

[Some Lenten Thoughts](#) was created by [Setanaoko](#)

I don't know, I started this project as just something to kind of explore all the ways that the Jedi Path has helped me with my Christian walk. I was going to go through every tenet of the Jedi Compass, but since my surgery, I've found renewed interest in other things. Still I thought I'd share what I've done thus far. Maybe I'll complete it one day. 😄

The Force: Light and Dark

In the fiction, we learn that the Force has two sides- light and dark. Oftentimes, in the Jedi Community, we talk about the dichotomy of Light and Dark with regards to the ethics, morals and personality. Discussions about what actions are light and what actions are dark circle the air until it comes down to “sometimes even pursuits of the light lead us acts of darkness.” As such, a Jedi learns early on that there is a whole spectrum of grey that needs to be accounted for. I’ve had discussions where people equate the light and dark to God and Satan.

For my own explorations, Light and Dark take on multiple meanings. I can think of it in terms of the actions we take and the actions we do not take. I can look at it from the perspective of Selfishness and Selflessness, which is one of the ways that George Lucas himself described each aspect of the Force. I have contemplated it from the emotional ranges and their impact on the psyche. From personal narrative and external narrative. And even worked through discussions of light and dark to grapple with larger questions such as “Why does God allow evil to exist?”

I grew up in an abusive home during the first 6 years of my life. During my 7th year, my foster parents and the Department of Human Services worked very hard to help me discover that the world was not full of evil men. So when an angel of the Lord came to me and told me that I needed to return to Christianity....I had questions.

What made the Christian God any better than the gods I was following up to this point?

If the Christian God is truly Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, why would He allow evil to exist?

Why let innocent children continually be abused? Why allow murder to continue?

The cookie-cutter answer I got from the churches simply infuriated me: Because Adam and Eve; it's to bring you closer to Him; or my ever favorite- he doesn't, that's why he created you! These answers leave you to the decisions that:

1) Because Adam & Eve: God isn't actually omniscient, omnipotent or omnipresent. He's lying to us about all this in a way to manipulate everyone.

2) It brings you closer to him: God is a manipulative bastard.

3) God created you! : Clearly that means he's not omni-anything, because he needs to rely on a human to do everything...which means he's just like any other "benevolent" god.

When I got to the Force Realist Community, my answers to these burning questions about God's reason for allowing evil to exist became the primary focus of my exploration on the topic of Light and Dark.

These different contemplations led me to a better understanding of the role Free Will plays in the history of the world. From the beginning, Adam & Eve were given Free Will to choose for themselves the future. So often we blame them as the first of us for our sinful ways- but the truth is that we cannot guarantee that even if they were upstanding holy people that their children wouldn't have fallen from grace and launched us into what we are today.

In an objective view of what the Bible says, I had to learn a hard truth- God is not all-good. Not in the sense of what we try to make him out to be. If you read the Bible, you see clear times when God's morality does not fall into line of what our morality is. As a result of this, we're told "That's because you're thinking with the mind of a human, not the mind of God." But this answer spells out the same problem: So God can get away with things that man cannot...

Think about for a moment. God can kill off whomever he wants. He can send people in to massacre an entire city (Jericho), He can halt an entire family line by having them swallowed up by the ground over the transgressions of the head of the house (Korah, Dathan and Abiram), and all other manner of atrocities....but humans cannot do the same on their own. They must first seek the approval of God to do so.

One might argue “Well, that’s because God sees things in the future we do not.” Then we’re left with a dilemma- why not kill off the sinner before they do unrepairable damage?

This is truly where the contemplation of a Light and Darkside of the Force pulled together the Bible in a view that I couldn’t get out of a church. The satori moment came when I realized that Job had his own interpretation of what transpired around him:

“Shall we accept good from God, and not הָרַע”. This word “הָרַע” is the word for “evil”. The Septuagint reads “κακὰ” which is used for “evil” or “wickedness”. This means that it was well known by the author of the story that God is not “all-good” in the sense of how we talk Him up today.

But that doesn’t strip Him of the title “Holy” or even “Righteous”- those are things by which we can give more moral grey area than we do when we say “good”. In order for a person to truly be “Righteous” they need to make hard decisions when presented with the circumstances. And Holy is defined by the head of the pantheon- in the case of Christianity, it is the God of Abraham.

It is in this understanding that Job recognizes God both visits good upon people, and evil upon them. It is likely that Job even believed that there was the possibility that evil was visited upon him because of someone else’s actions- but rather than demand of God an answer as to what he could do to weed out the unrighteous in his midsts, he chose to neither speak good nor evil of anyone in his party unless they dared to ask him to curse God. We don’t know the depths of his

contemplation, only the results of them based on the Book of Job.

So it's from here that the lessons of Light and Dark begin to truly manifest. Once I had the very basics of how these discussions could unfold in various discussions, and how they related to the concept of "Free Will", my contemplations of the Biblical Narrative took on a whole new perspective.

First, I suppose I need to clarify the key importance of "Free Will" in the discussion of "Why God allows bad things to happen." It goes to an age old discussion on why you should never cast a love spell on someone. Whether it works or not, you will never know- because you've put out the intention. If we are created in God's Image, as the Bible states, I believe that this means we inherited emotions from Him. It's in those emotions that we find throughout our lives that what we want are genuine relationships- not fake ones. I believe, that this is at the heart of why humanity was given Free Will- God wants genuine and sincere relationships. Jesus hints at this with the verses corresponding to "not all who say 'Lord, Lord' will enter into the kingdom of heaven...".

But Free Will means that we have choices to contend with. If God exercised a dictatorship like what we see in North Korea, then adherence to His Word wouldn't come from a place of sincerity, it would be out of a sense of obligation. That, in and of itself, does not demonstrate mutual respect for the creator on our part, or his Creation on his part.

Thus, what we see in the Bible, as sacrilegious as this may be to most of my fellow Christian readers, is that God's own

struggle is with balancing His role as the God of Gods, Lord of Lords and King of Kings, His want for a relationship with us, and His respect for the Free Will He has imparted upon us.

From here, we can see how the discussion on the Light and Dark sides of the Force can come to life. Whether you believe that the Force is something outside of God, something which flows from Him, or even that it is simply a word used to help facilitate a metaphorical construct of how every little detail impacts something else, the contemplation on how God's energy moves the Force remains the same.

With this in mind, here are some contemplations you can begin using as you work through the Bible:

1. When you read a Biblical Story, consider how every action is both light and dark. Within the confines of the story itself, ask "For good or for bad, why would God choose such actions?". Remember, you don't have to agree with the actions God took in the story. For a long time, these things upset me, but as I increased my own understanding of each action and prayed for wisdom to understand- my compassion for the decisions of others grew, and I was able to fully realize the line in what is called the "Skywalker Code" which reads "Jedi respect all life, in any form."
2. How did some of God's actions (Light or Dark) attract or detract from God's want to cultivate a world of people who love both Himself and each other the way He loves us?
3. Instead of looking at the 10 Commandments as rules you need to follow, analyze them with the idea of "What kind of obstacles (darkness) did God want to help us avoid by

putting them into place?”, “What darkness have I experienced as a result of violating this commandment?”, “What caused God determine that these 10 Commandments would bring about the most light into the world?”

4. Finally, contemplate what you do that is light and dark in the pursuit of your faith. How do your actions of light or dark attract or detract from the Jedi's Mission to be Guardians of Peace?



Report This

Last edit: 2 years 4 months ago by [Setanaoko](#) .

Action Moderate

- [illegible]

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

ONLINE

More

2 years 4 months ago - 2 years 4 months ago #1551

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)

The Force: Light and Dark 2
Listening to God

In the fiction, the Force calls to you. One of the problems the Jedi Community experiences these days, is that there is only a discussion of how the Force communicates to us what our mission in life is. But when I first began at Force Academy, I found that there were people who engaged with the Force in a variety of ways.

This was incredibly helpful for me to expand my understanding of what this “Force” everyone talked about was. No one had a concrete definition- we were all working out what “the Force” was for ourselves. I found my own answers by reading through what others had to say and comparing it to my experiences as a pagan in conjunction with the revelation given to me by an Angel of the Lord.

So what did these tidbits of information and meditation upon them lead me to? That there are competing voices which can be heard in the Force. The fiction actually illustrates this quite well in *The Last Jedi* when Luke has Rey meditate upon the Force and she responds to the calling of the Darkside, the whole time Luke trying to get her attention back to the here and now.

The lessons I gained were simple- know yourself, learn about God so you can discern His voice, and have a solid moral and ethical foundation.

With these in mind, here are some contemplations you can begin using as you work through the Bible:

1. When reading a Biblical Story, what are key fingerprints God reveals to me about who He is? Don't rely on simple answers you find on the internet by asking this question- study scripture.
2. Meditate upon non-routine circumstances you find yourself in each day. What do your responses to these situations reveal about you?
3. When going into prayer, take time to note details about whatever message you receive back, and compare it to what you know of both yourself and God based on your experience with the first two exercises. If anything falls outside of these, take note that this is something in the Force beckoning you. Whether it's of the Darkside or Lightside of the Force may be discerned based on wisdom gained through theological, moral and ethical studies.

4. When you find something calling to you that falls into the category of the Darkside, fortify yourself by reaffirming your dedication to God.



Report This

Last edit: 2 years 4 months ago by [Setanaoko](#) .

Action Moderate

-

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

ONLINE
More

2 years 4 months ago - 2 years 4 months ago #1552

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Respect the Law

“But these are man’s laws, and subject to flaws....”, this was the original phrasing in the Jedi Compass from 2013-2022. Today, that sentence has been revised to “However, some laws may be flawed and should be amended.”

The first one pulls one’s attention to the idea of “Divine Law”, while the new version requires some contemplation on the topic to arrive at the possibility that a divine law may be present to assist a Jedi in determining what is and isn’t appropriate for a law.

As a Christian, I could easily point to the Apostle Paul’s words that we “must submit [ourselves] to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established”. But we also need to remember that the Old Testament equally insists that we follow God’s laws first. This is illustrated with Daniel’s demonstration during a decree

which demanded all persons worship the king as their god, and no one else during a period of time. If anyone was caught worshiping another deity, they would be sentenced to the Lion's Den. Daniel made the decision to stand by the first Commandment, that the Jewish people would hold no other gods before Him.

What proved of interest to me, is that the guidance in the Star Wars fiction actually matches pretty well with the example laid forth by Daniel, Jesus Christ and his the Apostles. The fictional rules, according to a role-playing game book earlier this century, read "Jedi were permitted to break laws, but only when it was required, and only if they were willing to suffer the consequences".

If we look at the stories, when called before the King- Daniel didn't run, he faced the consequences and God used the Lions to further prove that Daniel did the right thing. When called before Pontius Pilate and Caesar, Jesus Christ submitted himself to their authority, and God used the situation to bring salvation into the world. But what is of keen interest, is that the Apostles' stories were oftentimes not as grandstanding. Peter's was, an angel saved him by casting off the chains. But most of the martyrs of the New Testament were not so lucky.

This is meant to demonstrate that faith alone is not enough to save your moral life, but that the story itself would manifest as a testament of what holy, or if you prefer virtuous, faith is.

But there's more to this than simply being "holy" or "virtuous". When you really consider the role of "laws" in society, doors

can open to you as to why laws exist. Christianity says it's to make you holy, to help you get into heaven. But this really misses the point. Those are selfish reasons to accept and live by Divine Law.

Law in the human world is about cultivating a community where we can all live together in harmony. It's not perfect, by any means, but it's the best we have. The laws aren't about you, they're about how you live with the people around you. They're designed to protect the whole. And the punishments are designed to assist the victims in healing, while giving a person an opportunity to see the error of their ways. Expedited death sentences following a major crime may not have given a person a whole lot of time to reconsider what they have done in the same way our extended death row sentences do- but they do give us an idea of the weight such decisions carry.

Just as our laws are designed to cultivate a community, God's laws are designed to build a compassionate, loving and righteous community in Heaven and on Earth.

Here are some contemplations you can begin using as you work through the Bible:

1. Before Moses, there is only one commandment that is made clear to the people of Earth: Thou shalt not murder. This is established as a pretty clear rule following Cain's murder of Abel. When you read the stories that predate the Exodus, consider which of these stories reveal a reason that God may have included one of the 10 Commandments in His line up.

2. As you find rules and laws that are written into the Bible, consider whether or not there is something in local human law that demands you violate God's Law. Remember that God allows for Free Will, and therefore a law which allows a violation of God's Law is not the same as a law which demands you violate God's Law. Think of it as a difference between a decree that for thirty days no prayers should be addressed to any god or man but the king and freedom of religion. One tells you what to do, the other gives you freedom to choose so long as your not violating another law (think terrorism in the example of "freedom of religion").



Report This

Last edit: 2 years 4 months ago by [Setanaoko](#) .

Action Moderate

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

ONLINE
More

2 years 4 months ago #1553

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Objectivity

The Jedi Code doesn't explicitly state that we should be objective, but it may as well be the one-word summary of the line "There is no ignorance, there is knowledge".

This was probably the most influential tenet of the Jedi Path as I walked back to Christianity. That I had to keep focused on the message rather than the congregation. Sure, Christian Pastors will insist upon you taking the lessons to heart and not judging Christianity on the congregation....but Objectivity is so much more than this message.

It's also about questioning the person that claims they are the authority. This is so key to living the life of a follower of any religion. Human's range from strictly adhering to tradition to adding on whatever they feel is necessary. And as a result we have all manner of leaders caught in between. Which denomination is right? What information from the pulpit is

being taught in accordance with God's will? If you're not asking these questions, you're not utilizing everything you have available to you.

The Bible was given to us as a means to help us discern what is and isn't of God. Sure, you can get messages beyond the Bible, but the foundation of your understanding of God should first come from what is in the Bible itself so that you can recognize the truth. Will we always get it right? No, we're human after all. But that's the key to mostly getting it right.

If we watch others around us, we're bound to fall into one trap after another, until finally we find ourselves before Jesus saying "Lord, Lord, did I not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" to which he will reply "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers".

In the Jedi Community, the lesson of Objectivity when it came to my own faith was consistently offered to me. Even from people who are not Christian at all- "Ally, you keep asking these questions about what your church is teaching...what does the Bible say? Or maybe, what does the Bible not say?". Always "stop looking at them, look to the source."

Tips Learned through the study of Objectivity:

Ask yourself during a service- what questions should I be asking about what the sermon/homily is trying to communicate?

Read the Bible on your own, only use Biblical Commentary after you've done some meditation on the scripture, and

Whenever you catch yourself judging someone's faith, recognize that you're starting to fall into the trap of judging your walk with Jesus by the walk of others.



.....

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

ONLINE
More

2 years 4 months ago #1554

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts Exterior-](#)

Spring boarding off of the discussion on Objectivity we have the role the individual plays. Although others may provide a negative example of what it means to follow Christ's teachings, it's important that we focus on our own example.

From the Star Wars fiction, we have the following quote that parallels this tenet in the Jedi Compass:

"When a Jedi behaves badly in public, an observer might think, 'If this Jedi is a representative of the whole Order, then plainly no Jedi is worth respect.' On meeting a second Jedi, who behaves better than the first, that same person might think, 'Does this say that half the Jedi are good, and half bad?' On meeting a third Jedi, who behaves as well as the second, the person thinks, 'Was the first Jedi an exception, then?' In this way, only by the good behavior of several Jedi can the public be certain that the poor behavior of one Jedi was

unusual. Thus, it takes many Jedi to undo the mistakes of one.” —Odan-Urr

That’s certainly true of everything in life. It’s not just Jedi, it’s all of us. One of the primary reasons I judged Christianity poorly, was because of the examples provided to me by a large swath of people. Still, as I pulled my attention more to letting the Jedi Path inform my Christian practice, the more times I heard people tell me that they felt a little better about the idea of Christianity co-existing beside them.

It doesn’t mean I converted anyone, in fact I’m pretty sure I haven’t been a factor in anyone’s conversion. But it did demonstrate something vitally important- God’s Word spreads better when it’s not bogged down by people who are holier than thou.

Just as the Jedi can take a page out of this lesson on the value of recognizing how people perceive them, Christians should take a look at what they are presenting to the world. You don’t need to be perfect, but you do need to work on following in the path that Christ has laid out for us. Afterall, how can anyone know the transformative power of Christ’s philosophy if we’re only paying lip-service to it?

Challenge:

Talk with people you trust to be honest with you and dare to ask- What do you feel my representation of Christ is when we interact with each other?

Setanaoko Oceana
Director of Education



Action Moderate

-

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

ONLINE
More

2 years 4 months ago #1555

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Responsibility

As the saying goes: “No one is above the law”. The Jedi of Star Wars built their reputation upon their ability to hold themselves responsible for their actions by creating a code of ethics that would be enforced by the Jedi Council. In a perfect world, this saying would hold true...but we know that even in the Star Wars Universe, the Jedi makes significant strides to hold themselves accountable while the fictional Sith did what they want.

This dynamic in the fiction proves that this saying “no one is above the law” is just that- a beautiful saying. Something that time and time again in the real world is disproven. In fact, this is so untrue, that the only thing men and women of religion have to rely upon is the idea that justice will be served after death.

Amongst Christians, justice is dished out by either entering into hell or never receiving eternal life. Problem is, Christ gave man the opportunity to repent upon their deathbed and eternal life would be theirs.

What, then...is the point? What possible reason is there for us to be responsible persons in a world that dishes out justice unevenly amongst the populace? Some getting it more harshly than is warranted, while others don't receive any what-so-ever.

This concept of being Responsible ties into our Exterior Awareness. The deathbed confession shouldn't be one taken up as a means to outwit God in order to get through the gates of heaven- it should come from a place of sincerity. After all, God does know our heart and will know the difference, so what's the point in trying to outwit Him? It's our example, however, that contributes to the decision on someone's deathbed to accept Christ.

I can already hear the sentiment from Jonah after God spared Nineveh Why should they be spared after everything they've done?! Just the same, I hear God's words to him-

"You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

The Christian faith would have us believe that God will hold us responsible for all things. But what does it mean to be held accountable after we are dead rather than in life? Therefore, it is important for us to hold ourselves accountable. If we truly love God, we should do it for Him. But more than for God, we should do it for everyone that is around us.

If being responsible feels like a chore, then our heart is not in the right place.

Reading Contemplations:

When we look at stories of different kings and prophets in the Bible, we see how their actions impact the masses. Their actions may have influenced an entire kingdom (sometimes more in times of war), but that doesn't mean that our actions don't have significant impact by comparison. Every time you read one of their stories, think about what kind of blunder they made and ask yourself "Have I made a mistake similar to this? How did/does it impact the people around me?"

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Defense Art -

Defense Art and Defense are two tenets in the Compass that are often get confused with one another. Defense is about the active act of defending someone against a physical attack, while Defense Art is a skill you hone in order to defend others against something. A Defense Art may be a physical skill such as Martial Arts, but it can also be an academic pursuit such as learning how to protect the oceans or becoming a lawyer. In the fiction, the Jedi picked up several Defense Arts. But the

world crafted by an author is hardly one which can be expected of real world Jedi to obtain en masse.

Although we cannot be as epic as our fictional counterparts, it shouldn't prevent us from asking the questions: What can I do to defend the people around me? If getting physically involved in an altercation will make it worse, then a cellphone can at least provide the police with evidence of the assailant. Picking up trash can help the environment a little at a time.

What intrigues me the most, however, is the most simple of defense arts laid before us by Christ. In a story about an adulteress, we find some scribes and Pharisees attempt to wrap Christ into a Catch-22. This woman is guilty of adultery, they point out; the law says she should be stoned, they push- what will you do?

But it is Christ's decision to follow His Father's example by acknowledging within himself that the woman hasn't been given the opportunity to repent of her sin and turn away from it. So he faces the obstacle in a new light by doing what is done so many times over during his ministry: He turns their attention inward. It's as simple as "He who is without sin, cast the first stone."

One by one, they drop their stones and walk away. They found within themselves that they were not perfect. Theoretically this means that Christ should be the only one that could cast a stone- yet instead he choose to look upon her and call her out of her sin. "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

This story is oftentimes meant to call us followers to look within ourselves and discover how we are in the wrong. But there's another element to this- it's that teaching the Word equally means that we call out sin.

In today's world, it's been made out to us that we need to be calling out sin directly. But in this story, we're given a very different and far more powerful example form of teaching: Introspection. The scribes and Pharisees were no doubt knowledgeable in the law, they could easily look at each one and determine if they were in violate of the law. And as we see in the story, every last one of them found that they were plagued by something.

This is what the true value of understanding that we are all sinner is about. It's not about shaming ourselves because we are imperfect, it's meant to do two things:

Instill compassion for our fellow man.
Give us direction on how to become better people.

For a Christian, we can find one of our Defense Arts in Christ's example of turning people towards introspection.

Biblical Reading Considerations:

There are varying ways to push someone into introspection. When you come across a story in the Bible that demonstrates how God, Jesus and/or the Prophets turns someone to introspection, consider how it's done. Ask yourself "why was a harsh/gentle approach used in this situation?"

Setanaoko Oceana
Director of Education



Action Moderate

-

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

AWAY
More

2 years 4 months ago #1557

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Defense-

Given that I went over Defense Art above, may as well jot down the thoughts that surfaced regarding Defense. This one doesn't really have a tie to the fiction, because the fictional examples are made to be theatrical. No one wants to go quietly in these stories! XD

The Bible does not condemn a person for killing out of defense of others. In fact, one woman is stood up as a hero for taking a tent nail to the temple of one of Israel's enemies. What it condemns, is murder. From all accounts, we might surmise that murder means taking the life of someone who has not earned their death. Sisera certainly earned his death as it was part of war and he was at war with Israel's forces. But Abel did nothing except incur the jealousy of his brother.

In Gethsemane, Christ admonishes Peter for lashing out and cutting off a guy's ear. Almost as though to say "those swords

were in case these guys tried to go after you.” It served as a double lesson- only take life when it is warranted, and submit yourself to the authorities for judgement when you are called.

This does tie us into the Skywalker Code though, which reads “Jedi respect life, in any form.” That is, that by only taking life in defense of life, limb or eyesight you demonstrate respect for the life’s continuance...and that by submitting to the authorities appointed over you, you demonstrate respect for the community which has set it up. Yes, even to a corrupt system this submission opens up doors for the people to discover where they may need to turn their introspection towards.

On the third day, Christ rose again with other Saints alongside him (a lesser known facet of the story, but it’s written there in Matthew if you look for it). This event caused people to realize that even though they felt Christ had been defiant against the leaders of Judaic leaders of the time, they could not rely upon these leaders to show them what was true righteousness.

Although our submission to the authorities when we are innocent is unlikely to result in a Christ-level revival of consciousness, it doesn’t mean that society won’t get wiser. We have incredible testimonies of how much impact both defiance of the status quo (sitting on a bus, as an example) and then not fighting against authorities when they exercise their power (police pulling Rosa Parks from the bus) can turn into something magnificent.

So know when to act, know how to respond, and what degree of force is necessary to maintain a respect for life, in any form.

Biblical Reading Considerations:

David was told that he could not build God's Temple because he had too much blood on his hands. Blood that God, ironically, asked him to take. When you read through his stories though, consider why each life he took is tolerated, yet felt as reprehensible to God.



Report This

Action Moderate

- • • • •

[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

AWAY
More

2 years 4 months ago #1558

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Attachments

The Jedi in Star Wars are told often to let go of their attachments. In the Original Trilogy, we see how Luke's attachments to his friends cause him to grow stronger as a person and embrace a calling to become the Jedi he needs to be for them. It's at the very last minute that we find him release his attachments to his emotions and in doing so he opens the door for Vader's redemption.

Of course, in the Prequel Trilogy, it's Anakin's hold onto attachments that causes him to fall to the dark side.

Between both arcs, we find that Attachments are a double-edged sword, and that it is necessary to know when to embrace them, and when to let them go. In the Christian community, learning this lesson could prevent a great deal of strife.

In modern Christianity, a common marketing tool is to tell people “Don’t you want to see your loved ones in heaven?”. It seems like such an innocent question, but this question - in my experience - has sparked more contempt than what the authors of the question likely intended. Contempt for the Church...but also Contempt for non-converts.

Love is something that we, as a society, desperately try to define as being all-good. We try to mask the evil that love can produce by giving it a different name: Obsession. Obsession is just another form of Love, and it’s clearly unhealthy. Of course, these aren’t the only ways that Love manifests, and when it’s not returned in the exact formula we want it to be, the emotional roller coaster has the possibility to produce all kinds of irrational thoughts. Those thoughts...they turn into words and actions that are meant to somehow protect our hearts.

The manifestation of some of the worst cases of persons that want to keep family and friends together in the afterlife is in the form of disowning people upon the basis of their religious platform (or lack thereof). Others insist upon shoving religion down the throat of another because it will mean that everyone gets to experience a great life later on. In the process, I fear that we all become stumbling blocks to one another- including ourselves.

Not all who say “Lord, Lord” will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. In the passage where Christ tells us this, he goes on to describe how unnamed persons will truly believe that they did the Lord’s work on earth only to learn that they were never known by God.

Going back to attachment though, the truth is that Christ taught detachment by taking on his 12 Apostles and calling them away from their families. This is made the most apparent in the fact that he called James and John to follow him, and they left their father Zebedee behind to become Christ's disciples. Another very significant call to detach from the ideas of what we have in this age comes in the form of a challenge issued by the Sadducees when they asked Christ about who a person shall be married to when they get into heaven. The teaching is that those who are alive in the Resurrection will be like angels in Heaven, untethered to the concept of marriage.

This reveals to us that the same things we are concerned with down here, are not really the things of importance in Heaven. The things we learn here are certainly important in the life to come. Not in the sense of being attached to specific people, but rather that we are attached to a community as a whole. Smaller family units serve as a means to cultivate an understanding that of what it means to really care for others.

We shouldn't neglect our families in order to achieve heaven, Peter certainly didn't. We even learn in the Bible that he had a mother-in-law which Christ healed. And Christ didn't just forget about his mother, he even called one of his disciples to look after her before he drew his last breath. But we also don't need to chip away at them until they either despise us or they are converted to our faith.

On that last one, there's actually some guidance on the matter from Paul. He tells spouses that as long as their spouse is

happy to be with them, they shouldn't divorce. After all, you never know if your faith will end up saving the non-believer. It's about the example, not about the insistence to join together in faith. So let the example be what speaks to your family and friends. I mean, profess that God has transformed you, but don't coerce people to change.

Reflection:

Matthew 7:21-23 Meditation: Read this passage a few times and consider what you believe you can say right now to Christ when you approach Him. What things do you believe you've done to earn your place in heaven. Jot down a couple of things so that when you enter into a meditation on the matter you can recall them. Then, pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire your meditation before recreating this scene. As you go into your meditation, imagine Jesus is there on the street and you run up behind him "Lord, Lord, may I follow you into Heaven? Have I not...." As he turns to you and speaks, let the honest truth come forward either by the words from his mouth, and/or by the acknowledgment of your authentic response to what is said.

Setanaoko Oceana
Director of Education



Action Moderate

-

• [Setanaoko](#)



•
• TOPIC AUTHOR

AWAY
More

2 years 4 months ago #1559

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts Self-Care](#)

We oftentimes think of self-care in the sense of pampering ourselves, or taking time off. But self-care has all kinds of meaning. Things like going to the hospital when your body calls for it, sleeping, eating well, and in general seeking out balance.

For the Jedi in the fiction, they were called to meditate regularly, this was a form of spiritual self care. But more than that, they also provided goals for Jedi to improve their well-being. Letting go of one's feelings, their attachments. While connecting with the Force was a way to gain information or to use cool powers, it was also a calming practice.

Christianity, in a similar way, encourages self-care. It does this by prescribing things that a person needs to work on- like overcoming their sin, entering into a life of prayer and building up one's community.

The insistence is always there, don't get all up in a person's face because they have a splinter in their eye, when you've got a plank in your own. Cast the first stone, but only if you're without sin. All of these different things call our attention to the problems we need to work on within ourselves. But at the same time, they cultivate another aspect of who Christians are suppose to be: The Good [Compassionate] Samaritan.

It is through spiritual self-care that we cultivate a personality which can best navigate the world around us. By cultivating this kind of life, we have more freedom to pick and chose our destinies.

Prayer is probably the most exalted form of Christian Self-Care that doesn't really get the credit it fully deserves. On one hand, you give up all of your concerns to God, and on another your manifest care for someone outside of you. But Prayer should never be taken as lightly as a ritualistic chore, but more of a mindful practice. That doesn't strip away the investment of what Prayer with God is, but instead advances how much more you get out of each session.

Advancing Your Prayer:

Start a journal that speaks each day to how God has shown up in your life. As your journal grows, go back and read over it to remind yourself regularly about all those times God has shown up. And when you prayer, take opportunities to use some of those notes to remind God of the wonderful relationship you have with Him.

Study how different stories in the Bible use historical events to pray to God, and take note of how their example calls the attention of others to God's different virtues. Consider how this helps encourage the spirit, and how it can be considered a form of Self-Care to embrace this form of mindful prayer.



Report This

Action Moderate

- • • • •

• [Setanaoko](#)



•
• TOPIC AUTHOR

AWAY
More

2 years 4 months ago #1560

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Integrity to the Path & Forgiveness -

Integrity is the used to describe a breaking point. If glass has low integrity, it will shatter without much effort. But if it has high integrity, it will take a significant amount of effort to break. For the Jedi, integrity is about maintaining strength to carry on within the Jedi Philosophy. In the Clone Wars, there is an episode where Mace Windu and Dooku go on a mission which ultimately determines which of the two will make it on the Jedi Council.

Although we might be able to side with Dooku's efforts during this whole event, it's ultimately Mace who makes the council for his integrity to the Jedi Code. On some level, it may seem unfair. But what we discover shortly after, is that Dooku's actions during that mission were indications of a much larger problem growing with him. Which ultimately led to his total fall to the Dark side.

In the moment, the guidance of the Jedi Philosophy may seem like the worse course of action. But the more we excuse our actions, the more we find that our character changes and we allow all kinds of things that our former selves may not have agreed with.

This is fine if we end up discovering that the Jedi Philosophy wasn't the one we aligned with in the first place- that's the nature of personal evolution. But it becomes an issue if you continue to claim something which is no longer in alignment with you.

This is one thing that Christianity recognizes well. That people change their positions all the time, and at the time of their death they get one last opportunity to embrace Christian ideals. It's a cycle of forgiveness afforded everyone via Christ's Sacrifice.

Forgiveness provides a person that wants to stay strong on the path, an opportunity to reforge the glass they've built their shattered. They can melt the glass down again, and reshape it, or just call on Heaven's SafeLight Repair service to mend the crack. Either way, it's the most healing tool that God was able to bestow upon man.

The second healing tool God bestows upon man is the ability to roam freely. Likely based on the story of Cain, Jewish law afforded that if a man murdered another, he could run to a sanctuary city and be granted amnesty from his crime so long as he didn't return. This capability to cut ties with our past gives rise to a new opportunity to take time in repairing the aforementioned glass we have shattered by giving into sins.

So what about these sins? We've talked about the 10 Commandments before. The idea of looking at them from the perspective of how they have light and dark facets to them. We've also talked about how different stories in the past have likely contributed to their foundation as the Commandments. But this time, the contemplation should be on how lack of integrity to these commandments has manifested in the world we know today.

Meditations:

Take a law in the Book of Leviticus or the 10 Commandments and consider what you've personally witnessed happen to yourself or another person you know when the law is violated. What good or bad comes from the violation? Remember, this isn't really a trick question, something good may actually come from the violation. It's okay to acknowledge this. But also consider: If there is good that came from this example, does that mean that I should throw it away for myself? Again, that's not a trick question- it's something to actually contemplate. After all, how will you know your own heart if you don't challenge what it is you say you want to believe? After you've considered the law, also consider: Do I need to ask forgiveness on this matter in my own life, and recommit to living up to it?



[Setanaoko](#)



TOPIC AUTHOR

AWAY
More

2 years 4 months ago #1561

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Self-Awareness Interior

“Am I following my own spirit?”

“Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts.” Ezekiel 13:3

That question plagued me after my encounter. I use the verse, but I’m not saying at all that I’m referring to myself as a prophet. It’s just to help better understand the importance this question carries. Prophets aren’t the only ones that follow their own spirit- teachers of the faith could easily fall prey to this.

There are hundreds of Christian denominations out there....but which one is it that is correct? And if you’re doing your own research into what the Bible says, how much of it is influenced by what you want to be true?

Then there are questions of how do you know that you're actually hearing the Holy Spirit vs. hearing what you want to hear in your prayer time?

It was actually through the idea of meditation that I was able to develop my own system of recognizing my voice and the voices of something else. But discernment between my voice and the voice of the Holy Spirit had to come from making notes of the differences between what I felt and what the Bible was saying. Internalizing what I felt about the different commentaries on various verses that held significant points of contention gave me the breakthrough I needed to hear the Holy Spirit was calling me out of a church that proved to teach damaging doctrine. Specifically the kind that encouraged people to follow their own spirits in prophetic prayer.

Reading Contemplations:

When reading the Bible, have a conversation with yourself about the verse or story and let out what your emotions are with regards to it. Pretend you're having a conversation with God/Jesus as he reinforces what is simply written in the text. How does He justify it, and how do you feel about those justifications?

Replied by [Setanaoko](#) on topic [Some Lenten Thoughts](#)
Attachments

You could probably make a number of cases regarding the value of Christians releasing their attachments in order to gain heaven in the process. Heaven never was my goal- my goal is

to see a better world. The world as we know it is the only thing I'm aware of. I don't know what it's going to be like to be in Heaven. I don't have photographs of it like I do Japan or Greece. And honestly I'm confined to the idea of who I am now- and who I am now cannot fathom the idea of not having a role to play in the lives of others around me.

“Where there will be no more pain, No more sorrow, No more waiting, For illusive tomorrows, There will be no more pain, No more dying, No more striving or strain, No more pain”
(Point of Grace Lyrics)

Honestly, that sounds awesome...but what about something to do? From my own studies, I see no indication that “Touched by an Angel” is a real thing. It's not that I want others to be in pain, or sorrow, or dying...but in this world I know they exist and I want to help people in this world with those issues. For me, going to heaven and knowing that others are suffering here means that I'm left with the feeling of pain for those left behind. Maybe Heaven would be more on my list of places to go if I knew that being there meant I could do more for people on earth. But honestly, even in the Catholic Faith it takes some incredible persons to become Saints which can pray for us sinners. And I'm just can't see myself getting to that kind of level. Would be awesome if I could...I just don't see it happening.

No, I learned the value of overcoming attachments as a Christian, is to let go of what you want the Bible to say, and instead accept that what is there is what was intended for us to learn. That kind of ties into my previous discussion on Self-Awareness Interior.

Notice I didn't say embrace. We don't have to agree with what the Bible says. But we have to accept that it says things we don't like. Because not accepting them, and creating our own narrative, is making God in our own image.

Think about it, how does it feel when people say things about you that are completely untrue? Even if what they say sounds awesome, is there something within you that feels off about accepting what they have to say about you?

Maybe not for you, but it does for me. If someone stands me up and I didn't earn it, I feel I need to set the record straight. And that's something I believe God feels too. Why? Because when reproofing the prophets, he has Ezekiel deliver this in a speech: "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar" (Ezekiel 13:10)

There are a lot of things God has done that I don't like. Just because I can find justification for the actions of another person, or in this case deity, it doesn't mean I have to agree with the justification. But releasing an attachment to a narrative that someone is "All this" or "All that" is the first thing that needs to be washed away. And one of those major attachments I had to get over, is that God is a god of several omnis. More powerful than us, certainly. The Master of our universe, certainly. But the Bible doesn't tell a tale of a God that is omni-everything. That is what the observation of the prophets is. But when you string together everything that is in the Bible, you find that God says of Himself only these things-

I do not change (Malachi 3:6) and I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god (Isaiah 44:6). These are truths, thus when we read what the Bible says of Him, we can find the truth of how God operates. That doesn't make him Omni-Benevolent, the Bible stands against that for he visits evils upon his children to punish them. That doesn't make him Omniscient, the Bible demonstrates this in the desert when God threatens to kill off all of Israel and start over with Moses family tree. That doesn't make god Omnipotent, though, I will admit that on this point there is nothing to disprove his Omnipotence either. It also doesn't mean that God is Omni-Present. This is demonstrated in the Garden when he has to ask Adam and Eve what happened. It's again illustrated when the Earth has to tell him that Cain killed Abel. All we know for certain, on this point, is that God has many spies.

Yes, I know how sacrilegious all this must sound. I don't need a perfect God to recognize wisdom in his policies. But in order to know who it is that I'm following, I do have to release my attachments to these ideas because it creates a false reason to follow.

Following a God should be about respect for what they want in the world. If you cannot respect a being, then you either live in fear of them and are paralyzed in place...or you fall hard for an image and carry out a will that may not even be accurate.

That last line may not make a whole lot of sense. Think of a movie trope where people follow a leader and they take initiative to do things that the leader gets upset over - because that's not what they intended. That's what I'm talking about. In order to be a proper follower, there needs to be respect for the leader.

Exercise:

What are the things you believe about God? Is there anything in the Bible that confirms God said this about himself? Or is that belief based on the observations of His followers (yes, even his Prophets)?

