

# Do the Right Thing

*A Quick Reference Guide for Biblical Discernment – Is. 38:3*

- **Cultivate Discernment**

1. Pray for wisdom – James 1:5
2. Walk in obedience: do what you already know is right – Heb. 5:14

- **What's the Question???**

3. Identify the issue – particulars -> universals -> Why is it right/wrong?
4. Identify the ethical questions – life, rights, authority, honesty...

- **Find the Answer<sup>1</sup>**

5. Does it glorify God & seek first His righteousness – **Walk before God.**
  - God is life/living – self-possessed power to accomplish His will
  - God is personal – autonomous agent
  - God is holy – set apart sacredness from all that defiles
  - God is good – value, pleasure, benefit
  - God is just and righteous – equitable in His dealings
  - God is love/loving – demonstration of affection, mercy, and just dealings
  - God is wise – perfect knowledge – judgments – means – ends
  - God is omnipotent – might does not make right – not obligated beyond ability – God does not do everything within His power
  - God is omnipresent – God is not morally responsible for everything that happens in His presence
  - God is omniscient – God is not always morally obligated to disclose all that He knows, or to direct His actions in a commonly approved manner
  - God is sovereign – rightful use of power based on authority
  - God is merciful – the withholding of judgment
  - God is gracious – divine merit in place of demerit – enablement
  - God is faithful – keeps covenant and promises – worthy of trust
  - God is true – the grand reality
  - God is blessed – happy of Himself – Good pleasure vs. pleasures of sin.
6. Search the scriptures – **in truth.**
  - **Precept** – directive “commands/prohibitions” – prescriptive truth (what ought be done): The Ten Commandments, The Great Commission, Etc...
  - **Principles** – guideline – prescriptive truth (what ought be done)
    - Sowing and Reaping (Gal. 6:7-9) – responsibility and accountability
    - Success (Josh. 1:8; Jer. 9:23) – will of God vs. wealth, fame, might...
    - Body is the temple – (1 Cor. 6:19-20) – my body belongs to God
    - Salt and Light Principle (Mt. 5:13-16; Phil 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:14; 1 Thes. 5:22). Lead others to glorify to God? Does this help my testimony?  
Present, Dominant, Association

---

<sup>1</sup> TH 685 Ethics Notes – Pensacola Theological Seminary; *Right Thinking in a world Gone Wrong* – John MacArthur

- Expediency/excellence principle (1 Cor. 10:23a; Phil. 1:10) choosing that which is excellent – putting on display what is best (Daniel)
- Edification principle (1 Cor. 10:23b) choosing that which builds up rather than destroys others or the body of Christ – spiritual benefit?
- Enslavement principle (1 Cor. 6:12b) – not brought under the power of any – Will this lead to spiritual bondage? (MacArthur, 19).
- Stewardship/servant principle (1 Cor. 4:2) – everything including my possession and person belongs to God (time, talents, treasure)
- The offense/esteem principle (Rom. 14:21) – will this cause a weaker brother to sin against His conscience.
- The doubt/faith principle (Rom. 14:5, 23) – don't violate my own conscience (if I am in doubt it is actually right, don't do it).
- The do unto others principle (Matt. 7:12) – am I actively doing for or to others what I would like to have do for/to me?
- Chastity/purity/cleanliness/exposure principle (1 Thes. 4:3-7; Eph. 5:12; Phil. 4:8) – Is this decision clean, pure and holy? Will it expose my mind or body to defilement or moral corruption
- Seek first the Kingdom/evangelism principle (Mt. 6:33) – Does this advance the kingdom of God and His righteousness in my life, family, or world. Is this an aid in being a witness for Christ?
- Others: Contentment, renewal, replacement, wedge, etc...

*Questions for Christian Liberty (Ethics for a Brave New World, Feinberg 43-45). Am I fully persuaded it's right? Can I do it unto the Lord? Will it be a stumbling block? Does it bring peace? Does it edify my brother? Is it profitable? Does it enslave? Glorify God?*

- **Precedent** – examples from scripture – descriptive truth (what has been done) – David, Paul, Joseph, Abraham, Moses, Jesus!!!
- **Perspective** – worldview – descriptive truth (the way things are). NOTE: this would be the place to do additional research to fully understand the issue. *Normal and abnormal reality* – whole world lieth in wickedness.

7. Search your heart – **perfect heart.**

- Answer the question of innate morality (moral, immoral, amoral), and then the question of means, motive, and manner. Double check your heart: am I corrupting an acceptable act with evil motives or methods?
- Pray for God to search your heart (Ps. 139:23-24).

8. Are there customs or institutional/family/gov. guidelines to consider?

9. Is this a demonstration of godly wisdom? (James 3:17-18)

10. Does it violate my conscience or is it a stumbling block?

11. Verify that this is not Satanic, worldly, or fleshly – this is your double check; your insurance. What is the fruit? **Gal. 5:16-24.** Lust of flesh, eyes, pride?

- **Do what you know is right!** Done that which is good in Thy sight!  
Draw your conclusions, summarize your answers, be kind, gracious, and honest. Live it – apply truth.