

Bad As I Want To Be

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June 6, 2018



About three years ago I announced to my wife that "I'm as bad as I want to be."

She doesn't always pay attention to what I have to say so I said it often, loud, and for about six months till she became perplexed. She thought at first that it was the result of a stroke I had a while back or an old football injury to the brain housing group.

But that wasn't it at all. I just decided to stop pretending that I was good. I became aware at some point that in my long tenure in the Unification Church that it was necessary to pretend that I was good. The reverse was that I also had to hide that I was, at least in part, bad. What's more it seemed that everyone else was doing the same thing and together we got real good at it. It was a competition to see who was the most good, had the deepest heart, deepest understanding of Divine Principle, and was closest to True Parents. When I go to church the phenomenon is on display. There are four women who rotate the function of giving the representative prayer and I get it as to why. They got the performance down pat. When one is called to the front, she walks up with her head,, down and stops to bow demurely in front of the photograph. Then she takes the mic and begins. It begins slow but then quickly winds up into a frenzy until the woman is crying and almost wailing as

she reports all the heartbreak of the world and the province. It goes on for exactly the allotted time and then she turns the faucet off. Next she returns to her seat without looking at anyone. Of course after the service she is back to her old self with no noticeable wear and tear due to emotional break down. To be fair, I've seen it around the world and have even engaged in it myself.

I see it everyday on social media and it's called virtue signaling and of course I'm a fairly good practitioner. I've witnessed it in more than a few churches, Unified and otherwise where theater is an important part of the liturgy.

Even repentance is a competition. If repentance is good than more and more had to be better. Not only do folks repent for what they did but they repent for others. They repent for their race, nation, and the world. Then there is the repentance or liberation for those no longer in this world.

Now I'm a believer that repentance is good for the soul if it has the result that bad behavior is turned away from. Repenting for people and things where you have no control over their future behavior seems real

thin. The repentance for generations of ancestors each carefully counted and given a monetary value seems to be ludicrous. I just said no.

Now I know that my declaration was part and parcel of the career as a writer that I had embarked on. As I read what I had written I noticed that while it was not always easy to see if it was right or wrong or even good or crap, but it was readily apparent if it was honest or not. I wanted to write honestly. The more I write the more I try to tell the truth as I know it, or at least not lie. In fact, when I start writing and it's not honest, I stop. Go do something else.

The fact is I'm as bad as I want to be but the truth is I don't really want to be bad. Although I've never committed murder I've done just about everything else. I'll leave the rest to your imagination. In addition I probably got a character that leans towards addiction. I also have a quick temper and an aggressive nature, all that I came by honestly. The good news is I haven't been in an actual fist fight in going on two years. More of an impact on my life are not the sins of commission but the sins of omission. You could probably make a good case that I'm a poor father and a worse husband. I'll do almost nothing today that I can put off until tomorrow. The list goes on but you get the point. It ain't easy being all that I can be. It's a constant struggle and some days I get a little ahead and other days I fall behind. Until today the words of Coach Vince Lombardi still ring in my ears, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." At almost sixty four years old, fatigue is becoming more of a factor. But then I read something from the world of Jordan Peterson like; "'You're okay the way that you are.' That's not the right story. The right story is 'You're way less than you could be.'

'Take on the heaviest burden that you can bear. To pursue a voluntary confrontation with the tragedy and malevolence of being. To seek a strenuous life spent at the boundary between chaos and order.'

'Stop doing the things that are not good for you and stop doing the things that are not noble.'

Pursue what is meaningful (not what is expedient). Tell the truth -- or, at least, don't lie.

Ah well, I'm still a work in progress, not yet as good as I want to be.

Here is an interesting post script. After writing this I announced to my wife again 'I'm as bad as I want to be.'

I asked her how long ago I first said this. She said it was the first time she ever heard it. Go figure.