



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Deuteronomy 30:15-19

(15) See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; (16) In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. (17) But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; (18) I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. (19) I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

*King James Version*

A tenet supposing that "the truth lies in the middle" in most matters is an ethically dangerous one. Applied universally, it guarantees a person a life—and communally, a culture—of compromise. Such a person or community will take a stand on nothing. Every decision will be a negotiation between whatever is perceived to be at the far ends of the spectrum. This is life in the gray land of rootless vacillation. It is living without convictions, without belief in the existence of truth.

The peril in living by this principle reveals itself most readily in matters of morality. In His Ten Commandments, [God](#) outlines truths regarding human conduct, both toward Himself and toward fellow man. These rules are not guidelines, as many seem to consider them today, but non-negotiable standards. As He patiently explains in places like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, if we live by them, we will receive all sorts of blessings,

but if we reject them and violate them, we had better brace ourselves for calamity. With God and His laws of happy, successful human behavior, there is no middle ground.

Yet, those who try to walk a centrist road often consider the Ten Commandments to be one of the extremes and begin backpedaling toward antinomianism, otherwise known as anarchy or lawlessness. For example, God instructs us, "You shall not murder" ([Exodus 20:13](#)), an unambiguous statement. In other places, God explains that manslaughter is an exception to this, but even one who commits manslaughter must pay a stiff penalty for ending a human life (see [Exodus 21:13](#); [22:2-3](#); [Numbers 35:16-28](#); [Deuteronomy 19:4-6](#)). As clear as this is, though, centrists rationalize further exceptions to reach personal comfort zones.

Abortion is a sad case of such compromise. As the murder of a human life, abortion falls under the umbrella of the sixth commandment. A centrist may not agree with radical, pro-choice advocates that abortion should be on demand at any time and for any reason, yet he might allow the use of RU-486 (mifepristone), the abortion pill, because he concludes it does not technically cause an abortion (in many—but not all—cases, it is used to prevent conception).

Another concession on the abortion issue is the ubiquitous proviso, "except in cases of rape or incest." If one believes that abortion is murder, accepting this position opens a crack in the dike. It assumes that the life to be extinguished is of lesser worth due to the manner of its conception. Ultimately, this exception operates on a belief that it is permissible to end a pregnancy if it can be determined—somehow—that the child would not enjoy a certain quality of life. Thus, it also becomes allowable to abort malformed and retarded babies, and the next step would be to abort potentially chronically ill children, say, those with genetic markers that point to certain debilitating diseases and syndromes. How long is it before abortion is tolerated for reasons as basic as gender (already common in India and China) or hair or eye color?

This is the proverbial slippery slope that eventually ensues from living "somewhere in the middle." The apostle Paul maintains in [Romans 8:7](#) that human nature is essentially hostile toward God and His law; it recoils from

submitting to divine standards, which are, admittedly, oftentimes difficult to observe. The Bible shows that people have an innate tendency to compromise to placate the human drive to live by its own rules. Every day in myriad situations, men and women repeat the [sin](#) of Adam and Eve in the Garden ([Genesis 3:1-6](#)), rejecting God's command in order to fulfill their own desires. Seeking "truth" through compromise will only end in sin and its destructive consequences.

Fundamentally, those who seek the "truth" between extremes are playing God. They have taken upon themselves the job of determining what is right and wrong, a position that the great Sovereign of the universe has not abdicated. Truth be told, we have all been guilty of this usurpation of God's throne, and there is no time like the present to give it back to the One to whom it rightfully belongs.

This suggests that we have to adjust our thinking. Men have formulated a spectrum of choices, all of which are legitimate to human minds, yet this is not a biblical construct. The Bible reveals, not a continuum with extremes bracketing an expansive center, but a simple alternative: We can choose between God's way and the wrong way. This is why God has established the process of conversion, so that over a lifetime of overcoming and growth, we can [repent](#) of our lives of compromise and begin to live by His righteous standards.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**  
[Somewhere in the Middle](#)

### **Related Topics:**

[Abortion is Murder](#)  
[Adjusting to World's Standards](#)  
[Carnal Mind is Enmity Against God](#)

[Carnal Mind, Enmity to God's Law](#)

[Compromise](#)

[Compromise with Sin](#)

[Compromising Standards](#)

[Culture of Compromise](#)

[Gray Areas](#)

[Manslaughter](#)

[Sixth Commandment](#)

[Standards of Morality](#)