



## *The Right Thing*

Why should we be concerned about doing what is right? How do we determine what the right thing is to begin with? I believe that we have a sense of what is morally right and fair as we observe events in the lives of others. Public figures for instance are exposed from time to time having extramarital affairs and covering them up. Almost universally there is a recognition that this type of activity is not right and careers have ended due to indiscretions made public. When tragedy strikes we have a need to determine what caused the calamity with the intent to hold someone responsible. Last week, outside Chicago, a train carrying a number of cars filled with ethanol, derailed and exploded causing evacuations and the deaths of several who were near the crossing at the time of the crash. Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the crash. Why? To determine if someone failed to do the right thing. So what is the “right thing”? We can define doing the right thing as that which does no damage to ourselves or others. We can add to that a need to meet responsibilities and obligations when entrusted with a task that could impact others lives. Paul alludes to first characteristic in his discussion of love or charity in his letter to the Corinthians (**1 Cor 13.4**). But, is that enough? Is it possible to think we are doing the right thing and not really comprehend what the right thing is, even though we might not be doing anything that hurts others? The answer to that is yes, it is possible. There are many people that think that speeding on the highways is all right as long as you don’t go too fast. How fast is too fast? There are companies that assist with this activity by manufacturing devices that aid in alluding detection and fines. Is that the right thing? Peter tells us, “**Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.**” (**1 Pet 2.13-14**). Discussing the Christians relationship to secular rulers and their civil power, Paul states “**Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.**” (**Rom 13.5**). The speed of some

results in accidents. Accidents result in raised insurance rates and health problems which also affects the healthcare system. While one may never have an accident there are many others who will and the cumulative effect of these is that everyone pays. An innocent “everybody else is doing it” attitude results in problems for everyone. One can dismiss this however since the effects are not directly felt and can thus be put out of mind. Other activities are engaged in in much the same way and since the overall effects are not experienced directly individuals who have a limited sense of the right thing continue to cause problems. The current economic crises are good examples of the institutionalization of greed and the massive effects it has at some point. To define how one does the right thing, we must add a temporal dimension. We must realize that the activities we engage in today must not only cause no harm to ourselves or others, but must also prevent problems from arising in the future for others who will come after us. When we consider all these aspects we realize that the only way to know what the right thing is, is to read the word of God and learn what the Lord defines as right and wrong. The scriptures are interesting in that they reveal that God worked through the ages to prepare a way for Christ. He then sent his son into the world to die for all of us and to leave a way of escape for all who will listen and obey. God defines doing the right thing as those things that are always good and are done when no one else is looking. Too many folks think their innocent indulgences are harmless as long as no one else is aware or is not affected by their activities. Some think this way refusing to acknowledge the chaos they introduce into the lives of others around them. God defines what is right and wrong. A realization that we are under the eye of the Lord twenty-four hours a day will impress upon us that every thing we say and do is important and has consequences, whether they are good or bad. So, what is the right thing? If we please God we can have the assurance that our actions are justified and we will strive to do good to all around us, put the interests of others before our own and above all be faithful to God always.

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