

Slippery Slope

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Comedy For a Cause: Fri, Oct 2nd, 7pm. Enjoy a night of *family friendly comedy* with Ron McGahee and Kerri Pomaroli. *Advanced tickets are \$15 each and \$20 at the door.* VIP tickets are also available for \$20. Buy your tickets in the office. *Mercy Projects is the “Cause” that will be highlighted.*
- B. Slide3 Children at Risk - Part of helping “children at risk” is by trying to prevent them from becoming “at risk”. Sunday the 20th, from 3-5pm. *Jennifer O’Farrel, the regional executive director of Big Brother Big Sisters of the Inland Empire*, will be sharing. She will share about their mentoring program. Come and hear what’s going on **in our valley, the difference mentoring can make in the life of a child, and how you can be involved, whether or not you can actually be a mentor yourself.**

II. Slide4 Intro: Slippery Slope

- A. Slide5 Reminder why we study the OT? 1 Cor.10:11 *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition.*
- B. It’s a sad story of **one Nation under God** that turns from *the God it was once under.*
- C. Slide6 The British historian, Arnold Toynbee once noted that **out of the 22 civilizations on the stage of world history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral position of the USA.** [that’s why Judges is so relevant]
- D. Slide7 It spans from the death of Joshua to the judgeship of Samuel & the intro to the Monarchy.
- E. It is the different accounts of both **minor** & **major** Judges.
1. **Minor**, barely mentioned names, **while the others** are expanded upon *like* Gideon’s story, & Samson, & Deborah and Barak’s. [13 all together]
- F. See last verse for **key verse**.
1. There was a **leadership vacuum**. They were **void of leadership**.
- G. **In the book of Joshua** they had **Entered** the land, **Distributed** the land, **but** had not **occupied** the land.
1. The Hebrew Nation had not strong central gov after the death of Joshua.

2. Slide8 They were a confederacy, of 12 independent tribes, with no unifying force, except their God.
3. Their form of Government in the days of the Judges is spoken of as a **Theocracy**, God Himself was supposed to be the direct ruler...but...the people didn't take their God very seriously.

H. Slide9a **Sin Cycle** throughout the book - *Rebellion, Retribution, Repentance, Restoration.*

1. The reoccurring result of *abandonment from God's law* is **corruption** from within **and oppression** from without.
2. Another has recorded it as: **Sin** (Israel turns from the Lord) **Servitude** (The Lord allows Israel's enemies to oppress them) **Supplication** (Israel prays for forgiveness) **Salvation** (The Lord raises up a judge, or deliverer, to rescue them) **Sin** (The cycle begins again)

I. Slide9b **Canaanite** - who are the Canaanites. Well, it's like asking who are the Americans?

1. All who lived in Canaan were Canaanites. It went from Med to Jordan river, from Tyre/Sidon to Egypt.
2. Amongst this country were like *City States*. King of Jerusalem, small by our standards. All the Jebusites, Hittites, etc. lived their.

J. (1) After the death of Joshua seems to be a **heading** for the Book of Judges as a whole, with the actual events following Joshua's death not being narrated till after the record of that death in 2:8.

K. Slide10 (9) **mountains, South, lowlands** - (explain map) Where battles were fought in the south.

1. We see the general movement from south to north. But we also note a **corresponding deterioration** as they move north.

L. Slide11 (19) **Because they had chariots of iron** - Should they have been able to make it past their **chariots of iron?** Yes! Dt.20:1 **When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.**
Read Joshua 17:16-18 - **What chariot of iron are you facing today?**

M. Slide12 **Israel's slippery slope** - we note Israel's deterioration...

1. It is the folly of **compromise**, which would lead to **intermarriage** w/ Canaanites. Which led to **tolerance** & even **participation** in their idolatry.
- N. (2:3) I wonder how this is applied today? Divine aid withheld?
- O. Slide13 (2:1) The Angel of the Lord - appeared to Moses, Joshua. Also during the time of the **Judges** to Gideon & the Parents of Samson.
1. The Angel of the Lord shows them the **consequences** of their failure & the **folly of compromise**.
- P. Slide14 **Compromise** - In 2 Kings 14:3, we are told why **Amaziah** did not experience the full blessing of the Lord. The text says, “**And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David.**” He followed the example of his father **Joash** and failed to put a stop to the semipagan worship conducted on hills throughout the land. He should have patterned himself after his forefather **David**. *He simply didn't aim high enough.*
- Q. How Does **Compromise** Occur? Sherman & Hendricks have a 7-step process that, if left unrecognized, could lead to **moral compromise**: [New Man, November/December, 1994, Page 74]
1. Slide15 A failure to **commit ahead of time** to do the right thing.
 2. Underestimating evil and **flirting with dangerous temptations**, thus being exposed to far more powerful evils.
 3. A failure to recognize the **numerous forms of compromise** lurking at every corner of life.
 4. A failure to recognize the **smooth flatteries** and **enticing fantasies** of temptations.
 5. Succumbing to **slick rationalizations**.
 6. A **sudden, deliberate choice** to **give in** to sin.
 7. A failure to consider the **costly consequences** of sin. Slide15b (go away)
- R. **Moral character** is an evaluation of an individual's **moral qualities**.
1. Character is the **sum total** of the **attributes & qualities** that form the individual nature of a person. [Like: integrity, courage, honesty, loyalty]
 - a) **Imagine**: A **pastor** who preaches well...but lacks integrity. *or...*
A **plumber** who can fix anything...but isn't honest when he bills you.

2. Example: **Concrete** = *cement, sand, aggregate, & water*.

a) **Not 1** can be left out. Requires proper proportions. Hardens over long periods of time. Once sets up is hard to change.

S. Character may be *manifested* in the **great** moments, **but** it is *made* in the **small** ones.

Phillips Brooks

1. Realize you will make **many small decisions** today that will shape your character (either for good or bad)

a) **Like bricks** settling & drying in place in a wall.

2. **Every little action** of the common day **makes or unmakes** character.

3. **Character** is simply a **long habit continued**. Plutarch

T. How diligently *the cavalry officer* keeps his **sword** clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. [if left dirty...corrosion, pit metal]

1. Remember **you are God's sword**, His instrument. In great measure, according to the **purity** and **perfection** of the instrument, will be the **success**. **It is not great talents** God blesses so much as **likeness** to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. Robert Murray McCheyne

U. **Character Builders** are: **Righteousness**: doing what's consistent with God's character.

Godliness: a life of respect & reverence for God. **Faith**: trust in God. **Love**: self-sacrifice for God and others. **Patience**: love that endures. **Gentleness**: a controlled spirit that can hate sin, yet love the sinner. **Humility**: being willing to serve someone. **Integrity**: being transparent. **Courage**: remembering we've been equipped w/the Spirit & courage of God.

V. **So what produces strong character?**

1. Consistency, Training, Right priorities, Following the right example, Obedience to God's commands, A steady diet of God's Word, Relying on the strength of the Spirit, Making Right choices, Living out the Christian faith, Doing what is right no matter what, Trusting and depending on God, Learning from others.

W. **Slide16** This is classic **existentialism** [a philosophical theory that emphasizes *the existence of the individual person as a free & responsible agent* determining their own development through acts of the will]

1. No standard of right and wrong. No ultimate underpinning of a value system.

2. **No ultimate standard of morality.** It's what happens when personal rights become lead in a society. It's when **personal rights overcome the good of society and the will of God** there is such a deterioration & all you have left is existentialism, because nature abhors a vacuum.
3. Take away a leader in touch with God, push God and His value system out of your life, and you have to create your own. **Your own personal rights, your own personal view of life, your own value system.** Apart from any value system you have pure...*whatever works for you...is cool.*
 - a) This is what we have with the nation of Israel, & of course with **us** today.
4. **Note**, the more personal **freedoms** you have the more in **bondage** you'll become. (I saw this in 1991 in post Soviet Union. Bulgaria & Russia when they experience "freedom" after 75 years)

X. **What kind of culture are we living in?** (There're 3 cultures in relation to *absolute*)¹

1. **Slide17a Theonomous Culture (God/law)** – Law of God is embedded in our hearts
 - a) We used to believe (as did our early framers) in *Natural Law*, "*we believe these truths to be self-evident*". We don't believe this anymore as a society.
2. **Slide17b Heteronomous Culture (another/law)** – main stream of culture is dictated by leadership at the top. **i.e. Marxism. Islam.**
 - a) The few at the top tells the masses *what to believe & how to live.*
3. **Slide17c Autonomous Culture (self/law)** – Each person dictates their own law.
 - a) So if we are an Autonomous Culture, and I answer your question, are you going to give me the privilege of my autonomy too, **or** as soon as you disagree with my answer will you switch to Heteronomous mode and dictate for me what I must believe as well.
 - (1) The problem with autonomy/self-law is that everyone runs against each other, **then what?** It's the Sociological issue/dilemma of our day.

¹ Ravi Zacharias, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPYRXop7aPA&feature=youtu.be>