

There is no Alternative to Total Commitment
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Introduction: Our God knows each of us and why we think and act as we do.

- A. When men reject God in their thoughts it will affect both the mind and the will.
 - 1. It is very easy for any man to deceive himself. **(Rom 1:21-22)**
 - 2. When we lose the ability to discern, we then lose the ability for self-control. We can end up involved and ensnared in destructive practices. **(Rom 1:28-29)**
- B. How can we explain the present age in which we live?
 - 1. Why do our leaders ignore basic truths and even the laws of the land? Why do they deny self-evident truths to the harm of those they seek to “help”?
 - 2. If men that serve in government do not “fear God” and are committed to truth, then they will be unable to resist this pull to irrationality and destruction. **(Ex 18:20-21; Deut 32:4-5)**
 - 3. As an example, let us consider the actions and thinking of Pontius Pilate.

I. The background of Pontius Pilate

- A. Pilate was a politician that claimed to apply Roman law with justice and truth.
 - 1. He had no loyalty to God but he did claim to have the ability to reason and stand as a Roman. Without commitment to God this is not possible!
 - 2. Listen to another Roman judge talk about his commitment. **(Acts 25:16)**
 - 3. Is it possible to have a moral government without a complete commitment to God? It is not!

“But when religion loses its voice and the media worship success, when right and wrong become relativised and morality is condemned as “judgmental”, when people lose all sense of honour and shame and there is nothing they won't do if they can get away with it, no regulation will save us. People will outwit the regulators, as they did by the securitisation of risk so no one knew who owed what to whom.” - **Morals: the one thing markets don't make** -Economics needs ethics – by Jonathan Sacks

- B. When there is no commitment to rules then reason has little weight.
 - 1. Threats, bribery and the praise of men are the currency of the unprincipled.
 - 2. Those who fear God respond in a very different way! **(Prov 15:33; 18:12)**
 - 3. Hypocrisy comes from one that wants a standing with Christians but does not want a complete commitment to that which is true. **(James 4:7-10)**

II. The revealing of the heart of Pilate

- A. Our God will put all of us to the test in time! **(Ps 7:8-10)**
 - 1. God allows men to face adversity so that their true character is revealed. **(Gen 22:1; Job 23:10-12)**
 - 2. What choice will we make when the consequences are high?
 - 3. God gave Pilate several chances to see what was obvious!
- B. Pilate saw the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. **(Mk 14:61-63)**
 - 1. They condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy. Did they mention this to Pilate?
 - 2. They wanted Pilate to rubber stamp their decision. **(Jn 18:28-31)**
 - 3. They made up accusations that would appeal to Pilate. **(Lk 23:1-2)**

4. Pilate had no respect for them.
- C. Pilate saw Jesus under severe pressure.
 1. The wisdom and strength of our Lord was shown even when he did not speak. (Mk 15:2-5)
 2. When He did speak it was not with excitement, hatred or fear.
 3. This strength continued even after a scourging. (Jn 19:1-2, 7-12)
- D. Pilate was warned by his wife. (Mt 27:19)
 1. God chose to warn Pilate through a very persuasive means.
 2. After hearing the claims of His divinity Pilate knew of his innocence.
- E. Jesus confronted Pilate with his own hope of rescue ---- the truth! (Jn 18:36-38)
 1. Pilate's background taught him the danger of "truth."
 2. He states the truth but will not stand for it.

III. The choice of Pilate --- commitment either to truth or to compromise!

- A. There were three ways Pilate tried to avoid his decision. He wanted to negotiate rather than stand upon what was true!
 1. He Sent Him to Herod. (Lk 23:6-7, 11)
 - a. Maybe the decision could be made by another!
 - b. Even if Herod had made the decision, Pilate had an obligation to stand.
 2. He offered the People Barabbas. (Jn 18:38-40)
 - a. Pilate wanted the crowd to make the right decision for him.
 - b. The decision now became even more difficult for him. (Mt 27:16-20)
 3. He sought to provoke sympathy in the people. (Jn 19:1-5)
- B. Pilate took "easy" solution of compromise and rationalization.
 1. He had two goals: to release Jesus but he also wanted to please the Jews.
 2. He decided that the decision was not his to make after all. (Mt 27:24-26)
 - a. Some think the struggle is enough, words and emotion without a stand!
 - b. You must not let another make the decision for you.

IV. Are there Pilates living among us?

- A. Pilate wanted "clean hands." Did he have them?
 1. God recognized that Pilate was pressured. (Acts 13:28)
 2. He also recognized that Pilate did not arrest Jesus or cause this situation.
 2. He also knew that Pilate heard a remarkable confession. (1 Tim 6:13)
- B. God clearly shows that Pilate's hands were unwashed. (Acts 4:27)
 1. How might a hypocrite act among us? (Mt 23:23-24)
 2. Many look at consequences first and then try to find another way. (Gal 6:12)
 3. What if Pilate had stood for the truth?
 4. On the judgment day you will have no one to hide behind. (1 Tim 5:24-25)

Conclusion: Are we looking for middle ground or the truth? Don't be a hypocrite!