



Wise Thinking in Foolish World – Part Two

Text: Proverbs 3:1-12; Hebrews 12:5-6

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1. Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you didn't know what to do? Have you ever had a hard time deciding what you should do or what path you should take? What is your process for making wise decisions?
2. Watch Postscript and read Study Deeper. What did you learn from the decision making grid that you can put into practice? How does that differ from the way you usually make decisions?
3. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to trust in the Lord with ALL our heart and to submit to him in ALL our ways. Read Matthew 22:36-38 and Luke 9:23.
 - a. What does Jesus teach us that God wants from us?
 - b. What is an area that you have been struggling to trust him with and to submit to him in?
 - c. What does the Bible teach about that subject?
 - d. What would it look like to surrender that area of your life to the Lord?
 - e. How can your community come around you to support you?
4. Read Proverbs 3:1-2, 11-12.
 - a. Though in our flesh, we often have an aversion to rules, restrictions, and discipline, what do these verses teach us about why the Lord gives us rules to live by and even disciplines us?
 - b. Share with the group a time in your life when you learned this lesson, perhaps the hard way that rules and restrictions placed over you were for your good?
5. Proverbs also shows us how our lives are impacted when we don't listen to God's Word. There are at least 21 of these in Proverbs 1-15. Use the chart below to write down some examples that you find and share what you learned with the group.

Passage Reference	What Happens When We Disregard God's Word
Prov 1:15	Action: If you don't honor the Lord,
	Consequence: you will never be knowledgeable and discerning
	Action:
	Consequence:
	Action:
	Consequence:
	Action:
	Consequence:

Challenge: Who are the "wise counselors" in your life right now? Who could you approach to develop this sort of relationship with?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for pursuing me with Your love and for sending Your Holy Spirit to give me counsel and to help me come to the knowledge of all truth. You are steadfast in Your love and You are faithful. Give me ears to hear what You have to say. I commit to lay down my pride and seek help from other wise counsellors. Lead me to those whose seek their wisdom from you and your Word. Help me to listen and receive from them particularly when their words challenge my defects of character. Bring people into my life willing to speak truth to me. Keep me honest. Give me the grace and understanding to hear and trust the counsel of others. Help me walk in the light of Your presence trusting not my own understanding but in all things trusting You. Amen.

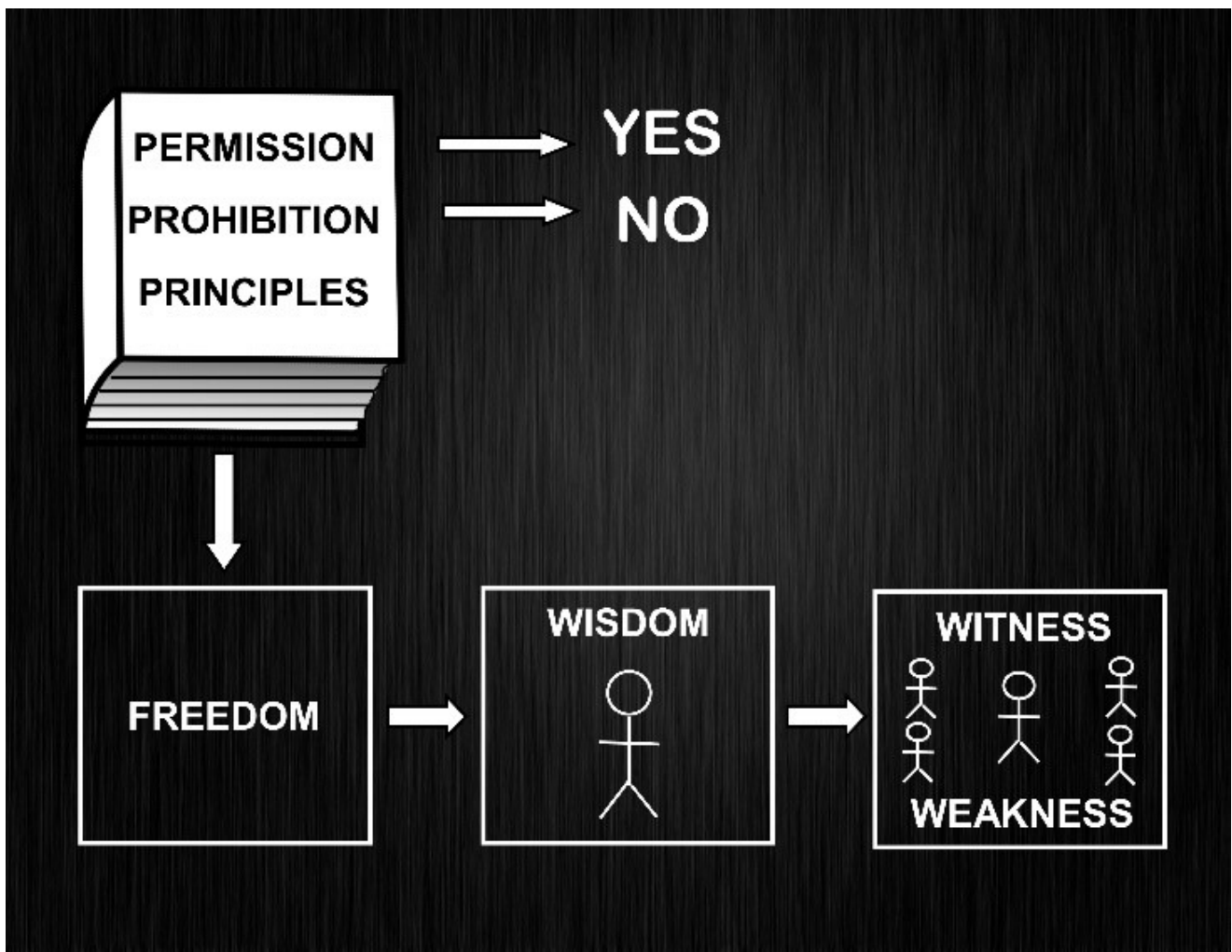
STUDY DEEPER

Is it ok for a Christian to...

Ever googled "Is it okay for a Christian to..." and then filled in the blank with everything from watching *Game of Thrones* to cremation, attending a gay wedding to getting a tattoo, practicing yoga to drinking wine?

You're not alone. But don't get the answer off the internet. There's a better way.

I sketched the following out on a whiteboard at the start of our most recent weekend series, and one of my faithful staffers polished it up a bit for better consumption. I used it as a schematic of sorts on how to walk through things that present themselves to us in our modern day. Let me take you through it, and see what you think.



Finding out whether something is "okay" begins with the top left box, which reflects going to the Bible to see what it has to say. If you want to know whether something is okay for a Christian, then you need to start with the authoritative guide for Christ-following. When you do, you'll find that the Bible gives you one or more of three answers: permission, prohibition or principles.

If blanket permission is granted, your investigation is complete. You are free to partake or pursue. If there is a direct prohibition, then you are not.

But most of the time, particularly in regard to many of the issues puzzling Christians in our culture, there is neither a blanket permission or prohibition. More often than not, it's thrown into the "freedom" box of life.

But it's not cut-loose freedom; it's freedom within the confines of a set of biblical principles. These principles form the boundary lines for freedom in Christ.

So is that the end of it? You simply pursue the freedom you've been given in light of the principles of the Bible?

No.

There is another box, perhaps best labeled "wisdom." While you and I may have joint freedom in Christ on a particular issue, it might be foolish for *me* to exercise it, but not for *you*. We all have backgrounds and dispositions, histories and inclinations, strengths and weaknesses.

Less sophisticated is just common-sense wisdom. Just because you're free to do something doesn't mean it's smart.

(You may be free to get that tattoo, but having "I love Samantha" inked on your arm at 16 may not be smart when you might start dating Sarah at 17, or want to marry Sharon at 23.)

Finally, there is the consideration of living out our lives before a watching world. In this regard, the apostle Paul gives two primary guidelines: first, do not do anything that would lead the world to believe you have disavowed Christ and worship another god; and second, do not exercise your freedom in a manner that would lead a fellow believer in close proximity into sin themselves. Let's call these ideas "witness" and "weakness."

This is the gauntlet you run the questions of life through.

Sounds simple enough, but knowing how to do so is one of the principle lessons of discipleship, and few invest the time and energy needed to engage its dynamics.

As mentioned, at [Meck](#) we just completed an eight-week journey through this very exercise. Here were the eight topics we explored:

Is it okay for a Christian to...

- ...watch *Game of Thrones*? (or anything rated "R")
- ...drink wine or smoke marijuana?
- ...gamble?
- ...practice yoga?
- ...participate in, or even go to, a gay wedding?
- ...vote for _____? (many ways to fill in this blank)
- ...get a tattoo, be cremated or have cosmetic surgery?
- ...*not* go to church?

If you're interested in the series, you can get it [here](#). It has already proven to be one of the most popular series in the history of our church through various metrics we track.

Why?

People want to know what's "okay."

They just don't know how to find out.

James Emery White

<http://churchandculture.org/Blog.asp?ID=10462>