

Student's Name

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Course

Date

Good People

The short story 'Good People' by David Foster Wallace is a very powerful and touching narration about a young, unwed, Christian couple who are facing a challenging decision that is associated with moral and religious impacts likely to follow. The short story is about the relationship between two young Christians; Lane A. Dean, Jr., who is 19 years old and his girlfriend Sheri. The two young people are confronted with an unwanted pregnancy and are contemplating the possibility of procuring an abortion, which is against their religious beliefs. Much of the story is told through contemplation by Lane about Sheri. Lane is faced with the stress of the desire to sustain the strong and positive relationship with God as well as the fear of going to hell due to abandoning the Christian values through contemplation of abortion. According to Lane, getting rid of the unborn child would enable him and Sheri to not only avoid shame but also pursue their plans. There is an exploration of the tension that exists regarding religious morality and the need to make practical life decisions that oppose Christian values as well as the resulting fear of hypocrisy.

A good person in the context of the short story is someone who follows and lives by the Christian values and follows the teachings of the religion. The definition is grounded on the fact that Lane is questioning the issue of him being a good person or not as he is moving away from his faith. As described by Wallace, 'Something in him, though, some terrible weakness or lack of

values could not tell her...she believed he was good, serious in his values' (p.228). Similarly, Lane is confused about his love for his girlfriend, which could be the reason they are not happy while seating together.

According to Lane, the love of God was a good indication of good people. Therefore, Christians should also love each other, particularly, such individuals who were couples. Lane believes that for one to be good, they should practice and show love, an issue he has a problem with when it comes to loving Sheri. As the author states, Lane "believed in a God of compassion and love and also the possibility of a close connection with Jesus Christ, the sacred being through which God's love is enacted in human time" (Wallace 228). According to the phrase, Lane's understanding of being a good person implied that one had to share the love of Jesus Christ to other people. However, the fact that he failed to open up and talk to Sheri about his love for her proves that he was short of love, the most important Christian value.

The idea of transforming from a good person is seen in the conflict that shows that Lane does not love Sheri. Lane is not honest to Sheri about his genuine and inner feelings, a scenario that leads to the situation of the unhappy and tense environment when the two are seated together. Despite the two looking at the issue in all different angles, Sheri needed a confirmation of whether or not Lane loved her. As described by the author, ["... for had he once said it, avowed that he did love her, loved Sheri Fisher, then it all would have been transformed" (Wallace 227). According to the description, Lane felt that he had complicated matters as he withdrew from telling Sheri the truth about his love for her. "But neither did he ever open up and tell her straight out he did not lover her" (Wallace 227). As the author says, the failure of Lane to Sheri about his love was a lie by omission. In this case, Lane had changed and ceased to be a good person.

Lane's failure to confess to Sheri that he did not love her is a sign of hypocrisy. As stated by the author, ["...they could not understand, could not hear each other's speech... two hearted, a hypocrite to yourself either way" (Wallace 228)]. Lane and Sheri have been praying for love all along but at the end, Lane realizes that what he needed most was the courage to tell Sheri the truth. The fact that the two are confronted with a religious and moral dilemma brings out the repercussion of being hypocritical. As Lane contemplates, if he were honest with Sheri from the start, things would have been different because both would have a better understanding of each other's feelings. Lane has the feeling that either of the decision they make i.e. keeping a child as unwed couples or having an abortion would be against their Christian values. However, he is hypocritical since he does not open up and communicate to his girlfriend (Wallace 227). The cause of the tension and unhappy atmosphere between the young, unwed couple could be that Sheri is waiting for Lane to come clean and be honest. All along, Lane has been praying for the wrong thing, love, instead of praying for courage to tell Sheri the truth.

In conclusion, the story does not tell us whether or not Sheri ends up procuring an abortion, hence going against their religious values. However, there is an exploration of Lane's uncertainty and fear of telling Sheri the truth. The short story brings out the impacts of hypocrisy in a relationship which is tension and unhappy moments. Similarly, there is the conclusion that young couples should decide regarding opposing their morals and those of the religion, as well as addressing the issue of hypocrisy in a relationship.

Works Cited

Wallace, D F. Good People. New York: The New Yorker, 2007.