

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS IN GRAY AREAS

Curtis C. Mitchell, *Let's Live! Christ in Everyday Life* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1975)

The positive elements...

THE PRINCIPLE OF BENEFIT — Is it beneficial?

- How will my participation in this activity improve my life or the lives of others? How is it profitable for the work of the Lord?
- Remember, for the Christian, the question is not “Why can’t I?” (“Is it permissible?”), but “Why should I?” (“Is it beneficial?”).
- *1 Corinthians 6:12a* “Everything is permissible for me’—but not everything is beneficial.”

THE PRINCIPLE OF EDIFICATION — Does it edify?

- How will this action build up your brothers in Christ? How will it draw unbelievers to God?
- Remember that the Christian is to pursue peace and the building up of others.
- *Romans 14:19* “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

THE PRINCIPLE OF GLORIFICATION — Will it glorify God?

- Will you bring more glory to God by participating in this activity than you would by not participating? How would your participation glorify God?
- Remember, the Christian will even give up his own rights to glorify God.
- *1 Corinthians 10:31* “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

The negative elements...

THE PRINCIPLE OF OFFENSE — Will it cause anyone to stumble?

- How will your Christian brothers be affected by your participation in this activity? Is there anyone who might stumble as a result of your actions?
- Remember, the Christian action of love keeps the other’s interests above his own.
- *1 Corinthians 8:9* “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.”

THE PRINCIPLE OF ADDICTION — Could it control me?

- If you participate in this activity, will you be able to stop at any time? Will you be in control or will someone else or something else?
- Remember, the Christian is to be controlled by the Spirit, and one evidence of this is self-control.
- *1 Corinthians 6:12b* “Everything is permissible for me’—but I will not be mastered by anything.”

The final verdict...

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIENCE — Do I have any doubts?

- Are you fully convinced in your own mind that this activity is right? Do you have any doubts?
- Remember, if you doubt and act you are acting apart from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin.
- *Romans 14:23* “But the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”