

Ignorance Is Not An Excuse

Genesis 20:3 “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, **thou art but a dead man**, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and **innocency of my hands have I done this**.

6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and **if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die**, thou, and all that are thine.”

Too often I preach on a subject like music, money, or parenting, and have someone come up afterwards with the excuse, “I don't know anything about...” the topic I just instructed on. Some are humble enough to realize their ignorance and start increasing their knowledge on the subject. Many, though, cling to their excuse of ignorance believing that God will not hold them accountable.

There are a number of important truths from our text, Gen. 20:3-7, that we need to learn about ignorance.

- First off, **whether King Abimelech knew he what he was doing or not, he was still sinning**. God still held Abimelech's feet to the fire for his transgression; even if it was done in ignorance. “Thou art but a dead man” is pretty serious!

Dear reader, you need to realize that your ignorance does not excuse you. Ignorant sins are still sins nonetheless and they have consequences.

Years ago, a lady came to Amy and I after the service weeping and crying. She had gotten a divorce. She was in sin with another man. Her life was a mess. At first, she seemed genuinely interested in our help. So, as is our manner and should be for everything in life, we answered each of her problems with multiples Bible verses. Over and over again, she responded, “I didn't know that....” Finally, I gently responded, “Although you may not have realized these verses, you still were sinning against God, and your wrong decisions, even in ignorance, have ruined your life.” She replied, “But I thought 'ignorance was bliss', and that nothing bad happens to those who 'don't know' what they are doing.”

Many parents are ignorant on how to train their children, and as a result, many children grow up choosing a life of sin. Ignorance did not save them.

- Secondly, because of King Abimelech's ignorance (“innocency”), God was patient with the king. God did not immediately punish Abimelech. God gave King Abimelech a chance to hear the truth and consequences, and then make his choice.

Years ago, Amy and I were driving through the state of Utah. In a certain busy section of town, we saw police lights behind us and pulled off the side of the road. The police man was irate. Apparently, we had been driving too high a speed in a school zone. I apologized profusely to the police man for our ignorance. I explained that he was probably aware that we were out of state, and did not know how to even discern the area was a school zone. He calmed down and asked what warning signs our state used for school zones. I explained, and he did not give us a ticket. Like God, he showed mercy for our first ignorance and let us go. However, we were still sinning, although ignorantly. And there still could have been grave consequences if a child had walked out in the middle of the road.

God is patient, but your decisions still have consequences even if they are done “innocently”. Marriages fall apart all the time. Teens turn out wrong all the time. Debt is piled up all the time; albeit

in ignorance and “innocency”. That doesn't mean there aren't consequences.

- Thirdly, after God revealed King Abimelech's sin, the gauntlet was thrown. There would be no more excuses for his sin.

When I was in Bible college, I was sent to the Dean of Men's office. I had ignorantly been breaking some very important rules. Now, understand, this wasn't the first time I had gotten in trouble for my ignorance. There had been other innocent offenses that the Dean of Men had forgiven because of my record of being a good student with low demerits. On this occasion, though, a punishment came. I remember apologizing in tears, and making the excuse again of “But I didn't know...” The Dean of Men was more emphatic this time and stressed that all the rules were in the college manual that every student had been given on the first day of school. I'll never forget as he explained that whether I sinned ignorantly or not, I had still sinned. And after he had already shown mercy, I still had chosen ignorance.

Friend, you may not understand how music works, but now that you have heard that there is good and bad music (Read “Music” articles), after a preacher like me has pointed out certain music in your life is sinful, you now have no excuse for your ignorance. **You are obligated** to do the research, and figure out from specific verses of Scripture what God wants you to do.

So remember: ignorant sins are still sins, God is patient to reveal His truths through His Word and preachers like me, but He will chasten you if you persist in your ignorance. **Ignorance is never an excuse!**