

THOU SHALL NOT

Deuteronomy 5:16-21

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

There is a worldly saying: “Everything that is fun either costs too much, is illegal, or immoral.” Sadly many view Christianity in terms of “Thou shall not” (restrictive and sterile). Is Christianity a life devoid of fun? Can Christians enjoy life?

THE FORBIDDEN IS ENTICING

“Don't look” “Don't touch” “Don't read” “Stay out” lures us!

Example: Someone says, “Don't look now, but ...” Do you find yourself looking? Curiosity has done more than “kill the cat.”

Everyone is affected by such allurements. Jam.1:14ff

Each person has their own areas of vulnerability.

One is drawn to the forbidden by its appearance and promises.

The forbidden fruit had its allure. Eve was deceived (desire blinded her eyes).

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Gen.3:6

The devil used appearances and promises to tempt Jesus. Mat.4:1ff

The lust for power and prestige lured Simon to sin. Act.8:18-24

Fear of criticism caused Peter to quit associating with Gentile Christians. Gal.2:11-14

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 1Jo.2:16

Lust of the flesh (to have); lust of the eyes (to see); boastful pride of life (to be).

WHAT IS FORBIDDEN OFFERS PLEASURE, SATISFACTION

There is no denying that sin offers and delivers pleasure. It's the “selling point.”

If sin was unattractive and painful, few would sin.

Deeds of the flesh offer personal satisfaction.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal.5:19-21

The “prodigal son” (Luk.15:11ff) enjoyed his freedom in loose living.

Moses recognized that there was momentary pleasure.

Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. Heb.11:25

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FORBIDDEN

Ignoring the consequences doesn't make them disappear.

There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Pro.14:12

One must live with the results of his or her actions.

The rich man who ignored Lazarus had to suffer the consequences. Luk.16:22ff

Many have rationalized about the consequences, while ignoring the reality:

Gamblers dream of beating the odds.

Refuse to see the loss of money and the consuming greed that corrupts.

Drug users only consider the immediate effect.

Ignore how wasteful their life is; the strained relationships; the hurt caused to self and others.

Immoral only seek the sensual pleasures.

Refuse to think about the loss of self-respect, reputation, broken vows, anguish of divorce, health, and disapproval of God.

Worldly-minded Christians see only what they want to see.

Ignoring the outcome of their actions.

RESTRICTED FOR OUR BENEFIT

The Father says "no" to counter such enticement.

Sin ruins lives as sure as poison harms the body. (It causes the cup of joy to spring a leak).

Many lives are ruined because, "I didn't think ..." "I didn't realize..." "I didn't consider..."

God's warnings are given out of concern, not to rob us of some pleasure.

TOLD OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR WELL-BEING

Graphic predictions are given to open our eyes. Mat.13:40-43, 47-50

The mention of awful consequences is not scare tactics, but solemn warnings.

The reality of judgment is cited to save us from the awful consequences.

GOD WANT US TO ENJOY LIFE!

Clean, wholesome fun ... that which promotes the godly life, not doing what destroys it.

Pleasure that endures, not fleeting pleasures.

Joy that fills the heart, not sin which satisfies the flesh but saddens the heart.

Godliness is gain, now and forever.

For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 1 Timothy 4:8-9

FOR DISCUSSION

Today we embrace many "thou shall not's" (we call them "do not's") that limit our activities while being protective.

Do not fool around with a loaded gun.

Do not ride a bicycle on the freeway.

Do not walk alone through a crime-infested area at night.

Do not give out your PIN number.

Do not open email attachments unless you know it is safe to do so.

Do not pick up hitchhikers along side the road next to a prison.

Do not try beating a train to the crossing.

Do not count on the lottery for your retirement.

Why should we chafe under God's "Thou Shall Not's" that are given for our protection?

We need to thank God for them!