

Gratitude: The Laws of Lovingkindness & Longsuffering: Law of Volitional Responsibility, Hosea 8:7; Galatians 6:7-8; Colossians 3:25**M. The Laws of Lovingkindness & Longsuffering****I. The Law of Volitional Responsibility**

Every believer is held responsible for his every thought, decision, and action. This is documentable in both the Old and New Testaments:

Hosea 8:7 - They sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind.

Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked [*mukterizo*: to sneer at; treat with contempt]; for whatever a man sows, this shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:8 - For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Colossians 3:25 - He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done and that without partiality [*ouk prosopolempsia*].

NOTE: “Without partiality”: the fault of one who when responsible to give judgment, has respect to the position, rank, popularity, or circumstances of man, instead of their intrinsic conditions, preferring the rich and powerful to those who are not so.

It is impossible to attain either human or spiritual maturity until you are willing to take the responsibility for your own thoughts, decisions, and actions. The Supreme Court of Heaven operates within a system that functions inside the parameters of divine essence.

We just noted from Colossians 3:25 that all wrongdoing results in consequences. Further, this wrongdoing is dealt with in a manner which does not show partiality from the Court.

The infinite genius of God so designed His system of justice that when wrong decisions are made ramifications result in such a fashion that associated suffering is self-imposed. The solution is the first problem-solving device of rebound.

Rebound is a process and a procedure which restores the filling of the Holy Spirit, recovers fellowship with God, and resumes the spiritual life. From this spiritual basis the individual can apply biblical principles which restore order to the situation, bring ramifications under control and eventually eliminate them.

Under some cases, confession alone to God alone will result in ramifications being resolved. However, in other cases people, systems, policies, and organizations are involved and one must endeavor to set things right among those who have been violated. Sometimes restitution is necessary to people, penalties must be suffered from the system and carried out under its policies, and organizational integrity must be restored by certain corrective actions.

Several principles which define the Law of Volitional Responsibility:

It recognizes that a believer's thoughts decisions and actions have consequences. Since by divine decree the freedom of our volition is real, then our thoughts, decisions, and actions have real consequences for which we are responsible. This requires that we acknowledge the reality of our error and endeavor to fulfill or meet any obligations incurred.

The poor decision may not even be sinful but rather the product of poor judgment. Our poor judgment is the result of our imperfection. As a result, many people may suffer for our honest but flawed decisions.

Sins must be confessed while we pray for God's grace to resolve the ramifications which inflicted suffering upon others. Confession alone to God alone does not relieve us of our obligation to others when our thoughts, decisions, and actions have caused innocent people to suffer.

In accepting our responsibility towards others, we must be mindful to avoid two extremes: (1) we must avoid insensitivity toward others and (2) we must not permit them to impose upon us a guilt complex through implacability. Otherwise, we should be willing to pay restitution, pursue justice, exhibit sensitivity, and apply doctrinal rationales to the situation.

After doing all we can do, we are to leave the remaining details to the Supreme Court of Heaven and move on with our lives. Once a good-faith effort is made to make things right, all must be willing to start afresh with no guilt on the part of the offender and no implacability on the part of the offended.

None is perfect. All of us are flawed. Everyone makes mistakes. This is a statement of the obvious. But this is no excuse for us to ignore the impact our poor decisions have on others. To claim human imperfection as an excuse is insensitive, boorish, and callous.

On the other hand, human imperfection is not an excuse for the offended to impose life-long condemnation upon the offender. This is self-righteous, implacable, and unforgiving and reeks of power lust.

NOTE: A salute to Independence Day concluded this lesson with a reading from:

Collier, Christopher and James Lincoln Collier. "The Most Remarkable Work." Chap. 23 in Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787. New York: Random House, 1986, pp. 264-68 passim.