



**Didn't  
Have to  
Do It**

All Scripture references  
in this writing are taken from the  
Authorized King James Version



## YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO IT!

### Accepting Personal Responsibility and Rejecting Bad Theology

**W**hat I'm about to share can show up in any pulpit, anywhere. You may well recognize a "version" of this occurring in your church, whether it is a prison chapel or a "free world" congregation. Therefore, do not disregard this warning simply because I will be referring to that portion of the Body of Christ I know best by years of experience, the prison church. A deep and an abiding burden for the Body of Christ universal is a burning fire in my bones. May you receive this in that spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and, it is my fervent prayer, in the anointing power of the Holy Spirit, without Whom nothing for God can ever be accomplished.

**T**here is afoot a many-headed monster that leaves the hearers with two distinct impressions. One is that *sin is really not that big a deal* (and as a supporting sub-text to that idea, all sin is the same in God's eyes) and two, *we really do not have a personal responsibility* for our actions and deeds, or at the most, limited responsibility.

**T**his cock-eyed concept has wormed its way into prison pulpits all across the nation. In this particular manifestation, there is a perceived "need" to convey to the imprisoned, down-trodden or "less advantaged" that, somehow, their sinfulness is not quite as sinful as they first supposed! A misplaced empathy, at best, and potentially destroying to the souls of men and women.

**L**et it be clear, I love the majority of prison chapel volunteers. They tend to be "of the cream of the crop" from the local churches. Truly, each person that I consider a close, dear friend is either a

Christian brother I've done time with or a Christian volunteer I've met and come to know while working as a chapel clerk in various prisons, or simply as a general member of the congregation. I cherish and respect their hearts for God and people. It is not of these I speak.

There are those, however, who are more "self-called" than "God-called" to prison pulpit preaching and teaching, and it is from those ranks that this "bad theology of a misplaced empathy" arises. Well-intentioned perhaps...but error none the less. In the realm of the eternal destiny of souls, error is a very serious thing indeed! Some are sincere in their desire to "help" prisoners, but are unprepared to "rightly divide the Word of God" from the pulpit. They preach and teach many times to the detriment of the prisoners who sit, like sheep to the slaughter, under their "off-kilter" teachings.

**«Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.»** II Timothy 2:15

Just last night I listened (endured would be more accurate) to a personable, friendly, "nice-guy" who is part of a prison ministry, a literate, well-spoken fellow, who obviously knows lots of scripture verses, and has spent considerable time developing his concept theology. As he proceeded to build further on a previous visit's message, his basic premise was comparing the human process of birth and birthing pains to the human spiritual journey in God's plan and purpose for us as individuals. Doesn't sound too bad so far, right? I mean, that premise COULD work, couldn't it? But then by using "projections and conclusions" of various scriptures and stretches of "anthropomorphic" applications (i.e. attributing to God the characteristics, motivations, reasoning, and logic of mankind), he declared his over-riding theme: we all had to do what we did that caused us to end up in prison! According to him, had to, mind you, unavoidably so! Mandatory!

He spent the remainder of the evening "supporting" and developing that proposition. His reasoning? "Because God is sovereign and all-knowing and He still caused us to be born into this world; since He had to, of course, know ahead of time what we were going to do; then, obviously, it was part of His plan that we do what we did in order for Him to reveal to us what was in our hearts so He could save us after we came to prison!!! Which, by the way, was therefore also part of God's original plan for our lives from the beginning...because, after all, since God knows the beginning for the end, anything He doesn't intervene in and stop or prevent has to be His will for us."

Do you recognize the twisted, deceived "circular reasoning" of this concept of God and His character, nature and ways of dealing humanity? I pray to God that you do, my friend, because it is a perversion of the revealed character of our God and Savior to cast Him in the role of an all-powerful "puppet master" pulling the strings of people at every whim of His choosing! God forbid such an understanding, and misunderstanding, of our Lord and Redeemer.

By way of true example, let me put it to you RAW and UNCUT! I killed a man during a robbery of a bar and grill and wounded another in a separate incident.

**Let me state here in no uncertain terms that  
God had no part in my doing so!**

It is a gross perversion of the truth of God and His dealings with mankind to preach a theology that says, "I, Larry J. Ries, had to kill a man"! NO! A thousand times, NO! No man ever created HAD TO DO EVIL! Whatever the pressures, bad thinking, demonic excuses, etc. that I may have been under the influence of at the time, I DID

WHAT I DID (and though it grieves me to no end and I hate the fact that I did what I did!) NOT because God wanted me to do it, or had determined I must do it in order for me to get saved “down the line” somewhere, or any other such godless reason! As difficult as it is to look it square in the face, I DID WHAT I DID BECAUSE I CHOSE TO DO IT. **All sin is exactly that way.**

**H**ow dare we preach or teach a theology that says, in essence, if not in exact wording, “Since God is ultimately in control of everything, even the devil, therefore GOD MADE ME DO IT”! No! No! No!

**H**ear me, my fellow prisoner! If you never, ever hear anything else, hear this! The devil did not make you do it and God Most certainly DID NOT make you do it nor predetermine you HAD to do it! You, as I, **did** your own “CRIME-SIN”! It is your personal responsibility, as is mine. Only when we come to grips with that fact – the horrendous nature of our sin...all of it, big and small – are we in the position to see ourselves as lost and undone, without Christ, standing before an absolutely perfect and Holy God! What God declares in His Word and by His spirit as evil, is evil. It never ceases to be evil, no matter how much “good” comes out of the “ruins” of the lives of the one who did and/or was used to do the evil! The end does not justify the means! God does not condone or promote evil.

**«Abstain from all appearance of evil.»** I Thessalonians 5:22

**«But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.»** II Timothy 3:13

**«Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.»**  
Hebrews 3:12

**«But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.»** Hebrews 5:14

**«<sup>15</sup>This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.»** James 3:15-17

**«<sup>11</sup>Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. <sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.»** I Peter 3:11-12

**«Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.»** Romans 12:9

**«The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.»**  
Proverbs 8:13

**«Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.»** Proverbs 28:14

**E**vil is found in the heart of man, just as it was in Lucifer’s heart. Un-confessed, un-repented, cherished and hung-onto-evil manifests itself through the man or woman given over to that evil.

**«Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.»** Ezekiel 28:15

**«Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.»** Gal. 6:7

**G**od desires only good and godly fruit, deeds, attitudes, thoughts and actions...for **«Every good gift and every perfect gift is**

***from above, and cometh down for the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.»*** (James 1:17). God does no evil, approves of no evil, grieves over every imagination or deed of evil, hates all evil and warns us to swiftly flee far from all evil! The exact explanation of how God can know all things, have all power, and still not be “responsible” for the things we do is, ultimately, a divine mystery hidden in the unknowable depths of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit’s own counsel. We cannot comprehend the why and how of such a high thing, which belongs to God alone. When we try, our prideful minds make-up “bad doctrine,” such as we had to do what we did!

**S**omehow in all of this, part of the answer is that God gave His very first man, Adam, and still gives each of us, free will to choose for or against Him; rebellion or submission; reception or rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as our sin bearer and Savior!

**K**now this with assurance: The only things God has pre-determined you have to do is, one day die (unless you’re alive when Jesus comes back!), bow the knee and declare “Jesus is Lord!” and stand before God to be judged for Heaven or Hell.

***«And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:»*** Hebrews 9:27

***«<sup>11</sup>For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. <sup>12</sup>So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.»***  
Romans 14:11-12

***«<sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.»***  
Philippians 2:10-11

***«The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:»***  
II Peter 2:9

***«<sup>2</sup>I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: <sup>3</sup>And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. <sup>6</sup>But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. <sup>8</sup>And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; <sup>9</sup>I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. <sup>11</sup>He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.»***  
Revelations 2:2-11

***«<sup>31</sup>When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup>And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup>And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for***

**you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: <sup>36</sup>Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. <sup>37</sup>Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? <sup>38</sup>When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? <sup>39</sup>Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? <sup>40</sup>And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. <sup>41</sup>Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup>For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. <sup>44</sup>Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? <sup>45</sup>Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. <sup>46</sup>And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.» Matthew 25:31-46**

**B**ad theology says, “since you are in prison and God, being God, knew you were going to come to prison, therefore prison is part of God’s original plan and will for your life!” NO! WRONG! Prison was Satan’s plan for you; you went for his seductive “hidden-hook” plan and ended up doing time.

**«The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.» John 10:10**

**G**od, however, “short-stopped” and invaded Satan’s plan of destruction by meeting you with salvation in His Son Jesus Christ in the midst of Satan’s turf and scheme! God “trumped” the

devil’s destructive hand in your life when you surrendered your heart and life to Christ!

**«<sup>17</sup>Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. <sup>18</sup>And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;» II Corinthians 5:17-18**

**I**t was never God’s will or plan for you to come to prison for crimes against others. However, when it happened God was waiting there to meet you with forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration to a life of meaning, purpose, and a future.

**«<sup>12</sup>Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: <sup>13</sup>Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup>In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup>Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: <sup>16</sup>For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. <sup>19</sup>For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; <sup>20</sup>And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. <sup>21</sup>And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. <sup>22</sup>In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: <sup>23</sup>If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is**

*under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;»*  
**Colossians 1:12-23**

**S**in - our personal sin - is a big deal and we should and need, to feel grief and a great weight of personal responsibility for our sin! That awareness is designed to bring us to God for cleansing, forgiveness, and relief from the guilt and burden of our sin! It is a grave error to make light of someone's sinful past...instead we are to point them to redemption and the clothing love of God found in Christ Jesus alone. The terrible weight of our sin should drive us to the arms of the Great "weight-lifter" and burden bearer. For prisoner or free person; it's true for one and all.

*«<sup>28</sup>Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.»* **Matthew 11:28-30**



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