Suicidal Empathy

The gods We Imagine—part 6

November 1, 2026

DAY 1: What is empathy? Secular; Christian

1. Wbat is empathy. (1) *Cognitive* empathy is the mental ability to understand someone else's mental state and see a circumstance from their point of view. (2) *Emotional* empathy is the ability to resonate with someone else's feelings. This is what I'll call **Empathy #1.**

Empathy is a noble virtue, but it has morphed into something different in our secular culture.

2. **Empathy #2:** In the secular world empathy has come to mean (1) being accepting of any behavior and (2) not being judgmental about any behavior except when someone else is critical.

- Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[e] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him. "Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

2. This parable was spoken to religious leaders who justified themselves as good based on what they *believed*. Jesus challenged them with the parable. Your theology is only as "real" as the extent to which you put it into *practice*.

3. No one can argue that empathy in this example is exemplary. This is an example of what we'll call **Empathy #1—real empathy in action.**

4. Our secular culture and even much of Christian culture, however, has redefined empathy as a virtue **without guardrails or boundaries**. It has been exalted as the preeminent virtue in both secular and Christian culture, always to be praised regardless of the circumstances.

5. What do you think? Is empathy to be exhibited in all circumstances?

DAY 2: Application of empathy needs to be in concert with other virtues

1. Empathy is not a standalone virtue. It is not a one-size-fits-all virtue, applicable in every situation.

2. We are to be empathetic, but we are also to be truth-tellers (Eph. 4:15, 25). There are polarities we are to hold in tandem. On one side is love and compassion. On the other side is truth, wisdom, and discernment.

3. This truth is lost to our secular society and is becoming increasingly lost in the Christian culture.

4. It should not be, because we are reminded in myriad of ways that it is foolish and harmful to live with empathy as a carte blanche virtue.

John 7:24 Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment.

a. It's what every decent parent knows when it comes to your teenager and their friends. You don't just blindly "accept" your teenager's behavior, nor necessarily "accept" all their friends. In fact, who their friends are is a major concern of yours. If your kids get involved with the "wrong group" it can be disastrous for your kids.

b. Its why you don't loan money to someone indiscriminately.

c. It's why you have locks on your house and your car. It's why you may pay for a ring doorbell,

d. Every country used to know the wisdom of this. That is why every country has immigration laws and enforces them thoroughly—at least we used to.

e. *2 Thessalonians 3:10 If a man will not work, let him not eat.*

f. Jesus gave these very directions to His disciples when He sent them out on two mission trips.

Matthew 10:16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

g. The Corinthian man caught in adultery was to be removed from the fellowship.

h. *Titus 3:10 Reject a factious person after a first and second warning. After that, have nothing to do with them. [11] You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.*

5. Where does your thinking go between these two alternatives with empathy?

a. We are to be empathetic and accepting regardless of the circumstances, or,

b. We are to empathetic in our attitude and using wisdom and prudence regarding how we respond to people.

DAY 3: Empathy, as it relates to the role of government

1. Government is one of three God-ordained authorities (Family and church are the other two).

*Romans 13:4 For the one in **authority is God's servant for your good**. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, **agents of wrath to bring punishment** on the wrongdoer.*

[5] Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

[6] This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

2. According to Romans 13, what roles is the government to play as God's servant?

3. The secular world is practicing **Empathy #2, empathy without wisdom (guardrails)** on an individual level as well as a governmental level. While it may be well-intentioned, it is harmful to everyone—both to the giver and receiver of Empathy #2.

One of the ways Empathy #2 is destructive is it enables bad behavior.

4. If you are a parent you know this to be true. Rewarding or ignoring bad behavior eventually encourages more bad behavior. The same is true with adults.

5. The "Abolish the Police," "No Cash Bail," and "Open the Prisons" movements are the inevitable consequences of **Empathy #2.** While the motivation for these movements intend to be empathetic toward those on the criminal side of society, they are certainly not empathetic to the victim side of society.

Altruistic motivations are no substitute for wise law and governmental policy.

6. The primary purposes of government are to **protect its citizens, provide a safe and stable social order, and punish evil.**

7. For a government to turn its back on its citizens and allow evil to be done to us is a failure of government.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Why is Empathy #2 such a powerful draw for secular people? Philosophical

1. Western Civilization has been adversely affected by the teachings of Karl Marx, not just regarding economics but in how we view what it means to be human, and what we call "good" and "evil."

2. Marx's teaching morphed into what philosophers call intersectionality.

3. Intersectionality was originally established to determine how one's social situations (gender, race, social class, sexuality, disability, etc.) affect someone's levels of discrimination. But this became THE way of identifying people's identity and level of victimhood.

4. The effects: (1) The greater the levels of possible discrimination, the greater you are a victim. (2) This way of seeing life has become DEFINING for people. It establishes a new IDENTITY for people, rather than their God-given identity found in creation, God-given value, and divinely loved and valuable.

5. Thus, what is maximized to you is what has been done TO you, and what is minimized or even eliminated is what you have done wrong. Hence, the abolish the police and prisons, for example.

6. Empathy #2

a. Intends to make a person feel validated and content with themselves.

b. How is that maintained? By your emotions, affirmation of others, and by seeing yourself as deserving because of your victimhood.

c. The outcomes? Permissive toward destructive behavior. It creates a greater sense of entitlement, increased narcissism, and increased lack of intentional motivation and action toward improving yourself. We more easily take less responsibility for bad behavior.

d. Ironically, Empathy #2 makes us not only less empathetic toward others more fortunate than ourselves but even creates disdain and contempt for them.

John 7:24 Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment.

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Why is Empathy #2 such a powerful draw for secular people? Personal

Romans 3:12 There is no one good, not even one.

1. To criticize virtually anything is considered the ultimate sin in our secular culture. "Who are you to judge anyone?" Empathy (#2) is now the pinnacle of virtue signaling.

In our secular society, to affirm empathy (#2)
signals you are a" good person."

2. We all want to believe we are a good person. How does the secular mind answer that question?

a. The secular mind is rooted in humanism, that all people are good. If someone does bad, it is not because they are bad. It is because they have been treated badly by people or "society."

b. "I am a good person because I believe people are good and I support good causes." Utopian concepts such as the brotherhood of mankind, empathy (#2), and helping those less fortunate (especially when they have been oppressed) reinforces my goodness.

3. This view of humanity is idealistic to a fault. It ignore a lot of realism.

4. Consider the "I support the Palestinians." They are supported because they are seen as the oppressed. To support the oppressed makes me good and reinforces me as a good person.

5. Suddenly Oct. 7 happened. Suddenly the people the secularist has supported, cheered for, marched for, raised money for in the defense of RESISTANCE AGAINST OPPRESSION, suddenly have turned into the most ardent cheerleaders for vile, repugnant horrors. Hamas brutalized in the most bloodthirsty and savage ways imaginable, slaughtering in the most barbaric, sadistic fashions: raped, tortured, burned alive—babies, girls, women, the elderly. While in some cases killing children in front of their parents before killing the parents.

6. The secularist is faced with a nightmare dilemma. The very people they have championed, the "good" people because they are "victims," are savages. The people they have championed as the oppressed are now the oppressors of unimaginable horror.

7. But cognitive dissonance steps in. A human being refuses to have their entire worldview shattered. If the cause for which they cheered for is evil, that makes them an evil person by their own metric for determining their basis of goodness.

8. Unspeakable denial jumps to the rescue! Oppression become resistance. Evil becomes good because of the ultimate cause of goodness.

9. So, the Israelis are the ones at fault. They are to be blamed. There is no better way of blaming people than blaming others for the very things they are doing. Accuse them of genocide. Nazis.

10. When we attempt to define our goodness on our terms instead of God's terms, you will always end up in this conundrum. It is not just a philosophical conundrum, but a very personal one.

11. You will find yourself blaming much of humanity for society's ills rather than yourself and people like you.

Hebrews 9:27 And just as it is appointed for everyone to face judgment.

12. What strikes you from today's devotional?