

Gray Areas: Deciding What To Do (Part 1)

(1 Corinthians 10:23-32)

Introduction.

- A) During the past several generations, some of the strongest debates among fundamentalists and evangelicals has centered around questionable practices – practices that many believers feel to be wrong but that are not specifically forbidden in Scripture. Some of the key issues have been drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking, card playing, wearing makeup, dancing, Sunday sports, styles of music, and going to the theater or movies. One reason Christians have spent so much time arguing those issues is that the Bible does not specifically forbid them” (*The John MacArthur Commentary on 1 Corinthians*).
- B) There are certain things, such as stealing, murder, slander, adultery, or covetousness, that the Scripture plainly forbid as sinful. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament mention many things that believers are prohibited from doing. Likewise, both testaments teach many things that are always good to do- loving and worshiping God, loving our neighbor, helping the poor, and so on. These are black and white, right or wrong issues.
- C) Many behaviors, however are not commanded, commended, or forbidden in Scripture. They are neither black or white, but gray. That is the Bible does not specifically address that behavior specifically.
- D) Through out the ages, well-intentioned men have tried to formulate rules and regulations to deal with these behaviors. Sometimes they have been on target and sometimes they have not. Sometimes the rules are the result of preference or prejudice. Sometimes they were about control. Sometimes they were about self-righteousness.
- E) Judaism had several rules. Referred to as the Law, these guidelines were intended to teach the Hebrews about sin, righteousness in order to enjoy a relationship with God. However, man’s sinfulness caused him to reduce those guidelines to a checklist for self-righteousness. **Religion was more about doing than being.**
- F) Contextualize 1 Corinthians 10:23-32

F) Introduce the series Gray Areas

I. What Are Gray Areas?

Gray areas are practices, behaviors or moral issues that the Bible does not directly command, commend or forbid. *Examples might include social drinking, movie choices, or dress codes.*

A) The Food Debate (1 Corinthians 8:4-7)

B) The Food Principle (1 Corinthians 8:8-12)

C) The Food Choice (1 Corinthians 8:13)

II. Questions About Gray Areas

A) Why is the Bible not clear on these issues?

B) If the Bible doesn't address it, then it must be okay, so what 's the big deal? (*suicide*)

C) If the Bible doesn't forbid it, then how do we know what to do?

III. Principles Concerning Gray Areas (1 Corinthians 10)

A) Edification Principle (10:23)

(**Principle:** When considering our participation in a activity, we must determine if it is profitable to the cause of Christ.)

B) Enhancement Principle (10:24, 29, 32-33)

(**Principle:** When considering our participation in a deed, we must determine if it is selfish or selfless.)

C) Glorification (10:30-31)

(**Principle:** When considering our participation in a deed, we must determine if it glorifies God or places attention on us.)

Conclusion