

1 John 2:15-17

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.

THE DANGER OF TOXIC INFLUENCES:

Like a muddied spring, or a polluted well, is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.
Proverbs 25:26

So, three things that we are going to remember when it comes to potentially toxic influences.

1.) a little bit of poison goes a long way.

6Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? 7Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 NLT

2.) just because everyone does it doesn't make it right.

"Right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it."—Augustine of Hippo

Daniel in Daniel 1 is a great example of this.

5The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

6Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. 7The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names:

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishael was called Meshach.

Azariah was called Abednego.

8 But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.

Right is always what God says is right.

Do not become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. That's pretty strong. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:2 MSG

3.) Just because I could, doesn't mean I should.

1 Corinthians 6:12

You say, "[am allowed to do anything]"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "[am allowed to do anything]," I must not become a slave to anything. NLT

Just because something is technically legal doesn't mean that it's spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my whims. The Message

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24 — "You say, "[am allowed to do anything]"—but not everything is good for you. You say, "[am allowed to do anything]"—but not everything is beneficial. Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. NLT

I want to do is encourage everyone follower of Jesus to learn to be led by the Spirit of God.

"DISCERNMENT IS NOT KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG. IT IS KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND ALMOST RIGHT." — CHARLES SPURGEON

Here are four questions to help us discern if something is right.

1. IS IT PLEASING TO GOD?

2. DOES IT BRING ME UNDER ITS POWER?

Romans 6:12-14

12 Do not let sin control the way you live; Do not let sin reign in your body, which is subject to death. do not give in to sinful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. 14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

3. DOES IT CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE?

Romans 14:20-21 Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble.

4. DOES IT HELP ME BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS?

Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." NLT

LIFE APPLICATION:

- 1. What are some of the toxic influences you currently have in your life? How have you seen these influences pollute your life?**
- 2. Why is it so difficult to filter out toxic influences in today's society?**
- 3. How have you seen toxic influences in your life impact your relationship with God and others?**
- 4. What standards are you using to filter out toxic influences in your life? How well do think your standards match God's?**

PRAY

- 1. Confess to God the toxic influences that are impacting your life. Ask God to help you remove these influences.**

- 2. Pray and ask God to help you filter out any toxic influences you may encounter in the future.**
- 3. Ask God to uncover toxic influences in your life that you aren't able to see in yourself.**
- 4. Pray for those you know who are struggling with toxic influences in their lives. Ask God to deliver them.**