

Principles of Righteousness #1

Introduction:

- A. How do we determine whether a particular action is acceptable before the Lord? – cf. Heb. 5:12-14.
 - 1. The *only* way we can determine what is right or wrong is by appealing to the scriptures and considering the principles of righteousness found there.
- B. God has not specified everything which we can and can not do.
 - 1. Rather, He has revealed His will on the basis of principles, which, when understood and applied, will show us what pleases Him.
- C. We begin looking today at a number of principles revealed in God's word which are designed to help us distinguish between good and evil.

I. Principle #1: ***Does it destroy your identity as a Christian by causing you to be regarded as OF the world? Does it classify you with the world instead of with Christ and the church?***

- A. The principle is that everything we do must protect our identity as a Christian.
- B. 2 Cor. 6:17–7:1– We are told to, *“Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate.”*
 - 1. We must be separated from the world to be recognized as a child of God.
 - 2. Therefore, any activity which would cause us to be considered “of the world” is wrong since it destroys our separation to the world.
- C. Rom. 12:1,2– We must not be *“fashioned according to this world.”*
 - 1. Again, we are to be different from the world.
- D. Applying this principle:
 - 1. Drinking alcohol.
 - a. If you were to see someone drinking alcohol, would you quickly think they were a Christian or would you quickly recognize that they were a person of the world?
 - b. Therefore, drinking alcohol can be understood to be wrong simply because of the fact that it would make us appear to be one of Satan's servants rather than a servant of Christ.
 - c. It would also be wrong since it would violate plain passages of scripture– 1 Thess. 5:4-8; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:13; 5:8.
 - 2. Dancing.
 - a. Seeing someone on the dance floor would likewise cause us to think not of their being a child of God but that they are a person of the world.
 - b. It also violates other Biblical principles.
 - 1) It is lascivious– cf. Gal. 5:19; it produces evil fruit– cf. Matt. 7:16,17; it destroys spirituality; it is “of the world”; and it destroys the Christians influence for good.
- E. The first question we should ask when trying to decide if something is right or wrong is “Does it destroy my identity as a Christian?”

II. Principle #2: ***Is the practice questionable in your own mind, and therefore an offense to your own conscience?***

- A. The principle is that we cannot do anything which violates our conscience.
- B. Rom. 14:13-23– *“23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”*
- C. When we have a question about an activity, before asking others what they think about it, ask yourself what *you* think about it and if you can engage in the activity without violating your conscience.

Conclusion:

- A. God has given us a way to determine for ourselves whether a thing is pleasing to Him or not.