

You Can't Tell Me What to Do!

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. "Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws." (Plato)
 - 1. "You can't tell me what to do!" is the motto of the unhappy, self-centered people.
 - 2. It takes multiple forms:
 - a. "It's my life; I have the right to live it my own way."
 - b. "No one can tell me what to do!"

I. IS IT YOUR LIFE?

- A. It is true that each person is responsible for their own decisions.
 - 1. Gal. 6:4-5; Phil. 2:12
 - 2. Self-determination means we get to choose; it does not mean that our choices will be without consequences.
 - 3. We emphasize the first and deliberately overlook the second.
- B. I can choose to make a foolish or self-destructive decision; however, I will never have the choice:
 - 1. To be without expressions of concern and corrections from people who know me and care about me,
 - 2. To void what God's word says about my sin,
 - 3. To avoid or dismiss the painful consequences of the choice on me and others around me,
 - 4. Or, to avert the judgment that will fall on me in the life to come.
- C. While all of us may choose the course of our lives, we all will be fully accountable and answerable for our decisions - 2Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:24-25
 - 1. All of us are independent, autonomous beings. The decisions we make affect our salvation, and ours alone - Ez. 18:20; Deut. 24:16
 - 2. But we are not free to do as we please.
 - a. We belong to God - Ez. 18:4
 - b. Our lives belong to the Lord - Rom. 14:7-8
 - c. We must live for the will of God - 1Peter 4:1-2
 - d. The whole purpose of our existence is to serve God - Ecc. 12:13
 - 3. One of the most foolish things I have ever heard someone say when I have talked to them about repenting of their sins is that God will accept them in their sins even if I won't.
- D. While we are autonomous, our decisions often negatively affect others
 - 1. Sins have consequences that are often widespread.
 - 2. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, the consequence of their sin impacted every person everywhere in all of time - Rom. 5:18
 - 3. Righteousness also has influence beyond the individual - Rom. 4:16-25
 - 4. The truth is that while we have a right to choose, we do not have the right to choose to sin without consequence. We don't have the right to make others' lives miserable with our sins and foolish choices.

5. In fact, we have the responsibility to choose right, both for ourselves and for others' sake - Rom. 12:9-13
- E. Even though we are all responsible for our own decisions, we are also responsible to encourage and counsel others to make right decisions.
 1. Parents are to train their children to do right - Prov. 22:6
 2. Christians are to encourage each other - Heb. 10:23-25
 3. When one is lost, we are to work to restore him - Gal. 6:1
 4. In view of the Judgment, we must persuade others to be saved.
 - a. 2Cor. 5:10-11

II. LIFE IS A GIFT WE SHARE WITH OTHERS

- A. God gave us life - 1Cor. 3:16-17, 6:18-20; Rom. 14:7-8
- B. Our lives are intertwined and interdependent - 1Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:25
- C. We rely on one another for safety, including our spiritual well-being
 1. 1Thes. 5:14; Eph. 4:2; Rom. 14:1, 15:1; Heb. 12:14
- D. It is not my life; it is our life. It is not your life; it is the life of everyone who knows and loves you, including the Lord.