

No Quarter November

THE 2020 ANTHOLOGY

DOUGLAS WILSON

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You Know the Drill

So here it is November yet again, and it is our third time around. I suspect that many of you know the drill, but in case you are new to these parts, I suppose I should take just a moment to explain the ground rules. Exactly what is No Quarter November? Or, as we will occasionally call it this year, Mostly Peaceful November.

From time to time, I have said certain things at *Mablog* that might ruffle a feather or two. Mindful of my responsibilities in such cases, I try to make it my usual custom to anticipate any objections and concerns that may arise, and I do so through what we might call my Second Paragraph Rule. Somewhere early on in the offending post I will say something that will hedge my supposed outrageous sentiment around with qualifications and other forms of oleaginous balance. For example, I will say something like “please don’t read this as arguing that all women are fat,” or something equally soothing.

Now there are some people out there who cannot be satisfied, no matter what you do, or how hard you try, right? For them, it is like

these qualifications were never even *made*. They respond to what I write, qualifications and all, nuance and everything, as through it were my purpose to be incendiary regardless of the consequences. They deny that my prose is exquisitely balanced. Despite abundant evidence to the contrary, they persist in denying that I am walking the Tightrope of Steadiness across the deep canyon of Overdone Metaphors.

And so, once a year, throughout the month of November, I do my level best to leave all the qualifications completely out of it. I still *believe* all of those most reasonable qualifications, most certainly, but during the month of November I count on you to supply the qualifications.

Some of you may have read this far, and you have been thinking “yeah, yeah, I know all that. But in the words of John of Damascus, what’s in it for me?” Aren’t there usually giveaways and stuff? There most certainly are, and this year will be even better in this regard.

2020 has been a *sui generis* year, a year like no other, and we knew that NQN needed to match. Since a bunch of you probably have all my books on Kindle from the last two years of giveaways, we thought it was time for something new. Alongside the blog posts here from me, there will be surprise announcements coming out of Canon Press every week this month. So stay on your toes and make sure you’re following their social media posts. I will announce the big doings here as well.

You won’t want to miss a thing. If you thought the free Kindle books were cool . . . just wait.

CHAPTER ONE

Something Like Dryer-Vent-Lint-for-Brains

In order to keep these things plain and clear and lucid and comprehensible and transpicuous, you and I are going to have a little talk about this here election tomorrow. And in this little talk I am going to play the role of a Dutch uncle, which means, in its turn, that I am going to set certain things before you. As I do so, I will seek to speak with a becoming frankness. The wood will be unvarnished, the signal ungarbled, and the rhetoric unadorned. The amp will be plugged in, but the distortion knob will be turned all the way to the left.

So I am going to *splain* here why a Trump vote is the path of true wisdom, and why a refusal to cast a Trump vote is walking a different path. What is the name for those who walk that different path? Because we are good friends, you and I, I will tell you, jabbing your forehead with an affectionate forefinger. I will limit myself to the sort

of names that are consistent with our long-standing relationship, not to mention our mutual Christian confession. You know, names like Dryer-Vent-Lint-for-Brains.

You may well ask if I am going to just use a name like that. Yes. I am doing it so that you may test my mettle, and my commitment to this November thing. No qualifications. Look at the calendar. The election is tomorrow, for pity's sake. No sense trying to talk me into qualifications. And if you keep pressuring me like this, I will have to make it the lint from two dryers.

But November or no November, we will eventually need to get to the actual argumentation. *That* doesn't involve any compromise with the ground rules.

Comparing Like With Like

When we turn to the Scriptures for guidance in such matters, we want to turn to passages that are relevant. We want to open our Bibles to the places that are actually comparable. We don't want to have an orange problem, which some people believe we actually do have, and turn for help to the apple passages. And yet even here there are layers. You can tell at a glance that there has been equivocation in the use of the word *orange*.

The Scriptures give us various ways to break this down. For example, the Lord told us the parable of the two boys who were told to go work in the vineyard. One dutifully said he would go, and then didn't. The other said he wouldn't go, and then did (Matt. 21:28-32). Which one did the will of their father? This is not a trick question. One politician talks pro-life for his entire political career, but when in office doesn't *do* anything about it. Another one talks all over the place, and before he was elected the first time there was no telling what he thought, but when he got into office, he did more to advance the pro-life cause than all his conservative predecessors

combined. So which one do you vote for? Yes, someone says, but he just can't get over the fact that when he told his father he wouldn't go work the vineyard, he was *quite* disrespectful. Rude almost.

Here's another way to look at it. When it comes to evaluating kings on the basis of policies and personal life, the Old Testament gives us a broad array of kings to look at. We have a king after God's own heart, like David, who failed grievously in his personal life, and yet whose policies were really good. We have a king who inherited those wonderful policies, and who was beloved by God, and who even wrote Scripture, like Solomon, but who introduced manifold corruptions into Israel later in his reign. Likewise, Amaziah and Joash began well, and cratered later. We have reformers like Asa, who removed corruptions, but whose personal life had real problems. We have reformers like Josiah, whose personal life was sound enough, but who didn't get the job of reform completely done. We have kings who occupy other places along the spectrum, like Hezekiah or Jehoshaphat, and who are still identified as good kings.

In Scripture, a man can be a good man and a bad king, like Solomon, and a man can be a bad man and a good king, like Asa. Life is complicated—but it is much simpler if you recognize that it is complicated. The question you should be concerned about is whether high places are going to get removed. Or, failing that, whether no new high places will be built. We even have the complication of Nathan the prophet working to get Solomon on the throne instead of Adonijah, even though Solomon was the one who was going to set the stage for Israel going astray later. A prophet should know that, right? And yet, Solomon's party is where the good guys gathered at the time, and we don't fault Nathan for supporting Solomon.

CHAPTER TWO

Pornography for Cuckolds

Christians across the board know that pornography is a problem. The only Christians who don't know this are that special class of Christians called non-Christians. They are the ones who yammer on about things like “ethically sourced” porn, and we need not take them seriously. They already have their reward, which was, they assure us, ethically sourced.

But regular Christians, the kind who go to Heaven when they die, know that pornography is both a personal problem for many and a cultural problem for all. That said, there is still a much bigger problem out there, and it is found in the fact that we tend to misidentify the nature of the problem. You can take a really big problem, and then make it huge through a misdiagnosis, which is what we are occupied in doing.

We know that things are bad out there, but we don't know how bad, and we don't know how much worse it is going to get because of our refusal to consider the problem with open eyes.

The Deeper Problem

So what do we think is the problem, and what is the nature of the *actual* problem?

We think the problem is lust, which is true enough, but only as far as that goes. Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her, etc. (Matt. 5:28). But it is not *simply* lust. The problem is that modern pornography trains men to be cuckolds, and deadens their God-given ability to be possessive and jealous, and that means they are being trained to be permanent objects of derision, and to accept that as their appointed lot.

I say “objects of derision,” and this is what I mean. When a husband strays, all the women in her life sympathize with the wife. But when a wife strays, all the other men think it is funny. Ah, ah, *ah* ... look at the calendar.

The reason I need to address this here in November is because discussions of pornography (among Christians) are discussions that have been sanitized (which is quite a different word than *sanctified*). I do not mean sanitized in accordance with sexual expressions, but rather sanitized with regard to the broader dictates of a widely accepted feminism. Our discussions have all been curated and cleared by the egalitarian censors, which means that our discussions are doing very little good, and a whole lot of harm.

In older forms of soft “porn” (think pin-up girls), there was a straight-forward problem for Christian men. There was a picture of a beautiful woman, and that woman was not your wife. “You should not desire her, or covet her, or lust after her.” Thus far the plain Scriptures. And it seems incredible to us today that a Christian man

CHAPTER THREE

The Authority of a Fraudulent Election

I will begin by saying that there is a sharp difference between saying “not my president,” on the one hand, and “not *our* president” on the other. It is very easy for individualistic Americans to sport a bumper sticker that says, “Don’t Blame Me. I Voted for the Other Guy.” That is not how a democratic republic makes decisions. We have an established constitutional mechanism that determines how we as a nation decide to go this way or that. And when 40% of the people don’t want to go in a particular direction, they wind up going in that direction anyway. If five people in the family want to eat at Panda Express, and one guy is holding out for Chili’s, almond chicken it is.

And so it is not possible for one man to “opt out” because of his deep-seated disagreements. He voted *no*, and voted with intensity, and that doesn’t matter. And neither is it possible for one state to “just say no.” When Nixon swept 49 states over McGovern in 1972, a bumper sticker appeared later which said, “Don’t Blame Me. I’m

From Massachusetts.” But Nixon was still president in Massachusetts as much as he was in Alabama.

Now when the disagreements get to a certain level of inflammation, they cease being mere disagreements and become occasions for war. At least that is what South Carolina thought. They had more than just a mere “disagreement” with Lincoln.

That is why we ought to abide by the results of elections that we don't like. That is what conservative Americans did, for example, when Bill Clinton was elected, and when Obama was. You don't like it, not even a little bit, but the country made that decision.

But what do you do when an election is fraudulent, and manifestly so?

Corruption of the Electoral Process

The first thing to do is recognize that it is a real possibility. America is not made out of stainless steel. We are susceptible to electoral corruptions, but we are actually well past that point. We have always had cheating in elections. As long as this world is governed by fallen human beings, which it will be until the Lord returns, there will be people who seek to game the system. But their evil deeds will be done at night, and in a culture that still has integrity, we all do whatever we can to suppress voter fraud.

But corruption in policy cannot be isolated and kept there. In other words, at some point corrupt policies will metastasize and will get into all the processes as well. A political party that stands four-square behind the dismemberment of unborn children is not going to flinch when it comes to the dismemberment of your right to cast your vote in a process with real integrity. And when it gets there, the corruption will be out in the open.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Singleness as Affliction

For various reasons and by various means, the teaching that singleness “is a gift” has got about in the Christian church. Like many other things that have got about, like your teen-aged son’s pet bull snake, this has been the cause of much excitement, most of it not good.

A few years ago, I wrote a piece that argued that young men should get married by their 23rd birthday.⁴ Despite the cogency of the reasoning therein, this contribution of mine did not fix our culture-wide disgrace of a problem, and so I thought it best to have at it again.

4. Blog and Mablog, “7 Reasons Young Men Should Marry Before their 23rd Birthday,” <https://dougwils.com/books-and-culture/s7-engaging-the-culture/7-reasons-young-men-marry-23rd-birthday.html>

Let Us Define Terms, Shall We?

Singleness is an affliction, not a gift. Or, if it is considered as a gift, following the instructions of the New Testament, it is the same kind of gift that a *bona fide* affliction is. More on that in a moment.

Got that? Singleness is an affliction, not a gift. But in order for this argument to hold water for more than three minutes, I hasten to define here what kind of singleness I am talking about.

Singleness *is* a gift if it is freely chosen by a responsible adult, and is freely chosen in order to devote oneself to kingdom work, and the choice is not rashly made by a nineteen-year-old at a revival meeting. “No man may vow to do any thing . . . which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God” (WCF 22.7).

A three-year-old is single, and that is a gift to everyone, in pretty much every direction. I am happy to call that status a gift. And the unmarried apostle Paul was gifted with celibacy (1 Cor 7:7), and he explicitly calls this status of his a gift.

So perhaps we should distinguish celibacy from singleness this way—celibacy is voluntary singleness, embraced for the sake of kingdom work by a responsible adult. This would exclude those who are voluntarily single, but whose reasons have more to do with the thought processes of crotchety bachelors than they do with the dedication of frontier mission church planters. As my father says, men turn into old maids sooner than women do.

So singleness is an affliction if it was not chosen freely and voluntarily for the sake of kingdom work, and the person concerned is of a marriageable age, and would very much like to be married.

The problem is that many thousands of young adults in just this circumstance have been told in numerous ways, and on many occasions, that their singleness “is a gift.” But this puts many of them in a really awkward position. They are the sort of church member that