

# The Christian Arsenal

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## USING THE BIBLE TO MAKE DECISIONS Essentials for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living

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### Part 6 of 9

“If you want better insight and discernment ... learn the importance of reverence for the Lord and of trusting Him. He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time.” Pr. 2:5,9 (LB)

### SIX WAYS TO TEST A DECISION

#### 1. THE *IDEAL* TEST:

**IS IT IN HARMONY WITH GOD’S WORD ?**

There are two authorities:

1) God’s Word (what God says) and (2) World (what people say)

“Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.” Ps 119:105 (NIV)

#### 2. THE *INTEGRITY* TEST:

**WOULD I WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS DECISION I’M MAKING?**

Bad decisions always lead to secrets and those kinds of secrets always lead to pain in our lives.

“The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.” Pr. 10:9 (NIV)

The test of integrity is that your public life and your private live match.

“Knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin.” James 4:17 (LB)

One question to ask when making a decision – “Can I do this with a clear conscience?”

There are consequences to every decision. And every bad decision always leaves scars in our lives.

Does this mean that God does not forgive us for the wrong things we do? Of course He forgives us. He is a forgiving and gracious God. But that forgiveness does not free us from the pain and the consequences that come from bad decisions.

You can be forgiven and still have regrets.

You can be forgiven and still face the pain.

You can be forgiven and still struggle with a low self-esteem from that decision.

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You can be forgiven and still have the broken relationship because you made that decision.

You can be forgiven and still lose the rewards.

“If someone believes something is wrong, then he shouldn’t do it because for him it is wrong.” Rom. 14:14b (LB)

### **3. THE IMPROVEMENT TEST: WILL IT MAKE ME A BETTER PERSON ?**

“Everything is permissible – but not everything is beneficial, ... (and) not everything is constructive.” 1 Cor. 10:23 (NIV)

He’s saying some things are not necessarily wrong; they’re just not necessary.

### **4. THE INDEPENDENCE TEST: COULD IT BECOME ADDICTING TO ME ?**

No matter how much fun something is, if it begins to dominate your life and become an addiction, it is a bad decision.

“All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.” 1 Cor. 6:12b (RSV)

“I can do anything I want to IF Christ has not said no, BUT some of these things aren’t good for me. Even if I am allowed to do them, I’ll refuse to if I think they might get such a grip on me that I can’t easily stop when I want to.” 1 Cor. 6:12 (LB)

### **5. THE INFLUENCE TEST: WILL IT HARM OTHER PEOPLE ?**

One of the biggest mistakes we make in life is we forget how much our actions influence and affect others around us.

“Each of us will give an account of himself to God ... Try to live in such a way that you will never make your brother stumble by letting him see you doing something he thinks is wrong.” Rom 14:12-13 (LB)

There is no such thing as, “All it affects is me.” That’s a lie. Everything you do has an affect on somebody else either directly or indirectly. You can’t just live your life the way you want to. You have to be aware of how it affects other people.

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“Even if we believe that it makes no difference to the Lord whether we do these things, still we cannot just go ahead and do them to please ourselves; we must bear the ‘burden’ of being considerate of the doubts and fears of others ...” Rom. 15:1-2 (LB)

Mature people limit their freedom for the benefit of others – Immature people don’t.

## 6. THE INVESTMENT TEST: IS IT THE BEST US OF MY LIFE (TIME) ?

“Be every careful how you live. Don’t live like those who are not wise. Live wisely. I mean that you should use every chance you have for doing good, because these are evil times. So don’t be foolish with your lives. Learn what the Lord wants you to do.” Ephesians 5:15-17 (ICB)

If you want to make the best use of your life, if you want your life to count, if you want to make an impact with your life, you’ve got to do one thing. You’ve got to get control of your time.

We all have the same amount of time every week – 168 hours per week. The greatest successes and the worst failures in life had the same amount of time as you do.

Time is more important in your life than money. You can always get more money. But you can’t get more time.

Effective people figure out what’s essential in life and what’s trivial in life and they spend more of their time doing the essential things and less time doing the trivial things. You can’t eliminate all of the trivia in your life, but you can reduce it.