

# 1 □ Principles for Proving

## The Doubt Principle

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

2 □

### 3 □ The Doubt Principle Introduction

- Finding God's will about an activity when the Bible does not directly address the activity requires that we prove it or test it with biblical principles.
- So far in our Principles for Proving series we have studied: 1) the Association Principle (could the association be harmful), 2) the Wedge Principle (could it lead to something worse).
- This evening we are going to study the **Doubt Principle**. Remember, these principles are not rules but tools to help you.

### 4 □ The Meaning of the Doubt Principle

- We know what doubt is!
  - Doubt is the state of being unsure of something.
  - Doubt is when we question whether something we are doing is right.
  - Doing the doubtful is dangerous.
    - It is like blindly making decisions.
    - It is like diving into a pool without knowing for positive it is full of water.

### 5 □ The Essence of the Doubt Principle

- **If in doubt, don't!**
  - If you are not positive an activity is pleasing to God, then do not do it.
  - It is always better to be safe than sorry.

### 6 □ Why is Doing a Doubtful Thing Wrong?

- God said so!
  - (Romans 14:21-23) "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
  - The word translated "doubteth" means to hesitate or to waiver. Rogers
  - The word "damned" does not mean sent to hell. It means to be condemned or made liable for judgment. It makes you guilty before God.
  - When God says, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin", He is saying that we must truly believe that what we are about to do pleases God and passes God's proving test.

### 7 □ Why is Doing a Doubtful Thing Wrong?

- Our choice must be based on confident faith that it is right.
- If we question whether something is right and do it anyway, we commit a sin. It is sin because we chose to do what we knew might not be right.
- (Romans 14:5) "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."
- Suppose you say, "It might be wrong, but since I am not sure, I will do it anyway."
  - If it is wrong in God's eyes, you just chose to sin.
  - If it is right in God's eyes, but you thought it MIGHT be wrong and did it anyway, you chose to take a sinful chance. That too is sin.
- When in doubt, give God the benefit of the doubt – do not do it.

### 8 □ Why Should I Avoid Doubtful Things?

- Avoiding doubtful things is prudent.
  - A prudent person is one who is careful, sensible and marked by sound judgment.
  - (Ephesians 5:15-16) "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
  - A prudent person will see potential dangers or problems and seek to avoid them.
  - (Proverbs 22:3) "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."
- A prudent person will not take foolish chances.

### 9 □ Do I have Reason to be Doubtful?

- Does the Holy Spirit make me feel uneasy about this activity?
- Am I unsure if this thing may hurt me spiritually?
  - Could this activity cause me to associate with questionable things? (Association Principle)
  - Could this activity lead me into sin? (Wedge Principle)
  - Could this activity keep me from walking in the Spirit?
  - Does this please God or please self?
- Do the godly people I know avoid this activity?

### 10 ☐ **Questions to Use with the Doubt Principle**

- Am I certain the activity is appropriate?
- Do I think that God might say that this activity is wrong?
- Am I confident that my holy God would do this with me?
- Does the activity pass all the proving verses that I can find in the Bible on the subject?
- Could I comfortably and effectively witness for Jesus while doing this activity?
- Can I, with a clear conscience, pray and ask God to be with me and bless this activity?

### 11 ☐ **Examples to Discuss**

- Is it right to flash your lights to warn oncoming cars of a police camera?
- Is it okay to listen to music that sounds like ungodly music?
- Would God want you to wear something that you are not positive is modest? Since women do not think like men, would it be better to add layer or change?
- Is it right to eat something that you know is harmful to your health?
- Would Jesus dance like the ungodly to the music of this world?

### 12 ☐ **Examples to Discuss**

- Is it right to watch something that you are not sure the Lord would watch?
- Since Sunday is the Lord's Day, what activities would honour the Lord if done on Sundays?
- Should a Christian swim with others at the public beach?
- Is playing a game with playing cards pleasing to the Lord?

### 13 ☐ **Conclusion**

- If we doubt and do it anyway, we are guilty before God.
- The bottom line of the Doubt Principle is ...