

Benefits of Restrictions



Do you remember the various restrictions you received from your parents as you were growing up? During early childhood “**Don’t go out into the street**” or “**Don’t take candy from a stranger**” were two restrictions common in many homes. As a child we may have viewed these restrictions as unfair, but as one grows older he or she can see the wisdom in these rules. Even as adults we give restrictive advice to one another. Consider: “**Don’t forget to put on your seat belts**”, “**Don’t allow any unknown person into your home without proper identification**” and “**Don’t give your credit card number to phone solicitors.**” Though these statements are restrictive they are beneficial.

Likewise the scriptures give various restrictions, not to make one’s life more difficult or to take away one’s “fun”, but rather to lead to a better quality of life and promote one’s spiritual well-being. Consider the following examples:

Associations

It is important to be selective with whom we choose to associate. Paul warns, “**Do not be deceived: evil**

company corrupts good habits.” (1st Corinthians 15:33) The New King James version of Proverbs 12:26 states, “**The righteous should choose his friends carefully. For the way of the wicked leads them astray.**” We also learn, “**Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.**” (Proverbs 22:24-25) How many times has a good person gone bad due to the negative influence of those with whom he or she has chosen to associate with? Therefore applying the lesson taught in 1st Corinthians 15:33 and the lessons within Proverbs may limit one’s friends, but it will greatly benefit one’s spiritual well-being. Remember, “**As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.**” (Proverbs 27:17)

Society

It is very easy to allow oneself to be like everybody else. It feels good to “fit in” with his or her peers. However if “fitting in” involves a view or conduct which is contrary to the scriptures, one must choose not to conform to society. Paul instructs, “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**” (Romans 12:1-2) James warns, “**Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world**

is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4) John cautions, “**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**” (1st Jn. 2:15-16) Though these scriptures are restrictive and limit one’s ability to “fit in” with society, the benefits of applying these verses in one’s life leads an individual to avoid the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The application of these verses also allows one to have a proper relationship with God, seeking to please Him.

Tongue

The ability to communicate to others by speaking is a wonderful asset. However, along with the precious asset to speak comes the responsibility of learning the important lesson of self-control in what we say. The scriptures teach, “**He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.**” (Proverbs 13:3) James warns, “**If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.**” (James 1:26) There are numerous instructions concerning the use of the tongue which are restrictive. But the application of these verses will prove valuable as the writer of Proverbs states, “**Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.**” (Proverbs 21:23)

Conclusion

The next time you hear someone complain about the restrictions that are in the scriptures, it would be good if you could take some time to show them the positive results of abiding by these teachings. Remember the lesson in Hebrews 12:11, “**Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**” Also remember, “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” (2nd Timothy 3:16-17) Let us always be diligent to heed the instructions found within the scriptures, even when obeying restrictions are required!

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