

CAPTIVES

Romans 6:18 ... “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

When we hear about captives it is usually about prisoners in jail or hostages held by kidnappers. Captives lose their freedom and the ability to make decisions. Captives are miserable; they feel powerless, like a victim, and hopeless. Are you not glad that you are not a captive? But, wait. You may be a captive if any part of your life is being influenced by the father of lies: satan. You may be a captive of satan if you are a born again believer, but have not yielded certain areas of your life to God. Our verse today contrasts being a prisoner of sin, with becoming a slave to righteousness. As slaves to righteousness – God’s influence on our lives – we have more freedom than anyone else, and God’s expectations of us are doable because we do not have to accomplish them on our own.

Being a captive robs you of peace, joy and love. You cannot enjoy authentic love from others, and you cannot express genuine love to others. Your mind may be confused by the lies of satan and his evil desires for you. You may even be a captive of your own selfish will or greed. Many things that you do in life seem pointless because your path cannot be guided by God when it is being guided by satan. Perhaps you own a business and cannot resist selling inferior products to your customers, or cheating them by not giving them correct change, as required by law. You may notice that righteous believers abstain from certain activities because those things are part of their past, not their current relationship with Christ. You may even mock or tease other believers when they choose not to go clubbing or drinking with you, or when they choose church over the beach; when they decline to have casual romantic relationships because they are waiting for God to bring the right – godly – person into their life.

You may be a captive and not even know it. You may attend church, be active in the youth group, sing in the choir or even teach Sunday school, and still be a captive because you have withheld some areas of your life from God. And when God is not guiding you, satan is. That is the simple truth of our lives: If you are not being influenced by God, you are being influenced by satan. There are no other alternatives. If you have been waiting for a breakthrough in your life...a spouse, baby, job, growth of your business, better friends; or, a car, house, greater income or better health, it may be because you have not surrendered your entire life to God; you are still clinging to old habits or sins that are keeping you captive to the evil one. Finally, if part of your life is still held captive by satan, your testimony is being corrupted. People see you and they know by your lifestyle, the decisions you make, and the habits you still retain, that God is not supreme in your life. Then they will question the authenticity of your faith and your belief in God, and that may be enough for them to reject God.

If you are a captive to sin, ask God to protect you from temptation, to bring better friends into your life, and to open His Word to the truth that awaits you. You need not be a captive to sin, when God offers you abundance and joy by being a slave to him.

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