

# When Is It Right To Do What Is Wrong?

## *September 17, 2017*

**Acts 4:13-18** When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

**Acts 4:19-22** But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

## I. Three Decision Making Steps For Challenging Times

### 1. Ask The Question

**Acts 4:19** But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!

- A. What is right in God's eyes?
- B. When is it right to listen to people?

**1 Peter 2:13-15** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

- 1. Believers are commanded to obey authority.
  - 2. The New Testament example shows that disobedience to authority is the exception and not the rule.
- C. When is it right to listen to God?
    - 1. There are times when doing what is right before God means doing what is wrong before people.

**Acts 5:29** Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!

**Galatians 1:10** Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

2. It is never right to do what is wrong in the eyes of God.

D. It is sometimes right to do what is wrong in the eyes of man.

*We are always to obey those in authority over us, unless that authority commands us to do something that God forbids, or forbids us from doing something that God commands. — R. C. Sproul*

1. Obey God instead when asked to sin.

2. Obey God instead when scripture conflicts with culture.

- The popular majority does not equal God's divine approval.

3. Obey God instead when your testimony is compromised.

4. Obey God instead when at crossroads of grace.

5. Obey God instead when led of the Holy Spirit.

**1 Samuel 15:22** But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

E. The P.L.O.W. Principle — Pray. Listen. Obey. Watch.

## ***2. Consider The Consequence***

**Acts 4:19** But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!

A. Your choices come with consequences.

1. The consequences of doing the wrong thing.

2. The consequence of a guilty conscience

3. The consequence of breaking a human rule

4. The consequence of sin

5. The consequences of doing the right thing.
  - We must choose calling over convenience.
6. The consequence of opposition
7. The consequence of isolation
8. The consequence of persecution

**Acts 5:17-18** Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

**Luke 21:14-15** But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

- B. Would you be willing to stand alone before people in order to stand confidently before God?

### ***3. Do What Is Right***

**Acts 3:20** As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

- A. Guard your attitude.

**1 Peter 3:15-17** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- B. Use your Bible.

**Luke 20:25** He said to them, “Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.”

- C. Let your life change be your life guide.

**Jeremiah 20:9** But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

**Acts 10:42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

1. Your testimony talks.

**1 Peter 2:12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

2. Your testimony tomorrow is built on your choices today.

#### D. Decide Today

**Joshua 24:15** But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

1. Stay close to Jesus now so that you will be ready for the time of challenge.
2. Light shines best in the dark places.