

## **ANOTHER NIGHT WITH THE FROGS**

Some might call it “defiance”, and others may say that it is simply “hard-headedness”; psychologists and criminologists will tell you that it is “*a form of denial*” – that magical buzz-word – which they love to use to convince people that they are right, and you are lying to yourself. The more astute among the *Hick Farmer Sigmund Freud Wannabes* would use the term “*reaction formation*” recalling their psych 101 classes, and the various “Anonymous” organizations (AA, NA, SA, *et al.*) would call it “the abstinence violation effect”. Others with a methodological scientific philosophy would call it “asserted rightness”. In other words, the observations lead to the conclusion that it is the nature of Man to try to be last-ditch right, even when he is obviously dead wrong. He does this by the power of assertion, and the assertion itself quickly becomes separated from any consideration of the facts, or of what the truth might be.

In the Bible, the condition is called “stiff-necked” or “a hardened heart”. It hardly matters what name one wishes to call it, but a “hardened heart” is the main reason that crime and sin persist in the world, and it is also the cause of criminal recidivism – it brings people through “the revolving door” and back into prison after their release; it causes the offenses to get worse and worse, and criminologists fail to understand that laws and increasingly severe penalties will only make the situation worse.

The best (and the oldest) example of this, is the colloquy between the Pharaoh of Egypt and Moses in the book of Exodus (chapters 4 to 12):

*“...Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go”*. – Exodus 5:1, 2

In those times, and in that culture, the Pharaoh (or King) of Egypt was thought to be a god, and the people worshipped idols that were “the gods of nature”. Pharaoh, who believed himself to be a god, had absolute authority – or so he thought. And so, the true and living God; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would now reveal Himself through nature, in order that Pharaoh would “get the message”. Pharaoh’s response to a series of plagues that God would send upon the land of Egypt is the best illustration of asserted rightness or hardened heart that I know of. In particular, there is something else that I want to call your attention to:

*“And the Lord spake to Moses, Go unto Pharaoh and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens and into thy kneading troughs...”* – Exodus 8:1 - 3

The Egyptians esteemed frogs greatly, because frogs would eat bugs in their crop fields, thus acting as a natural pesticide, and the Egyptians ate frogs as a delicacy, as many other Eastern cultures do, even to this day. Now, things were about to get messy – to say the least:

*“And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt”*. – Exodus 8:6

Now there were frogs everywhere! You can imagine how disgusting this was, if you know a little something about frogs – the Nile River hosts a variety of them; the average, full-grown frog is six to eight inches long, and weighs several pounds. Like all other animals, frogs eat and they defecate wherever they please. That means a horrific stench would be upon the land, also.

Every year, frogs molt; they push their skin off their bodies with their hind legs – like taking off a pullover sweater. I guess molting wouldn't be so bad; after all, there's new skin underneath; but when the old skin is completely off, they eat it (It must be that to them, it tastes like chicken).

A few years ago on a space shuttle mission a unique thing was discovered about frogs, that was never observed before: As part of a lab experiment, the astronauts brought a few frogs on board – I guess to see how the weightlessness of outer space would affect them. Well, they found out soon enough, when one of the frogs got airsick and tossed his cookies (threw up). When the frog barfed, he didn't “up-chuck” the contents of his stomach, but his entire belly came out through his mouth inside out (still attached, of course). The frog then used his feet to brush off the insides of his inside-out, barfed up stomach, and then stuffed it back into his mouth and swallowed it... and I thought “*a dog returning to his vomit*”<sup>1</sup> was gross!

Well, you get the idea. Of course, Pharaoh couldn't have been too happy with frogs hopping all over his castle, or hordes of frogs constantly *ribbetting* and keeping him awake, jumping up on his bed and barfing up their stomachs in the baker's kneading troughs and stinking up the whole country with frog poop:

*“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people [Israel] go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, **Glory over me** [“accept the honor” – NKJV]: *When shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?*” – Exodus 8:8, 9 KJV (brackets mine).*

And in the midst of *ribbetting* and continuous croaking; the unbearable stink of billions of frogs – dead ones, live ones, frog poop and barfed-up stomachs, Pharaoh's response was truly remarkable:

*“And he [Pharaoh] said, **To Morrow...**” (Verse 10a)*

Pharaoh said, “tomorrow”. **Tomorrow!** One would think that a sane man in Pharaoh's place would have replied, “*Right NOW!*”, “*Immediately, Moses*”, “*Today! – I can't stand it anymore!*”. But no. Pharaoh said, “**Tomorrow**”. He must have wanted *just one more night with the frogs*. He wanted to be right at all costs. He refused to repent and admit that he was wrong, and to “prove” he was right, and to assert his position as the “god” of his people, he was willing to endure (and let his people endure) the plague of consequences.

And so it is with sin. We think we have it under control: “I only smoke crack or marihuana on weekends... it helps me relax... it improves my glaucoma... it cures my headaches and improves my appetite”. Rationalization; justification. “What's wrong with having a beer now and then? I'm not an alcoholic”. We think that we have sin under control... all hemmed in and confined “*in the river only*”. Then we wake up one day, and there are frogs all over the place; it's out of control. We can't handle it.

I'm certain that no one, drinking his or her first bottle of beer, said to themselves, “*Today, with this first Budweiser, I'm taking the first step towards being another among the twenty five million Americans who are addicted – enslaved to alcohol*”. Nobody among the millions who are hooked on drugs said that, or thought that, either. Somehow, all of them were going to be the exception to the rule. Somehow, they were different. Soon, there were frogs everywhere.

Sin is like a frog. If you take a frog (or a lobster) and throw them in a pan of boiling water, he will jump out, or at least try to. But if you put a frog or a lobster into a pan of room-temperature water, he will just sit there, contented.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 2:22

Now turn on the burner, and allow the temperature of the water to rise slowly. The frog or the lobster will just sit there becoming accustomed to the heat; perhaps at some point, he says to himself, *“Ahhhh... a hot tub... a Jacuzzi”*. He will stay there until he boils to death. Isn't that how it is for us with sin? At first, it's revolting and shocking. *“I would never do that!”*, we say. *“I would never go there!”* we tell ourselves. Then somehow, some way, curiosity or something gets the better of us, and we dabble in it – just a little bit – have just one beer. Smoke just one joint – just to see how it is. Have that one adulterous affair – it won't hurt anybody if nobody knows – or do whatever sin pleases us at the instant moment. We sit there in that pan of tepid water and think to ourselves, *“Y'know, this ain't bad!”*. The water is warm... then we slowly abandon ourselves to it because it feels *sooooo* good! *“It's a hot tub”*, now. It feels so good that we fall asleep in it, and when something finally wakes us up – if it ever does – the water is boiling around us, and there are frogs everywhere!

All of this goes hand-in-hand with the tragically mistaken belief that we (as individuals) are somehow the exception to the rule. We get the idea that somehow things will be different *“for me”*. We say, *“I can stop (drinking, drugging, womanizing, etc.) any time I want to”*; the only problem is that in our own will-power, sitting in that comfortable, cozy hot tub that is slowly becoming a deep-fry, we cannot muster up the will to want-to. Paul of Tarsus said it best:

*“For the good that I will to do, I do not; But the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me”* – Romans 7:19, 20 NKJV

Of course, we all think ourselves to be the exception to the rule. Listen, my brethren: A true story. Recently, a bright, pretty young girl, 15 years old, approached a zookeeper to inquire about how best to care for her pet raccoon “Bandit”, who she took in because its mother was run over by a car. The zookeeper told her to get rid of the raccoon, “because”, he said, “At two years old, raccoons go through glandular changes [puberty] and get very temperamental and nasty”.

In fact, a twenty-pound raccoon can kill a one hundred pound German Shepherd in a fight. *“Oh, no!”*, the girl said, *“Not Bandit! Bandit loves me; he's so sweet and cute!”*. And so she refused to accept the facts. Now, caring for orphaned animals is not a sin, but the girl went beyond care for the raccoon, and kept it as a pet. Why? Because she enjoyed it. She petted it, she fed it, she cleaned up after it, and most importantly, she became attached to it. Two months later, she was playing with Bandit, and Bandit did what raccoons do – he turned on her viciously. Bandit tore into the girl's face with his claws and teeth, and ripped her face apart; and the girl is lucky to be alive. Of course, the raccoon was “only playing”, some might say. Sin is like that raccoon. Sin is like those frogs that barf up their bellies. What was once a pleasure turns into disaster if you engage in it long enough, or fail to recognize it as a danger soon enough; what you don't rebuke and turn away from immediately; all the stuff we say *“Tomorrow”* to; all of those things that nobody is immune to *“except me”* – watch out!

*“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”.*

– Galatians 6:7

The Bible tells us: *“For the wages of sin is death...”* – Romans 6:23a

*“...behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out”.*

– Numbers 32:23b

You will note that it is not the Lord who hunts down our sin; but it is **the sin itself** that will *“find you out”*. The Lord forgives us:

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.* – 1 John 1:9

However, eventually, no matter how the sin is done, the sowing will reap a harvest: We cannot go on sowing sin and expecting or hoping for a crop failure; it is the nature of sin to “crop up”; to surface, and to be exposed:

- Like the sin of Cain, it may be done in secret. – Genesis 4:8 - 10
- Like the sin of Esau, it may be done impulsively. – Genesis 25:32, 33
- Like the sin of Joseph's brothers, years may pass before it is discovered.  
– Genesis 42:21
- Like the sin of Achan, it may be well covered-up. – Joshua 7:21
- Like the sin of Samson, it may be done reluctantly. – Judges 16:16, 17
- Like the sin of Ahab, it could be done under peer pressure. – 1 Kings 21:7 - 20
- Like the sin of Belshazzar, it may be done under the influence of alcohol  
(or drugs). – Daniel 5:1, 2, 27
- Like the sin of Herod, it may be the result of a foolish promise.  
– Matthew 14:6 - 10
- Like the sin of Judas, it may be approved by the authorities. – Mark 14:10, 11
- Like the sin of Pontius Pilate, it could be “politically correct”. – Mark 15:15
- Like the sin of the Jews, it could be done in ignorance. – Luke 23:34

The Bible tells us that there is pleasure in sin for a season (Hebrews 11:25), and isn't that true? Sin has to be fun; else it would lose its appeal. If you hate to be lied to; if you despise being taken for a fool, and if you love God and trust the Lord, then you should hate and despise sin. We should hate sin in ourselves as much as we hate it in others. Sometimes we hate others when we see the same sin we harbor in our hearts, in them. A little sin leads to more of the same: *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”*. – Galatians 5:9 KJV

Man has the tendency to assert himself above authority – even the authority of God. He believes that he will gain some advantage by it; it is the lie and the seed sown by Satan in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve, *“...that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods”*.  
– Genesis 3:5b KJV

Man sometimes has the mistaken idea that God is trying to *“spoil my fun”*. This thinking is the core of the *New Age Moral Relativism*. *“Nothing is really bad”*, they will tell you (but not in so many words):

*“Truth is what you believe to be true; it's your truth”*; *“It's OK to have promiscuous sex, just use a condom”*; *“Wrap it up”* is the new public service message... and homosexuality is now *“an alternative lifestyle”*. Better go read Romans 1:25 - 28; they have *“...received in themselves that recompense of their error...”* (Verse 27b), and entire continents have become infected with a virulent plague. The sin is exposed (finds them out) by virtue of the “crop” springing up where the seeds of sin and debauchery were sown. Unfortunately, the innocent seem to suffer the worst.

God loves us, and He doesn't say, *“I'm forbidding you to do <this>, and <this>, and <this>, and therefore, its bad”*. No, my friends, we are not getting the message. God is saying to us, *“I know that <this>, and <this>, and <this>, is going to hurt you; it will cut you, scar you, mutilate you, and ruin your life. That's bad, and therefore, I forbid my children to do these things”*.

Jesus Christ paid the debt for our sins. The slate is clean. – Isaiah 53:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 5:21. We, unlike Pharaoh, do not need Moses or Aaron to *“entreat the Lord”* for us, to *remove the frogs from our midst*: *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”*. – Hebrews 4:16 KJV

Remember that “...we are bought with a price...” (1 Corinthians 6:20a) and that God “...will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able [to resist]” (1 Corinthians 10:13b), and our bodies are to be “... a living sacrifice... [Our] reasonable service”.  
– Romans 12:1b KJV

Instead of following what “*the natural man*” does: letting our feelings and emotions dictate our actions, we are to discipline ourselves to “...casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”.  
– 2 Corinthians 10:15 KJV

In other words, we are to be obedient to God our Father, and let our feelings and emotions follow our obedience. If that seems difficult, take heart, because it is written:

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: Be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”. – Isaiah 41:10 KJV

“...my grace is sufficient for thee: For my [God's] strength is made perfect in [your] weakness”.  
– 2 Corinthians 12:9a KJV

As Christians, we must not allow the world's ideas – the New Age, feel-good, pill-popping, Freudian psychobabble and “*science*” *falsely so called* to affect our judgment:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”. – Colossians 2:8 KJV

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called”. – 1 Timothy 6:20 KJV

Make no mistake, my brethren, we are in the midst of spiritual war. The conflicts between nations, right down to the turmoil in our own families are the result of the rebellion of a hardened heart – Man's vain attempt to deny God, and be his own god. This is the “*philosophy and vain deceit*” of humanism, Darwinism, and the *New Age* cults; it is the tradition of laws that are contrary to God's will, God's word, and God's law. It is the “*rudiments of the world*” of materialism, the “*babblings*” of idolatry, witchcraft, and *Harry Potter*, and Mattel's *Secret Spells Barbie Doll*; It is the “*science falsely so called*” that teaches “Big Bangs”, and life evolving from rocks over billions of years by *pre-biotic natural selection*. The frogs are indeed upon us. Why, are we like Pharaoh, saying, “*Tomorrow*” ?

“*Hypocrisy is the homage that vice renders to virtue*”. – François de la Rochefoucauld – 1678 French author.

**Sin:** “*If you sit in the barber's chair long enough, you're going to get a haircut*”. – Unknown



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A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'David Todeschini'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.