



Biblical Perspectives in Everyday Life

Terrorists, Adulterers, Liars, Racists...Same Old, Same Old

In recent years, terrorism has significantly altered global life and perspectives. Terrorists, however, have been around for millennia, wreaking havoc on individuals, families, neighborhoods, ethnic groups and, sometimes, entire countries and regions of the world. Terrorists use their personal biases to “legitimize” their deeply rooted self-centeredness that results in devastation to others. Perhaps surprisingly, there is a commonality between terrorists and career criminals, racists, adulterers, liars, juvenile delinquents, sexual predators, serial killers, thieves, swindlers, and other persons who live to please “self” at the expense of others.

BRANCHES OF THE SAME TREE

When the curtain is pulled back to expose habitual behavior that places “self” over the welfare of others, the Bible puts “fool” and “scoffer” on center stage. The scriptural characteristics of a “fool” and “scoffer” are common to all the persistent wrongdoers mentioned in the introductory paragraph. All of these misguided people are simply “branches” of the same tree, a tree that is rooted in the ground of self-exaltation. No matter what “label” is used to describe them, a “fool” or “scoffer” embraces destructive behavior and has little difficulty in ignoring anyone trying to stop or change them.

As previously stated, a terrorist—just one branch of the “fool/scoffer” tree—is similar to every other branch on that same tree. All of these branches despise wisdom and minimize guilt. They reject wholesome instruction and use their own self-centered standards as the foundation for daily life. They are “always right” in their own eyes and, as a result, are easily provoked. They slander others, purposefully lie, and often deceitfully conceal their hatred for others who stand in their way. They will not respond to correction and will persist in their perverse “self-exalting” behavior in spite of adverse consequences to themselves or others. They can harm others who oppose them, and they break laws and commitments as if they were playing a game. (*These characteristics are used in the Bible to describe “fool” and “scoffer.”*)

NOTHING NEW . . . SAME OLD, SAME OLD

Are the above characteristics new in human history? Such is not the case, as Solomon stated thousands of years ago, “There is nothing new under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, What has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already the ages before us.

Below are listed some of the attributes of fools and scoffers that are mentioned in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. These are common characteristics of liars, racists, career criminals, thieves, sexual predators, terrorists, juvenile delinquents, adulterers, swindlers, and serial killers.

Proverbs 1:7, . . . fools despise wisdom and instruction

Proverbs 1:22, . . . How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?

Proverbs 3:35, The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

Proverbs 10:8, The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

Proverbs 10:14, The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.

Proverbs 10:18, The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool.

Proverbs 10:21, The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.

Proverbs 10:23, Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.

Proverbs 12:15, The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

Proverbs 12:16, The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.

Proverbs 12:23, A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.

Proverbs 13:1, A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 13:16, In everything the prudent acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly.

Proverbs 13:19, A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

Proverbs 14:6, A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.

Proverbs 14:8, The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way: but the folly of fools is deceiving.

Proverbs 14:16, One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.

Proverbs 26:11, Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.

Proverbs 27:22, Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD . . . WITH A COMMON BASIS

The above characteristics—only a partial list—did not develop overnight. These traits are the result of habitual choices that follow the well-worn path of self-exaltation which disregards others' welfare. Self-exaltation cannot permanently go unnoticed since this disposition, by its very nature, demands center stage where it is readily seen.

Mark 7:20-23, And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

The Apostle Paul also listed additional characteristics of the "human branches" of the tree rooted in the ground of self-exaltation.

Galatians 5:19-21, Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

As self-exaltation increases in prominence, this trait will not only be seen; it will be heard.

Luke 6:45, "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

Because of the common ground of self-exaltation, all terrorists, adulterers, liars, thieves, and every other "fellow branch" produce different types of devastation on unsuspecting people. However, harming others is the predictable behavior of every branch on the tree. That sounds rather defeating and hopeless, and it is, apart from God's intervention that can change any person . . . from the inside out.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD . . . THAT CAN BECOME NEW

(Most of the following is excerpted from [The Most Difficult People in the World](http://www.wordtruth.net), one of the downloadable documents at <http://www.wordtruth.net>.)

The downward spiral of fools and scoffers can only be halted by a heart change. This is accomplished by God's power, not by anyone's good intentions or sincere efforts. If the descriptions of a fool or scoffer fit you and you recognize the necessity for a personal change of direction, there is hope.

Such change begins with the recognition that your failures, what the Bible calls sin, cannot be undone but can be forgiven. This forgiveness is provided by the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, God's Son, who received divine judgment that was reserved for you. Jesus became your substitute, receiving the penalty of your sins, because of God's merciful love to you. When you, by faith, believe that Jesus gave His life for you, you will be cleansed of your sin and receive God's gift of eternal life. As a result, you will become a new person and, for the first time in your life, have God's power to live for Christ instead of self-centered desires.

Specific truths from Scripture speak to this change that God promises can be yours.

Ephesians 2:3-5 . . . we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have

been saved

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:6-10, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

2 Corinthians 5:14-19, For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Acts 4:12 [*speaking of Jesus*], “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

If you recognize traits of a fool or scoffer in your friends or family members, pray that God will change their hearts so they will receive Christ into their lives as well.

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 1:12-13 [*speaking of Jesus*], But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.