

Biblical Guidelines Regarding Cultural Behavior

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- **1 Cor. 9:21** like Paul, we must make decisions regarding cultural behaviors

- live as those around us, within the boundaries of the law of Christ, for an opportunity to reach them with the gospel

- **this lesson:** Biblical Guidelines Regarding Cultural Behavior

- **note:** have time just to review guidelines, and make only a few applications, mostly for the young folks

➤ What are some decisions we have to make regarding cultural behavior?

- clothing, modesty

- **1 Tim. 2:9-10** adorn with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly

- standards of modesty change over time

- **pics:** styles 19th century vs. 21st century

- **illus.:** 1st supreme court chambers, balcony, short curtain, modesty curtain, so men from lower level looking up wouldn't see the women's ankles

- **illus.:** modest women in the Lord's church in USA today would be considered dressed immorally in the 1st century – true of all the women in the assembly today

➤ - modesty is different from culture to culture in the world today

- **pic:** 21st century styles - USA woman vs. Afghanistan woman wearing burka

- **illus.:** modest women in the Lord's church in USA would be considered dressed sinfully in some areas of the world today, and physically punished or killed

➤ - adornment of physical body

- **1 Pet. 3:2-4** adorned properly, not with braided hair or jewelry or costly garments, but with good works professing godliness (cf - 1 Tim. 2:9-10)

- the hairstyle and jewelry and cost of clothing is not so important, but the professing of godliness

- these things must send the right message, and be in harmony with the godly works we do as God's children

- other decisions

- piercing

- **Gen. 24:47; Ex. 32:2** OT, God's children wore nose rings and earrings

- today, nose rings have a bad connotation in some cultures, and in others they can be either good or bad depending on the details

- tattooing

- **Lev. 19:28** Israelites commanded not to cut or tattoo their bodies, as the pagans did

- today, tattooing has disseminated throughout pop culture, and young folks are pressured more than ever to get tattoos

➤ - **decisions about our conduct**

- **Heb. 13:18** we are to conduct ourselves honorably in all things (rf - vs. 15-17)

- **games:** change over time

- **illus.:** when Ms. Irene was growing up, and even a young adult, playing any game with a deck of cards was considered by some people a sin

- **technology**

- **illus.:** many sinful behaviors have come about because of technology that Christians must stay away from, such as sinful video games and internet pornography

- **we must go to God's word and apply principles to determine appropriate cultural behaviors today**

- **in the culture we live in**

- **in other cultures,** to teach God's word to people in other places, and to conduct ourselves properly when visiting them

➤ **Guidelines relating to expedients** – things that we employ to fulfill general commands – **illus.: “go” to the store**

- **1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24** **criteria of expedients** – recent adult auditorium class, bulletin

- **summary:**

- **lawful** (in accord with God’s word)
- **helpful** (expedient, KJV; profitable, NASB; beneficial, NIV and NRSV)
- **edify** (builds up)
- **not our master** (not have control over us, not addicted to)
- **good for our neighbor** (not self-serving)

- **illus. Paul** – applying these guidelines regarding cultural behavior

- **1 Cor 9:19-21** Paul keep Jewish customs when with Jews, and Gentile customs when with Gentiles

- **visa versa would be lawful, but not helpful or edifying or good for his neighbor**

- **1 Cor. 9:22-23** **Paul did all things for the sake of the gospel**, for an opportunity to save some

- **illus.: some things we don’t want to think or say**, if we truly live this way

- **I don’t care what they think**

- we do care what they think, so we can reach them with the gospel

- **they shouldn’t care what I do**

- we want them to care about what we do, so they pay attention to us, and our manner of life, because we teach Christ in everything we do

- **it’s my business, and no one else’s**

- we want all our public affairs to be their business, so we can reach them with the word of God

- **I don’t care if that hurts them or not, they should keep their nose out of it**

- we care about everyone, and know that hurting them lessens our influence regarding Christ

- **I don’t care if I’m addicted – it’s my body**

- addiction is a sin, and we care about all addiction

- **not only are we concerned about something being lawful but also:**

- **helpful, edifying, not our master, good for our neighbor**

➤ **Additional guidelines as they apply to choosing appropriate cultural behaviors**

- **1 Cor. 6:19-20** we **glorify God in our bodies**

- **Phil. 1:20** we must exalt Christ in our bodies

- **1 Tim. 2:2, 10; 4:7-8** our outward appearance and behavior should profess godliness

- everything about us should proclaim that we're Christians

- illus.: bodily adornment and conduct, not imitate sinners – music, TV stars

- illus.: #460 The World's Bible – send a message of salvation, lead others to Christ

➤ - **Rom. 12:17** we **do things that are honorable and respectable in the sight of all men**

- **1 Cor. 9:21** always obeying God in everything

- **1 Cor. 9:19** make ourselves slaves to all, to win some

- Christians aren't on the cutting edge of pop culture, because many think it's dishonorable and disrespectful

- illus.: Christians in 2010

- won't do some things that Christians in 2050 do, because it's become accepted by public in general, and not just pop culture

- illus.: young Christians

- don't do things they're parents believe are dishonorable or disrespectful

- illus.: tattooing

- not honorable and respectable in the sight of all men

➤ - **Rom. 6:12; 1 Jn. 2:16** we **don't engage in lustful and licentious (sensual) behaviors**

- **lust**: a strong desire to sin

- **licentious**: unbridled lust -- excess, absence of restraint, indecency, and wantonness

- **note**: the Greek is often translated "sensual" in the NASB

- we control our desires, so that we hate sin and don't dwell on sin

- therefore, we don't unloose sinful desire and behave licentiously

- illus. dances:

- we don't participate in dances because of the lust and licentiousness people are engaging in

➤ - **Rom. 14:23; 1 Th. 5:21-22** we **don't engage in questionable behaviors**

- if we're not sure it's right, based on Scripture, we don't do it (Col. 3:17)

- illus.: peer pressure

- if your friends try to get you do to something, but you've never heard of it and not sure what it is, and whether it's right, just don't do it

- illus.: some things we don't want to think or say

- what I do with my body is my business

- not true, it's God's business

- we don't engage in lustful or licentious (sensual) behavior

- I don't care what other people think

- not true, we care because we only want to do things that are honorable and respectable in the sight of all men

- I'm not sure if it's right, but I'm doing it anyway

- not true, we only do the things we know are right (Col. 3:17)

➤ **Young folks and new Christians must rely on the sound judgment of mature Christians**

- **young folks are foolish until they have time to grow and mature in Christ**

- **Pr. 22:15** “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”

- **young folks and new Christians have to take time to grow and mature in God’s word**

- **Heb. 5:13-14** **must grow in the Lord**, exercising senses with God’s word, so can discern between good and evil

- **until young folks and new Christians grow and mature in faith through God’s word, they need to rely on the sound judgment of mature Christians**

- **Pr. 8:33** “Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.”

- **Pr. 10:8** “The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined.”

- **Pr. 12:15** “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”

- **Pr. 19:20** “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.”

- **Ec. 7:5** “It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools.”

- **the young who are wise (age and faith) will seek wise council and lean upon it, knowing they lack the knowledge of the mature**

- **young folks**, know that you are not wise enough to make every discussion on your own, and you need the wise council of the spiritually mature

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **review PP: Biblical guidelines regarding cultural behavior**