



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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Freedom From Control

You may have heard this yourself this week. NPR did a story on Maya children from Central America. What researchers have found out about them reinforces an understanding of human nature built around how God created us to work.

It seems these children have a much greater ability to pay attention than most children from more “advanced” societies. What they found out is that this ability is linked to the greater autonomy these children have.

I see it as evidence that God created humans to be free. He granted us such great freedom that it was possible for us to make the one choice that would ruin our lives, a choice that Adam and Eve made for us. And why did he create us to be free? Because without freedom it is impossible to love, and God wanted his universe to operate on love, the basic principle of his character.

It was an expensive choice, one selfish humans aren't able to make with each other. In our selfish desire to keep as much for ourselves as we can, we can't see our way to make the expensive choice to grant others freedom. So we become control addicts who actually believe that it would be ungodly NOT to control our children.

In so doing, we rob them of the ability to love, we make them incapable of paying attention, and then we wonder why our children grow up to be hateful and thoughtless. We made them that way in our control addiction!

So even though our children inherit selfishness from us, it seems that our outcomes would be better if we would be less demanding and grant them more autonomy (freedom) to be self-directed. Then again, Jesus did say the kingdom

of God was within us.

In other words, with God's help it is possible to restore the human character to the unselfish, service-oriented basis we were created to have. And that can happen while we're still stuck on this sin-infested planet.

Which brings me to another thought I had recently. We tend to do everything judgmentally, and so we approach the story of the fall with a judgmental attitude. We seem to assume that something was wrong with Adam and Eve or they wouldn't have fallen victim to Satan's lies.

When we say that Adam and Eve didn't HAVE to sin we're really talking about the freedom God gave them. They were designed so that they could make up their own minds. We're not talking about some defect on their part, because if we were, then we would be saying that God made a mistake when he created them.

The fact is that one of the reasons Jesus came to this earth as a human being was so that God could demonstrate that there was no "manufacturer's defect" in the species human. Paul put it this way in Romans 8:

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was wakened by the [flesh], God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man [human flesh] to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in [the flesh], in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the [flesh] but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3, 4)

So Adam and Eve shouldn't be the target of our judgmentalism, but of our pity, because they were victims of Satan's lie. Yes, they had the freedom to choose to believe God over Satan, so they didn't HAVE to fall victim. But they did. Even so, God was able to use them to demonstrate his character clearly to the universe.

And it is our privilege to join in that demonstration by choosing to have him write the perfect human character of Jesus over our fallen, selfish characters. When you understand it that way, isn't choosing God a "no brainer"?

God bless....

Elkanah

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