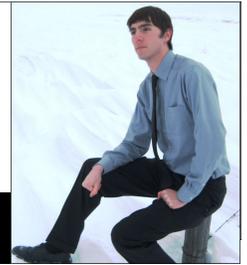


CLASSIC TALES FROM CAUSTIC TIMES

Joshua Pedrick's February Update

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Dear friends and family,

The month of February has mostly been spent adjusting to the office, and preparing for our upcoming events in Georgia and Tennessee. In light of this, I decided to take this opportunity to share a classic Justice for All story with you.



This anecdote from the campus of Texas A&M in 2007 has always been one of my personal favorites. I was one of the fortunate few who were able to witness firsthand the events of this account as I listened in on both of "George's" conversations. What makes me appreciate this story the most is the sharp contrast between two very different responses to the same argument.

Without further ado, here is the story in the words of Stephen Wagner, our Director of Training:

A crowd formed around a conversation I started with two joking students at Justice For All's Free Speech Board. Students with various views watched and participated. "George" stepped out from the crowd to offer his perspective. George and I had talked earlier that day when he shared that he was angry about my

free speech expression of graphic abortion pictures. So he returned with a free speech expression of his own.

"Steve, my perspective is that casual sex is a really wonderful thing. I brought some magazines to share my perspective. Will you look at them? Here's a *Playboy*, and I have *Hustler* here as well." As he pulled the pornography from his backpack for the whole crowd to see, I turned my head and tried to keep my cool. I could see my fiancée, Rebeccah [my sister], in the distance. I pointed out that I would definitely not look because it would be disrespectful to her. The truth is, I have about fifteen arguments against pornography; I just used my most persuasive personal reason - the quickest at hand.

George held the magazines in view. Just the fact that George would support the pornography industry to make his point angered me. I could feel my face getting red with frustration as he continually taunted me. "What is it about beautiful women's bodies that you don't like?" I clarified that his free speech was bad for society and legally defined as obscene, while abortion pictures are not.

I felt like I was getting nowhere, so I asked, "Is your point that I am a hypocrite because I believe in my free speech, but not yours?" "That's it," said George. I replied, "Let's say you're right. I'm a hypocrite. How does my being a hypocrite justify the killing of innocent human beings with abortion?"

He had no reply and persisted with his taunting as the conversation shifted to others in the crowd. I was doubly frustrated that George had

succeeded in frustrating me. Why wasn't I able to keep my cool?

Soon George left the crowd and went to find another victim. He walked up to my friend David Lee and began again, "David, I believe in casual sex." As he was taking the magazines from his bag, George stopped because David didn't hesitate: "Casual sex? With whom?" George was startled. "With girls."

David was unsatisfied. "With which girls? Six year-olds? Ten year-olds?" George looked aghast. "Why are you going *there*?" he asked. David was unaffected. "Going where? I'm just trying to understand your view. You said you believed in casual sex and I want to know what you meant by that."

"Twenty to twenty-five year-olds. It's best with twenty-five year-olds," George stuttered. David proceeded. "What will you do if one of those girls gets pregnant?" George was quick to reply, "We'd get an abortion." David now had the information he needed to help George see the folly of his ways. He said, "You mean to tell me that you love casual sex so much that you would proudly kill your own child, but you don't want me to show people what that looks like? Doesn't that make you a hypocrite?" David didn't know that just a few minutes before, George had attempted to pin the same charge on me.

George had no steam left, but David didn't let him off the hook: "You are welcome to show your pictures in public and see what happens. I wouldn't recommend it, however, since you'd likely be arrested." George put the magazines away and settled into a civil discussion with David.

With an aggressive questioner like this, I much prefer David's strategy to mine. I was clearly on the defense, allowing George to direct the conversation. He had me on the ropes. I assumed I knew what George meant by "casual sex" and allowed him to derail the conversation. I was oblivious to my best tool, a simple question. David went on the offensive from the beginning with at least three perfectly-placed clarifying questions. He was direct, but he didn't sacrifice his gracious manner in the process.



In discussions you have this month, instead of assuming you know what the other person means, use "what" questions to create the best opportunity for impact when you decide to respond. You might even try this in discussions with your spouse and kids. You'll be surprised how effortless understanding becomes.

The story of "George" is an excellent illustration of what Justice for All tries to do: train people to thoughtfully respond to any argument. Thank you for supporting me in this goal.

In Christ,

Joshua Pedrick

Joshua Pedrick's Prayer Requests

- That people's hearts and minds would be open at Georgia and Tennessee outreaches
- Endurance and strength for all JFA staff and student volunteers
- Patience and love as staff and volunteers speak with students on campus