

CRIBBS NOTES - July 15, 2007

Sometimes it is necessary to ask, "What if I am wrong?" Actually, I find myself wondering if my perspectives and position on issues are off course. At our best, when we feel so confident in the correctness of our ways, we are probably on the wrong path. Yet, it is hard to see where we have erred. Thus, we continue on our path and not look back to see the harm we wrought.

Mistakes should not deter us from striving to reach our goals. We should not be afraid to make mistakes. But, we must keep in mind that everything we do or think is not necessarily right. We walk a fine line where we cannot afford to dismiss our attitude and behavior. We have to be aware of the impact we have on the lives of others.

In my police ethics class, I constantly repeat a simple phrase to law enforcement executives, "Everyday everybody is watching everything you do." Even when we don't think people care about us, there is somebody paying attention.

That current television commercial about Las Vegas which says, "What happens here stays here," is far from true. It is another cute mantra that can trick people into embarrassing themselves and thinking nobody will ever know. A few politicians and celebrities have learned the hard lesson about how acting out in Vegas, only to have it come back and hurt them and others at home.

Another popular phrase, "Stuff happens," is very true. A part of living and growing up means getting into trouble. We do stuff that we don't want to talk about as we get older. But, the fact of the matter is we are who we are because of what we have done. If we are fortunate, we can be honest enough to admit our past and vow not to repeat those early life lessons.

It is mature to confess our wrong doings as adults or as a nation. Unfortunately, many of us don't feel accountable to anyone. We believe we are in charge of our lives and can do whatever we imagine. We believe nobody else has a right to tell us what to do. That is one of the great problems we are facing as a country. Nobody in the world can correct us. Nobody can tell us what to do. As a result, the United States is in deep trouble. Rarely do we ask, "What if we are wrong?"

God's grace is available because we make mistakes. If we cannot admit our errors, it is almost impossible to reap the benefits of grace. Until we realize what we are doing because of our policies to protect our "national interests," too many peoples of the world will continue to suffer. And unless we look at the wake we are creating, we will not see the number of bodies littering the earth as a result of America's insatiable appetite and gung-ho bravado to control everything.

What if we are wrong? How can we turn around and begin to do things differently? What must we do to get it right?