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FREE OR NOT?

Q. Brother Dave, a woman in our church left her husband and is dating our choir director. Their dates are very "personal"! He told her that it was all right because we are not under the law anymore. The woman's husband is broken hearted and the whole nasty situation is about to tear our church apart. Some people say they have done right - some say wrong. What I can't understand is that I heard each of them give glowing testimonies concerning the fact that Jesus saved them. I even heard them speak in tongues. Please, can you tell me why Christians do things like that? Haven't they lost their salvation? You teach a lot about the difference between law and grace. Now, what do you say to this?

A. I know that you do not want me to "soft soap" my answer, so here goes. The woman and the choir director are very immature. They both made their views very clear in Sunday School last month, so I'm not revealing anything that is not public knowledge already. They may think that what they are doing is quite grown up but they are both immensely selfish, self centered and ignorant. However, they are saved. You have asked three questions and implied several more, so I'll have to take it from the beginning.

First, when Jesus Christ is admitted into the heart (spirit) of a person, then Jesus does His job perfectly. The spirit of that person is saved and all past sins are forgiven. Initial salvation does not remove the sin nature. It covers past sins. I wish that you would say that to yourself three or four times! That is

why James said, "Receive with meekness, the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21. That was written to people who were already saved in their spirits, but who needed more salvation (changes) in their souls. In the same way, these people were saved by Jesus Christ but they have not received enough engrafted word (Bible) yet in order to save their souls (change their minds). Even though we are all free in Jesus, we are not free to follow the leading (lust) of our own souls.

In their immaturity (of soul salvation, or changes) they followed their soulish desires. They were motivated by what they could see, hear, smell, taste and feel. That is why they committed adultery. They should not have allowed themselves to get into a situation that would lead to adultery. At no time does the Holy Spirit ever lead anyone to commit adultery. They were led by their own soulish lust.

And following the lust of the flesh does definitely remove a person from the benefits of the Kingdom of God such as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Q. But, Brother Dave, the man involved said that he was free from the law and that he could do anything that he wanted to do.

A. Your choir director does not know the scriptures well enough. While it is true that he has embraced those selected scriptures which show that we are free from the law - he has neglected those scriptures which show that we are not free to follow the leading of our own soul. In

other words, even though Jesus Christ has entered the heart (spirit) of a person, that alone does not change the mind (soul) of that person. He has twisted the scriptures for his own sensual purpose.

Q. But, don't the scriptures say that we are free from the law - so we can do what we want?

A. Absolutely NOT! The flesh (sax) body is led by the mind (soul). Your mind (soul) processes the signals from the five caporial senses (see, hear, smell, taste, feel).

Then after receiving these inputs the mind (soul) becomes sensual. (From the word senses.) Thus, the person is led by the soulish, sensual mind. The Bible refers to this as "works of the flesh." When a person is engaging in "works of the flesh" they do not lose their eternal salvation (home with Jesus in heaven) - but they definitely do lose their righteousness, peace and joy. (R.P.J.) Your R.P.J. is the outworking of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth (not in heaven). The Kingdom of Heaven is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost right now.

Q. Yes, but how can a person be in heaven and out of heaven?

A. After I counseled that couple I found that they have lost their righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Right now they are living in hell. Let me repeat that I'm only talking about subjects they have already made public. They know that what they are doing is wrong but they also know that their sins have not interfered with their communication with God. That is the hardest part for many people to understand. You see, sin removes righteousness, peace and joy from the soul but since Jesus already has the spirit of the same person - God continues to speak to the heart (spirit).

That is what is really making the couple miserable. They sin because of the condition of their minds (they have not yet received enough of the engrafted word in their souls, James 1:21) but they pray to God in their hearts (spirits) and they are utterly perplexed.

Q. It seems to be complex. But I know that you are right because both of them are still spiritually sensitive, as you call it. She receives visions and he receives dreams

from God even now. But I find it difficult to accept them as Christians.

A. In a way you are right. They have elected to not accept the standards of the Christian community (church) and so the Bible teaches that they should not be accepted (Romans Chapter 14). They are stumbling blocks. But the fact is that their actions do not keep them from a heavenly home after they die - but the actions do keep them from living in heaven (righteousness, peace and joy) here on earth, while they are alive. They constantly have thoughts of self condemnation. Further, they really feel bad about the condemnation they receive from their church friends. But their soulish desires get the best of them.

Q. Well, maybe I'm seeing more clearly. Tell me what to do.

A. Realize that they are still Christians but that they have resigned from the Christian community.

Q. That's impossible! How can I do that?

A. Honor their prayers and spiritual sensitivity; but don't invite them to the Sunday School picnic, or any other social event. I get that idea from I Corinthians 5:9-13 which I quote, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators; Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Q. Brother Dave, you are making it harder, aren't you?

A. No, I'm not. The Bible did. However, if they do show up, then I believe that the law of love teaches us to be civil to them. The law of love is in front of - is more important than - this law of conduct. We are still under Bible rules.

Q. If they are free from the law, and they cannot follow the leading of their minds - what do they follow?

A. Your question is part right and part wrong. No Christian is free from the law!

Q. Now, you are wrong. Paul said that we are free from the law.

A. No! You are wrong. Paul said that we are free (from the law) to be led by the Spirit.

Q. I don't see what you are talking about. It seems like you say one thing on one hand and something else on the other.

A. So did Paul. I'll try to explain it. "The law of the freedom of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death." The people you asked about have noticed the part of the scripture which said, "made us free from the law of sin and death." They use that as an excuse for exercising their sensual desires. But the same scripture says that "freedom of life in Christ Jesus" was the thing we follow, - not the law. We do not believe that Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit (life in Christ Jesus) ever led a Christian to participate in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and the list in Gal. 5:22, Rom. 1:18 and II Cor. 12:20. These are works of the flesh - the result of a reprobate mind (soul) (Gal. 5 and Rom. 1). The Holy Spirit will not lead a Christian to do these things. The mind (soul) of a Christian will! Their minds did, and now they are using that scripture as an excuse to wrongly justify their own sensual actions.

Q. Then why don't their minds lead them right?

A. Because they are not mature enough. They have not yet received enough engrafted word to save their souls (change their minds - James 1:21). You see, the choir director was placed in his job of authority and responsibility as soon as he was saved. It is true that he is an accomplished musician, but he received his authority at church much too soon after salvation. He did not have enough time (or expend enough effort) to receive the engrafted word to change his attitudes. His heart (spirit) was right but his head (soul) salvation is progressive. He became the woman's choir director before he had time to progress. On the other hand, she accepted him as her leader, and he led her into this. But there were times when her own selfish, sensual desires led him too! In other words, it takes two to tan-go - and they did because they had not yet

received enough engrafted word which gives them power to control themselves.

Also, there are a lot of Christians who have been "in the way" a long time, who still are very often led by their souls, - not spirit. These people have also been placed in positions of authority - just because they have been around for quite a while. They are really no better than the choir director, because "time in office" is not the right criteria, - receiving with meekness, the engrafted word - is!

Q. All right. I can see that. But tell me what you meant by being "free to be led by the Spirit"?

A. Now you are ready to understand the most important part of the whole lesson. The Holy Spirit leads Christians to do things that are against the law of Moses - like go to church on Sunday, not Saturday; or wear a wool suit with cotton underwear. Peter was even led by the Holy Spirit to eat supper with the Italians which was against the law. We assume that they fed him bacon (or something like that) because of the argument he had with Paul later (Gal. 2-5). Eating with Italians and eating bacon were against the law of Moses. (I'm using Cornelius, Captain of the Italian band as a joke here. No offense is meant toward Italians.) If Peter decided to eat with Italians or eat bacon because of his sensual desires (something he could see, hear, smell, taste or feel) then he was wrong. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit did lead him to do those things against his will. Paul argued with Peter that since Peter was led to do those things, then Peter's will about them should have changed. In other words, the Holy Spirit led Peter into new freedom in those realms. Peter reverted back to the old, and Paul advanced into the new.

Q. That explains the argument between Peter and Paul. How does it apply to us?

A. 1.) When you - or the couple you asked about - follow the leading of the Holy Spirit - you are right.

2.) When you follow the leading of your mind (soul) you are often wrong.

3.) When your desire is to leave the law of Moses, you are always wrong.

4.) When you desire is to be led by the Holy Spirit, you are always right.

Q. That says a lot. But it is not what the choir director said. Why doesn't he see things that way?

A. He is acting like a selfish baby. Being a big baby, - it does not keep him from being a member of his father's family. But it certainly should keep him from positions of responsibility and authority. Presently, he has no place in the church where he (or his actions) can influence or lead people to follow him.

Q. If they become married later on, what should we do?

A. That's another question. Right now we are looking at - his feeble excuse for his own sensual actions. The subject of how to handle marriage, divorce and remarriage is associated with this - but results of Bible study on that separate subject are just as revealing. As we have seen, the common church does not understand or handle backsliding rightly. Also, neither do they understand Bible principles about marriage, divorce and remarriage either. So they don't treat that right - but that's another subject. In fact, I had to write a whole book on that subject called, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE.

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