

**“Where Should a Christian
Draw the Line?”**

Where Should Christians Draw The Line?

- In moral issues, Christians are expected to train their consciences according to the principles of God's word, and then listen to their consciences when they speak out.
- Rom. 2:15 - "Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them"

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- 1Cor. 8:7 - “However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.”
- 1Cor. 10:27 - “If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.”
- 1Tim. 1:5 - “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith”

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- However, there are variables involved:
 - Christians study and grow their consciences at different rates
 - Some consciences have improper training in a past religion
 - Some consciences are over or under active
- This means that the conscience is not the determining factor in where Christians should draw the line. A more reliable standard is necessary

Where Should Christians Draw The Line?

- The question must now be restated: “Where has God drawn the line?”
- We can now examine an objective standard and train our consciences accordingly
- What questions require a line drawn by God?

“How Does One Apply: ‘We Are In The World But Not Of The World’?”

- It will be tough to apply because it is a chimney corner scripture. It is not in the Bible
- It began to be used early in the 20th Century, and is loosely based on John 17:14-16
- The proverb was actually coined by Buddhists and Jainists long before 20th Century preachers began using it.

“How Does One Apply: ‘We Are In The World But Not Of The World’?”

- John 17:14-16 - “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”
- This passage is not talking specifically about moral issues. Christians are not of the world in the sense that they no longer belong to or serve the purposes of the world, but rather belong to and serve the purposes of the kingdom of God. Moral issues are only a small part of a much larger definition.

“How Does One Apply: ‘We Are In The World But Not Of The World’?”

- Is it a true principle that can be derived from the harmony of all scriptures on the matter?
 - Only to the extent that we recognize it as a proverb and not a precept.
 - It is true that while Christians live in this world (physically speaking), they are not a part of this world (spiritually speaking). The proverb is a play on words.

“How Does One Apply: ‘We Are In The World But Not Of The World’?”

- So how does one apply the proverb “We are in the world but not of the world”?
- Learn and live the precept that as a Christian:
 - Your first loyalty is to God
 - Your highest duty is to serve the Lord
 - Your greatest interests are spiritual in nature
 - Your greatest works will be the things you do for Christ
 - Your primary goal is going to heaven
- This in spite of the fact that you live in a physical world that constantly demands your attention be diverted from this rule of life.

Questions

- “Can one go to a restaurant that serves alcohol? (Applebee’s, Pizza Hut)”
- “Can one work in a place that sells alcohol? (Giant Eagle, Kroger)”
- “Can one be in a place where alcohol is consumed in quantity? (football game)”
- “Can one work in construction if the company is building a bar?”

Answers

- Depends on what your conscience is telling you.
 - If your conscience bothers you to the point that you feel you are in sin, you need to cease that activity.
 - You must have the scripturally based conviction that the activity is acceptable.
 - Rom. 14:20-23 - “Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. 22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”

Answers

- Otherwise, the answer to all four questions is yes.
- Christians live in this world; they cannot insulate themselves against or isolate themselves from all exposure to the sins of others

Answers

- 1Cor. 5:9-13 - “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person. 12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges...”

Answers

- John 17:15 - “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.”
- 1John 5:19 - “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”

Answers

- As in many activities that are themselves morally neutral, so it is with the activities of these four questions, what is the intent of the person engaging in the activity?
- Why do you go to a restaurant, a grocery store, a sporting event, or work for a construction company?

Answers

- Neutral activities are made good or bad by the intent of the participant
 - Rom. 14:14 - “I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”
 - Rom. 14:5-6 - “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.”

Answers

- In 1Cor. 8, Paul implies that he would have no difficulty eating meat in an idols temple. Why? Because he is hungry; he is not there to worship or honor the idol; it is nothing
- We have the choice to take activities that have no moral implications and make them good and wholesome or make them evil and destructive
- One man plays golf for recreation and relationships; another man on the same course plays for the opportunity to gamble, drink, and curse

Answers

- “But it will look like I approve of drinking.”
- The appearance of endorsement is based on your own beliefs and understanding, and not necessarily on truth and reality

Answers

- How far is one willing to go to avoid any activity that has the appearance of endorsement?
 - The government uses a portion of your tax dollars for purposes Christians cannot approve. Will he refuse to pay his taxes?
 - The schools teach things Christians cannot believe. Will he refuse an education for his children?
 - Not everyone member of the local church is faithful, or honors God as he should, or believes the Bible as it is written. Will he stay away from the church because some abuse it?

Answers

- We live in a world that is soaked in liquor and licentiousness. You cannot escape exposure to it without leaving the world.
- Do not engage in the sin and do not attempt to hide yourself away in a compound. Train your conscience.
- 1John 5:18-20 - “We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”