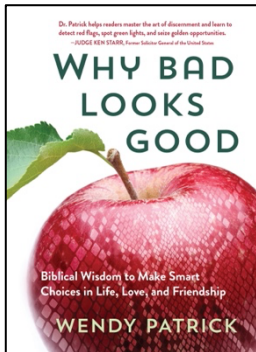


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## WHY BAD LOOKS GOOD

### Overcome Deception with Biblical Perception

Wendy Patrick, PhD. on the importance of discernment, divine wisdom, and godly decisions.



Los Angeles, Calif: Have you ever misjudged a situation that appeared desirable but ended in disaster? Have you been betrayed by a friend, coworker, or love interest? We all face challenging, heartbreaking experiences that require us to make important decisions, but rather than pursue worldly advice, we can find complete wisdom and discretion in God and his Word.

**Wendy Patrick, PhD.** is a career prosecutor with degrees in psychology, law, divinity, and theology. For decades, she has worked with victims and witnesses who dismissed red flags and personal intuition, only to find themselves entangled in perilous situations with dangerous people.

Inspired to help others avoid falling victim to the hazards of misperceptions, Wendy wrote *Why Bad Looks Good: Biblical Wisdom to Make Smart Choices in Life, Love, and Friendship* (BroadStreet® Publishing). In its pages, Wendy explains the emotional and psychological reasons behind our attractions to people and circumstances that ultimately prove harmful and destructive. She shares stories of real people and real legal cases, as well as biblical wisdom and personal counsel to help others develop discernment and live with equal parts caution and optimism. Topics featured include:

- **When Bad Appears Beautiful:** Attractiveness does not always equate to righteousness. We misjudge attractive people by attributing favorable qualities to them that they do not actually possess (also known as the halo effect). We must first verify that a person's external beauty comes from within. (John 7:24)
- **The Fallacy of Feelings:** Relationships rooted in feelings make us vulnerable to dangerous, toxic people, especially if we believe ourselves unworthy of love and respect. We can either disregard our internal warning system, or we can pursue biblical wisdom to understand our feelings and make informed decisions. (Jeremiah 17:9)
- **When Bad Feels Good:** Not everything that feels good is a sin. God designed us to live, laugh, and love in community. Biblical warnings of sensual pleasures and temptations are designed to preserve and protect, not punish. God wants us to find true peace and comfort, not cheap thrills and flashy indulgences. (Ecclesiastes 1:8)
- **When Immoral Seems Normal:** Adultery destroys relationships, devastates trust, and damages people emotionally and spiritually. We must remember that worldly temptation does not come from God, and resisting it often requires avoiding it in the first place. We flourish in Christ-centered relationships and should pursue those instead. (Hebrews 13:4)
- **The Illusion of Intelligence:** Intelligence can be an illusion, whereas true wisdom is evident in a person's disposition, actions, and words. This kind of wisdom comes from seeking and understanding God's will, taking advice, and practicing discipline. (1 Corinthians 1:27)

Other chapters address what to do when bad sounds good, when bad feels good, when less looks like more, when risky looks rewarding, when lust feels like love, when credentials do not reveal character, and more.

Wendy affirms that when we submit to the Lord's guidance, we are prepared and protected by the armor of God. She further asserts that practicing biblical discernment helps us assess people and circumstances clearly and accurately, surround ourselves with trustworthy people, and root ourselves in God, our ultimate source of strength and wisdom.

### About the Author:



**Wendy Patrick** is a career prosecutor and holds a bachelor's degree in psychology, a law degree, a master of divinity, and a doctorate in theology. She teaches at Trinity Law School, Veritas University, University of San Diego, and San Diego State University.

Dr. Patrick regularly shares her knowledge as a media analyst and has made thousands of television appearances, including Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, CNN, Inside Edition, and a variety of other national and international programs. She is the author of *Red Flags* (St. Martin's Press) and coauthor of *The New York Times* bestseller *Reading People*, and she writes a regular column for *Psychology Today*.

Wendy holds a purple belt in karate, and in her spare time, she performs with the La Jolla Symphony as a concert violinist and plays the electric violin professionally with a rock band. To learn more about Wendy, watch her [sizzle reel](#), visit her [website](#), and find her on Twitter @WendyPatrickPhD.

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### Suggested Interview Questions:

1. What is your hope for readers of *Why Bad Looks Good*? What prompted you to write this book?
2. As a trial attorney and career prosecutor, can you explain how seemingly good things often influence our perception?
3. Why is discernment important? What does it require of us?
4. You write that we should ask ourselves "why" whenever someone focuses their attention on us. Why is this an important question?
5. What can become forms of idolatry in our lives? What warning signs should alert us that something has become an idol?
6. You encourage readers to evaluate the integrity of others by looking beyond mere appearance. How can we assess a person's reputation without face-to-face interaction?
7. What do you caution against when relying on first impressions to understand others? What do you mean when you write that "demeanor deceives, but patterns predict"?
8. How can someone be sure they're using their influence and power to benefit others? What leadership qualities indicate that a person uses their power for good?
9. What is unproductive busyness, and what are its dangers?
10. Where can we learn more about you and stay up to date with your projects?

## Notable Quotes from Why Bad Looks Good:

Biblical wisdom is drastically different from worldly wisdom. As the Lord declares, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9). Unlike worldly advice, God’s advice is perfect because he created you and knows everything about you. And because God created everyone, he knows just as much about everyone else as he does about you, including why some people, unfortunately, are not to be trusted. (p. 15)

Normalizing and legitimizing maladaptive, harmful thoughts and behaviors create a dangerous environment of permissive immorality. Whether in terms of infidelity, dishonesty, or depravity, marketing malevolence is no less harmful to public morality simply because it is portrayed as normal. We see similar behavior today— people living in depravity, behaving in deceitful, wicked, greedy, arrogant, and boastful fashions, knowing their behavior is sinful but continuing in it and encouraging others who behave the same way (see Romans 1:29–32). We are wise to carefully consider whom we follow and where they may be leading us. (p. 21)

Hypocrites often sound and look good. They boast about their virtuous behavior, appear respectable, and publicly engage in righteous deeds. But when judging a person’s sincerity, appearances can be deceiving. If you want to know what someone is truly like, watch what they do. Consider whether a person’s talk matches their walk. Jesus explained, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 7: 21-23). (p. 47)

As relationships develop, no one wants to reveal too much too soon. We should always leave certain things to the imagination—just not the important things. Yet within the throes of infatuation, some people revel in the belief that ignorance is bliss. The less you know about someone, the more you can use your imagination to fill in the details—favorably. Unfortunately, rose-colored glasses camouflage red flags. Because history impacts credibility, it is difficult to judge someone in the present who has no past. In both life and love, less is not more. Knowledge is power, information breeds intelligence, and safety is found in numbers. (pp. 81, 83, 85)

Despite the allure, many people obey their instincts and refrain from dangerous behavior. But not everyone. For some people, despite an appreciation of the risks, wrong looks right. Also beware of people who encourage irresponsibility. In the words of Jesus, “If anyone causes one of these little ones— those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Biblically, boldness comes from knowing Christ: “In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (Ephesians 3:12). (p. 91)

Wisdom is power; it “makes one wise person more powerful than ten rulers in a city” (Ecclesiastes 7:19). Godly power is a gift. The Lord “gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak” (Isaiah 40:29). True power is perfected in weakness. When Paul complained about an ongoing infirmity, the Lord reminded him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul went on to proclaim that he delighted “in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties,” recognizing that “when I am weak, then I am strong” (v. 10) (p. 148)

When it comes to evaluating a person or situation, you are most observant when you are objective. Before you act, consider and reflect on the following: • Why do you want this? • How does it make you feel? • What makes this attractive? • Who would disapprove and why? • How will this improve your life? • How will you use it to improve the lives of others? • How will this impact your image or reputation? Learning to distinguish healthy from harmful desires allows you to distinguish the lure of the world from the truth of the Word. While others are seeking fame or fortune, love, or luxury, be wise enough to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (6:33) (p. 176–177)