

SINS AND WEIGHTS — WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Hebrews 12:1-2:

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

HOW TO TEST THINGS

If I am to run the Christian race, I am to lay aside every sin and every weight. Every weight may not be a sin; but every sin is a weight.

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Here is a test from the Word of God. You must not simply ask — concerning a doubtful thing — “*Is it a sin? Is it wrong? Is it wicked?*” . . . but rather ask:

- ***Is it best?***
- ***Is it, to any extent, a weight or a hindrance to me in my Christian life?***
- ***Does it slacken my pace?***
- ***Does it take the keen edge off my spirituality?***
- ***Does it blunt my enthusiasm for Christ’s service?***
- ***Does it spoil my enjoyment of prayer?***
- ***Could my time, energy, or money be used for something higher? Would I be a keener, brighter, happier, more powerful and useful Christian without that amusement than with it?***
- ***Even though the thing is not a definite sin itself, is it a case of the better being the foe of the best?***

A thing may be a weight to one Christian, but not to another. The thing which retards your progress may not retard mine, and vice versa. Further: the thing that may be a weight at another time and under different circumstances may not be now.

To be sure, there are definite laws against pronounced sinful things such as drunkenness, theft, adultery, Sabbath desecration, idolatry, murder, covetousness, profanity, and so forth; but regarding the doubtful thing, each must apply for himself the Scripture tests and arrive at his own conclusion.

Bring everything in your life to this bar for judgment: habits, recreations, hobbies, books, friends, fashions, songs, games, movies, television, dancing, gambling, and smoking.



Strive to discover if there is anything in your life which hinders your being your best for God. If you can, then that thing is a weight.

Susannah Wesley, mother of the great founder of Methodism, said a wise thing when she stated, *“Whatsoever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind — that is wrong, however innocent it may be in itself.”*

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE.

The second test to consider is based on Paul’s words:

1 Corinthians 8:9, 13:



⁹ But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

¹³ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Romans 14:7, 13:

⁷ For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

¹³ Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

There may be some things which under the first test we might allow but which are ruled out by this second one. Here we have to consider not only the effect of certain things upon our own lives, but the influence which we exert upon others. A particular course of action may do us no harm, but as Christians, we have a solemn duty towards those who may be injured by it, and who may be more inclined to take it because of our example. That, of course, is the time-honored total abstinence argument.

Total abstinence advocates rightly say, *“Liquor is a curse in the land; therefore abstain from it – even if it does you no harm. For the sake of your weaker brother, you will throw the full weight of your influence against it.”*



This same argument can be applied to everything else which causes weaker ones to stumble. There are other things which curse the land, besides liquor. Take the R-rated movies. Does it not happen sometimes that a Christian’s attendance so influences others as to prove a stumbling block?

“Oh, I could never live up to that standard of Christian life. It involves too much sacrifice. There is too much to give up. The things of the world fascinate me and I could not do without them.” To such objections let me say: **The world’s pleasures are the devil’s counterfeit for God’s provision. The joy of God is the antidote to all the world’s attractions.**

If you only knew the deeper, richer, fuller, more satisfying joy that flows into a life that surrenders all to Christ, you would no longer want what the world has to offer. God says in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 2:13: For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.



The world’s cisterns are broken cisterns. What countless thousands have tried them and found no satisfaction!

A girl wrote to me, *“My life is fixed on pleasure, and the more enjoyment I have, the*

more I want. Oh, if you knew the restless longings I have for quietness and peace. I cannot understand myself. All the enjoyment I have leaves only an emptier, more aching void than before; yet I cannot stop. I can laugh and be merry whenever I feel like it; but underneath, and more often than not, I carry an aching heart. Yet no one knows that I am not as light-hearted as I appear to be."

Ah, yes. Broken cisterns. Are they too much to give up when in Christ there can be found "*joy unspeakable and full of glory*"?

1 Peter 1:8 : Whom [Jesus] having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

I want to show you His Will. Be prepared to be obedient to it. I am not going to ask you to arrive at any decision merely upon my advice or opinion. I want you to study with me what the Word of God has to say on this subject. Then, apply it to your life sincerely and fearlessly.



THERE ARE PRACTICAL TESTS FOR EVERY QUESTIONABLE THING.

Romans 12:2: And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God.

2 Corinthians 6:17: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

Galatians 1:4: Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the Will of God and our Father:

Ephesians 5:7, 11:

⁷ Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

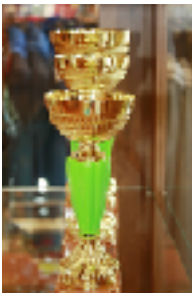
Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.



Philippians 2:15: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Colossians 2:20: Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,



2 Timothy 2:21: If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Titus 2:12: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Hebrew 13:13: Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

James 4:4: Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

1 Peter 1:14: As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

1 John 2:15: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 5:21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

The same ringing clarion call sounds from **Romans** to **John**. The keynote of every epistle is separation from — not similarity to — the ungodly world. There is to be a clear line of demarcation between the Christian and the worldly. You and I are meant to be easily recognizable as Christians because of the things which dominate our

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lives. They should be totally different from those which are obsessed with material things.

If people note that my Christianity renders me no different from the non-Christian in my tastes and habits; if the world's pleasures are as eagerly sought by me as by them; if I am dependent upon the earthly things for satisfaction, as they are —then, clearly, I am not a New Testament Christian.



With this background, we may proceed to deal more specifically with the tests which the Bible would have us apply to each and every doubtful thing.

Setting our affection on the things which are above not only has a promise of this life, but also of that which is to come. This life is far from being the ultimate and final state of existence. It is only a temporary phase of something more important that is to be.

Setting our affection on things above links the here with the hereafter — the now with the then — until the common walk of daily life has reflected upon it something of the glory that shall be, and “*when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in Glory.*”

Colossians 3:1-4:

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right Hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in Glory.



Therefore, “*love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*”, but “*set your affection on those things which are above.*”

1 John 2:15-17:

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the Will of God abideth forever.

You will never become radiant with glory — transformed into the image of Christ — by continually looking at yourself.

It is well to keep examining ourselves, and the Lord will sometimes chide His people, but He will not do it forever. No, on the contrary, you will have to look away from yourself, cease to waste your time in vain self-efforts to do better and be better, and get your eye of faith upon Jesus. It is then that you will be transformed.



Hebrews 12:2a: Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith;

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