

Relativistic morality?

We have seen in Chapter 8 that we can sin by stumbling another by perhaps innocently inducing them to do something they consider to be sin. We also have seen that a person can sin by acting against their conscience, even though what they do is not sinful in itself. This may seem like a kind of relativistic morality. Actions which may not be absolutely right or wrong, but depending upon circumstances may be OK or may be sin. **Don't fool yourself.** Sin is lawlessness. Outright sin is sin! We are still to be obedient to God and to those He has put in authority. If we disobey the will of God as clearly stated in the scriptures we sin.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin.

1John 3:4 Every one that practises sin practises also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof]

This is more than simply an issue of sinning ourselves, horrible as that is to God. If we **disobey** God we not only sin but may stumble others as well (although possibly the more serious our sin the less likely we might lead another astray). Furthermore, if we are on the straight and narrow way we may still fall into sin if we do not walk by faith.

Romans 14:23 ... for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin.

And if we flaunt our knowledge of what is right and good we may still sin by doing something not sinful in itself by stumbling another to sin against his conscience. Are we "who are strong" ready to cheerfully sacrifice some pleasant activities we can rightly enjoy, for the sake of a "weaker" brother or sister in Christ who might be stumbled?

The Corinthians were flaunting their "superior" knowledge and human wisdom as we saw in the first few chapters. This not only was causing divisions and sects among them but here we see was stumbling those weaker among them. Since this issue was one of the questions they had written to Paul it probably was one of the divisive issues in dispute.

What about idols?

! *Leviticus 19:4 Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I [am] the LORD your God.*

! We are requested to not eat things sacrificed to idols because we would offend others, Acts 15, 1Corinthians 8.

! We are to keep ourselves from idols, 1John 5.

! Covetousness [or greed] is idolatry, Colossians 3.

! We know the physical idol itself is nothing., 1Corinthians 8, but

! There commonly is a demon behind a physical idol, 1Corinthians 10.

Reality Check Ahead:

Scriptural check! Righteousness check! Faith check! Grace check! Peace check!

CHECK FOUR WAYS:

1. What things, activities or customs besides **physical images**, fit the description of an idol?

2. What things, activities or customs fall into the same class as meat sacrificed to idols? That is, what things I might feel free personally to do in the :Lord, **will stumble or ensnare** a believer with a weak conscience?

3. Personally, what things, activities or customs are in my life that are **fleshly** gratifying the flesh, bad flesh or good flesh but still flesh not befitting to the believer's new nature.

4. Personally, what things, activities or customs are **worldly**, not befitting the believer's heavenly citizenship, and earthly pilgrimage?

As we review and reflect on our present personal life style there are **five questions** to ask about every thing we do or say or think:

1. Does it glorify God? *1Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*
2. Does God ask us to do it?
3. Is it righteous?
4. Is it by faith? Does our liberty allow us to pursue it personally with a clear conscience before God?
5. Is it loving? Are we likely to lead others (believers or unbelievers) astray if we do join or pursue this?

NOW, list some things you think you should review in your life:

Here are some general categories:

- With the local assembly.
- With believers not in fellowship.
- Doing good to others.
- Various secular activities.
- Various recreational activities.
- Various entertainment events and activities.
- Material possessions.
- Unequal yokes with unbelievers.

Is stuff like this relevant today?

Does scripture change or become outdated with Time? Locale? Culture? Technology? Human sophistication?

Does God?

Think about it!

Pray about it!

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether. {true: Heb. truth} 10 More to be desired [are they] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: [and] in keeping of them [there is] great reward. 12 Who can understand [his] errors? cleanse thou me from secret [faults]. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous [sins]; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. {the great: or, much} 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if [there be any] wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. {wicked...: Heb. way of pain, or, grief} } 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if [there be any] wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

By Ron Canner, May 7, 2003

APPENDIX

A key scripture for a believer seeking to follow the Lord in these last days is:

2Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

“Following” is like driving down a highway: First we need to get off the wrong path and on to the right road, going in the right direction. Once saved by grace, and separated from evil, we follow with others with an undivided heart:

1. Righteousness. This is confined within the edge stripes on the road. We might go off the road if not heeding the guidance of scripture. There are dangerous ditches and obstacles on both sides. Beware, be careful and be diligent. No OFF ROAD vehicles allowed!

2. Faith. Within the breadth of the traveling surface we determine, **by faith**, what lane are we to place ourselves, when should we change lanes, how fast are we to pace ourselves, when we are to pullover and rest, what fork are we to take, relying upon the Lord as our leader, following Him step by step, the word of God a lamp (headlights in the darkness) to our feet for each step and a light (overhead signs) to our path

showing the way ahead and the goal. Other believers may be used by the Lord to provide guidance, counsel and admonition (warning signs).

3. Love. As we travel we demonstrate a loving, forbearing nature, yielding right of way to fellow travelers, avoiding conflict, changing lanes safely, letting others pass, avoiding being a hindrance or danger to others, watching out for the safety of others, etc. Love is the governing and binding agent for the pilgrims all going at their own pace and in different lanes but all headed the same direction, toward the same destination, welcoming merging traffic, watching out for the distracted or careless, stopping to assist those with trouble, calling the authorities (the Lord) for help when needed.

4. Peace with God, the peace of God and God of peace. No place for road rage on this trip!

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