

BBC 12/1/24 – HBS “Testing Behaviors” - 1 Tim 3:15 *“that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself”*

God expects His people to live in a manner that is a good reflection of Christ’s character and holiness. A believer’s godly lifestyle is the conduct expected among fellow believers & as a witness to the world.

We ought to give ourselves a 4-question test before we act on any impulse or situation. If King David were able to go back and do things all over again (2 Samuel ch.11), he surely would’ve tested himself.

Here is the 4-part self-question test:

1) Is whatever we’re about to enter into or engage in clearly prohibited by Scripture?

The 10 Commandments listed in Exodus 20:1-17 is the foundation for our behavioral standard. Jesus summarized them as two pillars (Matthew 22:37-40), to love God, and to love fellow-man. Jesus further declared, *“If you love me, keep my commandments.”* (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3)

Discussion: 1) In reviewing the 10 Commandments listed in Exod 20, which ones are directed as our responsibility before God, and which ones as our responsibilities before fellow-man?

2) According to James 1:13-15, is temptation sin? When is sin “birthed”?

3) In light of James 1, did David sin when he inquired about Bathsheba? (2 Sam. 11:2-3)

2) If something is not explicitly prohibited by God’s Word, can it still be inadvisable for me?

1 Corinthians 6:12 & 10:23 says, *“all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient”*

Whether something is permissible or inadvisable (*even impermissible*) can vary in different people.

For example: Having a glass of wine is not dangerous and permissible for the average person, but it is completely inadvisable because it is impermissibly dangerous for a sober alcoholic!

God expects us to live in obedience to Him by faith, and to exercise proper judgment.

Another principle: There is a difference between God’s “perfect” will, and His “permissive” will.

Discussion: 1) What is God’s “perfect” will regarding salvation according to 1 Timothy 2:4?

2) What is God’s “permissive” will regarding salvation according to Joshua 24:15?

3) Was David’s mere invitation for Bathsheba to come over (2 Sam 11:4) an act of sin?

4) In light of Romans 13:14, what was David’s error that led to a series of grievous sins?

3) Should I be concerned if something permissible to me causes someone else to stumble?

As we saw in the 10 Commandments and Jesus’ two related “pillars” (Exod 20:1-17; Matt 22:37-40), we have a responsibility to not only love God by our obedience to Him, but also have caring concern for one another. So much so, that we’re required to avoid even the appearance of evil to our Christian brethren & fellow man (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Discussion: 1) According to Romans 14:11-21, who should yield concerning a controversial conviction? The one who is certain his actions are not in violation of God’s Word, or the one who may be immature in the Faith and understands things much more narrowly?

2) When the prophet Nathan confronted David about his sin, according to 2 Sam. 12:14, what was one of the grave consequences of David’s sin that was so harmful?

4) Is my desire / fear to keep an action or behavior secret due to my disobedience, or condemnation?

A valid “rule of thumb” is; if I have to keep something secret, it’s probably not something I should be doing. The Bible says (Romans 14:22-23), that what is not to us of faith, is sin.

Secret sins don’t only affect us, they permeate the whole “body” (*family, church, etc*) - see the broad effect of Achan’s secret sin in Joshua ch.7. Also, some “*gut convictions*” are actually unnecessary “*self-condemnations*” that originate from an inaccurate doctrinal understanding of God’s Word. It is wise to remain transparent before God, humble, teachable, & to cast all of our cares upon Him.

Discussion: 1) Did David foolishly think he could hide a multitude of mounting sins (2 Sam ch.11)?

2) Though David fell hard, how did his tender heart help him (2 Sam 12:13b; Psalm 32:1-2)?