



General Topics :: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk?

What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/12/22 8:30

Something that has been on my heart recently, I have heard other believers say that not everything is "black and white" that there are a lot of gray areas? This is confusing to me especially when the topic is about sin...what "gray" areas are there according to the Bible? Didn't Jesus have very strong words to say about those who were neither "hot" or "cold" but rather lukewarm??? I always thought being lukewarm was rather like being in a "gray" area?

Anyone have any thoughts?

God Bless
mj

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by Svane, on: 2011/12/22 8:39

Perhaps, it would be areas where one doesn't have a clear scriptural argument for whether one should do this or that. I.e . discernment when it comes to movies, TV, games, etc.

Some people might consider it to be wrong to watch "Lord of the Rings" while some may enjoy it. Therefore, it's black to some and white to some, and the combination of that is gray.

I assume that is what these believers you refer to are talking about. If it's about something that can be proven biblically to be either black or white, there's a problem though.

That's my thoughts :)

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/12/22 8:43

Great question :)

People make up lots of excuses for sin and thus a "gray" area is born. You know the homosexuality is starting to become a gray area in many christian circles? Basically those that don't want to hurt people's feelings or tell the truth of sin accept these gray areas and live as if God's word doesn't speak against them.

I asked this question on a different forum, is it judging someone if you are telling someone living in sin their lifestyle will lead them to hell in a loving a compassion way on sin that the Word makes clear the lifestyle will end in hell? Ie like lying or sexual immorality.

Its not that the world is growing more and more wicked (though it is) its that the church has willingly lost its voice against sin.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/12/22 8:54

Matthew wrote:I asked this question on a different forum, is it judging someone if you are telling someone living in sin their lifestyle will lead them to hell in a loving a compassion way on sin that the Word makes clear the lifestyle will end in hell? Ie like lying or sexual immorality.

Its not that the world is growing more and more wicked (though it is) its that the church has willingly lost its voice against sin.

I have seen this too. So many people who profess to be Christians live together now before getting married(if they get married at all) and many churches consider it to be no big deal.

God Bless
mj

General Topics :: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk?

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2011/12/22 8:58

Does this help:

Cold water came from the springs and was good for drinking. Hot water was for bathing. Lukewarm water was undesirable for either. It was imported water, and full of sediment. (From the IVP Bible Background commentary)

This metaphor from Revelation has nothing to do with the legal paradigm - which aims to slot all behaviors into a black or white category: Either it's right or it's wrong. Period. "Grey" includes all those behaviors judged by some as compromise, and defended by others as acceptable. (Romans 14 addresses this shade)

I don't think the passage in Revelation is merely distinguishing behaviors. It's talking about ineffective living caused by spiritual poverty. (See Rev. 3:14-20) It's pointing readers to Jesus Christ - something which the legalist paradigm fails to do (because of its focus on behavior).

The difference in focus I would say is location: the inside of the "cup" vs the outside of the "cup".

Diane

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/12/22 9:34

Diane

I see what you are saying but I wonder, can all these attitudes of compromise lead to a "lukewarm" living and spiritual poverty. Once we become accepting of "some" gray areas can that lead us into spiritual poverty and away from Christ?

Putting the "lukewarm" reference aside then I guess I am asking about sin being "black or white" while there are those who sincerely believe there is a lot of "gray" areas even when it comes to sin.

Not sure if I am really conveying very well what I am seeking to understand(sorry) I realize that our focus must clearly be on Jesus and yet our behavior and attitudes matter as well. We must keep our focus on Jesus and yet HE looks at our hearts and responses??? Is the idea of a "gray" area another way to justify or excuse sin?? Wondering this even of myself??

God Bless
mj

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by dietolive, on: 2011/12/22 9:48

Hello Ma'am,

Your question reminded me of Evan Roberts and the great Welsh revival of 1904-5. One of the tenants of Roberts' was that the people must aggressively cease all doubtful (or gray-area) practices. And great was that revival, as the people began to walk with the resulting clear conscience that comes when we seek only to do those things that are pleasing in God's sight.

Certainly this was the apostle's practice as well:

"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16

The Scriptures do not spell out everything for us, especially in our modern world, 2000 years after-the-fact. Yet, the principles that should guide our day-to-day decisions are all there for us to read and glean from.

Out of our study of the Word, and our singular devotion to God, may arise a prayerful attitude like this:

Asking the Lord, our Heavenly Father,

- To please give us divine Wisdom to understand His Word: that we may know how to serve Him in righteousness; that we may give no offence to Him or to any man at all.

General Topics :: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk?

- In all things "doubtful" , that He would please give us the grace and peace to simply CEASE doing them, unless and until we receive more light from His Word in the matter.
- That He would please give us the grace to withstand any ridicule or contempt from our dear brothers and sisters, who may call us legalistic, or who may belittle our tender consciences in other ways, simply because we will spare nothing in this life to come between us and Him.
- That He would mercifully grant that we may joyfully be conformed into the image of His Dear Son, and on the Last Day, be raised again in His Glorious Likeness.
- That He may receive all the praise and all the glory, forever. Amen

Be well Sister,
Doug

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by Sree (), on: 2011/12/22 9:51

Wow, I was thinking about the same scripture today and thought of sharing it in SI. According to me Jesus was talking to the angel of a Church(elder) so it is from a Church perspective. In their preaching and Church conducts, they were luke worms. They decided they were already blessed with everything and stopped seeking God.

I think if you apply it personally to our spiritual life, it refers to the time when we lose the longing for spiritual growth and have a stagnated Christian life. God always wants us to grow more and more in Christ Jesus and to bear more fruits for him (John 15:1).

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk?, on: 2011/12/22 10:58

It all depends on how it's used.

For example, last night when I was talking to our Father, I said, "Remember when I was a kid when I used to spend all the time with you while everything around me was grey?"

In that example, Grey has no appeal, no lure, it's boring.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/12/22 11:04

Amen! Doug...

I was not going to respond to your question but the issue keeps troubling me, like as though it demands a reaction...

I know what you mean by gray-areas. They do exist because we encounter issues where depending on my motive, circumstances can determine where something is right or wrong. Confusing? You bet, it is, unless you are listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit but then at times even he is silent. So what does one do?

Allow me to illustrate. Suppose you need a new or another pick-up. Your husband uses it for his work and the one he now has needs replacing. The question comes "which one shall I buy?" A brand new one with all the bells and whistles the industry offers, or something less expensive but more functional for my present needs? Is it sin to own a very expensive pick-up truck? No. But could it be sin for you to? Yes. Why? Because it could be because of pride that would motivate this choice - owning and running a fancy pick-up feeds the macho-ego, or pride. But then, maybe this pick-up could be had cheaply and would satisfy your practical needs, but what would this tell your neighbors? Still, it is no sin to own a fancy pick-up. (This reminds me of a testimony given by David Wilkerson who purchased a fancy car...after driving it for a short period of time, he returned it for a cheaper model because he felt so foolish and condemned.)

For women: we want our houses to look nice, be nice. Do I demand new furniture when what I have serves our needs well? So, it is looking shabby? what if I become a bit more resourceful and see if I could not repurpose it, making it look nice without an outlay of ridiculous amount of money? And why do I think I need new furniture? is it worn out - and it will in

time with usage - is it to impress someone else? Once again pride rears its ugly head...It all comes down to a wise expenditure of resources and my defining a need.

This is just a few examples of issues we have to deal with in life that forces us to make decisions and we need to consider why we make the choices we do.

Someone once said , "we spend money we don't have to buy the things we don't need to impress the people we do not like!" Methinks this sums it up quite well, don't you think?

My understanding of this issue...

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2011/12/22 11:37

Quote:
----- In all things "doubtful" , that He would please give us the grace and peace to simply CEASE doing them, unless and until we receive more light from His Word in the matter.

Good point!!

I merely address the unfortunate flip side, which, no doubt you are already know. IÂ'm being the devilÂ's advocate here, IÂ'm afraid.

We run into problems whenever the "doubtful" areas get turned into heavy burdens on the conscience. It produces self-absorption - an obsession with oneÂ's behavior and a need to defend oneÂ's choices. Or it tempts GodÂ's people to condemn others for their choices. This is exactly what happened in the holiness movement. It ultimately made wrecks out of people. It happened because of a shift from ChristÂ's holiness working freely to human holiness attained through endless strivings.

This topic, I think, begs us to consider the sad fact that the church has often taken on the role of dictating what is "grey" - and therefore, by necessity, dictating who is to be suspected. ItÂ's been a way to control people and keep the church "pure". However, the individualÂ's conscience is put in bondage to human authorities: The brother then tries to do what pleases those whose approval he depends on for his sense of righteousness. ItÂ's immature morality - even if itÂ's VERY GOOD behavior. IÂ've been there, and it derailed me (thankfully!). You can see why I tend to be adamant about protecting the conscience - and keeping it free for GodÂ's Spirit. God takes a whole lifetime to work in people. That's why patience is important. We can't go around extracting sin - as if it's merely an outer garment to remove.

HereÂ's a thought: What if we shift this idea of "doubtful" to the area of the conscience. Isn't that what Romans 14 is addressing. If a certain behavior is going to violate the conscience of a believer (the one who is still wavering on whatÂ's right and wrong on the matter), you submit to that person - and you avoid that behavior. ThatÂ's why you might not eat sacrificed meat - or whatever. You are zealous to protect your brotherÂ's conscience.

A clear conscience is crucial in victorious living. ThatÂ's why unacknowledged sin is such a serious problem. It distances us from Christ. Christ has come to cleanse our consciences of guilt. But if we turn around and put guilt on peopleÂ's consciences, as a means to control behavior - we are the ones in sin. ThatÂ's a sin that often gets overlooked - that is, unacknowledged.

I wonder to what extent, in the revival of Wales, the call to abandon all "grey" activities was left to the consciences of the people. IÂ'm sure each person eagerly sacrificed compromised habits out of obedience to the Spirit, not for self-righteous purposes. If they were reasoning like the Pharisees did in Jesus' day or like some in the later holiness movement, they would have actually resisted revival.

There is another factor that gets overlooked when thinking only about "grey" areas: God often calls his people to sacrifice what is perfectly acceptable in itself. ItÂ's surrendering the good for the better. And conversely God has used significantly flawed people to advance his kingdom.

Grace is so messy isn't it!
Conversely law is so clear: black or white.

Diane

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/12/22 12:18

Quote:
-----MaryJane wrote:
I have heard other believers say that not everything is "black and white" that there are a lot of gray areas? This is confusing to me especially when the topic is about sin...what "gray" areas are there according to the Bible? Didn't Jesus have very strong words to say about those who were neither "hot" or "cold" but rather lukewarm??? I always thought being lukewarm was rather like being in a "gray" area?

There are so many variables to a 'gray' area as you call it and yet you can't call these gray areas being lukewarm either because sometimes it's a knowledge issue. We are accountable for what we know; can a five year old be expected to balance a check book before they even know arithmetic? It might help if we try to look at each other as trees that are at different stages. Jesus gave examples to us about this and not just for our reading pleasure but for a purpose...

Apple trees, depending on the type, from seed take 4 to 6 years to bear good fruit. When we look at someone who is not as far along as "we" think they should be Christ, maybe we should ask ourselves: when was this person planted? Were they planted in good ground? When did they "take" root? Did a storm come along and damage the tree? When were they fertilized? Watered? Pruned? Do you see all the variables that affect a tree's bearing fruit? There is no telling what has caused a "gray" area in a person's life, only if we have compassion on them and ask the Lord will He share with us what is going on.

And another variable is that not every person (Christian) has had a good teacher of the Spirit and of the word to help them bear good fruit. What I find is that more than not are the people (Christians), who are more quick to judge someone's state of grace or gray area than they are to help them grow in grace so that one day they can help and love others too.

God bless,
Lisa

Re: roadsign and Lysa - posted by dietolive, on: 2011/12/22 13:09

Insightful points Sister Lisa :O)

And insightful points as well Sister Diane. :O)

I wonder in particular about the meaning and application of your response Ma'am... In particular, the danger you warn of: that men may try to usurp the place of the Holy Ghost over other believers and then require more than God does.

This is a DEEP topic... and this particular danger is one of a great many that threaten the Christian, as he or she "shove s off" from the "safety" of the doomed land, and sails into the rough waters that lead the Christian to Eternal Life.

Yet sail on he must, come what may.

I too have suffered under those who have demanded more than God does. I have also suffered under those who fail to even mention what God clearly does say to do.

Yet even now, I attend a local church that teaches some standards that aren't even in the Old Testament, let alone in the New. And they teach against other standards of living that are plainly written in the New Testament for Christians, because those standards go against the recent artificial Hollywood culture we are forced to live in here in the West.

But what do I do? I abide by their standards, so as to not give offense to their consciences. And where I appear to do more than they do, I suffer the little stings that come with doing so. Some will avoid any mention of the difference. Others preach openly and publically against my differing practice. Yet I have learned to love both kinds. As Sister Lisa pointed out so well, I am aware that we are all in different places in our walks, with different experiences, both them and I.

Some may not do what I do, but have more inward grace than I have. - I am humbled, as I submit to and learn from them anyway. Some may do more than I see the Scriptures commanding us to do. - I am humbled, as I submit to their standard for their conscience sake anyway.

Let us be brave then! Let us put aside the doubts and worries and pain of past hurts from our minds. Simple gospel truths have great efficacy, IF we can somehow cast all else aside and simply BELIEVE them.

We may yet cast aside all doubtful things, yes EVEN the doubtful things of others. And at the same time, we can be perfectly FREE in doing so.

Be encouraged dear Sister. Be encouraged in Him all. :O)
Doug

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2011/12/22 13:54

Good morning,...a blessed morning ,

Mary Jane,

As I read / read what you were asking and meditating on this, I was remembering a time when I was desperately trying to make a dividing line, between what was Right and what was Wrong...(the Lord had already been bringing things to my attention and bringing about a change) But I was very diligent wanting more of what God would have me be / do...in other words...How would the Lord 's' judgments be in this / that be...Because , my whole heart wanted to do God' will. I know, by experience, this is not easy....I was consulting Him in every thing....it is not easy to determine the dividing line.

I know now, that we are to keep our ear tuned to the Spirit, to be 'led by the Spirit' .

I was very young then, and just starting out with the Lord. Looking back now, I know that it was like when Paul first started out with the Lord, and he asked 'What would Thou have for me to do, Lord' I believe Paul continued to ask the Lord this, always...because he realized He was not 'his own' . That he now belonged to the Lord....and He was now Lord over his life.

I was thinking about this ,....would this be the only way that we too, could stay out of the gray area ?

Please note, I am not trying to be a ,know-it all ,but this is what happened to me.
Much love,
Elizabeth

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/12/22 14:02

Thank you for the insightful replies. You have given me much to consider and pray on. I do look to the Lord for better understanding and pray it will help me with some things I find myself struggling with.

Doug you mentioned that, "Some may not do what I do, but have more inward grace than I have. - I am humbled, as I submit to and learn from them anyway. Some may do more than I see the Scriptures commanding us to do. - I am humbled, as I submit to their standard for their conscience sake anyway."

when you say that "you submit to their standard" what exactly do you mean by that? I just wonder because something has been brought up to me as being sinful and I guess it is one of those areas that one would say is "gray" area. Do you submit to those around you and what they command even though you feel no personal conviction to do on the matter from the Holy Spirit?

God bless
mj

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/12/22 14:07

Elizabeth wrote : 'What would Thou have for me to do, Lord'
I believe Paul continued to ask the Lord this, always...because he realized
He was not 'his own'. That he now belonged to the Lord....and He was now Lord over his life.

I was thinking about this ,....would this be the only way that we too, could stay out of the gray area ?

Please note, I am not trying to be a ,know-it all ,but this is what happened to me.
Much love,
Elizabeth

This is probably the best way to handle things. Thank you for sharing with me. I did not feel like you were trying to be a know it all (smile) I appreciate everyone taking the time to help me sort through this and sharing what the Lord has laid on your heart.

God Bless
mj

Re: MaryJane - posted by dietolive, on: 2011/12/22 15:47

Dear Sister,

You said:
"when you say that "you submit to their standard" what exactly do you mean by that?"

And:
"Do you submit to those around you and what they command even though you feel no personal conviction to do on the matter from the Holy Spirit?"

Yes, I submit to standards of the Church even though I do not believe they are necessarily biblical. (They are "good" things, nothing bad. They just aren't literally commanded in Scripture.)

While I do submit, my conviction for doing so lies in something else altogether. The practical doctrine I am trying to convey is seen the most clearly in Romans 14. Here Paul says:

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Romans 14:14

Using the then current issue of clean vs. unclean meats in the early churches, Paul lays out the general principle of how the strong are to walk with the weak.

Paul is "strong": he knows that the mere partaking of certain kinds of food or drink is not a moral issue in Christ. Yet, he said there existed some in the church, real saved Brothers, who believed otherwise. Their consciences were offended by the practice of eating meat sold by gentiles. They believed it was sinful, and the consequences of deliberate sinning were seen to be very serious in those days:

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Romans 14:15

“For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” Romans 14:20

"Destroy not him...", "destroy not the work of God...", Paul warned. This was why it was so important not to offend the weaker brothers in Paul's mind. They would be lost, perhaps irrevocably. That is why this is so important.

What is the solution then, if we are really willing to love our brothers as our own soul? Simply this, avoid even the doubtful thing, the "gray area" thing, if necessary:

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” Romans 14:21-22

Dear MaryJane – Consider the situation you find yourself in: I assume you believe the people telling you something is sin are truly saved. Are you in church fellowship with these people? Would God have you continue with them? Is this particular issue one that they feel would damn you or others who did it? Could some of the people who believe as they do also be offended from Christ (and therefore “fall away”), by your not going along? If the answer is “yes” to all these questions, then you face a similar situation to what Paul faced.

In this way, I myself try to weigh every “conviction” or “standard” of others by the final Standard: Is it biblical? If it is, I want to do it.

If it isn't, I begin asking myself the questions I asked you above. The Spirit and my conscience both then bare witness as to what I need to do in each case.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” Romans 15:1

Just some thoughts regarding applying this early Christian practice of maintaining peace and unity in the churches.

In any and all cases, be guided by the Lord Ma'am. And,

Be well.
Doug :O)

Re: - posted by mama27, on: 2011/12/22 17:03

I heard a message by John MacArthur some time ago on gray areas that was helpful to me since we are parenting teens and young adults....Hope this helps....I believe you could find the longer version of the message on his website, gty.org

Glorifying God in Gray Areas

Selected Scriptures A165

John MacArthur

Making Decisions in Gray Areas

If the issue you are wondering about is not specifically addressed in the Bible, then it's helpful to ask these questions from 1 Corinthians to help you in deciding what to do. Asking these questions (and others like them) will help you make a wise decision based on sound biblical principles.

General Topics :: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk?

1. Will it benefit me spiritually? First Corinthians 10:23 says, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify."
2. Will it put me in bondage? First Corinthians 6:12 says, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything." Any questionable practice that can be habit-forming is not wise to pursue.
3. Will it defile God's temple? First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." "We should not do anything with our bodies that would dishonor the Lord."
4. Will it cause others to stumble? First Corinthians 8:8-9 says, "Food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak." One should refrain from using his freedom in an area which might cause others to sin. For "by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore," Paul said, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble."
5. Will it help the cause of evangelism? First Corinthians 10:32-33 says, "Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved." We must think of the effect any practice might have on our testimony to the lost.
6. Will it violate my conscience? First Corinthians 10:25-29 contains three references to abstaining from a certain practice "for conscience' sake." And Romans 14:23 says, "He who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin." If we are not sure whether an action is pleasing to God, we should not do it. That way our conscience will remain clear and our relationship to God will not be hindered.
7. Will it bring glory to God? First Corinthians 10:31 summarizes all these principles by saying, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2011/12/22 17:27

First of all Luke worm and Gray areas (as described my many here) are not same. Luke worm is to have a stagnated Christian life.

If Gray area is defined as things in which the Bible is not clear, then I feel there cannot be such an area in a persons life if he is filled with Holy Spirit.

1 John 3 20:-

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight

I am hundred percent sure our heart will condemn us if we are doing something against the will of God, even though the scripture is silent about that subject we are dealing with. It is a promise given in scripture.

The reason some still believe in Gray areas because they expect scripture to prove everything as black and white. If there is no clear scripture then they think it is Gray. Actually Scripture cannot cover all things, that is why we have Holy Spirit

Re: What are "gray" areas when it comes to our walk? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/12/23 8:06

MaryJane,

Last night as I was thinking about this thread, my mind went to this piece that has been posted on here several times since I have been with SI. It is titled, "Others May, You cannot"

Here is the link:

https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=685&forum=35&3

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/12/23 8:35

I disagree Sree,

The Holy Word and the Holy Spirit are One, and thus they operate together. Gray areas and Lukewarmness are very similar because Lukewarmness breeds Gray areas. Someone says to the Lukewarm Christian "oh quit being such a legalist" and the Lukewarm Christian is so far from God at the time they simply agree, "Maybe I should lighten up a bit."

Many Christians are stagnate and have lost touch with the Word making them more likely to agree that something is gray rather than seeking the Holy Spirit and Word together for a definite answer.

We must be clear on one thing here is that if the Word is clear on the matter then the Holy Spirit doesn't need to speak to our hearts a conviction, its already written, so in matters of sin and the hard hitting questions like "Is there such an animal as a gay christian?" Answering being no Scripture is clear the sexually immoral do not inherit the Kingdom of God and that we, as Children of God and New Creature in Christ, must flee sin.

One could take your argument to the extreme and say, welp I am not convicted of this sin so it must be okay. This is false and I know that's likely not what you meant presenting your point of view. I guess I took all of these words to say this There must be a balance and Harmony of The Holy Spirit and The Holy Word. The Spirit will Line up and be in Harmony with the Word and the Word will Line up and be in Harmony with the Spirit, period.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/12/23 8:42

Mama, Thank-you so much for sharing this article. It is well written and Biblical as far as I can see. The crux of the matter is found in this statement:

"One should refrain from using his freedom in an area which might cause others to sin. For "by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore," Paul said, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble."

It is all about submitting for the sake of the weaker brother or sister lest we cause them to stumble and woe on us if we are guilty of it.

God bless, Mama.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2011/12/23 9:38

Quote:

-----Paul said, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble."

For this reason I try to conform to the dress habits of a church I visit -- to avoid possible barriers. I think it is unhelpful to tempt worshippers to stumble into sin -- that is, to judge me unfairly, or to be distracted from God.

Yet, I often wonder who the "weaker brother" really is. Is it the legalistic-type of person who is always judging people by their outer appearance -- the kind of person who insists I conform to their prescribed standards -- or they will judge me as "carnal" -- that is, a "grey" Christian -- outside of the spiritual "elite"? This person is surely weak in grace-living!

I find it tempting to comply with the one whose approval I may seek most than to consider my weaker brother -- whom I may NOT even notice!

Who is my "weaker brother"? I need to know because I have a responsibility to this person.

Diane

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2011/12/23 10:13

Quote:

One could take your argument to the extreme and say, welp I am not convicted of this sin so it must be okay.

You are correct, it is really possible and there are many who deceive themselves in this area. For John 3:20 to come true, there are few preconditions. One should really be filled with Holy Spirit and should have clear decision of listening to the Spirit's voice. If someone is not willing to listen and obey the voice of Spirit then why should he even convict such a person?

Quote:

The Holy Word and the Holy Spirit are One

The Holy Spirit is actually the Spirit of the word. Every word has a spirit behind it. The Holy Spirit brings light on this spirit behind the word. Jesus came to teach us how to live by the word keeping the spirit of the word. For example 'Do not commit Murder- when someone reads it, he might understand that only Physically murdering someone is unlawful. Such a person only cares about the word and not about the spirit. They are legalists. A person with Spirit will understand that this verse also covers not to show his anger out. A person with much mature walk in Christ will even understand that looking at someone with Anger is like committing murder.

Same can be said about scriptures on Head covering for Women and wearing ornaments. If someone learns to cover her head understanding the spirit behind it then they will never judge others who do not cover, hence will not become legalist.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2011/12/23 10:33

Quote:

Who is my "weaker brother"? I need to know because I have a responsibility to this person.

According to me a weaker brother is one who just lives by Word and not by the spirit behind it. As stated by Paul a brother who does not believe in eating unclean animal because the law says so is a weaker person. Another brother who lives by Spirit and understands that what goes into his mouth will not defile him and believes in eating everything created by God is considered spiritual and stronger. Now when these 2 brothers eat together, the freedom of the spiritual brother should not cause this other brother to stumble. So it is better for this spiritual brother to lower his standard when he is around with this weaker brother so as to save him from stumbling.

I do not eat pork because I come from a country that does not eat and am not used to it. In Church when other brothers eat pork while dining with me, one of the brother always quotes this verse and asks whether they are causing me to stumble. I answer them saying, I am not eating pork because I am not used to it, and not to please God. So I have no judgmental attitude in this area towards those brothers who eat.

My wife and I go to a prayer meet where majority are Women and they do not cover their head. My wife covers her head during worship time. She asked me whether she has to continue covering because she feels like odd person out there. I told her if she is covering understanding the spirit behind and as a sign for her submission to me, and she has no judgmental thoughts in her mind on these other sisters who do not cover, then she can continue.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2011/12/23 11:29

Quote:
----- So it is better for this spiritual brother to lower his standard when he is around with this weaker brother so as to save him from stumbling.

Sree, I think you are right, but I am still troubled. In order to "diagnose" another as weaker, I have to view myself as stronger -- and that is risky at best. After all, that is the very temptation for those who live by law!

And when I accommodate myself to another, surely I am not to LOWER my standard -- but to RAISE my moral standard to a higher level -- that of love (ie Christian submission).

I'm wondering how we could integrate this quote by JI Packer in this matter of personal practices as related to the conscience of another:

"Love is a commitment to meet the need of another person and to make the other person great thereby."

Diane

Re: - posted by mama27, on: 2011/12/23 11:46

Maybe, because our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, we are to live above reproach so as not to cause a "weaker brother" to stumble whoever he is - seen or unseen....

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2011/12/23 13:33

Quote:
-----Sree, I think you are right, but I am still troubled. In order to "diagnose" another as weaker, I have to view myself as stronger -- and that is risky at best. After all, that is the very temptation for those who live by law!

Now I understand the depths of your Question. I don't think I have an exact answer. But remember we are not stronger in all aspects nor is the other brother weaker in all. So based on such practices we cannot judge a person as whole weaker or stronger. That is why bible encourages fellowship so that we can learn from one another.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2011/12/23 14:27

Quote:
----- But remember we are not stronger in all aspects nor is the other brother weaker in all.

I like this, because it invites me to humbly receive from another believer as well as give.

What do you think of this:

Nowhere does the Bible speak about "grey" areas. But it does use the metaphor of shades -- light vs dark. We are called to be a LIGHT of the world -- to shine God's glory through our lives. So - there can be "grey" Christians - those who may have mastered the right behaviors, but do not shine with the radiance of Christ. They have a form of godliness without the power.

What can turn our grey Christian living into brilliant living -- where we shine for Jesus - and others know Jesus' grace is real and liberating?

What scriptures apply here?

Diane

Re: - posted by elected (), on: 2011/12/23 17:17

Quote:

"Nowhere does the Bible speak about "grey" areas. But it does use the metaphor of shades – light vs dark. We are called to be a LIGHT of the world – to shine God's glory through our lives. So - there can be "grey" Christians - those who may have mastered the right behaviors, but do not shine with the radiance of Christ. They have a form of godliness without the power."

If there is such a thing like "grey christians", then it should be equivalent to a compromised faith and lifestyle. In other words it should mean living, "with one foot on earth and the other in heaven." Such a compromised christianity is not acceptable for God. Whoever is in such a state, if they are not zealous and repent, then like the Laodicean church they risk of being "spit out of his mouth."

Some may deny that "gray" christianity exist or may justify it in their theology. The first group of christians make the mistake of doing the wrong diagnosis of a "sick" christian and may be making the mistake of telling him, "he has never been born again" since he is not spiritual or bearing fruit. And the second group justifies the state of a born again person who still lives in sin or lukewarmness, instead of showing him the cure of his sickness they do their best to ease his conscience and offer him a false insurance.