

Questionable Things

Credit must be given to Dr. John Cornette, a mentor and friend from some years ago, who preached a message entitled "Guidelines for Godliness." That message is the basis for this study.

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Introduction

We continue our series of answers to questions from the October survey. Today let us look at two questions which appeared a few times, and which we will handle together. One question concerned music, and another question concerned the King James Bible issue.

Let's begin by more accurately exploring your questions in these areas

QUESTION - Concerning music, what specific questions or concerns do you have? What would you like to learn from a discussion on music?

QUESTION - Concerning the King James Bible issue, what specific questions or concerns do you have? What would you like to learn from a discussion on this issue?

In addition to answering specific questions about the issues, I would like to share some thoughts that a former pastor provided in a sermon entitled "Guidelines for Godliness." His sermon taught that there are some areas that the Bible does not specifically address. (For example, there is nothing in Scripture that specifically addresses the matter of Bible translations.) In such areas, though, there are principles that can be applied to help us arrive at an understanding of the will of God. Because one of the great questionable issues in New Testament times concerned meat offered to idols, the verses we will look at specifically deal with that issue. However, the application should work for any and all issues.

Let's notice a few simple principles that will help us deal with any and all questionable things.

Is it the best thing?

PRINCIPLE - I will only do those things which are GOOD, or THE BEST. I will not think, speak, or do things that fall into lesser categories.

This particular principle may be a little hard to apply to an issue like the King James debate, but it certainly applies to music, and it certainly applies to other questionable areas.

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient... (I Corinthians 6:12a KJV)

QUESTION - What does the Bible mean when it says that all things are lawful?

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (Ephesians 1:7, KJV)

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1, KJV)

Based on their understanding of the glorious truth of forgiveness in the gospel, it is possible that the Corinthians were using a slogan such as "all things are lawful" in order to justify sinning, or engaging in questionable activities.

QUESTION - What does it mean when it says all things are not expedient?

ANSWER - The word "expedient" may alternatively be translated as profitable, beneficial, or helpful.

QUESTION - What are some questionable areas of life where we could apply this principle?

QUESTION - Can we apply this principle to the matter of Bible translations?

QUESTION - Can we apply this principle to the matter of music?

Can it control me?

PRINCIPLE - I will not engage in a thought life, a pattern of speech, or any activity, which has the ability to overpower me and control me. I will understand the danger of dabbling in such things.

Again, this principle may seem to apply more directly to other issues we face, than to the two we are discussing today, but let's explore the principle anyway.

... all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (I Corinthians 6:12 KJV)

QUESTION - What is meant by the phrase "I will not be brought under the power of any?"

QUESTION - Are there questionable activities which, if not handled properly, can control you? What might they be?

QUESTION - Can the issues of Bible translations and music, which we are specifically addressing today, control you? How?

Does it honor your temple?

PRINCIPLE - I will not think of, speak of, or do things that dishonor my body and my God.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (I Corinthians 6:19 KJV)

QUESTION - What does this verse mean to you? What does it teach us about our physical bodies?

QUESTION - Are there activities which are specifically ruled out by this verse?

QUESTION - What of our two issues - Bible translations and music - are they in any way covered by this principle?

Up to this point in our lesson, we have dealt with principles that have little or no direct bearing on the two issues we originally set out to discuss. They are wonderfully helpful principles, however, for dealing with questionable things, and I hope you will prayerfully apply them in your day to day lives. I believe the remaining principles, however, will more directly bear on the two issues of Bible translations and music, so let's look at them.

Does it offend?

PRINCIPLE - I will not think about, say, or do anything that might cause my brother or sister to stumble.

READ - *1 Corinthians 8:1-13, esp. vss. 9,13*

QUESTION - Can someone explain for me what Paul is telling us in this chapter?

QUESTION - Does this chapter teach us that when a particular issue is "offensive" to any Christian with whom you have to do, it is forbidden? If the consensus is no, then under what circumstances is it acceptable to do things that offend certain of the "brethren?"

READ - *Matthew 12:1-8*

QUESTION - Did Jesus seem to be bothered that the Pharisees were offended? Did He stop what He was doing to avoid offending them? Does His reaction toward them help in dealing with others in our lives?

Let's apply this to our two issues now:

QUESTION - How does this principle help us in dealing with the matter of Bible translations?

QUESTION - How does this principle help us in dealing with issues concerning music?

Does it help evangelize?

PRINCIPLE - I will concentrate on thoughts, words, and actions which attract the lost to Christ, and I will avoid thoughts, words, and actions which hinder the success of the gospel.

READ - *1 Corinthians 9:19-23*

QUESTION - What priority did Paul place on reaching the lost? What issue, right, or personal freedom did he place greater importance on than reaching the lost?

QUESTION - What should we learn from this?

QUESTION - In what way does the issue of Bible translations impact the lost?

QUESTION - In what way does the issue of music impact the lost?

Does it build others up?

PRINCIPLE - I will only engage in thoughts, words, or activities which build other believers up in their faith, and I will strive to never think, say, or do, things which might hurt them or tear them down in their walk with God.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (1 Corinthians 10:23 KJV)

Where the previous principles teaches us to tailor our behavior in such a way that the LOST are benefitted by it, this principle teaches the same basic concern for the SAVED. We are to build each other up - one of the foundational principles of this class, by the way. If our behavior does not do that, then there is a problem.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29, KJV)

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. (Proverbs 14:1, KJV)

Both of these verses teach the paramount importance of building up, in Christian relationships, in the home, and in every aspect of life. Building is always the goal. Tearing down is always the thing to be avoided.

QUESTION - Once again - how does this apply to the areas of Bible translations and music?

Is it forbidden in scripture?

PRINCIPLE - I will not engage in thought patterns, speech patterns, or activities which are specifically addressed in scripture as being wrong or sinful.

Note: (This is really point 1 - superceding everything else already mentioned.)

Questionable Things

Certainly, if the Bible speaks, the argument is over. If this principle were applied, there would be little need for the others, for most issues are dealt with in scripture.

QUESTION - Is the matter of Bible translations dealt with in scripture? Where?

ANSWER - No, not translations specifically. For this issue, we must consider some of the principles laid out in this lesson, as well as the wealth of general teaching in scripture concerning the Word of God, in order to reach an understanding.

QUESTION - Is the matter of music dealt with in scripture?

ANSWER - Absolutely. There is a plethora of teaching on music, and it makes a very profitable Bible study. In the matter of music, we need to FIRST, learn what the Bible teaches and ensure that our musical lifestyle conforms to the Bible teaching, and when issues arise that are not specifically addressed, apply the principles in this lesson.

Conclusion

I realize that I have probably not fully addressed the issues to your satisfaction. I have not given black and white answers to the questions, but rather provided Biblical principles for you to base your understanding on.

If you are still questioning, however, please share your concerns and we will try and address them more fully, either in class, or in some other forum.

QUESTION - Are there additional questions or concerns? Is there any area of this discussion that you would like to delve into more deeply?