

Some People Must
by Bob Bekins
April 2015

When I first met our new neighbor Rhoda I knew little about her. As she and my wife got to spend time together they eventually became good friends. Then Rhoda's story came out and an interesting one it was.

Three years earlier Rhoda had been the driver in a tragic car crash in which her passenger had been killed. Rhoda was seriously injured and some scars were left. The depths of her emotional scarring were far deeper. You see, the passenger was her own father, and the accident had been her fault. Until I heard her story I did not understand why she was in an abusive relationship with the man who shared her home. Why would she stay? Now I understood. She had found a way to deny herself joy in life as punishment for what she blamed herself for. Some people feel they must do this.

After the accident, as she lay in her hospital bed, each day her mother came in and literally gave her hell over the "crime" threatening to sue and prosecute her. Hooked to IVs and breathing apparatus and monitors, Rhoda was trapped in the room. The prison walls were under construction with her mother as the Master Mason. Enter Tyler. He was visiting a friend in Rhoda's shared semi-private room and overheard the all too loud vocal torture beyond the privacy curtain. Stealing looks at Rhoda, he could see that she was beautiful or would at least return to her beauty soon enough.

One day, when her mother was away, he slipped into the room and introduced himself. A week later he could see that the time was right and asked a simple question, "You want to get out of here?" He took her home and then took advantage of her guilt with full control using the story that had spilled out across the mother's lips.

Rhoda told my wife, "I deserve to be punished." And maybe that is true. However, judgment is not up to us, not even up to people who are judging themselves. Judgment is in the hands of the ultimate father of us all - God. And He has decided to forgive us but with just one condition. The price for the forgiveness was paid by Jesus, His Son on the cross. The subscription is ours to accept. That is the one condition. Accepting that Jesus died for us, each of us individually.

I can't think of anything more heinous than someone who uses another person's guilt to punish them. Or worse, to control their life through belittling conversations, demands of all kinds, and ultimately using that person to commit evil acts. Acts that even the villain would not do himself. His "rescue" was designed for his purposes, not for her salvation.

If God has forgiven us, we must also forgive ourselves. It is normal to be aware of the mistakes we've have made in life, correct our decision making process, and move on. Abnormal is a continual grinding guilt which can exploit our vital energy and ruin a perfectly useful life. That is what happened to Rhoda. My friends, don't let it happen to you. Accept God's forgiveness by accepting His Gift of Jesus. Then forgive yourself.

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