

# Decision Making—Flawed Principles

**Introduction:** Every day of our lives, we make decisions. Those decisions affect our lives in the here and now but also our eternal destiny. Upon what basis do we make those decisions? Each person has a set of moral standards upon which he makes those decisions. Those moral standards might change depending on the situation or we might even apply more than one standard in the making of a decision. Let us consider some of the flawed or faulty standards of making those decisions.

## I. IS IT FUN: WILL IT GIVE ME PLEASURE

### A. This rule is as old as man.

1. It is what Eve based her decision upon; Gen. 3:6 “<sup>6</sup> And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”
2. It was the philosophy of the Israelites leading to repeated times of oppression:
  - a. Jud. 17:6 “<sup>6</sup> In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.”
  - b. Jud. 21:25 “<sup>25</sup> In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.”

### B. Epicurus

1. Acts 17:18 “<sup>18</sup> Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.”
2. He was a Greek philosopher who lived 341 – 270 BC.
3. His philosophy held that whatever is pleasurable is morally good and whatever is painful is morally evil.

### C. Many modern versions of this exists.

1. Paul Kurtz wrote:
  - a. “Secularists wished to realize happiness here and now rather than focus on alleged divine rewards in the afterlife.”
  - b. “As secular humanists we believe in the central importance of the value of human happiness here and now.”
2. Humanist Manifesto
  - a. Denies any God or afterlife.
  - b. Thus, this life is all there is.

### D. The is-it-fun rule of life ends in eternal sorrow.

1. Phi. 3:19 “<sup>19</sup> Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.”
2. Gal. 5:19-21 “<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
3. Rev. 14:10-11 “<sup>10</sup> The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

## II. IS IT PROFITABLE, OR WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME

### A. This could involve money, but often includes many other things.

1. Pride
2. Prestige
3. Popularity
4. Power

### B. It is basic covetousness.

1. Covetousness is idolatry.
  - a. Eph. 4:5 “<sup>5</sup> For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”
  - b. Col. 3:5 “<sup>5</sup> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”
2. 1 Tim. 6:9-10 “<sup>9</sup> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
3. Many live by this principle:
  - a. Seems like all our elected officials and political appointees.
  - b. Many of the immoral are simply out for the money (what’s in it for me): drug dealers, pimps, sellers of alcohol, etc.
  - c. Televangelists and fake-healers and gibberish speaking.

## III. IS IT LAWFUL

### A. We are to obey the laws of the land.

1. Rom. 13:1-6 “<sup>1</sup> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. <sup>2</sup> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: <sup>4</sup> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. <sup>5</sup> Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. <sup>6</sup> For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.”
2. 1 Pet. 2:17 “<sup>17</sup> Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”

### B. We must obey God rather than men.

1. Acts 5:29 “<sup>29</sup> Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”
2. Moral decisions based solely upon the law is dangerous.
  - a. What the law determines is often contrary to God’s laws.
  - b. Abortion
  - c. Alcoholism
  - d. Prostitution
  - e. Homosexuality
  - f. Gambling; Lottery
  - g. Divorce and no-fault divorce.

**Conclusion:** These that we have considered are all subjective standards and so will change with the person and the time. They are contradictory and will never lead to true joy nor give purpose to life. The only true standard that is objective in its nature is the Bible—God’s Word.