

THE NEED FOR DIVINE RESTRAINTS

Introduction

- 1) **Proverbs 29:18** – “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law” (*Para* [Heb] – let loose, lack restraint)
- 2) Restraints are very important in zoos, prisons, cars, hospitals, etc. (“restraining order”)
 - a) Used to protect us from harm or danger; unrestrained “freedom” is not a good thing!
- 3) The above passage emphasizes the need to have the law of God as a restraint on our lives
 - a) Happiness is found in keeping the law of God; problems arise when we ignore God’s will
- 4) God has provided restraints to keep us from destructive words and behavior – for our good
 - a) We should understand, welcome, and use these divine restraints

I) GOD’S DIVINE RESTRAINTS

A) *Knowledge of God*

- 1) The knowledge of God is a restraint on sinful behavior (Prov. 29:18; 1 Tim. 1:8-11)
 - a) Law and love work together as restraints (Rom. 13:8-10)
- 2) Fearing God is the beginning of knowledge – foolish to ignore (Prov. 1:7)
- 3) God’s word guides us to properly discern good from evil (Deut. 30:15-18; Heb. 5:14)
- 4) God’s way is a narrow way – a restraining strait of truth (Matt. 7:13-14; Prov. 4:23-27)
- 5) Knowledge of what we ought to do and what we are to avoid (1 Thess. 4:1-8)

B) *Conscience*

- 1) The conscience is a personal restraint within each of us to either affirm or accuse us as to our behavior according to God’s standard (Rom. 2:15)
- 2) One will have a good conscience when doing God’s will (1 Pet. 3:21) and an evil conscience when rejecting God’s word (Heb. 10:22)

C) *Family*

- 1) A divine arrangement for loving instruction and discipline of its members (Prov. 4:1-7)
- 2) Family members help to restrain the thoughts and actions of one another (1 Sam. 3:13)
 - a) Parents teach and discipline children to restrain them from evil (Eph. 6:1-4)

D) *Civil Government*

- 1) If the preceding restraints do not work, then government restraint may become necessary
- 2) Civil disobedience and crime will receive civil punishment (Rom. 13:4)

*Sadly, our society is seeing the breakdown of each one of these restraints, which will result in increasing chaos and eventually destruction! Christians must be different!

II) Making God’s Restraints Work in Our Lives – Thoughtful and Careful Discernment

A) “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished” (Prov. 22:3; 27:12)

- 1) Prudent foresight uses knowledge and discernment gained from God’s word
- 2) Discernment takes careful thought and meditation (Psalm 1:1-6; Prov. 2:6-12)
- 3) To reject God’s restraints ensures a disastrous end (Judg. 21:25; Prov. 14:12)
 - a) Beware of those who promise “liberty” to do evil (2 Pet. 2:19; Gal. 5:13)

B) What we desperately need is the time and desire to learn, understand, and apply truth to restrain our mouths and hearts to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world

- 1) Are we willing to think carefully about what is right *before* we act or speak?

Conclusion

Matthew 16:21-23 – Peter spoke rashly from his human opinion, not God’s wisdom. We must restrain our own thoughts and set our mind on God’s things. Will you obey God to be saved?