

Do We Have the Right to Be Wrong?

Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17

PROPOSITION: God has given us many indications that man has the right to choose to do what is wrong in His sight, but, at the same time, He warns us about the consequences.

INTRODUCTION:

1. From the beginning God determined that His creation would not be under His direct control.
2. Placement of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was saying to man, "You have the right to be wrong." That tree represents God's openness to man's self-determination.
3. Because of the choices Adam and Eve made, they were cast out of the garden.
4. For happiness there must be liberty; but freedom implies the possibility of falling.

DISCUSSION:

I. You have the right to be wrong about your leader.

- A. Evidence of Joshua's skill as a leader of men is given in Joshua 24:31.
 1. During his lifetime he led people through the making of many decisions.
 2. He could have been wrong, and, sometimes, he was (cf. Josh 7, 9).
 3. He was usually right, however, and led Israel to take care to do the same (Josh. 24:14, 15).
- B. We, too, are presented with a choice between God Who makes demands on us to sacrifice self interests and the right to satisfy our immediate physical and earthly desires.
- C. Such choices – whichever one we take – have consequences. We see this truth also in other Bible examples.
 1. Jotham's fable about his murderous brother, Abimelech, came to be a true application to the people's poor choice of Abimelech for a leader of Shechem (Judges 9:40-49).
 2. When Israel came to Samuel with the request for a king to judge them (1 Sam. 8:5), they rejected God as their king. God gave them the right but not before He warned them (cf. 1 Sam. 8:11-18).

II. You have the right to be wrong about what controls you.

- A. Paul speaks about choices in Romans 6:16-19 saying don't let sin control the way you live.
 1. He is not discussing the big choice (God), but the daily choices.
 2. Don't let sin into your life. It will take control and make you its slave.
- B. Is there a better description of today's world than that given in 2 Timothy 3:1-5?
 1. Freedom can easily erode into self-indulgence and irresponsibility.
 2. That seems to be the life many choose, but not Timothy.
 3. He chose faith, patience, love and steadfastness (2 Tim. 3:10).
- C. We cultivate that which will control us, i.e. we "sow" to it (Gal. 6:7, 8).
 1. Choosing that to which you will "sow" you are choosing what will control you.
 2. However, each choice has consequences.
 3. If you make the wrong choice, you must accept the responsibility and suffer the consequences.

III. You have the right to be wrong about the way.

- A. The Bible has many examples of people's being given choices concerning the way they will go. In them God is saying, "You have the right to be wrong, but don't make the wrong choice."
- B. In Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Moses told Israel, "You have the right to choose life and good or death and evil. Choose life."
- C. One of our favorite parables in the New Testament tells us that we have the right to be wrong about the way we will go (Luke 15:11-32).
 1. The father didn't want the younger son to leave home, but he allowed him to be wrong. Grievous consequences were attached to his error.
 2. The older son also sinned though he remained at home; yet, to him the father said, "When you are with me, all that is mine is yours."
- D. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus talked about the two ways you are free to choose (Matt. 7:13, 14). Choose the hard way, because it leads to eternal life.
- E. Walk (i.e., travel) in the light, for when you do, "...the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

CONCLUSION:

1. Life is filled with choices that have to be made every day.
2. God calls on us to live with restraint and exercise forbearance.
3. With freedom comes responsibility and consequences.
4. The choice is yours. You can change the direction of your life anytime you want.
5. No matter how many wrong choices you have made, or how bad those choices have been, none is so bad that the blood of Jesus can't make you clean and new again.