

NSD Notes

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. (1 Cor. 9:19)
Volume 6, No. 02 April 11, 2010

Services

- Bible Study 10 a.m.
- Morning Service.....11 a.m.
- Evening Service.....6 p.m.
- Wednesday Meeting.....7 p.m.

News @ NSD

Aaron Gibson will be giving this morning's sermon.

- **Janna Wells** – back problems.
- **Martha Holloway's** recurring back and heart ailment.
- **Dan Austin** – suffering from shingles.
- **Robyn Hamilton's** sister, in hospice in New Orleans awaiting surgery after a car accident.
- **Dema's** sister-in-law – liver and bone cancer.
- **Scott Shaw's** dad, Tommy – battling liver cancer.
- **Jeanne Lynne** – recovering from surgeries.
- **Darcy Austin** – due back this week.
- **Dema Franklin** - in Northern California for the next 2 weeks.
- **Ernest Peeples** – deploying this month.
- **Logan Harper** – deployed in Afghanistan. His address is posted on the bulletin board.

PUTTING YOUR ETHICS TO THE TEST

Carl B. Garner

In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14: 26

When a person has no guidance about the things that are right and wrong, he often does that which is "right in his own eyes" (**Jdgs. 17:6**). However, there is "a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (**Prov. 14:12**). God has given us explicit statements and principles in the Bible that help us to make those hard ethical decisions. Since this kind of choice can have an abiding effect upon the rest of our life, and even our eternal destiny, we must make every effort to make thoughtful, informed, biblical judgments.

Modern philosophies have tended toward purely subjective ways of achieving these answers, such as Utilitarianism and Situation Ethics. But God has not left us to guide our lives without objective truth, and the subject of morals is no exception. God describes some actions as sin (**Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-11**, et. al.), but the principles spelled out in the New Testament can help us to make the right decision, even when specifics are not found.

The following questions or tests have been used by many in their effort to "live soberly, righteously and godly" in these modern times (**Titus 2:11-12**):

THE HEART TEST

This test is listed first because without a heart that is willing to be submissive to God's will, we will not be open to any restrictions or any mandate from God. The remaining tests will be of little real value if we do not serve Him "with singleness of heart" (**Acts 2:46**; Note also **Luke 8:15**).

THE SCRIPTURE TEST

This test asks the simple questions: *What does the Bible say about this choice I must make?* Foremost in our thinking must be "What does the scripture say?" (**Gal. 4:30**). Whether explicitly or implicitly, Scripture can and will provide the exact principles needed to find the answer. We should note that if any ethical or moral practice does not pass this test, the remaining tests need not even be considered, for if we have no authority from God for that activity, then it matters not what may come from other tests.

THE INFLUENCE TEST

The test of influence asks the question: *What will be the effect of my decision upon others?* God has instructed us that, even in areas of liberty, we are obligated to consider others who will be touched by our behavior. Will my actions cause another person to be emboldened to engage in sin? Could my choice cause some young or weak Christian to lose their soul? Read **1 Corinthians 8:9-13**.



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All are welcome to our worship
and study meetings!

... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **Col 3:16**

The integrity of the upright
will guide them
But the perversity of the unfaithful
will destroy them
Riches do not profit
in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers
from death.
The righteousness of the blameless
will direct his way aright,
But the wicked will fall
by his own wickedness.

Proverbs 11:3-5

Father when my clumsy footsteps falter
Patiently and with demeanor mild
Stretching out Thy hand along my
pathway
Thou hast led me like a little child

Knowing thou wilt cherish and protect me
Mend what's broken, cleanse what I've
defiled
Trusting in Thy goodness without
doubting
I have loved thee like a little child

R. J. Stevens

[...Ethics to the Test]

THE CONSCIENCE TEST

The fact that a particular choice is questionable in our own minds is sufficient motive to apply the conscience test. The conscience is "an alarm bell in our heart warning us of the danger of some course of action." Those who ignore their conscience are described by the Holy Spirit as having "made shipwreck concerning the faith" (**1 Tim. 1:19**). In **1 Peter 3:16**, we are told that even if men "revile our good manner of life in Christ," they are "put to shame" by the guarding of our "good conscience."

THE TRUE FRIEND TEST

This test asks: *What kind of advice would I give to my best friend? What if my very best friend were to ask my assessment or advice concerning the course of action he/she is considering? Then, am I willing to follow my own advice?*

THE EVANGELISM TEST

Often the lives of Christians will overshadow their words. This test asks: *Will my participation in this activity hinder my efforts to convert the lost? Is my seeing this movie or wearing that kind of clothing worth the endangering of someone's soul? Am I so determined to take that drink or smoke that cigarette that I would ignore my neighbor's eternal destiny?*

THE ASSOCIATION TEST

Christians are to "shine as lights in the world" (**Phil. 2:15**), so we must not cloister ourselves in some corner, but must be a positive force in this world. We are not likely to do so if we place ourselves in the position of being "unequally yoked" with worldly people (**2 Cor. 6:14-18**). This test asks: *Will this activity force me to be associated with wicked people to the extent that I am looked upon as having cast my lot with them?*

THE STEWARDSHIP TEST

This test requires me to look at a proposed decision and ask if my participation will keep me from being a good steward of my time, talent, energy or money. Am I a good steward of my funds when wasting them on gambling or other questionable activities, or of my time when I spend it all in front of the TV set? See **1 Corinthians 4:2**.

Other helpful tests include the Parent Test, the Golden Rule Test, the Momentum Test, the Prayer Test and the Hindsight Test. Ultimately, the most valid test will be that of the *Footsteps Test*, which asks: *What would Jesus do if He were faced with this moral choice? Will you consider it?*

If all choices were easy, then we would need no guidance from any source. But some are difficult, and God's standards are absolute and discernible. Why not live up to Jesus' standard of godly living?

Herald of the Hills, February 10, 2008

ELDERS: Dan Austin, Robyn E. Hamilton

DEACON: Matt Wells

MINISTER: Dan Austin