

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!