

## **Moral Choices III**

### **Hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil. So as to not be judgmental??**

Last week the story of the Chicken the man had sex with and then ate was designed to elicit a moral taboo response from you [and me.] Psychologist Haidt asked two different groups of people about the Chicken, and other morally loaded stories to see how they would react. When questioning a group of working-class Americans whom he encountered in front of a McDonalds, he got the taboo response “It’s wrong; people just don’t do those things!” However later when questioning graduate students at the University of Virginia he got a different response to the same questions: “It’s perverted, but if it’s done in private, it’s his right.” Or “it may be ugly, but as long as nobody gets hurt and no one’s rights are violated, it’s OK.” While the graduate students responded with feelings of disgust, for the most part they were able to set aside those feelings. He found that the working class folks were not insensitive to concerns about harming others, but they remained faithful to their strong emotional responses. Meanwhile it seems that the grad students actively suppress their emotional response in order to focus on a narrower range of concerns: harming others and empowering the disadvantaged. We hear such things from many who advance the theory that if it doesn’t harm another, or it is “fair” to all, it can’t be wrong. Politicians particularly take up this mantra. Haidt calls this the “Harm and care” foundation of morality.

More to come.

**IHM Pray for us.**

*Fr. Jerry*