

## Rebellion – Part One

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." 1 Samuel 15:23

It was not so much that King Saul did not want to follow God, nor that he refused to do what God said. Rather, he insisted on modifying God's instructions and then justifying his behavior. God would have none of it; He rejected Saul, and made David, "a man after His own heart," king in his place.

Generally, you do not consider a refusal to follow the authority of someone you do not recognize as having authority rebellion. For example, you do not fault your daughter for refusing to get into an auto with a strange man. Rather, people rebel when they refuse to follow the leadership of recognized authority. You may argue that you are not under the authority of certain people, but you cannot claim a relationship with God and say you are not under His authority.

If rebellion is resisting authority, there are many ways you can rebel without appearing that you are rebelling. For example, King Saul insisted that he was not rebelling against God. Granted, he modified God's commandment, but he said his intention was to improve the instructions God gave him. God told him to kill all, and Saul said he was going to do this, but wished to bring some back to Israel to offer as a sacrifice to God.

God does not want you to modify or improve on His commandments. What He asks of you may appear to need refining, and you may have compelling reasons for doing so, but it is this attitude that He will not tolerate.

**Rebellion – Part Two**

"Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you." Deuteronomy 9:24

There are times when a person rebels and it is obvious he is doing so. For example, you say to your son, "Please pick up your toy." He looks you in the eye and says, "No!" Much of the time, however, only God knows when a person rebels. Often biblical writers accuse people of rebelling, as Moses does in this passage, but they have been given special insight not available to those of us who read what they say.

Because rebellion is often attitudinal, it deals with a person's motives, and **you cannot know the motives of other people.** For this reason, in such cases you remain unsure as to what is happening. When this happens, **you should suspend judgment and pray about it, asking God to expose it at another time if your suspicion proves true.**

You are easily deceived, especially when you love someone and want to think the best of him or her. For example, you have a trusted employee who has been with you for years, and one day you find a sizeable sum of money missing from your firm. You are reluctant to even suspect that he is culpable.

People who are devious, pretending that they are not rebelling, when in reality they are, have deceived themselves into believing that they need not fear God. The Bible promises that, "...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."<sup>1</sup> **To think that you can deceive others without God either knowing or caring is to accrue horrific consequences in the Day of Judgment.**

<sup>1</sup> Romans 2:16

## Rebellion – Part Three

"And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.' And Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus." Acts 15:36-39

As you know, the absence of trust is not the same as judging the motives of another. Because you are unsure about their motives, you refuse to trust them when you perceive that the risk is high. For example, you probably would not wish your wife to pick up a hitchhiker as she is driving home in the middle of the night.

John Mark, who joined Paul's first missionary journey, went home when they began ministering in Pamphylia. The Bible does not comment on the agreement the men had with each other prior to their going. On the second missionary journey, however, Paul did not wish to risk taking him again. Paul was not judging John Mark's motives; he had no idea whether or not John Mark would leave in the middle of the work once again. Rather, Paul did not wish to take the risk; he did not trust John Mark.

One way you lose the trust of others is when you create the impression that you rebel against legitimate authority. Paul warns the Corinthians not to judge the motives of others.<sup>1</sup> They should not judge your motives, but this is different from you concluding what Paul concluded regarding John Mark. If you appear to be devious, or if you make the same mistake over and over again, you cause people to wonder if you are sincere.

Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get...Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you."<sup>2</sup> Obviously, when Jesus warns not to share eternal food with those who will misuse it, He tells us to practice some form of judging. In this we see that that discernment is a legitimate form of judging.

If, because of past behavior, you have lost the trust of others, do not deceive yourself in thinking that this is their fault. It may be that you have created an environment in which it is no longer prudent for people to trust you. When you create the impression that you are deceiving those in authority over you, it results in your not being trusted by those whose trust you most desire.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I Corinthians 4:1-5 <sup>2</sup> Matthew 7:1-2, 6