

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE MIND

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 7:23-25

There are many subjects which are often avoided in polite company because they are considered politically incorrect. While we should always be mindful to let our speech be seasoned with salt and to avoid confrontation when possible, we should not neglect to speak the truth just because some are uncomfortable in discussing it. We are well aware that not every thing that we say is going to be received with the open arms of our hearers. A good example of this arises when we mention what the scripture says about the role of women in the church. Paul plainly said "*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*" (1Cor 14:34) In another place he said, "*Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*" (1Tim 2:11-12)

The purpose of this teaching is not the "oppression" of women as some have purported. Rather, these principles are set forth because it has pleased the LORD to magnify the authority of JESUS CHRIST as the HEAD of the body by manifesting the man as the head of the woman. (see Eph.5:22-33; 1 Cor.11:3-10) Those women who are truly spiritual, those whose primary concern is not centered in their outward appearance "*But in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*" (1Pe 3:4) are not in opposition to GOD's order nor will they be found trying to overturn or circumvent it. If a woman will be spiritually minded then let her be in submission to the plain teaching of the scriptures and thereby exalt the name of JESUS CHRIST by a meek and quiet spirit. Those who balk at this only demonstrate an unruly spirit which will not be in submission to CHRIST. I have never personally been acquainted with a "spiritual woman" who had a problem with this order.

Another touchy subject to some is a frank discussion of slavery as it occurred in the United States prior to the Civil War. From a human standpoint I can think of few things more reprehensible than forcing another human being, regardless of race or standing, into servitude against their will. This whole system from beginning to end was a demonstration of the depravity of men. From those Africans who captured and sold their own countrymen to the debauched buyers of these captives who packed them into hellish slave ships to make the journey to the "free world" (a misnomer to be sure). There to be paraded naked to be sold to willing buyers ready to press them into servitude in order to ring up greater profits with little regard to the suffering and plight of these captives.

Yet in all of this, GOD had a greater purpose for good unto all of those who were HIS elect children participating in this despicable practice, whether they were captors or captives. We

have all read of John Newton, the author of "Amazing Grace" as well as hundreds of other hymns. It was there on those slave ships that GOD was pleased to convict him of his sin as he was confronted with the horror and insanity of it all. To his dying day he could never forget that pit from which he was dug. Then there were countless thousands of those whom the LORD had set HIS love on long before they were born into Pagan tribes in Africa. It pleased the LORD to bring them to this country where they might in HIS own good time be comforted with the good news of the gospel as HE quickened them and gave them ears to hear and eyes to see. Men meant it for evil but GOD meant it for good.

In time the LORD saw fit to put an end to this practice of slavery and the blood of a nation ran freely as HE manifested HIS judgment upon such an institution as ought never to have been named among men professing godliness. Those who had been enslaved, some for numerous generations, were suddenly set free. Some had no doubt been enslaved for so long that they didn't have any idea what living as a free man even meant let alone how to go about it. Many of them were very reluctant to leave the only life they had ever known. I am sure that even years after their freedom became a reality that the sound of their former master's voice would still cause them to pay attention to his commands even though they were no longer under his control.

This is something of an illustration of the new found freedom which the sons of GOD enjoy as they are brought out of darkness and into the light. While it is possible to enslave the bodies of men, it is not possible to enslave the minds of those who are free. Many who live under the domination of dictators and despots nonetheless do not pay homage or respect unto them. This was demonstrated quite clearly in the heady days after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Paul speaks here in the seventh chapter of Romans about the fact that those who are born again by the SPIRIT of GOD are no longer under the dominion of sin even though the motions of those sins can still be seen in them from time to time. Paul said that he served the LORD JESUS CHRIST with his mind. The word mind appears 54 times in the KJV. There are 20 different Greek words that are translated "mind". By far the most commonly used word is "nous" which is the word translated as mind here in this passage in v.23 and 25; is also translated as understanding five other times (see Luke 24:45, 1Cor. 14:14, 15 Phil. 4:7; Rev. 13:18.) The literal meaning of this word is the mental faculty, the understanding or perception.

When the LORD foretold the unveiling of the new covenant HE said, *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."* (Heb 8:10) It has pleased the LORD to call out for himself a people who are awakened and made able to comprehend the spiritual nature of HIS kingdom. These are those of whom HE spoke to Nicodemus saying *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) HE has prepared a people to worship HIM in the only way HE is pleased for men to worship HIM. *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

Those whom HE has caused to be born again have been transformed in their mind, heart, and understanding. They cannot be brought back under the dominion of sin because HE ever works in them, having made them new creatures. In order that they might not be lifted up with pride, HE has seen fit to leave them in the same bodies in which they were born which are still susceptible to the motions of sin which onetime dominated not only their actions but their mind as well. They long to be free from sin and because HE works in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure they are engaged in a life and death struggle with it. *"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Rom 15:6)