

“Where Should a Christian Draw the Line?”

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Where should Christians draw the line?
 - 1. In moral issues, Christians are expected to train their consciences according to the principles of God’s word, and then listen to their consciences when they speak out.
 - a. Rom. 2:15; 1Cor. 8:7, 10:27; 1Tim. 1:5
 - 2. However, there are variables involved:
 - a. Christians study and grow their consciences at different rates
 - b. Some consciences have improper training in a past religion
 - c. Some consciences are over or under active
 - 3. This means that the conscience is not the determining factor in where Christians should draw the line. A more reliable standard is necessary.
- B. The question must now be restated: Where has God drawn the line?
 - 1. We can now examine an objective standard and train our consciences accordingly
- C. What questions require a line drawn by God?

I. HOW DOES ONE APPLY: “WE ARE IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD”?

- A. Tough to apply because it is a chimney corner scripture
 - 1. It is not in the Bible. It began to be used early in the 20th Century. But it is loosely based on John 17:14-16
 - 2. The proverb was actually coined by Buddhists and Jainists long before the 20th Century preacher began using it.
 - 3. John 17:14-16 is not talking specifically about moral issues. Christians are not of the world in the sense that they no longer belong to or serve the purposes of the world, but rather belong to and serve the purposes of the kingdom of God. Moral issues are only a small part of a much larger definition.
- B. Is it a true principle that can be derived from the harmony of all scriptures on the matter?
 - 1. Only to the extent that we recognize it as a proverb and not a precept.
 - 2. It is true that while Christians live in this world (physically speaking), they are not a part of this world (spiritually speaking). The proverb is a play on words.
- C. So how does one apply the proverb “We are in the world but not of the world”?
 - 1. Learn and live the precept that as a Christian, your first loyalty is to God, your highest duty is to serve the Lord, your greatest interests are spiritual in nature, your greatest works will be the things you do for Christ, and your primary goal is going to heaven; this in spite of the fact that you live in a physical world that constantly demands your attention be diverted from this rule of life.

II. QUESTIONS

- A. Can one go to a restaurant that serves alcohol? (Applebee’s, Pizza Hut)

- B. Can one work in a place that sells alcohol? (Giant Eagle, Kroger)
- C. Can one be in a place where alcohol is consumed in quantity? (football game)
- D. Can one work in construction if the company is building a bar?

III. ANSWERS

- A. Depends on what your conscience is telling you.
 - 1. If your conscience bothers you to the point that you feel you are in sin, you need to cease that activity.
 - 2. Rom. 14:20-23 - You must have the scripturally based conviction that the activity is acceptable.
- B. Otherwise the answer to all four questions is yes.
 - 1. Christians live in this world; they cannot insulate themselves against or isolate themselves from all exposure to the sins of others
 - a. 1Cor. 5:9-13; John 17:15; 1John 5:19
 - 2. In Bible times, some form of alcohol was served in nearly every public eatery; it was sold in every market and bazaar. The Greeks and Romans worshiped a god of drunkenness and debauchery; his image would be found in every public area
 - 3. As in many activities that are themselves morally neutral, so it is with the activities of these four questions, what is the intent of the person engaging in the activity?
 - 4. Neutral activities are made good or bad by the intent of the participant
 - a. Rom. 14:14, 5-6
 - b. Why do you go to a restaurant, a grocery store, a sporting event, or work for a construction company?
 - c. In 1Cor. 8, Paul implies that he would have no difficulty eating meat in an idols temple. Why? Because he is hungry; he is not there to worship or honor the idol; it is nothing
 - d. We have the choice to take activities that have no moral implications and make them good and wholesome or make them evil and destructive
 - e. One man plays golf for recreation and relationships; another man in the same course plays for the opportunity to gamble, drink, and curse
 - 4. "But it will look like I approve of drinking."
 - a. The appearance of endorsement is based on your own beliefs and understanding, and not necessarily on truth and reality
 - 5. How far is one willing to go to avoid any activity that has the appearance of endorsement?
 - a. The government uses a portion of your tax dollars for purposes Christians cannot approve. Will he refuse to pay his taxes?
 - b. The schools teach things Christians cannot believe. Will he refuse an education for his children?
 - c. Not everyone member of the local church is faithful, or honors God as he should, or believes the Bible as it is written. Will he stay away from the church because some abuse it?

C. We live in a world that is soaked in liquor and licentiousness. You cannot escape exposure to it without leaving the world.

1. Do not engage in the sin and do not attempt to hide yourself away in a compound.
2. 1John 5:18-20