**COMPROMISE:**

**Straddling The Fence Can Smart**

R

ussian folklore tells of Boris who took careful aim at a massive polar bear. As he was about to squeeze the trigger, the wooly carnivore piped up, "Isn't it better to talk than to kill? Just tell me what you want. Let’s negotiate."

Uncocking his 12-gauge, Boris barked, "I want a fur coat."

“That's reasonable," replied the bear. “After all, this *is* Siberia. You need a fur coat; I want a full stomach. We’ll compromise."

When their summit concluded, the bear had his full stomach, and Boris was in it, *wearing* the bear’s fur coat.

*Parsing “Com-pro-mise”*

Compromise can mean:

1. Settling for something less or different, or
2. Exposing someone or something to risk

Or it can be implied, as in:

Reaching agreement, good politics, balance, tolerance, caving in, surrender, capitulation, give and take, finding middle ground, meeting halfway, half a loaf, settlement, concession, adjustment, splitting the difference, wiggle room, fallback position

“Com” means “together.” “Pro” says “in favor of.” “Mise” is French for “putting.” So, it’s being in favor of putting something together.

**DISCUSS: How have you employed compromise effectively in your business or personal life?**

*The Buzz*

**Margaret Thatcher**, former British Prime Minister**: “**Consensus is the process of abandoning beliefs, principles, values and policies.”

**James Russell Lowell**, American poet: “Compromise makes a good umbrella, but a poor roof….”

**Yoko Ono**, John Lennon’s widow: “Be understanding of one another. Be willing to compromise.”

### Richard Widmark, actor: “You have to compromise all the way. The only thing that counts is the result.”

**Lord Edward Cecil**, ex-colonial leader in Egypt: “Compromise: an agreement to do what both (sides) agree is wrong.”

**Andrew Carnegie**, industrialist/philanthropist: “Compromise is usually a sign of weakness or an admission of defeat.”

**Van Morrison**, rock star: “You still have to compromise and play some sort of game to stay in the game.”

**Janis Joplin**, rocker, dead at 27, O.D.’d on heroin and alcohol: “Don't compromise yourself. You’re all you've got.”

**Robert Louis Stevenson**, Scottish author: “To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying ‘Amen’ to what the world says you ought to prefer is to have kept your soul alive.”

**DISCUSS: In what ways is compromising healthy or unhealthy? What’s your plumb line for assessing that?**

*Compromessing*

Perhaps you and I compromise more than we realize:

• You crave eggs for dinner, but this cafe stops serving breakfast at 11 am, so you settle for the waiter just scrambling your order.

• You like to sleep with windows open, but she prefers the equator. Impasse solved: you move outside with Rover.

• The pilot skips the pre-flight check because your non-stop to Perth is running late. So, you whip on your Gore-tex survival suit.

Is compromising a sin? How does God define the S-word? Paul writes, *“If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.”* (Romans 14:23) James, Jesus’ half-brother, adds: *“It is sin to know what you ought to do and not do it.”* (James 4:17)

Remember when Jesus implores His Father to waive the cross? Let’s check Luke 22:39-42 (p. 183).

**DISCUSS: If Jesus had settled for being merely “a good moral teacher,” where would you and I be now?**

*Eating Crow That Tastes Like Rooster*

One of Jesus’ best friends, with sandals fully in mouth, became the all-time sell-out. **Let’s do Luke 22:31-33, 54-62 (p. 182).**

**DISCUSS: For a few coins Judas turned turncoat. Were Peter’s protests a compromise? Differentiate betrayal, denial, accommodation, deferral and compromise.**

*Life After Compromise*

Soon after He bolted from the grave, Jesus appeared to Peter and his fishing buddies, returning to port with empty nets. **Let’s go there inJohn 21:1-17 (p. 244).**

Earlier three times Peter had disavowed knowing the Lord. Now Jesus offers Pete three Mulligans to confirm his loyalty. To further prove His unconditional love, Jesus appoints “Chicken Man” to be His spokesman. Two months later Peter’s high octane preaching in Jerusalem would find 3,000 Passover celebrants giving their allegiance to Jesus – all in a single day!

When our compromise is sin, we’ll suffer its natural consequences in this life, but thankfully the believer has God’s forgiveness (paid at Christ’s expense). Furthermore, God doesn’t brand us as damaged goods (1 Corinthians 1:1-9, p. 354).

With God’s Holy Spirit, each believer has a power-packed temptation resistor. Let’s read its tutorial here in one of Paul’s letters to the early, New Testament believers. “What makes you think you’re any more temptation-proof than your ancestors?” he asks. **We pick it up in 1 Corinthians 10:11-13 (p. 369).**

**DISCUSS: Does God dump you in a landfill when you screw up? What’s His M.O. when His kids sin?**

*Tempting Tips*

• When deciding to please people or God, take Door #2. **This is how God puts it in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, p. 395.**

• God doesn’t expect us to clean up our act before we invite Him into our lives No, when we get to know Him, we naturally change. So …. “Live based on what you *know*, not how you *feel*.” What God wants us to know is in Romans 12:1-2 (p.343).

These three tools will help you make God-pleasing choices:

(1) A guide – The Bible is our plumb line (2 Timothy 3:10-17, p. 471). The O.T. book of Proverbs is loaded with God’s wisdom for living-in-real-time. By reading and heeding one of its thirty-one chapters a day, your month will rise to new heights.

(2) A guard – Ask God to guard your heart, mind and body, and He’ll give you peace (Philippians 4:6-7, p. 439).

(3) A gauge – Form a small core of believers to keep encouraging you to do the right thing (Hebrews 3:12-14 (p. 483).

*The Extreme Compromise*

All of us have crashed short of God’s standard of sinless living. The outcome is permanent separation from Him. But His undeserved gift to us, by our choosing to rely on Christ’s sacrifice to save us, is living forever with Him (Romans 3:23, 6:23).

In Old Testament times the Jewish faithful brought animals to the priest to be sacrificed, and God would “cover” their sins temporarily. That system was set aside when Jesus, the only sinless Sacrifice, took on Himself *every* sin – past, present and future – and served our death sentence for us in full! Then He rose from the grave, defeating death’s power to condemn us to hell.

What’s the worst compromise? It’s when we settle for running our life instead of turning it over to God. If that’s you, please wait no longer to tell Him: “Dear God, I believe You sent Your Son to pay the ultimate price to buy me back from the clutches and penalty of my sin. I now give myself unreservedly to You, as best I know how. Walk with me, please, and guide me into making choices that bring credit to You. In the uncompromising name of Jesus, amen!”

His Deal

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