

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## **Subject: HOW DO I KNOW WHAT IS APPROPRIATE? Psalms 25:8, 9**

Godly modesty keeps harmony with faith, love, and holiness. It is setting an example of appropriateness that cannot be criticized. It wins over unbelievers.

Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

Modesty focuses on inward beauty, for that kind of beauty remains strong and youthful long after our bodies turn old and frail.

Christians need to show a Christlike lifestyle before believers and unbelievers alike. We should live as Jesus lived.

### **A Good Reason for Politeness**

"My boy," said a father to his son, "treat everybody with politeness, even those who are rude to you; remember, you show courtesy to others, not because they are gentlemen, but because you are one."

### **Baptism is Essential**

Christian water baptism is an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ. If it is not important in the plan of God, why did Jesus command it in Matthew 28:19? And why did Peter follow up by saying, "Be baptized every one of you," and by commanding the Gentiles to be baptized (Acts 2:38; 10:48)? We must remember two points about the importance of water baptism. First, whatever Christ definitely established and ordained cannot be unimportant, whether we understand its significance or not. Second, Christ and the apostles showed the importance of this ordinance by observing it. Jesus walked many miles to be baptized, though He was without sin, saying, "For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (See Matthew 3:13-16.)

It is true that water itself does not contain any saving virtue, but God has chosen to include it in His plan of salvation. Peter explained, "Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). According to Luke 7:30, "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized."

### **Our God Can Be Trusted**

**At this point, David paused to meditate on the character of the Lord his God. After all, why pray to the Lord if He can't be trusted? But He can be trusted!** To begin with, He is "good and upright" and what He says and does is always right. **If we submit ourselves to Him in meekness, He will teach us His ways, but if we are arrogant, He will be silent.** In the New Testament, the word "meek" describes a horse that has been broken, a soothing wind on a hot day, and a healing medicine. Meekness is not weakness; it is power under control. God can be trusted to guide those who obey His Word (v. 10), for a willingness to obey is the first step toward spiritual understanding (John 7:17).

**God can be trusted to be merciful and gracious to those who repent** (v. 11), but we must walk in the fear of the Lord (v. 12). "He [God] will instruct him in the way chosen for him" (v. 12, NIV). Knowing

that the Lord has a plan for our lives, and that this plan is the very best for us, should give us great joy and confidence as we seek His will (16:11; 139:13-16; Ephesians 2:10). According to God's covenant arrangement, those who obey will receive His provision and protection, and there will be blessing also for the next generations in the family (Deuteronomy 4:1-14). The word "children" is used nearly forty times in Deuteronomy, reminding us that our descendants can receive blessing from our obedience or sorrow because of our sins. If we love Him, fear Him, and obey His Word, He will draw near to us and share His plans with us. "Secret" in verse 14 means "intimate conversation, plans and purposes," what Jesus spoke about in John 15:15 and what Abraham experienced in Genesis 18:16. (Jeremiah 23:18 and 22, Proverbs 3:32 and Amos 3:7.) As we "walk with the Lord in the light of His Word," we develop a close fellowship with Him and better understand His ways. Yes, the Lord can be trusted to help us; and when He helps, He does it in mercy and truth ("love and faithfulness,").

**Psalm 25:8-9 . . .** The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in what is right, teaching them his way.

James 1:5 . . . If you need wisdom-if you want to know what God wants you to do-ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking.

Proverbs 16:1 . . . We can gather our thoughts, but the Lord gives the right answer.

Colossians 3:16 . . . Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

1 John 2:27 . . . You have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you all things, and what he teaches is true-it is not a lie. So continue in what he has taught you, and continue to live in Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16 . . . All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right.

Psalm 19:7 . . . The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Proverbs 1:3 . . . Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline, good conduct, and doing what is right, just, and fair.

Romans 2:15 . . . They demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right.

Ecclesiastes 10:2 . . . The hearts of the wise lead them to do right, and the hearts of the foolish lead them to do evil.

Psalm 37:30 . . . The godly offer good counsel; they know what is right from wrong.

God is the generous, unselfish source of wisdom. He has made his wisdom available to us to help us make appropriate choices. He shares his wisdom with us through Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, our own consciences, and godly counsel. The more closely you walk with God, the more appropriate choices you will make. Saturate yourself in Scripture, prayer, and Christian fellowship and you will find yourself usually knowing the appropriate thing to do.

### **HOW DO I KNOW WHAT IS INAPPROPRIATE?**

1 Corinthians 6:12 . . . You may say, "I am allowed to do anything." But I reply, "Not everything is good for you." And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything.

Romans 14:20-23 . . . Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, there is nothing wrong with these things in themselves. But it is wrong to eat anything if it makes another person stumble.

. . . You may have the faith to believe that there is nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who do not condemn themselves by doing something they know is all right. But if people have doubts about whether they should eat something, they shouldn't eat it. They would be condemned for not acting in faith before God. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.

1 Corinthians 8:9-13 . . . You must be careful with this freedom of yours. Do not cause a brother or sister with a weaker conscience to stumble. You see, this is what can happen: Weak Christians who think it is wrong to eat this food will see you eating in the temple of an idol. You know there's nothing wrong with it, but they will be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been dedicated to the idol. So because of your superior knowledge, a weak Christian, for whom Christ died, will be destroyed. And you are sinning against Christ when you sin against other Christians by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong. If what I eat is going to make another Christian sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live-for I don't want to make another Christian stumble.

Hebrews 12:13 . . . Mark out a straight path for your feet. Then those who follow you, though they are weak and lame, will not stumble and fall but will become strong.

1 John 2:10 . . . Anyone who loves other Christians is walking in the light and does not cause anyone to stumble.

2 Corinthians 6:3 . . . We try to live in such a way that no one will be hindered from finding the Lord by the way we act, and so no one can find fault with our ministry.

Will a choice I make take me closer to God or farther from God? Will a choice I make take another person closer to God or farther from God? The answer will determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of your choice.

#### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE CONCERNING OUR THOUGHTS?**

Romans 12:2 . . . Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

Philippians 4:8 . . . Now, dear friends, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

We can choose to ask God to help us concentrate on appropriate thoughts. And ask him to help you purge inappropriate thoughts from your mind. When we are filled with godliness we have little room for inappropriate thoughts and behavior.

#### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE CONCERNING OUR BEHAVIOR?**

Galatians 1:10 . . . Obviously, I'm not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 . . . Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You are doing this already, and we encourage you to do so more and more.

Proverbs 21:3 . . . The Lord is more pleased when we do what is just and right than when we give him sacrifices.

Appropriate behavior not only pleases God, but has pleasing God as its aim.

1 Corinthians 10:23 . . . You say, "I am allowed to do anything"-but not everything is helpful. You say, "I am allowed to do anything"-but not everything is beneficial.

Titus 3:8 . . . These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to do good deeds all the time. These things are good and beneficial for everyone.

Romans 13:13 . . . We should be decent and true in everything we do, so that everyone can approve of our behavior.

Behavior that is good and beneficial for everyone is appropriate behavior. Behavior that is right and pleasing in God's sight is appropriate behavior.

### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE IN OUR SPEECH?**

Proverbs 20:15 . . . Wise speech is rarer and more valuable than gold and rubies.

1 Samuel 3:19 . . . As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him, and everything Samuel said was wise and helpful.

Proverbs 31:26 . . . When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule when she gives instructions.

Proverbs 16:23 . . . From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive.

Ecclesiastes 12:11 . . . A wise teacher's words spur students to action and emphasize important truths. The collected sayings of the wise are like guidance from a shepherd.

Ecclesiastes 9:17 . . . Even so, the quiet words of a wise person are better than the shouts of a foolish king.

Proverbs 15:23 . . . Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!

Proverbs 10:19 . . . Don't talk too much, for it fosters sin. Be sensible and turn off the flow!

Proverbs 17:27 . . . A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered.

Proverbs 11:9 . . . Evil words destroy one's friends; wise discernment rescues the godly.

Proverbs 12:18 . . . Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.

1 Peter 3:9 . . . Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate when people say unkind things about you.

Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it.

Appropriate speech is rich in quality, scarce in quantity, and timely in delivery. By choosing appropriate words, even in response to the inappropriate words of another, we can save friendships, bring healing, and give and receive a blessing.

### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS?**

Mark 12:29-31 . . . Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

All of our relationships should be governed by our love for God and our love for one another.

1 Corinthians 10:24 . . . Don't think only of your own good. Think of other Christians and what is best for them.

1 Corinthians 10:33 . . . That is the plan I follow, too. I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what I like or what is best for me, but what is best for them so they may be saved.

We should unselfishly and regularly think of others-both Christians and non-Christians.

Psalms 106:3 . . . Happy are those who deal justly with others and always do what is right.

3 John 1:6 . . . They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. You do well to send them on their way in a manner that pleases God.

2 Corinthians 7:15 . . . Now he cares for you more than ever when he remembers the way you listened to him and welcomed him with such respect and deep concern.

We should deal justly with one another. Our relationships should be full of loving deeds, respect and deep concern for each other. Watch what happens when you give loving service to others.

Ephesians 5:33 . . . Again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Our marriage relationships should reflect love and respect. Reinforce your loving words with loving respect and honor.

1 Corinthians 6:20 . . . God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Romans 6:12 . . . Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.

We bring honor to God with appropriate physical relationships, as outlined in God's Word.

**PROMISES FROM GOD:**

Proverbs 2:9-10 . . . Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will know how to find the right course of action every time. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.

Isaiah 48:17 . . . The Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says: I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is good and leads you along the paths you should follow.

Psalm 25:8 . . . The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray.

Colossians 1:10 . . . Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better.

Ecclesiastes 8:5 . . . Those who obey him will not be punished. Those who are wise will find a time and a way to do what is right.

Colossians 3:17 . . . Whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus