

THE FREEDOM TO MAKE MISTAKES

1 Corinthians 6:12 ... “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

I have been asked why God allows us to sin and make mistakes. It is because God gave us a free-will when he created us. If you force someone to be loyal to you, it is not genuine loyalty, it is only forced behavior. The same answer also applies to our love for God. If God forced us to love him, it would not be a satisfying result for God or us. God does not want mindless robots loving and serving him. He wants people who make an informed decision to honor him and follow his guidance.

In today's verse Paul says that as a follower of Christ he no longer needs to be concerned about Jewish laws, because the power of the Holy Spirit living within him influences his behavior and helps him avoid sin. Paul was a Jew and he lived under Jewish law for most of his life, until he was born again in Christ. Jews had laws for everything to try and control society. Just like we today have many laws instituted by the government, so many in fact that you probably know very few of them. As a Jew, Paul had to know every little detail about what was allowed and what was prohibited, and it was a constant struggle to avoid breaking those laws. But once he was saved, he was no longer bound to obey those laws on his own because his commitment to Christ was superior to his commitment to Jewish laws. With the Holy Spirit living in him, he knew right from wrong and good from bad.

A paraphrase of today's verse might read: “Since I've become a follower of Christ, Jewish laws have no authority over me. The Holy Spirit shows me what is helpful and what is not, and keeps me from indulging in habits that take control of my mind and body.”

One role of the Holy Spirit is to help you avoid sin and things that can harm you and others. Consider eating, for example. The Christian faith does not forbid you from eating pork or other foods that might be somewhat unhealthy. However, there are things that will harm your body if you consume them too often or in large quantities. Nothing in the Bible specifically forbids smoking. But if you smoke, it will harm you and others around you. The Bible is more neutral on alcohol, but it forbids coming under the influence of it, which can happen with only a small amount. So, for me personally, I abstain entirely.

Just as we have the freedom to love God, or not, we have the freedom to sin, or not. If you are not a keen student of the Bible, you may not know everything that is bad, which is why God sent his Holy Spirit to guide you when you became a Christian. Trust the Holy Spirit. Listen to his voice. Head his advice. Under his guidance you can become a righteous child of God.

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