

How to make baby believers make decisions about activities.

*1 Cor 3:1-2 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

God tells us to... *2 Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

If you don't study, if you don't take notes, one day when someone asks you a question, you are going to be ashamed, because you don't have the answer! You are going to say, "Pastor O'Dell had taught us that but I failed to take any notes."

Dances, Bars, Casinos, Theater, Clubs... What is wrong with them?

Let's give them principles that they can use to make the right decisions in their life and for your family.

1-3 Justify our activities before God

4-6 Justifying our activities before man

7 Justifying our activities for ourselves

**Start with justifying our activities before God!** Place the focus on Him first!

1. Does this activity honor God? *1 Cor 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Do we exalt God with all our hearts? Do we show by it our utter, supreme reverence and respect for God?

Our activities ought to glorify Him! (Does a tight miniskirt and halter top at a dance?)

2. Could Christ be a partner in the activity my decision concerns? (Bar? [only drink coke] or Movie house where they curse His very name?) You take Him wherever you go! Why?

Christ is always with us!

*Matt 28:20 ... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Heb 13:5 ...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

3. Will my activity grieve the Holy Spirit? Did you know that He has feeling? We should be sensitive to the commandments of God and the "feelings" of God.

*Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

*James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*

He lusts and envy's in a proper sense, to possess us, to control us, to own us! He has strong emotions. He envy's to control us.

**Justify our activities before men!** People are watching you. (Fellow employees; neighbors, family members, total strangers and unbelievers start watching you... we must be good testimonies)

4. Will it cause somebody to stumble who might be ready, or very close to receiving the Lord.

Is it possible that our activities (our hypocrisies), have caused others to stumble and not enter into the kingdom of God? Have we slammed the door shut on them?

I regretfully say, that I may have done that to some myself in years gone by.

*Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

Don't judge others, judge yourself.

*1 Cor 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

Nobody purposely would want to do this and sin against Christ. If we wound the conscience of others in this way, (by our example, by our words, by our music, dress, behavior,) we sin against Christ.

We must guard our testimony. We must teach the new believers these principles to guide their lives by. We don't want to cause or be the cause of anyone stumbling in his or her walk with the Lord.

5. Then in justifying our activities before man, we have to ask ourselves, is the activity considered worldly today?

This is where personal judgment comes into play and Spiritual discernment comes in because the world is always changing.

1 Cor. 7:31 If you or I are bent on constantly being in fashion... that is a worldly behavior! (Not that we are suppose to look like slobs or anything!)

1 John 2:15-17, Worldliness does not show a lack of love for the Father, but an absence of love for the Father. That is what the text says literally! Do you understand that? The Love for the Father is absent! It is turned toward himself.

(ex.) When I was a young teenager, I was bent on wearing hip hugger, bell-bottom jeans, poke-dot shirts, where a big medallion, grow my hair long and part it down the middle. I wanted to be just like the Beatles! I didn't care what my parents wanted, I didn't care of it embarrassed them, I didn't care what my priest said, what my teachers expected of me, or what the neighbors thought! I didn't care! I didn't care if it embarrassed God!

All I wanted to do was to be like every other young man my age. I wanted to be a Beatle! I tried hard to be a rock star! I tried to play the electric guitar and drums! I loved the world.

I was worldly! I didn't care about what others thought about my music, because it was the fashion of the world that day.

I wanted a sports car! 66 Ford mustang! Wouldn't go as fast as I wanted it, so then I set out to buy me a 2 door, Chevy Nova super sport. My father wanted me to buy a Ford Fairlane 4-door wagon.

In doing so, I probably hurt and disappointed my parents deeply by not following their advise, and hurt my reputation amongst others. I was selfish and loved myself. I probably hurt a lot of people deeply, but I loved myself. I loved what the world had to offer.

*1 John 2:15-16 If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*1 Cor 7:31 ...the fashion of this world passeth away.*

There is many a teenager out there that doesn't care. They don't care if they hurt their dad or their mom, their teachers, principle, their pastor, or their Sunday School teacher. They don't care if they hurt their grandma or grandpa. They love the world! The love of the Father is not in them!

*1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

I go visiting every week. I have some appointments that I keep with visiting folks who have visited our church or through other contacts. Some of us have adopted a St. and are going door-to-door, inviting folks and witnessing for our Lord Jesus Christ.

I can't tell you how many times I hear, that people tell me that they are just to busy to attend church. It is the only day that they have to sleep in. Do you know what the real problem is?

The love of the Father is not in them! They love the world and the things of this world.

This might be hard medicine for some of you today to swallow, but we need to teach the baby believers.

Is this activity considered worldly? Is this music considered worldly? Is this clothing considered worldly. (Ex. I stopped at a house one summer, a woman was driving her mower cutting the lawn. She stopped and came to where I was standing and asked if she could help me. I told her that I was pastor Willie O'Dell from the HCBBC. She immediately covered herself, excused herself and returned a couple of minutes later wearing something that was much more appropriate than what she had on.)

Do you love God? I am amazed how the Lord cleaned up and changed the life of the maniac of Gadara. When His disciples came to him, they found him sitting, clothed, and in his right mind!

And his first desire was to go home with the Lord, to follow him wherever the Lord went. But the Lord said, I need you to go home, to your family, and tell your loved ones how the Lord had done great things for you and has showed compassion on you. Go win your family and friends to Christ.

There was something about that man's heart that was miraculously changed. He didn't want to go out and make some money, buy things and accumulate things, he wanted to follow Jesus Christ!

Last time I knew, "Thou shalt not covet was still one of the ten commandments." But pastor that is the American way! But it is worldly!

#### 6. Does the activity have the appearance of evil?

*1 Thess 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

There is a difference from the perception of worldliness and the appearance of evil. The difference is that worldliness changes, while evil is always the same. If something was evil or wrong, it has always been wrong and ever will be wrong.

Drunkenness, fornication, premarital and extramarital affairs, illegal drugs, evil rock music of Exo. 32 is still evil today! Crimes, violence, delinquency, gambling, pornography, homosexuality, lying, cheating and stealing!

There are some things that are just plain wrong, always evil. God is not changing with this world. God is not interested in being politically correct. He is CORRECT! He is the way, the TRUTH and the life.

The believer should realize that his or her behavior should not have any appearance of evil. Sounds like a boring life? Are you kidding me? It's a great life! Most of us adults in growing up, have tried both sides. We sure are enjoying this side! It gets sweeter every day!

#### 7. Last of all, justifying our activities for ourselves, "Is there too much doubt?"

This is very simple and yet profound. If we even have to bring it up and question it, then that makes it questionable. If we have to ask what is wrong with rock music, that makes it questionable. Isn't it common sense, that if we have to bring it up and ask a question about it then doesn't that make it questionable?

What's wrong with hanging out at the beach with a two-piece bathing suit on? If you have to bring it up as a question, then that makes it questionable.

Why can't I go to a dance with my girl friend or boyfriend?"

Why can't I pierce my navel? Tongue? When you have to question something, then it makes that activity questionable.

A believer is not to live his life by doubts, but by the faith.

*Rom 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

If there is some doubt... DON'T! That is one of the safest principles to live by. IF IN DOUBT, DON'T! You can't go wrong living by that principle when it comes toward activities.

*James 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

*James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

When we get wisdom from above, He always leads us to choose what is the most purest. And then he gives us peace about those decisions.

Parents, did you ever struggle with telling your son or daughter that they couldn't attend a certain event, while your teen cried and begged and threw a fit? But you said NO because you had some doubts about it, and your gut feeling was that it was wrong?

Then after you had put your foot down and made your decision you felt at peace about it? That peace comes from the wisdom from above! That is what the scriptures are talking about.

**First...** Justify the activity before God. Does it honor Him? Could you invite and have Christ be a partner in this activity? Would my activity grieve the Holy Spirit?

**Second of all...** We have to justify the activity before men, because they are watching us.

Would my activity cause somebody to stumble? Is it considered worldly? Do others perceive by me being involved in this activity that I don't love God?

Does the activity have the appearance of evil?

**And Third...** Justifying the activity with ourselves.

Is there too much doubt? Is it questionable?

God wants to lead us down the plain paths, not paths of doubt or confusion.

When in doubt Don't!

Love God first. Love others second. Love ourselves last.

These principles will help us with our activities.

We are not here to live for ourselves, we are here to live for God and make our lives count for something.

### **Invitation:**

#### **Pray...**

"Lord, keep us from worldliness. Keep us from even the appearance of evil. Help us that we might have some heart cleaning this morning, some mind cleaning and some house cleaning in our homes of some things that are questionable.

Lord, help us to glorify you in all our activities, and to remember that Jesus is with us wherever we go, and that your Holy Spirit has great feelings for us today.

Help us to make the best and right decisions for us in our families lives."

### **Pg. # 306 Have thine own way Lord.**

We tolerate things today that lost people wouldn't even have tolerated 30-40 years ago. We have just gotten used to it. But God hasn't!

There should be a difference between the people of God and the world around us. He called us...

*Titus 2:14-15 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

The Lord admonishes us as leaders in the church... vs. 15 *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

Have you found yourself getting worldly or getting away from the Lord? Won't you come this morning to the altar?