

Justifying Your Captivity

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:18-21, NKJV).

We cannot excuse the works of our flesh. Whether the issue is anger, pride, lying or selfishness, there is no hiding it or controlling it in our own strength. Sin will eventually come out, whether through the pressures of work or family or in circumstances beyond our control.

We have been given total freedom through Jesus, yet it can seem easier to claim the solution is out of reach so that we won't have to face the truth. When we refuse to take responsibility for our actions, we forfeit our ability to change, for what you justify, you buy. In reality, our upbringing, heritage or current circumstance should not determine our actions.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

In Christ, you can walk in authority that God prepared for you before you even existed. This should encourage you! But when we excuse issues of sin as “spiritual attacks” or blame someone else for our actions, our unwillingness to take responsibility hinders us from accessing God's divine ability. Spiritual attacks absolutely occur in our lives, but be sure to examine your heart before pointing fingers at others.

God does not say to make excuses for the flesh. He says to crucify it. We cannot judge ourselves by our intentions and therefore make excuses for our actions. Behaving in such a way eventually leads us to criticize the behavior of others and even dare to say we know their true intentions. This is spiritual pride.

Many mistakenly look to the position or promotion they have received from God and assume that these blessings mean God has overlooked their unrighteous behavior. This is a great deception. Just because there is favor on your life doesn't mean that God approves of your actions.

If we want to be free from sin, we must humble ourselves, acknowledge our sin and repent before God. If you are ready to renounce your sin, pray:

"God, I don't want this work of the flesh anymore. I will no longer justify or blame it on anyone else. Forgive me, Lord, and empower me to be holy by Your grace. Holy Spirit, I desire to walk by Your guidance and bear Your fruit."

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives" (Gal. 5:22-25, NLT).

*Adapted from Out of Control and Loving It! (Charisma House, 2006). **Lisa Bevere** is a best-selling author of Fight Like a Girl, Kissed the Girls and Made them Cry, Out of Control and Loving It! and Be Angry and Don't Blow It! In addition to speaking at national and international conferences, she is a frequent guest on Christian television and radio shows. She and her husband, best-selling author John Bevere, make their*

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