

## *The Law of Unintended Consequences*

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**Introduction:** As we gain wisdom we become more aware of consequences.

- A. The fool looks at the here and now and laughs at consequences. **(Ecc 7:4-6)**
  - 1. This world is filled with this wisdom!
  - 2. What if they showed the “other side” of the beer commercials?
- B. One can have God centered goals but suffer terrible disappointments.
  - 1. Even though one may be sincere they still may suffer because of a lack of wisdom. **(Prov 10:21-25; Jas 1:5-6)**
  - 2. Our government has often demonstrated this principle!
    - a. What was welfare designed to do? What did we get?
    - b. What was “no-fault” divorce designed to do? What did we get?
  - 3. Consider David’s building a new ox cart to carry the Ark of the Covenant. **(2 Sam 6:3-8; 1 Chron 15:12-13)**
    - a. Your goals may have been reasonable.
    - b. Your motives may be good.
    - c. You may have been encouraged by others.
  - 4. This lesson is not meant to be a judge about every specific consequence you may have experienced. It is however intended to point you to God’s wisdom.

### ***I. How can we know the consequences of our decisions?***

- A. We cannot anticipate all of the consequences of our actions.
  - 1. The wisest man on earth cannot do this. Consider Solomon.
    - a. Did Solomon understand the consequences? **(Ecc 1:17; 2:10-11)**
    - b. If he had known he would have taken another path! **(1 Kings 11:4, 9, 11)**
    - c. We can know that which Solomon could not know through his wisdom!
  - 2. How many men could you name that exemplify this? Consider: Judas, Achan, the 10 spies and many more.
- B. Satan can use our fear of consequence to his advantage. **(Heb 2:14-15)**
  - 1. What did the spies fear?
  - 2. What did the one talent man fear?
  - 3. What did the Jews fear? **(John 11:48-50)**
- C. God wants us to be concerned about consequences. **(Gal 6:7-8)**
  - 1. God does not tell us all possible consequences.
  - 2. He does however tell us the path to take! **(Psa 37:23-25)**

### ***II. Consider some unintended consequences for local churches***

- A. How should we help members overcome boredom?
  - 1. Consider the struggle of Pat Boone.
  - 2. Do we seek the root problem or deal with the symptom?
  - 3. What has been the effect of “contemporary worship?” **(Jn 4:24)**
- B. How do we reach the lost?
  - 1. Some have decided to address the “symptom” of numbers.
  - 2. What is lacking in the social gospel and some organized church evangelism? **(2 Cor 5:10-11)**

3. What have these “conversions” brought?

C. How do we deal with problems and possible division?

1. Consider the solution of one denominational leader:

“Heresy is better than schism, the Episcopal bishop of Virginia said yesterday in a speech that gently chided church conservatives for imperiling the unity of the country's largest diocese over the consecration of the denomination's first homosexual bishop last November.

“If you must make a choice between heresy and schism, always choose heresy,” said the Rt. Rev. Peter J. Lee to 500 Episcopalians meeting for the annual diocesan council at the Hyatt Regency in Reston.” – Washington Times – 1/31/2004

2. What is the consequence of heresy? (**Gal 5:19-21**)

3. There is nothing humorous about the word heretic or hell.

### ***III. Consider some unintended consequences for individual Christians***

A. How do we build a biblical faith in our Children? (**Prov 22:6**)

1. Discernment is needed to distinguish between faith and fear.

2. Fear will avoid hard choices and therefore multiplies the problem.

3. What happens when things that build faith are removed? --- a weaker faith!

4. Did God want Israel to avoid the ridicule of the world? He counted on it!

(**Gen 46:31-34; Mt 5:11-12**)

B. How do we Deal with the issue of fellowship?

1. Some seek to accept a human catechism. Where is their faith?

2. Consider the unintended consequence of legalism.

“Believers who are motivated by legalism are always anxious to know what is expected of them. They want to do only what is necessary to make themselves look respectable. They crave specific rules so they can know precisely how to behave. They plod along hoping that someday their efforts will pay off. According to the New Testament such people are legalists; they are using the law to establish their righteousness.”

3. Should we seeking peace at any price? (**Rom 16:17-18**)

### ***IV. There is only one way to avoid unintended consequences***

A. Seek the wisdom of the only one who both knows the consequences and holds the future! (**Rom 8:28**)

1. I do not carry the burden of the unknown. (**Mt 11:28-29**)

2. I need to know that God is in control and I am not.

B. Fight the temptation of pride and the unintended consequences it brings.

1. Why do men change the organization, work, worship of the church and many other things? What have been the consequences?

2. Some have though so much of their wisdom that they despise God's!

(**1 Cor 1:26-31**)

3. We need to watch our hearts when we look down on other churches and consider ourselves as the only ones who are “thinking.”

4. With more blessings come more temptations towards pride. (**1 Cor 8:1-2**)

C. When we trust in God and his wisdom there will be blessed consequences.

1. “What if I do not have enough money for my children!” (**Heb 13:5-6**)

2. “Will my children be hurt if they take a stand alone?” What does faith say?

3. God's best work comes in our weaknesses if we will let Him. (**2 Cor 12:7-10**)

**Conclusion:** Are you living in the peace of God or in the blindness of human wisdom?