

WAYNE GRUDEM | *CHRISTIAN ETHICS: RESPONDING TO SLANDER*

In wrestling with a biblical response to slander, I contacted my favorite seminary professor, Wayne Grudem. He directed me to his book, *Christian Ethics*, which is endorsed by Al Mohler and also by one of our church member's from the Deerfield Road campus, John Kilner.

"Insightful, encyclopedic, biblical, and distinctively evangelical, this new book from Grudem is a massive contribution to Christian ethics. It will stand as one of the most important and definitive works of this generation." – **R. Albert Mohler Jr.**, *President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

"...Grudem's *Christian Ethics* is a breath of fresh air. ... Where his views are at odds with other views, even within evangelical Christianity, he explains those alternatives to his readers and invites comparisons. Readers are challenged to think and are given the material they need to do so in a God-honoring way." – **John F. Kilner**, *Director of Bioethics Programs, Trinity International University*

Here is what Wayne Grudem wrote about responding to slander... – *Pastor James MacDonald*

2. The Necessity of Responding to Slander. The Westminster Larger Catechism, in further explanation of the ninth commandment, says that it also requires "love and care of our own good name and *defending* it when need requireth (Question 144). It gives to scripture references in support:

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold. (Prov. 22:1)

Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me." (John 8:49)

The second passage illustrates a general pattern in Jesus's ministry. He always defended himself immediately and firmly against false accusations throughout his entire ministry (see, for example, his progressive silencing of the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew Twenty two 2130 3:46. The only exception was the unique situation when he was on trial leading up to his crucifixion at the end of his life (27:12, 14). In that situation, it was important that he submit to the Father's plan that he would die as a criminal, under false accusation, and that he fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet *he opened not his mouth*;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is *silent*,
so he opened not his mouth. (Isa 53:7; cf. Acts 8:32)

Too often today Christian leaders mistakenly and allow their own names or the ministries they lead to be slandered relentlessly in the public eye while they give no response. This can be immensely damaging in an age when Internet accusations can multiply rapidly with no accountability for the authors. These silent Christian leaders perhaps think they are imitating the example of Jesus at His crucifixion, but they fail to appreciate the uniqueness of that situation, and so they fail to imitate the example of Jesus during his entire public ministry, when he immediately defended himself and answered false accusations. I do not mean that we must answer everything we hear or read. For sometimes a false accusation has little influence and is best ignored: "Do not take to heart all the things that people say, less you hear your servant cursing you" (Eccles 7:21). But when it seems that a false accusation will gain influence and do harm, it must be answered.

The Apostle Paul showed a similar concern to protect the good name of his ministry, the good name of Christ, and the reputation of the gospel when he demanded that city officials in Philippi come to the jail and publicly release him and Silas, thus showing public vindication of their innocence.

But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." (Acts 16:37; cf. Mark 13:11)