

The Side Effects of Freedom

Romans 6:15-23

John 8:36

I. The Side Effects of Medicine

- A. Medicine has been labeled by some naturalists as controlled poison.
 - 1. Prescription medicine is given to kill a virus or ease a symptom.
 - 2. As a foreign substance to the body, it will almost always have a side effect.
 - 3. The medical doctor's job is to balance the treatment so the side effect isn't worse than the problem you had in the first place.
- B. Example of a side effect - **ILL: Jess Barter**.
 - 1. He was given medicine for E. Coli which made his kidneys shut down.
 - 2. His E. Coli was cured, but then he had to have dialysis.
 - 3. His life was saved so it was worth it - but now he needs a kidney transplant.

II. The Side Effects of Freedom

- A. The land of freedom is America.
 - 1. In spite of its shortcomings & corruption in government, it's still the greatest country in the world.
 - 2. Everybody wants to come here. People immigrate to America to have the freedom to be what they can be.
 - 3. The problem:
 - a. With all this freedom in the last few generations, the values of our culture have evolved from a Christian base to a humanistic (secular) base.
 - b. The moral taboos are no longer there.
 - 4. The philosophy is "do whatever you want as long as it doesn't hurt someone else." There isn't any absolute standard for moral conduct.
- B. What are the side effects of certain freedoms:
 - 1. Of sexual immorality - venereal disease, AIDS, abortion & often a terrible amount of guilt.
 - 2. Of the traditional vices:
 - a. Drinking alcohol - shortened life, brain damage, pre mature aging.
 - b. Smoking tobacco - shortness of breath, lung cancer, shortened life.
 - c. Using street drugs - brain damage, illness, jail time, death.
 - 3. Of divorce - broken hearts, loneliness, insecure children.

III. The Side Effects of Spiritual Freedom

- A. What is Spiritual freedom?
 - 1. Before the cross:
 - a. The Jews had an obligation to obey the Law of Moses.
 - b. A relationship with God depended upon it!
 - c. Since perfect obedience was nearly impossible, a system of animal sacrifices temporarily filled the gap. **Rom 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .**
 - 2. After the cross:
 - a. The Law of Moses was made obsolete as far as establishing a relationship with God. **Col 2:14 - having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.**
 - b. Lord Jesus "fulfilled" the Law when He died! **Matt 5:17 - Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

3. So - the question becomes: **Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? - v15**
 - a. Since there is no longer a law to obey, am I free to live a life of sin?
 - b. Answer: obedience to the Law as Lord of your life was replaced with obedience to Jesus as the Lord of your life!
 - c. So - obedience to a set of rules was replaced by the building of your character; a team effort between your will & the Holy Spirit!
- B. What are the side effects of grace (your freedom in Christ)?
 1. Whatever course of action you choose, sin or righteousness, results in side effects (or consequences) - either good or bad.
 2. **v16** - It's a matter of selling yourself into slavery:
 - a. **v19** - Slavery to sin is doing your own thing; the sinful lifestyle - impurity & wickedness that continues to get worse & worse (addiction).
 - b. **v17** - Slavery to obedience is doing God's thing - obeying **that form of teaching to which you were entrusted**, i. e., what you have in His Word!
 3. The eternal consequences:
 - a. What is the side effect of the sinful life? Death; eternity in hell apart from the presence of God.
 - b. What is the side effect of obedience? Righteousness; eternity in heaven in the presence of God.

So - simply because the Lord graciously saved you, just as you are, when He died on the cross, doesn't give you license to live a sinful life. Instead, it gives you the privilege of surrender!

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