

## *“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”*

Acts 16:30

### **Learn The Gospel**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17; James 1:22-25

### **Believe On GOD In CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; James 2:14-26

### **Confess CHRIST**

Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33; 7:21

### **Repent Of Sin**

Acts 3:19; Matthew 3:8

### **Be Baptized**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:21

### **Be Steadfast**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

## *“A Word Fitly Spoken”*

Proverbs 25:11

“Sometimes when I’m faced with an unbeliever, an atheist, I am tempted to invite him to the greatest gourmet dinner that one could ever serve, and when we finished eating that magnificent dinner, to ask him if he believes there’s a cook” (Ronald Reagan).

# *“Sound Doctrine”*

Titus 2:1

## WHAT IS WRONG WITH...?

by Evan Casey

Sometimes after a preacher has presented a message about the evils of drinking, gambling, dancing, mixed swimming, or any number of other things, someone will be heard to say, “What is wrong with dancing (or gambling, drinking, etc.)? The Bible doesn’t say that it’s wrong, and I don’t see anything wrong with it.”

While there are different ways to respond to this argument, I have come to believe that many of those who say they don’t see anything wrong with dancing, mixed swimming, smoking, or gambling are telling the truth – they really do not see anything wrong with those things. But the real question should never be, “Do I see anything wrong with them?” Instead, we should ask, “Does God see anything wrong with it?” As we mature as Christians, we are expected to become more skilled in discerning good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14). All evil is not directly condemned in the Bible. However, God expects the growing, maturing Christian to learn how to apply some basic principles to the moral questions that arise so that we are able to see “what is wrong” with various evils. Consider with me some basic questions and principles that should guide us in discerning good and evil.

**Is it condemned?** Sometimes the wrongness of an action is clearly seen if we take the time to define a few words. Do we realize that a “reviler” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:9-10) is one who verbally abuses others? When we read of “licentiousness” (or

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## *“The Assembling Of Ourselves Together”*

Hebrews 10:24-25

### **Sunday**

10:15 am.....Worship

Las Vegas Library

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

### **Monday**

7:00 pm.....Acts Study

Cogburn residence

### **Tuesday**

7:00 pm.....Ladies’ Study

Tanksley residence

### **Wednesday**

7:00 pm.....Various Studies

Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

## *“Give Attention To Reading”*

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:13

Your reading assignments for this week are as follows:

Sunday.....Matthew 19-21

Monday.....Matthew 22-24

Tuesday.....Matthew 25-26

Wednesday.....Matthew 27-28

Thursday.....Mark 1-3

Friday.....Mark 4-6

Saturday.....Mark 7-9

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*"lasciviousness"*), do we understand that this word condemns lewd behavior, including "indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females..." (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)? If we say that we see nothing wrong with dancing or "making out", perhaps we ought to look more closely at the definition of licentiousness. Lesson number one: know the meanings of those things that are condemned in scripture.

**Will it lead to temptation?** Jesus taught His disciples to pray: *"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"* (Matthew 6:13). Can we consistently pray that prayer while going places and doing things that we know are evil? Apply this instruction from Jesus to the consumption of alcohol. Knowing that our adversary seeks to devour us (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8), are we not foolish to take the first drink, which could set us on the path to drunkenness? No one who refuses the first drink can be led to take the second or third or however many it takes to violate the warnings against drunkenness.

**Can it be done in good conscience?** Many times a Christian will be considering some activity and, although no one tries to stop him, he hesitates because his conscience is seeking to hold him back. What should we do in such situations? The answer is clear: *"But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin"* (Romans 14:23). When our conscience warns us against an activity, that does not necessarily mean that the activity is wrong, but it does mean that we must stop, study, and think carefully before we act. If we have doubts about some activity, it may be that there is a reason for those doubts – a reason that we somehow sense but cannot fully explain. Until careful study and reflection allow us to act in faith, we must refrain. While further study will sometimes lead us to conclude that our initial misgivings were unnecessary, there will be other times when our study validates the warnings of the conscience. At these times, we will be glad that our consciences compelled us to slow down and think.

**Will it damage my influence?** Too many Christians have adopted the view that it does not matter what others think of their conduct. For example, they might defend conducting a business deal in a bar by

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saying, "I know that I don't drink and I can't control what other people might think. So I'm not going to worry about it!" But are we not to be concerned about living a life that leads others to glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16)? In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9 & 10, Paul spoke of giving up things that would not necessarily have been wrong but would have weakened his influence for good. We must learn to make decisions about difficult and questionable issues based on the principles laid out in Paul's conclusion: *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ"* (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:31-11:1). The next time we are faced with a difficult decision, we should ask ourselves if, by engaging in that activity, we will strengthen or weaken our influence for good.

How should we deal with matters that are questionable but perhaps not expressly condemned in the scriptures? I suggest we begin by making certain we understand the words used in the text, seek to avoid temptation, listen to the conscience, and try to maximize our influence for good. Let's use our God-given powers of reason and discernment to be the best possible examples of Christians in this sin-darkened world, and not flirt with evil by refusing to see what is "wrong with it".

***Vegas Valley Church Of Christ***

*Romans 16:16*

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