

1 □ Principles for Proving

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

2 □ Where do we begin?

- A Christian who truly wants to honour God with his life in this godless world is faced with many difficult decisions.
- Feelings, family traditions, popular opinions (secular and religious), and cultural ethics are often unreliable guides.
- God calls him to a high standard.
- (Leviticus 20:7) "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God."
- (Proverbs 14:7) "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."

3 □ God calls him to a high standard.

- (Proverbs 19:27) "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."
- (Matthew 6:24) "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
- (2 Corinthians 6:17) "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."
- (2 Corinthians 7:1) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

4 □ God calls him to a high standard.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:7) "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."
- (Titus 2:12) "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"
- (1 Peter 1:14-16) "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
- Such Bible verses are abundant. A Christian simply cannot do many things that others do and still live a holy life that pleases the Lord.

5 □ God Gives Three Helpful Commands

- We find these commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."
- These commands help Christians in the difficult decision-making processes of life.
- Let's examine each of them by way of introduction.

6 □ Prove all things

- **Prove**
 - to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals; to prove by testing, to accept as approved after testing. Thayer, Rogers
 - The word describes the process of melting ore, discarding the scraped off dross, and saving the pure metal.
- **All things**
 - Every area of life is included.

7 □ How are we to implement proving all things?

- All that we do must please God to pass His test. Proving is essentially seeking **God's mind** on every situation BEFORE we get involved.
- The **Bible** reveals God's mind and God's holiness. It is our God-given authority or standard for all proving.
- God commands that we prove all things. This is a decision-making process that we must do all day long every day with every situation. There are no exceptions!*
- We must not do or say anything without first putting it to God's test to see if it passes His approval.

8 □ The Bible reveals God's mind for proving.

- (2 Timothy 3:16-17) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [spiritual truth], for reproof [conviction], for correction [restoration], for instruction in righteousness [training in right living]: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- God expects us to obey His commands. A clear command needs no proving. We simply must obey it.
- God expects us to apply His principles. A principle is a timeless truth or guideline that reveals the mind of God on contemporary issues. How did God react? What happened when others did this? What does this tell me about God's character? etc.
- While principles are not as clear as commands, they reveal God's mind and are helpful for proving.

9 □ Hold fast that which is good

- **Hold fast**
 - to hold securely, to hold firmly, retain, take possession of, keep on holding, Thayer, Vincent, Robertson
- **Good**
 - Good as a quality and character; Good as to effect or influence, useful, profitable; Good in a moral sense, virtuous, excellent, choice, surpassing, commendable, Thayer, Zodhiates

– In Context: Good in God's mind, holy, God-pleasing

10 ☐ How are we to hold fast the good?

- Once we have proved what is good, we must hold on to the good and not let it go. Hang on as if life depended on it.
- We must make the good part of our daily lives.
- We are to retain only what is good.
- As Christians, we have no right to keep anything in our lives that does not pass God's approval.
- If we hold fast something that does not pass God's test, that is sin.
 - (James 4:17) "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

11 ☐ Abstain from all appearance of evil

- **Abstain**
 - to hold one's self off, refrain, abstain Thayer
 - In Context: Do not do it, stay away from it.
- **Appearance**
 - visible form, shape, appearance, kind; the external or outward appearance, manner, shape, Dodson, Thayer, TDNT
- **Evil**
 - Bad, wicked, unsound, hurtful, Thayer, Dodson, TDNT, Mickelson

12 ☐ Appearance

If it looks like an apple, smells like an apple, feels like an apple, tastes like an apple, we must conclude that it has the characteristics of an apple and APPEARS to be an apple.

Any "thing" that has the characteristics of something that may be evil, we must conclude that it APPEARS to be evil.

13 ☐ Abstaining is not an option.

- Once we have proved what is good, we must refrain from ALL that appears as evil. We are to stay away from every form of evil.
- Anything and everything that does not pass God's test is off limits for Christians.
- We must hold ourselves back from every kind of evil that fails God's approval.
- This is not just a nice option; it is a command from God.

14 ☐ Principles for Proving

- In this series, we are going to study seven principles that we can apply to situations in life to help us make biblical decisions. (The names and some of the material are not original with me).
 - Association Principle: Will this activity require me to associate with evil?
 - Wedge Principle: Will doing this open the door to sin?
 - Doubt Principle: Do I think God might say this is wrong?
 - Edification Principle: Will this activity build me up as a Christian?
 - Expediency Principle: Will this be the best option in the end?
 - Distinction Principle: Will this hinder distinction between the holy and unholy?
 - Glorification Principle: Will this activity truly glorify God?