlands, he created and published two newspapers. He founded the Free University of Amsterdam. He also managed to find time to serve as his country's prime minister. He was a true Renaissance man, equipped with a wide variety of talents. And he traveled the world teaching others about Jesus. What he may be most remembered for is a short aphorism, spoken at the founding of the Free University:

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!”

Work is part of God’s first command to man, and we were to exercise dominion over the creation. But there’s more to it than that. We are called to exercise dominion not for our own glory, but for His. This applies to our work, our play, our families, our rest and anything and everything we put our hand to. We were made to reflect His glory, not to produce our own. When we seek our own apart from God, we find only shame.

There is no “safe” territory between pleasing God and living for ourselves. There is no place for self-justifying complacency amid sinful activities and attitudes. Our Father wants to take all sides of life—every ingredient, activity and assignment—and eliminate the “safety” of the DMZ.

Put that in your bowl, grab the wooden spoon, and “mix thoroughly until fully blended.” With God’s help, you and I really can live with integrity.

When Joseph was sold like a piece of something on Craigslist by his jealous brothers and soon found himself in a faraway land where no one knew him—or his family’s good name—he had a chance to walk away from the man of character he had been. After all, his former life of obedience to Yahweh God might not fit well in this new Egyptian culture.

But when his boss’s wife tried to seduce him, “he refused” (Gen. 39:8a). And when she persisted, propositioning him again and again, day after day, “he did not listen to her” (v. 10). And one day when she found herself alone with him in the house and grabbed at his clothes and insisted he make love to her, “he left his clothing in her hand and fled and got outside” (v. 12).

How did he do it? Joseph had passions, just as you and I do. He was not immune to the offer of an illicit thrill. But there

was something that mattered more to him than any short-lived ecstasy. “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (v. 9b), Joseph said to his seducer. The fear of the Lord enabled him to refuse to surrender his foundational core for the sake of immediate pleasure. Again and again.

This is integrity. {eoa}

Used with permission by Moody Publishers.

Robert Wolgemuth *has been in the media industry for over 39 years. He is a speaker and the best-selling author of over 20 books. He is married to Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. Visit .*