

CULTIVATING A SOFT HEART:

Teachability, Rebellion & Entitlements



CULTIVATING A SOFT HEART – teachability & avoiding religion

REBELLION

Rebellion is our natural state and the fruit of fear, pride and control. Core spiritual problem

Definition: Opposition to the one in authority; open defiance of the established and recognised authorities. Revolution, revolt, mutiny, uprising.

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17.9

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Proverbs 14.12

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Joel 2.13

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. Galatians 5 16-17

Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15.22

REALITY We hear the Lord's voice, we ask Him to explain and then we obey – maybe.

IDEAL The Lord speaks, we obey and then He explains – maybe!

We are stuck in a cycle of sin, we are unwilling to break out of it.

Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. James 4.4b

Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king. 1 Samuel 15.22-23

Fall occurred due to rebellion, both the human and angelic fall. (see Isaiah 14.13-14).

Living in rebellion to God means we live in agreement with Satan.

Pride leads to independence and away from daily dependence on the Lord.

We have free will and we need to choose to submit to God's established authority. Rebellion is witchcraft (attempted control of the spiritual realm), iniquity and idolatry.

Rebellion takes us further away from God and so further outside the path of blessing. Choosing to live in submission to the Lord's authority is choosing to be like Jesus (Jn 14.21). We are to be like Jesus, imitating Him – doing His ministry His way.

Key issues for the person in rebellion:

a. **Function in CONFUSION**

Circumstances are so different to everyone else that the Word of God applies to them differently. Especially true in recognising revelation and coming away from Freedom Prayer appointment confused when others see "it" clearly.

b. **DISREGARDED** previous instruction/revelation

c. **IGNORE** credible counsel - advice and prayer abounds but nothing is put into practice.

d. **Minimal application of Truth**

ENTITLEMENTS – see separate worksheet



12 KEY ENTITLEMENT AREAS

not an expansive list but a good starting point

1. TIME

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I control when things happen – I'm not doing God things when I normally play golf/meet the girls for coffee etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> It must be convenient for me |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> All this ignores the fact that "time" is a God-given gift and so needs to be yielded to Him. |

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED We assert that we have the right to

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> know what will happen – the destination before I get on the bus – so I can stay in control | <input type="checkbox"/> control timing of... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> see breakthrough happen according to my timetable | <input type="checkbox"/> take it easy |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> "me time" – for me to be pampered |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> be impatient |

2. COMFORTS

Material (often) things that we desperately want but do not necessarily need. I'm entitled to buy our food from M&S instead of Aldi. I'm entitled to buy books instead of borrowing them from the library. I'm entitled to a new car/computer with all the "bells & whistles". Why should I have to take the bus? I should have best. We need to discern the difference between needs, wants and gifts.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hold on to my property and not let others borrow | <input type="checkbox"/> a certain standard of living |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be where I am – I am not ready to move | <input type="checkbox"/> be completely understood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> remain hidden | <input type="checkbox"/> have what others have |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pass the buck | <input type="checkbox"/> get what I ask for |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be obedient without a cost/suffering | |

3. APPEARANCE

I must look a certain way. Right make-up, clothes, fitness level, dress size drops, beer belly becomes a six-pack. We should look after ourselves and not dishonour the Lord in the way we dress/look BUT focussing on the outward appearance is about looking for approval from others. This leads to childish and selfish spending behaviour rather than spirit-led stewardship.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED We have the right to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> buy designer label clothes rather than own brands | <input type="checkbox"/> replace serviceable shoes/handbag with this season's must-have |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dress our children fashionably | <input type="checkbox"/> alter our appearance with cosmetic surgery |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> join an expensive gym for basic exercise |



4. RECOGNITION & ATTENTION SEEKING

“Look at what I have done and pat me on the back”

This demands that my service and sacrifice is noticed and others acknowledge how wonderful I am – cf Pharisees praying on the street corners. I become angry and frustrated when I am not noticed.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> be respected by others | <input type="checkbox"/> my mistakes being overlooked because I work so hard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more knowledge than the next person | <input type="checkbox"/> be supported and affirmed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lead but not be led | <input type="checkbox"/> get along with everyone and be loved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my opinion being heard | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> by all | |

5. MONEY

Often these entitlements arise out of expectations of a certain standard of living. These can easily be dressed up in spiritual terms – I live in stockbroker belt therefore to minister effectively, I must haveComes down to “it’s my money and I’ll do what I like with it and the church should be grateful for its 10% (and that is if you tithe!)”

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- choose who I will serve
- reward myself by spending my money
- be financially comfortable

6. SERVICE

I pick and choose where I serve and what I do.

- Cleaning loos/gutters are beneath me. This is not based on the Lord’s direction but on what I like or dislike.
- Often it’s an old-fashioned demarcation dispute – that’s not my job description so I will not do it.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> do it my way | <input type="checkbox"/> not be disrupted or interrupted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be angry about the process – I wasn’t finished yet – well that’s a stupid way of doing it... | <input type="checkbox"/> be discontent with others’ development |

7. ASKING GOD

I lean on my own understanding and do not ask the Lord – I don’t want/need to know what the Lord will say. We need a new car because ours is 2 years old and this is the right time to change; it’s common sense - don’t need to ask the Lord. This is rebellion and so limits the experience of our freedom.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> understand – knowledge is more important than faith | time – what my understanding of the scriptures suggests is this but not actually ask the Spirit what He is saying now. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> know why | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> say “no” to the Lord | <input type="checkbox"/> to consult the Lord on the big things but to do my own thing with the little things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decide without seeking the Lord in these specific circumstances – He did it this way last | |



8. ENERGY

If we think the Lord is asking too much of us physically and emotionally we “dip out”. We are too tired. We must be at our best otherwise the Lord will not be able to use us fully. Re-read that last sentence and see how ridiculous it is. The Lord enables the willing heart. This entitlement puts the flesh squarely in front of the Spirit.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- be lazy
- rest – man comes home from work and has a sleep. Wife comes home and does all the work.
- move at my own pace

9. EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS

I’ll obey when you obey... I’ll do it differently if the Vicar will....., if my spouse will.... etc. Waiting for others to perform first is rebellion e.g. I’ll keep the house clean when you stop being a slob!

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> indulge | <input type="checkbox"/> be properly prepared |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in complaining, insubordination, backbiting and gossiping | <input type="checkbox"/> be carefully handled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> engineer change in others in my strength rather than waiting on the Lord | <input type="checkbox"/> blame someone else if it goes wrong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> know what others know – why are they in the Freedom Prayer team and not me? | <input type="checkbox"/> withhold myself when I am angry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be bitter and resentful because of another’s resistance | <input type="checkbox"/> others initiating and maintaining friendships with me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be critical of or superior to others | |

10. SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE

I’ll do it/go to it if I get a personal invitation from the vicar – the church hasn’t been to visit – the church warden/homegroup leader/PCC member are not good enough for me. My ego needs massaging first.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> retain a certain distance in relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> to unbelief about what the Lord has said about me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> say “no” to the Lord when He has given clear conviction or direction | <input type="checkbox"/> insecurity and so fear what leaders think of me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trust some people but not others | <input type="checkbox"/> shrink back and say “that’s not who I am” – hiding from responsibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> use my gifts as I see them best deployed | |



11. EMOTIONS

I know that this is true but this is how I feel.

I know I should be doing what the Lord has said but I feel no peace about it. I know that it is alright to go out with a non-Christian because I feel peaceful about it. Emotions are not an excuse to be disobedient.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excuse myself | <input type="checkbox"/> explain myself and be defensive |
| - too tired, too busy, too sick | <input type="checkbox"/> special treatment/dispensation in my circumstances |
| - not in the mood, not ready/equipped/gifted | <input type="checkbox"/> have my particular emotional reactions |
| - too burdened with responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> say what I feel |
| - I'm not a leader | <input type="checkbox"/> be loved the way I need to be loved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> protect myself and not allow others to speak into my life | <input type="checkbox"/> be defensive about my wounds and walk in these immature behaviour patterns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hold on to grief and sorrow | <input type="checkbox"/> be led by emotions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be ashamed and wallow in guilt and self-pity | <input type="checkbox"/> withdraw when I feel uncomfortable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be fearful about certain things | <input type="checkbox"/> complain and vent my anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be indirect and not confront | |

12. REWARDS

I need compensation if I am obedient. Bargaining with the Lord is sin. Abraham only asks God to do what the Lord has placed in his heart anyway! Do we look for praise, thank you notes, gifts, food, holidays, extra sleep – these are all emphasised in our culture. The response to the Lord of Hosts should be “Sir, Yes Sir!” from the heart.

RIGHTS TO BE RELINQUISHED

We assert that we have the right to:

- receive recognition for what we do – receive “payment”
- be bitter when I do not receive recognition
- a particular position/status/title – I've done my time – earned my stripes – I am the Reader after all and it should be acknowledged
- have my demands met – conditional obedience
- be in charge
- reward for sacrifice

