



September 25, 2023

"Rules are Meant to be Broken"

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

I suspect most of us have regretted saying some things to your children. I have. A comment I made when Jessica, my daughter, was much younger came back to haunt me. Currently, she is teaching law at the University of Baltimore and is intimately acquainted with the legal system. She surprised me with my old comment during a conversation at the dinner table when her friend, a lobbyist from Iowa, came for supper. "Well, my mom always said, 'Rules are meant to be broken.'"

I blushed and backpedaled to get beyond my embarrassment. After all, I did strive to raise children with high moral character. "I didn't *always* say that!" I said defensively. But I couldn't deny it, and I was pretty sure I was influenced by the bevy of lawyers in my family.

After reflecting on the comment, 'Rules are meant to be broken,' I realized that there are many instances when rules need to be broken. Lawrence Kohlberg created a model of moral development. This model culminates at the highest level, the post-conventional stage. The example regularly used to describe moral dilemma at this level is: If Sam's wife is dying and she needs medicine to live and he doesn't have enough money to pay for it, is it wrong or right for him to steal it? In other words, is it more important to save a life or to follow the rules of society? Those at the post-conventional level would choose saving a life.

Galatians, an epistle written by Paul in the New Testament is sometimes referred to as the Magna Carta of Christian Freedom. The Old Testament

presents a dizzying array of laws (613 in Leviticus alone). These laws needed to be followed in order to be forgiven. Because we are sinful on so many levels, it is an impossible for us to perfectly obey the laws of the Old Testament. Here is an example from Leviticus of the many laws that are impossible to attain.

“He is to lay his hand on the goat’s head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the Lord...Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood... In this way the priest will make atonement for the man’s sin, and he will be forgiven.” Leviticus 4:24-26

It is with great joy I share the good news that we no longer have to follow these laws to be forgiven. The blood of Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law for us. When we give him our heart and ask for forgiveness, God looks at us differently. He doesn’t see our stains or decay of sin, He sees instead the radiance of Jesus Christ in all His redemptive Glory shining through us. The chains of sin have fallen away. We are FREE... Praise the Lord!

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