



Illuminating the Gray Areas of Life

God's Word presents truth for every aspect of daily life. These statements are as clear as the difference between black and white. The Ten Commandments are a prime example of such clarity. For example, there can be no misunderstanding of the prohibitions "you shall not steal" and "you shall not commit adultery." From a positive perspective, clear statements of Scripture such as "forgive one another" and "bless those who persecute you" are just as understandable.

When a believer does not obey such clear statements, the reason is not a lack of understanding. Rather, the root problem is an orientation to "self" and the corresponding gratification of self-centered desires instead of responding in loving obedience to Jesus Christ (John 14:15).

If such a spiritual battle occurs when scriptural clarity is unquestioned, imagine the conflict between "following self" or "following the Savior" in situations not specifically addressed in the Bible. In these so-called "gray areas" of life, however, God's Word provides guidelines to bring any situation out of the shadows and into the brilliant light of understood truth.

God's truth for the gray areas of life encompasses three perspectives: God, self, and others. A believer can evaluate these three perspectives in every situation not specifically addressed in Scripture.

A believer, following the order of the two great commandments, loving God and loving others, (Matthew 22:37-40), can respond to any situation perceived to be in the "gray area" of life by answering the following questions:

- **God:** Will my response in this situation bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31)?
- **Others:** Will my response in this situation help to build up others in their faith in Christ (Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 10:23) or, instead, create hindrances for them (Romans 14:13)?
- **Myself:** Will my response help my spiritual development in Christ or will it contribute to enslaving me to things that lead away from growing in Christ (1 Corinthians 6:12)?

These questions are easy to understand. They illumine any perceived gray area of life not specifically addressed in Scripture.

Will a believer's response in these gray areas be motivated by loving obedience to the Lord and His Word or will a believer's response follow the alternative path of human wisdom and self-oriented desires? Through God's grace and strength, believers learn and increasingly appreciate that there is no beneficial alternative to living in the clarity of God's Truth.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

John 14:15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Matthew 22:37-40, And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

1 Corinthians 10:31, So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Romans 14:19, So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

1 Corinthians 10:23, "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.

Romans 14:13, Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

1 Corinthians 6:12, "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything.