

Tolerance of Evil is Evil Itself

By Daryl Wingerd

“Congratulations to Corey Delaney”

That’s how the news broadcaster began his story about a 16-year-old in Australia who recently hosted a party in his parents’ home while they were away on vacation. The party, which was advertised on Delaney’s “My Space” page, drew 500 people along with a lot of alcohol. It resulted in \$20,000 damage to the home and had to be broken up by police officers using dogs.

The broadcaster may have been using sarcasm when he offered his congratulations, but he went on to explain that the young man’s stunt seems to have paid off. He now has a loyal following, particularly among teenagers, and has been booked as a party promoter, planner, and DJ at numerous events in Australia and the U.K. He even has a manager who will receive a share of the \$100,000 he expects to make this year. His father is angry, of course, and has insisted that Corey live elsewhere, but he also stated that his son’s new enterprise will be better than working as a carpenter’s apprentice, as he had been previously employed.



Not everyone thinks Corey Delaney should be congratulated. Many recognize that the parties he promotes, like the one that made him famous, often involve underage drinking, immorality, and violence. Thousands have expressed their outrage at this arrogant young man who wears a fur-lined hooded jacket and oversized yellow sunglasses with a few strands of blond hair hanging in front. To many, Corey Delaney is a purveyor of evil who came by his success through evil means, but his popularity with so many others brings to mind a sobering biblical truth.

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord. (Prov. 17:15)

In this context, to justify a wicked person is to indicate that what he is doing is acceptable, or even praiseworthy. One person might justify a wicked person *actively* by saying, “I think that what you are doing is great!” Another might justify him *passively* by saying, “I would not do the same myself, but who am I to say that what you are doing is evil?” The promoters who are scrambling to book Mr. Delaney (before his undoubtedly short fuse of fame burns out) are in the first category. Those

who would not emulate him personally, but who secretly admire his entrepreneurial spirit and financial success, are in the second. The point is, *neither person is willing to call evil “evil.”*

The socially acceptable response to wickedness these days is to praise whatever good can be seen in a person while speaking in veiled terms about the bad (if the bad is mentioned at all). Using Corey Delaney’s behavior as an example, the typical response might sound something like this: “Corey will have a lot of potential in the business world once he’s gotten through his difficult teenage years.” Applied to any form of sin, this is not the biblical message to those who practice evil.

A more appropriate response would be, “Corey, God sees you as wicked and rebellious. If you do not repent of your sins and find God’s mercy through faith in Jesus Christ, you will suffer eternally under His wrath.”

I am not suggesting that you should go around offering unsolicited rebukes to every unbeliever you see committing evil acts. Silence in the presence of sin is often appropriate as long as it does not amount to an implicit approval of the sin. I especially would not want Christians to start blasting away verbally at fellow Christians when they see them stumble in sin. Rebuke among fellow Christians has its place, but the love we share as believers “covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8) and should color every word we say to one another.

My real aim is not to persuade you to begin speaking more openly or directly to those who are practicing evil (though I would not discourage anyone from doing so either, if done compassionately). I simply want you to understand that the person who routinely *approves* of evil is simply practicing *a different form* of evil. “He who justifies the wicked . . . [is] an abomination to the Lord.”

You may not be a rebellious teenager, or openly practicing some other form of obvious wickedness. You may profess to be a Christian who loves God. You may attend church regularly. You may even believe (as is so commonly taught in many religious circles) that tolerance of evil is a Christian virtue. But if you characteristically *condone* that which God *condemns*, you prove yourself to be God’s enemy, not His friend. You show yourself to be just as much in need of His saving mercy as those whose more obvious sins you gladly tolerate.