



Sunday Sep 08, 2013
Answers To Common Questions (Part 2)
Ps Ashish Raichur

In June we invited people to send in their questions, with the intent that we will answer them during our Sunday services.

We have broadly categorized the questions we will be covering into five main areas: Christian walk, Marriage, Lifestyle, Theology, Church.

Last week we covered Christian walk, and Marriage.
This Sunday (Sep 08) we will cover Lifestyle,
And then on Sunday Sep 22, We will cover Theology, and Church.

We will attempt to be brief but clear, direct and Scriptural.

On topics where the Scriptures are silent, our approach is to address the matter (A)in the light of what the Scriptures speak on related or similar issues, (B)in the light of the nature of God and (C)with practical wisdom.

In cases where we are sharing our personal opinion, we will indicate that we are doing so, and you are free to hold to your own personal opinion on the matter.

Lifestyle

1, Movies, TV : Are tv serials bad for us. Is it wrong to watch them everyday. One of the programs i watch promotes bad lifestyles against Gods will then again almost every new movie that comes out has something or the other bad in them. Do we stay away from them in that case we would have to stop watching tv.

Movies, TV in themselves are not bad, evil or sinful. It is the content - what is communicated - that determines what is bad, evil and sinful. If we feed our mind with what is ungodly, it is likely we will begin to think and act in line with that.

Another important factor is time that is spent watching movies and television. If time is wasted, which otherwise could have been spent in other things, then once again, we will have to trim this down.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Throw out anything tainted with evil. [MESSAGE]

Psalm 1:1,2



1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Here are some guidelines:

We should avoid movies/shows that are morally indecent, or promote values and lifestyles that are ungodly. So if you know something is of this nature, then avoid watching it. Sometimes, a movie/TV show or even a commercial advertisement may have something indecent in it - at which time you take your eyes away or turn your TV off, or block that out mentally.

On the other hand, we know that movies and TV is a vehicle that we can use to communicate the message of Jesus Christ and we must use it.

2, Parties - Is it alright to go for parties? What about Halloween and similar parties? What if a party we have to attend is held in a pub?

"Parties" in their basic sense is simply a group of people getting together to socialize, talk, interact, spend time together and could have other activities/purposes - e.g. recreation, celebration, etc.

There are the general parties that happen - birthdays, family dinners, etc. which we know are harmless.

However, I suppose you are referring to the "wild" kind of parties - where there is drinking, dancing...and a lot of indecent activities that go on.

While there is no one straight answer, as believers we should consider the following to help determine whether we ought to be at a certain party:

- 1, Does God want me there? Would God be pleased in me being there?
- 2, Would I be able to impact somebody by being there? Would I be able to glorify God and serve God's purposes by being there?
- 3, Does it enrich me as a person - or will me being there unnecessarily expose me to impure things that i will have to take time to get rid off mentally, emotionally, etc.
- 4, Will this be a good testimony to younger believers who look up to me and to non-believers who I am sharing/will be sharing Jesus with?
- 5, Why do I want to/need to be there? Is it just to "fit in" with the crowd, give myself a little bit of "sensual" time, etc?
- 6, What's the purpose of the party? - If your company/organization is celebrating a "success" with its employees and are hosting it in some place where liquor is being served - i think, because you are part of that organization, it is good to be there, without



drinking alcohol. On the other hand, a "Halloween party" for example, is a celebration of death and demons, a festival of the dead - this is something we as believers should **not** be involved in!

3, Drinking - Is it alright to drink wine? Is social drinking ok? If you say 'no alcohol' then what about using perfume?

The Bible is clear about the sin of drunkenness [Proverbs 20:1, Proverbs 23:20-21,29-35, Galatians 5:19-21,] and the long term effect of alcohol consumption is detrimental to one's health.

While there are people (even believes and pastors) who may argue in favor of "drinking a little", "social drinking", "occasional drinking", and may even use Scripture for this, etc...our decision is to stay completely away from consumption of all forms of alcohol. Our basic reasoning is that

(A)we don't really need it (1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23) and

(B)if we tolerate this even a little, then there may be potential situations where what we tolerate will eventually dominate. (Proverbs 31:3-5)

Using perfume or deodorants are basically to help you (and others) with hygiene and will not result in drunkenness or addictive behaviors. So we are safe in using these.

4, Is it alright to wear jewellery, makeup?

5, Clothes - What does it mean for women dress modestly (1 Timothy 2:9,10)

We will answer these two questions together.

1 Timothy 2:8-10

8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;
9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,
10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

1 Peter 3:3-5

3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—
4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.
5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,
6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.



The women being referred to is Sarah Abraham's wife and the women in their day. Sarah was beautiful to look at (Genesis 12:11)
We can infer that she didn't have her face covered all the time or dress shabbily. She wore a lot of ornaments (Genesis 24:22,53 nose ring, bracelets, jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, etc.)

So God's desire for us is that we put our focus on developing inner beauty, a gentle and quiet spirit, doing good works, walking in honor, etc.

For what we wear God's desire for us is that we be "modest and sober" and that which demonstrates that we are walking in the fear of God or in honor of God ("women professing godliness"). It is not that women are to refrain entirely from adorning themselves - as the very examples referred to in the Old Testament actually did wear jewellery and fine apparel, etc. but the emphasis is

(A) Our focus must be on the inner person and

(B) Our focus must be on demonstrating godliness through the way we dress and what we wear.

6, Tattoos - Is it alright to have tattoos?

There are quite a few references in the Old Testament where God speaks of not cutting, making marks or tattoos.

Leviticus 19:28 You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD.

[See the entire passage Leviticus 19:24-37]

[See also Deuteronomy 14:1, Jeremiah 16:6, Jeremiah 41:5]

God prohibited the unnatural disfigurement of the body : cutting, marking, tattooing. Some of these were done by the neighboring tribes as a sign of mourning for the dead or in worship of their gods. The underlying reason for refraining from doing such deeds was that God did not want His people to be engaged in a similar kind of expression of mourning for the dead or worship of false gods. However, keep in mind that people did wear earrings and noserings, which likely had their body pierced to hold these in place. Also the practice of circumcision involved the cutting away of skin (marking their body) but was done in reverence toward God.



The New Testament is silent on this.

The following is our reasoning and approach to this. You are welcome to differ.

If we declare all forms of tattooing as sin, then we must also refrain from anything else that marks our body, e.g. makeup, etc. AND more importantly we must also enforce all other requirements of the Old Testament Law which would include dietary restrictions, ceremonial practices, cultural practices including things like

- "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 22:5)
- "They (the priests) shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat." (Ezekiel 44:18)
- The Priests "They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh." (Leviticus 21:5)
- A priest cannot marry "A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot—these he shall not marry;" (Lev 21:13)

So we believe that the heart and mind of God for us in the New Testament would be:

A, We do not judge anyone who has a tattoo as being disliked by God,

B, We do not judge a believer who gets a tattoo done, for example of a cross, or a Bible or something he feels about, (although we feel it is unnecessary)

C, We ourselves do not do it (that is tattooing) or encourage others in it - since we do not see any value on it.

D, We would be concerned about any medical side-effects on having certain kinds of tattooing done - for which please consult a physician.

7, Finances & Material Possessions - Is it ok to want to have a bigger car (a BMW, Audi, etc.) a bigger house, etc.

8, Profession - Is it alright to desire to be successful, to make it to the top and become rich?

We will answer these together.

Material success and prosperity is no indication of one's spirituality. The Bible does say that there are those who are poor in this world but rich in faith (James 2:5).

As the Lord prospers you and you would like to have a bigger car, house, etc. desire to move to higher levels on the corporate ladder, etc. that is something between you and the Lord. We believe, what is important is the purity of heart and purity of motives.



As long as we are loving God above everything, loving people as God loves them (Mark 12:30,31), keeping our heart free from covetousness and the love of money (Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 6:10,11) and giving generously into God's Kingdom - then you are free to do these things because God does give us all things richly to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17,18).

9, Profession - Can a Christian be involved in industries such as Entertainment, Fashion design, modeling, etc?

God has called us to be salt and light in this world (Matthew 5:13,14). We are called to be in the world without be of (or part of) it (John 17:16,18). While industries such as Entertainment, Fashion design, modeling, do have practices that are ungodly and indecent, there are roles that we as believers can have in these industries where, without compromising on standards of purity and godliness, we can make a difference. We believe it is important that God's people find and take their place in such industries to be salt and light where it is needed most.

10, Profession - as believers can we pursue vocations like Forex trade, stock trading etc. I believe these are based on pure speculation and seems to me more of gambling than anything else?

Any form of business activity that provides a useful service to customers, that is legal, ethical and does not exploit people is acceptable.

In Forex and Stock trading, there is a fair amount of research and analysis of markets and trends that is involved in decision making. I realize forecasting does involve some amount of speculation - but that aside a good trader bases his decisions on thorough research and analysis of global markets, recent trends, historical events, government policies and decisions, etc. Hence an average person will not have time to do this part of the work. Thus the one providing service in Forex and stock trading, as many wealth management companies do - when done legally, ethically and for the benefit of customers - is an acceptable form of business/professional service.

11, Abortion - is it wrong? What about situations such as 1) Young unmarried, 2) Too early in the marriage, 3) After 2 kids and get pregnant by accident

Abortion is wrong because it is the taking away of an innocent life, though still unborn. In all cases above (1), (2) and (3) it would be wrong to abort the child.



However, we do not condemn or judge anyone who has given in to the pressure of the situation and has had an abortion. We encourage them to receive God's mercy and forgiveness.

There are more difficult situations that are medically life-threatening, or other complications, where physicians would recommend an abortion. In situations like these, as believers we have to listen to God and follow God's leading on what He wants us to do. God may lead us to accept the medical advice and go with what the physicians recommend. Alternatively, God may lead you to have faith and trust Him, against medical advice. There is no standard answer here and we will not enforce our ideas - but what is important is for us to listen to God, be at peace in following His leading.

Similarly in the case a rape, when a woman has been sexually violated resulting in pregnancy - we will let the woman decide on what to do and will not enforce our ideas. Regardless of her decision, whether to terminate her pregnancy or to have the baby, we believe there is God's abundant grace and mercy to make her whole inspite of the evil that has been done.

12, Exercising - Is exercising wrong when it goes beyond the need for health say someone is working towards getting a six pack is a person obsessed, does exercising become an idol in one's life. Where do you draw the line in a way that nothing becomes an idol in one's life.

As we mentioned last time, anything that takes God's place in our lives is an idol. So the moment exercise or the feeling of having a great physique becomes 'god' in our lives, we are off track. However, if our heart is wholly devoted to God - then whether someone want to exercise just to stay fit, or someone wants to push it further for great abs, etc. it is entirely up to that individual, and is not sin.

1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

13, Faith and Culture - since we do not worship idols or eat anything offered to idols, should I never attend any non-Christian religious function even the ones where i don't have to participate .

No - we don't need to completely dissociate from people and culture or cultural activities. So if there is a valid reason for me to be at a non-Christian religious function, e.g. a friends wedding, then, for my friend's sake, i'd be there, without ofcourse participating in the religious function itself.



14, Friends - I mostly have college guys in my team who use a lot of unhealthy language, which I know they do not literally mean it when they talk and they definitely do not converse the same way with me as I have made it clear with them. But it gets very difficult sitting in the same place surrounded by so many who cannot finish a sentence without using such words and it keeps ringing in my ears. I cannot even put up headphones to avoid it. How do I go about this as it really annoys me & it so happened one day when I was frustrated about something, this word comes in my thoughts.. Even though I did not speak it out I know that's not right.

This definitely is not the best of environments to be in. Ideally it would be great if you can position yourself in a different environment, but that may not always be possible. So you would have to look for ways to fill your mind with the things of God so that the negatives you hear for many hours each day can be "cleansed away".

- Try to tune out conversation that goes on around you, that you don't really have to be a part of. You could do this for instance, by softly humming a song of worship to God while you are doing your work.
- Each day before and after you are in such an environment - speak cleansing over your mind, rejecting words and ideas that you heard that were unclean and indecent.
- Spend more time filling your mind with God's Word and Presence (listen to His Word, listen to worship music).

15, Dating - What is APC's position on Dating? Is Dating Biblical?

The word "dating" can mean different things to different people - right from just going out for a meal together to some more serious things. "Dating" is not in the Bible, and hence we see it more of a cultural and personal practice. "Dating" is a big topic for Teens N Twenties and we would need to deal with it at length to do justice. However, to put it briefly, while APC does not prohibit dating, we encourage young people to

(A) focus on more important matters as their own spiritual, emotional, intellectual and professional development

(B) be friends with everybody - until you really know you are ready for marriage

(C) At the right time, when you are ready for marriage, when you do find someone that you are serious about, then "date" as a way to get to know the person, and then if things are positive and look like they will lead into a marriage - get the consent of your parents.

16, Horoscopes - is it right for me as a believer to read horoscopes online or in newspapers?



17, Superstitions - Vaastu. I am in the real estate and construction business. Should I also pay attention to Vaastu - the direction of the main entrance of the house so that the right energies come in?

We will answer these two together.

Jeremiah 10:2-3

2 Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

3 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.

As believers we stay away from these and do not pay it any attention. Our times are in His hands (Psalm 31:15) and He orders our steps (Psalm 37:23). Colossians 2:18-23 Paul warns us against being subject to superstitions of men.