

Discerning Good And Evil

TEXT: Heb. 5:12-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. AS WE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN, WE MUST:
 1. Change our desires.
 2. Limit our opportunities to sin.
 3. Exercise self-control.
 4. Seek forgiveness.
- B. WE MUST BE ABLE TO DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.
 1. Knowing the difference does not come automatically upon conversion.
 2. It is an ability that comes with time and "exercise" (**Heb. 5:14**).
- C. DECIDING WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG INVOLVES ASKING A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MATTER AT HAND.

I. IS IT CLEARLY CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE?

- A. MANY THINGS ARE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED AS BEING WRONG.
 1. One list of such things is found in **Galatians 5:19-21**.
 2. A similar list is found in **Eph. 5:3-5**.
- B. BUT NOT ALL THINGS ARE MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.

II. IS IT SIMILAR TO SOMETHING CONDEMNED?

- A. **Galatians 5:19-21**, NOTICE THE PHRASE "**AND SUCH LIKE**."
 1. Why are all these things alike, **what do they have in common?**
 2. They all show domination by the flesh. They violate the same principle.
 3. When uncertain, we should ask "Is it LIKE any sins specifically mentioned."
- B. YOU MIGHT EVEN COMPARE IT WITH THE GOOD THINGS MENTIONED.
 1. Notice those things in **Gal. 5:22-23**.
 2. Is it more like the "fruit of the Spirit" or the "works of the flesh?"

III. DOES IT HURT YOUR CONSCIENCE?

- A. THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE(**1 Tim. 1:5, 18-19; 3:9**).
- B. VIOLATING THE CONSCIENCE IS SIN, WHETHER THE ACT IS INHERENTLY SINFUL OR NOT(**Romans 14:23**). **STAY OUT OF GRAY.**

IV. WHAT DO MATURE CHRISTIANS SAY ABOUT IT?

- A. THIS, OF COURSE, IS **NOT** THE ULTIMATE DETERMINING FACTOR.
- B. **Hebrews 5:14** SAYS THOSE WHO BY "REASON OF USE" ARE IN A POSITION TO DISCERN
 1. This is why the advice of mature Christians can be helpful (**Phil. 3:17**).
 2. Rehoboam's failure to listen to the advice of elders(**1 Kings 12:6-20**).
 3. Paul taught Titus that the younger should look to those older(**Titus 2:3-5**).

V. DOES IT HINDER YOUR INFLUENCE?

- A. PAUL STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INFLUENCE.
 1. His concern for how his influence affected others(**1 Cor. 9:19-23**).
 2. He commands us to do likewise, imitating Christ!(**1 Cor. 10:31-11:1**).
- B. PETER TAUGHT THE VALUE OF A GOOD EXAMPLE.
 1. In helping a wife win her husband to the Lord(**1 Pet. 3:1-2**).
 2. **Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:11-12**.

VI. IS IT POOR STEWARDSHIP?

- A. WE ARE "STEWARDS" OF OUR TIME, MONEY, AND BODIES.
 1. The point of the Parable of the Talents(**Matt. 25:14-30**).

2. Paul's instruction concerning our bodies(**1 Cor. 6:19-20**).
 3. His directions for those rich in this world(**1 Tim. 6:17-19**).
- B. SOME HARMLESS ACTIVITIES REQUIRE SO MUCH **TIME** AND **ENERGY**.
1. There is none left for the Lord!
 2. Time is limited; **priorities** must be set and kept(**Eph. 5:16; Matt. 6:33**).

VII. WOULD JESUS DO IT?

- A. THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP(**Luke 6:40**).
- B. "WOULD JESUS DO IT?" IS AN APPROPRIATE QUESTION(**Acts 17:30**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. AN **HONEST** APPRAISAL USING THESE QUESTIONS WILL HELP US DEFEAT SATAN BY DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL..
- B. THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IS "DO WE WANT TO OVERCOME SIN, OR DO WE WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN WITH NO INCONVENIENCE?"