

## Identity Wars Study 16 – No Longer a Servant

Who's the boss?

- Can you recall a time when your child questioned why you have to make all the rules?
- Wouldn't it be fairer if sometimes the child could make the rules and sometimes the parent?

Why are there rules about manners when eating, when or when not to play outside, when one should go to bed etc. ?

The reality is, we are not born knowing everything. We need to learn the rules of life which will protect us as we are growing up, and turn them into healthy habits (a lifestyle).

- That's why the Bible instructs us to train up a child in the way that he should go ... Proverbs 22:6

None of us, even when we are older, truly understand all the dangers and pitfalls of life.

- Therefore, it is always important for us to have a spirit of humility: always willing to learn things that will be a benefit to us in our daily lives,
- Also realizing that by nature we tend to believe and do things that are harmful and self-justifying

Galatians 4:1 "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a servant, though he is master of all."

What do you think Paul meant with these words?

- The relationship of a child to his parent is no different to that of a servant to his master.
- As Christians, parents must train their children in the principles of God's kingdom; although it is natural for the child, born with the rebellious nature of Satan's kingdom, to fight against the instruction intended for their good and safety. We are all like that, aren't we?
- Learning new things does not sit too easy with us. Especially when we are set in our ways: even as Christians. We are reminded of the proverb, 'You can't teach old dogs new tricks.'

That's why it is common to hear people complaint with these words, 'Why are there so many boundaries, restrictions, and laws in the Christian life?' 'It's just not fair.'

The fact is, our independent natures are not fit nor ready to be taken to heaven.

- The harmony of heaven is there because each individual in heaven, from the Son of God to the angels, is content doing the Father's will.
- For us to be united with them in heaven, and for harmony to remain, we will have learned now, in this life, that our heavenly Father's way is the best way, and we will delight in it.

Knowing that God desires us to enter His heavenly kingdom, it is only fair and understandable that He would treat us as His children, 'training us up in the way that we should go' so when we are old, we will be ready to enter heaven. (Eph 1:3-5 – He has purposed us for Heaven)

Can we see the events of life, even the difficulties, as demonstrating God's love for us?

(Though God is not the cause of suffering, He can use it to teach us to grow and learn. But we often misunderstand and blame God, rather than listening to His explanations for why things are like this)

Our human nature always seems to want to rebel against God's instruction. We cry out, 'That's not fair!'

- Why did God allow this to happen to me? or why does He place so many restrictions on me?
- Either way, God gets the blame. So many of us join churches and desire to keep our old natures and practice our old ways which are not in harmony with God's will and ways.

No wonder there are so many fights in God's church among His children. We call this 'family squabbles'.

The story of the Prodigal Son demonstrates these points accurately. Luke 15:11-32

So many Christians find it difficult to break free from their Christian childhood and learn the lessons God has prepared for them. They remain children in thinking throughout their Christian life, never growing up to the full stature God has planned for them as mature Christians.

- 1 Corinthians 13:11; Hosea 11:1; (Growth – 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12, 13)

Even Jesus went through the process of growth and development.

- Luke 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Paul invites us to enter into that same experience, which will bring unity and end family squabbles.

Eph 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

If we hold on to the attitude that we'll do what God wants just so we get the rewards He has promised, we will discover too late that this attitude will leave us short of God's kingdom. We will end up like the elder brother in the prodigal son story: he never left home but never enjoyed his privileges as a son.

- He never truly lived with the joy of a son but as a submissive servant.
- He did what he had to just because he had to, in the hope of not losing his inheritance, but he never developed the loving, faithful relationship the father desired with his son.

How do you see God's 'restrictions' in your life? Do you see them as means of protection or ways for God to interfere with your rights?

- Your view tells your experience: whether you've been living as a slave or a child. God desires that we grow into mature children, loving Him for His advice, training, care, protection and provision. It is only as we begin to understand God's love for us in these loving provisions that our relationship with God will start to make sense. What a wonderful Father we have in heaven.

In the Garden of Eden the serpent tempted Eve to believe that the one restriction that was placed upon the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a restriction of her rights and freedoms (and in that one restriction was a hidden power that God was jealously hiding back from her).

How many view God's protective laws and regulations in the same way?

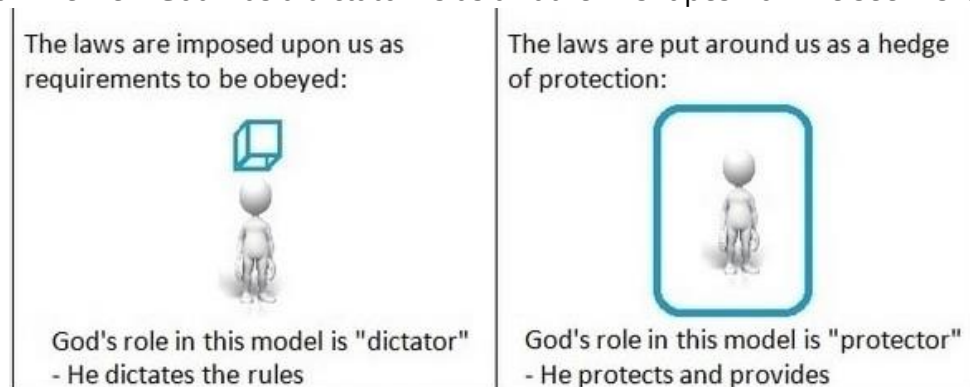
(we try things that God suggests us not to – like drugs, pre-marital sex and pornography, gambling, stealing, violent media, etc – and then we LIKE them and IDOLIZE them...

...and then think God was mean and selfish for not letting us do them...

not realizing the long term effects of things that are not according to God's will)

We only need to look around the world today to see the serpent lied. God's restriction was not to stop Eve from having fun but was designed to stop her entering the door where death waited – separated from the Source of life.

How we view God – as a dictator vs as a Father – shapes how we see His laws:



God wants to restore our full inheritance as His children. Paul explains it this way: Galatians 4:3-8.

What do these words say to you?

Notice carefully, Jesus mission restored to us our freedom; it took us from being slaves to being children.

- Our view of a God through Christ can never be the same again. What a sacrifice They made to secure us our inheritance as adopted children through the Spirit of His Son.
- Do you believe this sacrifice was intended for you? Do you feel secure in this love? Do you have that childlike adoration of your Father in heaven, and appreciate His every provision in Christ?
- God is waiting longingly for your response. He loves you dearly.

Do you believe God has your best interests at heart, always? Then rest in His love.

- Enjoy your journey to heaven as He trains you in His ways.
- The values of this world are not worth holding on to: they will not allow us to possess our inheritance as children of God. Let them go and receive God's values for you as His child.

Christ's sacrifice was not about paying off God's anger against you for your sin. It was about His willingness to suffer at our hands while demonstrating God's everlasting love for you.

- We have thought God was against us, and have refused to trust Him.
- Christ showed us the truth: He only wanted to help and heal us, but because it was in a way we didn't like, we killed Him. This reveals the true dynamics of the relationship, which if we realize, can bring healing to the relationship.
- Just as a doctor doesn't judge a sick man, neither does God judge us the way we are naturally. But He also wants us to know that that way isn't good for us.
- Jesus's resurrection proves that God has the cure

What power, what love, what commitment to reveal God's mercy endures forever: for you, for me, for everyone. There is no child on earth that God has turned His back on. We turned our backs on Him; because we didn't understand Him. But now we do understand.

- Let's give our hearts and lives to Him today with praise and thanksgiving. The fullness of joy awaits our decision right now.

Romans 8:31-39

...In all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us!

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love:

neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the

future, neither the world above nor the world below—

there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours  
through Christ Jesus our Lord.

(v. 37-39 GNT)