

*We come from checkered pasts where we learned to play chess with human perception-Badpeople.la*

There is a bad people website. I couldn't resist, I had to look. Sure, there are Satan websites. How bad could a "bad" website be? Maybe it was dedicated to honoring badness? At first glance the opening web page quotes "*We don't want the spotlight for ourselves. We're stealing it and giving it to those who deserve it.*" Is it Robinhood or stealing the Pink Panther diamond? What kind of bad are we talking about? I read further and they appear to embrace the Robinhood mentality.

It's very cool really. These former bad asses take their talents and use them for good. I believe they want to embrace their past and shape the future with the experiences they had. For most of us that is it in a nut shell. We've all been hurt. I know I have made stupid choices. Certainly, I have been affected by bad events like divorce. We can choose to take the bad and use it for good. I gather that the Bad people website aims along those lines too.

Joseph in the book of Genesis is a good kid. Sure, he ticked off his brothers from time to time, but it's not like he was that bad. I'm not so sure his brothers were terribly bad either. To be fair, Joseph probably was a pain in the butt. His brothers were the jealous types. They had enough of their kid brother, and through a series of events, got rid of him. Years later, we find Joseph standing before his brothers. They had done something bad to him, yet Joseph says "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*" Joseph shows us there are good ways to handle bad deeds.

Why I like Josephs comment is twofold. One is that he acknowledged bad behavior. Half the time we love to make excuses for the bad people in our lives. Joseph didn't do that. Secondly, he found a way through it. He could have killed or banished them. In a way it was the little boy growing up. Joseph would rather live for the future rather than wallow in the past. What's done was done. It's the perfect recipe. Confront bad behaviors and countermand it with love.

People do bad things. I believe we all probably have done something bad at-least once in our lifetime. People think that means murder or robbery. Sometimes it's just immaturity or mistaken intent. Josephs brothers meant wrong but I know they did not plan on killing him or ruining his life. They just wanted to teach him a lesson. We get labeled as bad people when we are misunderstood. I'm sure Pol-pot in Cambodia or Stalin in Russia were not misunderstood. Their bad was horrible. Good most likely is good. Yet, we prefer it somewhere in a gray middle ground muddy area. A place of good intentions or misguided actions. That's a good place for misunderstandings.

J Vernon McGee is a famous radio Pastor. As a boy he tells the story of stealing watermelons. He said they stole ones tasted way sweeter than the store-bought watermelons. Is he a bad man? No, but he has done bad things. Pastor McGee also mentions that he is hot headed and needs to be kept in check. Bad Pastor? You see, I don't think so. He is a lot like the bad people website guys. J Vernon has lived on the bad side. He is also trying to live on the good side. We have a choice to be good or bad. Sometimes our good and bad look a little murky.

I do feel that I am a good man. It's not boastful. I believe I desire to do good. Bad people have good days just like anyone else. The difference might be in the intent and execution of bad

actions. I feel that the word “sin” is best described as “*anything we do to hurt others.*” God said sin is bad. In my mind, anything someone does to hurt themselves or other people is bad. It could also apply to things we abuse like alcohol and drugs. We all know what bad is.

Here is my problem with people. We embrace the bad far too much. Adultery has its reasons. Some murder is justifiable. Sure, I would steal to feed my family. Yet, a person dies. Someone’s hard earned work is stolen. A kid loses his family. Oh sure, they are all justifiable, right? Don’t they all hurt someone else too just to have what we want? I mentioned a rapist that won a paternity battle. Who wins in that decision? People have a warped sense of justice. Some things are just bad.

Yet, we will gravitate towards and defend the bad. These days being the victim is almost shamed. The poor criminal is the victim. We made him or her bad. The victim should feel bad that the criminal was put in that situation. Someone told me on the day my Ex kicked me out “maybe it is your fault.” Did I commit adultery? Did I work too much because I wanted to hurt the family? Was I too soft? I have often wondered if I was not bad enough. Was it really my fault?

I have met some unsavory people. Certainly, I try and tolerate bad people. Recently, I met a man who lost about 160 pounds. He said he was a confident man. Yet, he also mentioned (out of the blue) that he got rid of all the bad people in his life. Who were they? He would not go so far as to say that people picked on him. He didn’t say that he was right and they were wrong. As a matter of fact, this man back tracked several times about being too harsh towards bad influences in his life. Therein lies the conflict good people have all the time. We let the bad people off way to easy.

I have often said that good people spend too much time trying to be good. They make sure they hold doors, be polite, and forgive the bad. In church circles it's tradition to ignore the bad as long as you can. Pray to God for answers and let the bad fester. Eventually the problem explodes. Usually a good person takes the fall for letting things get out of hand. It's not just in church. It happens in our relationships all the time. We ignore the bad far too much.

Sometimes we marry a bad person that we are attracted to. Inside our hearts we hope that prayer, kindness, and love will win. People dish on the Bible. Check out this verse in Proverbs 25:21-22

*“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.”*

I feel this verse is two-fold. For one, it means we should love unconditionally. As I said in the *Good people* chapter: be goodness because you can. However, secondly, we use verses like this to ignore the obvious. Good people focus on the good. It's not in our nature to heap burning coals. As a pastor I have counseled relationships. I always tell them to be the best spouse possible. If they love you, they will love you back. If they don't love you then your kindness will make them hate you all the more. That's it exactly in this verse.

Carrie Underwood sings *“in the end love wins.”* It's true. Yet, don't stay with bad people and wait until love wins. The heap burning coals part is real. Many bad people are surprisingly bad people. Who knew? They also love good people. It's an easy playground for bad people. Love them just enough to stay bad. Love them just enough to berate, hit, and abuse. Why? To stay bad. For bad people, it's not about love or changing for the better. It's about using just enough love to keep the bad alive.

That seems odd, but I believe it. How often do abusers say sorry, I'll change, or next time things will be different? Often councilors will need a break or quit because of the relationship merry-go-round. Good people that are abused will often come back for help 20-30 times. The councilors get to hear the stories and see the bruises. I have wondered if that's why about 50% of pastors quit. They are ill equipped to deal with the carnage from bad people that good people tolerate.

To know why bad people are this way is the 64-million-dollar question. Why did Cain decide to kill his brother Abel? It's not like he had bad parents, friends, or drugs? At that point there were just 4 people in the whole world. Something enticed him. God says a great line during that sequence. He said "*sin is crouching at your door, but you must master it.*" Is it that simple? It seems to me that insecurities and depression play a role. I equally think pride and jealousy played a part. Yet, something drives certain people to not care about hurting others.

I do think that if good people were a little more bad-ass then things would be better. What I mean is that we could call out bad behavior. Good people could tolerate less. The problem is that good people are not wired that way and the bad ones know it. I put up my hand and said no to verbal abuse from a family member. After they died, I struggle that I could not fix it. I have often wondered how I could have fixed my first broken marriage. On and on I have pondered what "I" did wrong.

What if people just came around to the fact that bad is bad most of the time. We would have better relationships. Good people would pick good people. Bad people can have themselves. Instead we spend our time trying to make bad people a little better. I have laughed at this notion. Christians complain that non-Christians act non-Christian. Duh! Did we really expect

them to be what they are not? Yet, bad people pull the Christian card on good people all the time. One small mistake gets a “*that’s not very Christian*” verbiage. I wonder if bad people own us rent free.

Is Michael Jackson the perfect spokesperson for the abused. Look at his songs. He sings he is bad. The lyrics from other songs ask us to leave him alone. Then there is the *man in the mirror* song. He is questioning the mirror. Was he conflicted, confused? I could go on. I have wondered if this poor man was a tormented soul of a good person. The other day a friend posted that there are predators in the music industry. It makes sense. Michael looked conflicted, tormented, and even a little twisted in his life. How often did Michael run into bad people in music? How much of that affected him?

It’s worse in marriage. We make a vow right at the beginning to honor and cherish. Not only that but we say it’s until death too. They say that family is blood. We must respect our parents. I could go on but you know. I know you do. Who does not have a bad family member. Who has not lived in a bad relationship. We know. That is why the #me-too thing exists. That is why gay people have parades. Bad people have done bad things to good people. Yet, good people honor vows to stay in bad relationships. No wonder some well-meaning people become a hot mess.

I do think that most of the bad people are shy. How often do they say that the killer was shy? I have equally heard people say they did not know the killer. He or she kept to themselves. Are some bad people the shunned, maligned, and abused? I bet they are. Aren’t some good people abused too? Why is it so hard to say bad people are bad? The excuses fly. They are

abused, shy, misunderstood. The fact remained they act badly. A so-called good person usually tries to make amends. Bad people tend to strike back.

Most of the time good people take the fallout. They find themselves smack dab between good and evil. They are hearing two voices. Get revenge or find a way to fix this mess. I feel humans are weird when it comes to good and evil. We struggle with that concept. Everyone has their own concept of good and evil. Even in church, I think the reason there are so many denominations is directly because of sin. Each church has their own version.

I wonder if within the realm of good and evil there is a battle for the soul? I am a firm believer that it's all about our soul. The Bible talks at length about ruining the soul. God mentions that what goes in is not half as bad as what comes out. There are themes of guarding our eyes, ears, and thoughts. So, we're left with a choice. Work on being good or let the world crush us. That's where the bad stuff is. I don't think people become bad by accident. They were all little children changed by the world around them.

I have heard it so often from interviews with bad people. Many times, they are stunned at what they did. Even military soldiers have commented at how shocked they were at the killing after the battle. Many could not recall if they killed or who they killed. It leads me back to the soul. I wonder if humans blank out during bad things. Far too often a person has wondered how it got that bad.

That does not excuse bad actions or attitudes. We all get carried away. The trouble with bad behavior is it's a small snow ball. A comment here and a push there is ok. I never really did anything too bad. Yet, power and ridicule are intoxicating. Who knows why? I suppose its

adrenaline in a bad way. The ball starts rolling. Then it eventually turns into an avalanche. An addiction.

The same can be said for the abused. At first, it's not that bad. Love wins! Then our heart leans towards excuses, forgiveness, condoning, accepting, and many other forms of goodness. A little further on it morphs into an apology, shifted blame, and many other countless adjectives for "it's my fault." Finally, your wondering how you got there. All the love in the world can't change a black heart if that heart is black. In the end it's the abused abusing themselves by accepting bad people as good people.

They say that Jesus can save people from the blackness of our hearts. Jesus says he offers a way through. Yet, the black hearted bad people of the world must choose to turn towards good. Jesus does not turn you away from the bad. He offers you a choice or path from your evil ways. It's the same with good people. We can only love the best we can. Half the time your love is not enough to persuade bad people to love you back.

Over the years I have discovered that most of the time bad is bad. Actually, they can be really bad. Good people spend a tremendous energy trying to help bad people. Yet, those we call bad spend very little energy trying to be good. What we get is good people with conflicted souls. Why can't we help? We see it all the time with well meaning parents trying everything to help troubled teens. It's not always about what good people did wrong. Some people have gone bad.

These bad people affect us the wrong way. Hopefully good people affect us the right way. Bad situations change us. There is a danger of us becoming a little dimmer in the heart. A bright light that becomes hard of hearing others. A little harder at loving others. That shiny light of a good heart gets rocks thrown at it. So, what do we do? We turn down the brightness. People



shy away from trouble and begin to ignore others and hide in their shell. We have been invaded by something in our soul. Something that hurts and ruins happiness. Then we say it's time to retreat into our bomb shelter.

Until now I have touched on good people. it's the sect of humans that want a good world full of wonderful relationships. Sometimes these people make mistakes that look stupid. Other times we are embarrassed and maligned by stupid people that just want to ruin us. People are people. it makes some retreat from relationships. Whatever happened to some people that turned them bad could just be an invasion. That's where I want to go next: the invasion of the soul.