

# 1 □ Principles for Proving

## Association Principle

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

### 2 □ Review

- In our previous lesson, we introduced the topic of proving all things. When we prove all things, we are really trying to answer the question: **What should I do when there is no clear Bible command to guide me?**
- When the Bible does not specifically state whether an activity is right or wrong, we should use biblical principles to help us make godly decisions in our lives.
- Bible principles are not rules but tools to help you. If you want to live a holy life and please the Lord, you will find that these principles will be a great help in making godly choices.
- Tonight we are going to consider the *Association Principle*.

### 3 □ "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

(Psalms 1:1)

### 4 □ What is the Association Principle

- An association is the act of joining with another, being connected with another, or appearing to be connected.
- A principle is a timeless truth or guideline that reveals the mind of God on contemporary issues.
- Therefore, the association principle is a guideline for activities that may not be wrong by themselves, but have questionable or bad associations or connections.
- Beware! Associating with questionable or bad things could harm your testimony, show approval of wrong, cause others to sin, lead someone into temptation, or make you guilty by association.

### 5 □ Illustration

A man choosing a new driver for his vehicle on mountain roads ask each applicant how close he could get to the edge and still keep the vehicle perfectly safe. The one who said he would stay as far away as possible got the job.

### 6 □ Ask Clarifying Questions about this Association

- Who or what is associated with this item, activity or individual?
  - Is it godly or ungodly?
- Will this activity require me to associate with evil?
- What is the present dominant association of the activity?
  - What is the main thing for which this activity is known?
  - With what do most people associate this activity.
- Could doing this activity make me guilty by association?

### 7 □ Applications of the Association Principle

- Consider some activities that we must prove:
  - Attending an evangelistic crusade where false teachers are involved
  - Listening to so-called Christian musicians that sound, look, and perform like the godless worldly musicians
  - Eating at a "Bar and Grill" restaurant
  - Swimming where immodest swimmers are present
  - Decorating with secular Christmas decorations
  - Dressing like a rock star or movie star
  - Going into a pub to get a drink of water
  - Wearing a shirt that promotes something ungodly
  - Wearing a rainbow coloured hat
  - Going to the cinema to watch a "clean movie"

### 8 □ Prove the association with Bible principles

- Does it have an appearance or form of evil?
  - (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."
- Does it yoke me to unbelievers?
  - (2 Corinthians 6:14) "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
  - (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1) "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 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."

## 9 ☐ Prove the association with Bible principles

- Does it fellowship with or reprove darkness?
  - (Ephesians 5:11) "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
- Could it cause someone else to stumble?
  - (1 Corinthians 8:13) "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
- Could it harm my testimony?
  - (Romans 14:16) "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."
- Does it make me look like I love the world?
  - (1 John 2:15) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

## 10 ☐ Prove the association with Bible principles

- Will it hurt me spiritually?
  - (1 Corinthians 15:33) "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."
- May it cause me to be tempted?
  - (2 Timothy 2:22) "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

## 11 ☐ Prove the association with Bible principles

- Does it violate a Bible command to separate?
  - (Proverbs 4:14) "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."
  - (Proverbs 14:7) "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."
  - (Romans 16:17) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."
  - (2 Thessalonians 3:6) "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
  - (2 John 1:10) "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

## 12 ☐ Ask God for Wisdom

(James 1:5) "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

## 13 ☐ Conclusion

- Remember, these principles are not rules but tools to help you.
- If you want to live a holy life and please the Lord, you will find that the **Association Principle** will be a great help in making godly choices.