TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#647 Soldiers of Christ Arise
#469 Faith Is the Victory

Scripture Reading by: Brooks McKelroy
#470 Victory in Jesus
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
Sermon: The God of the Living
Mark 12:18-27

#904 Have You Been to Jesus?
#634 We'll Work Till Jesus Comes

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor	Phillip Strickhausen	
Robert Ward		

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

May 23, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

What Do I Do?

A few weeks ago, we began a new adult class on Wednesday evenings where we are studying Christian ethics; more specifically, we are thinking through how we make decisions when we are faced with difficult moral dilemmas. This should be practical for all of us, not only as we grapple with controversial ethical issues that our contemporary culture is struggling with, but also just on a day-to-day basis as we all strive to choose to do God's will.

This past week, we worked through a model to help guide us in navigating those tough matters. Since not everyone is in that class, but everyone of us has to face this same problem, I thought it would be beneficial to share it here. This model is not my creation; it is adapted from Scott B. Rae and his book *Introducing Christian Ethics* and as he explains in some other texts he has published.

What makes our decisions so tough is often, Scripture does not address an issue directly; in fact, sometimes it might not address a specific issue at all. So we have to consider Biblical virtues and principles—the foundation of Christian ethics—on a general level, and then endeavor to apply them to our specific situation. This can be complicated further by that fact that certain virtues and principles might conflict in a given situation, and we will have to weigh one side against the other.

This is what we call an ethical dilemma: a conflict between two or more principle or virtue driven interests. What that means in a nutshell is that there's more at stake here than just one choice versus another—there are dilemmas we face that are not ethical ones—but that each of those choices has genuine principles and/or virtues underlying their interest. When this happens, what do we do? Here's some guidelines:

1. Gather the facts. This is for clarifying two main things: 1) what do we know? and 2) what do we need to know? In analyzing a situation, we need to know all of the available facts to make a wise decision. Sometimes it might not be possible to know them all at the time because the necessity to make a choice is thrust upon us; even then, it's helpful to gather them later to help us evaluate whether our decision was a good one. But in most cases, there will be time for us to ask questions and clarify information.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Oscar Cantu is taking chemo treatments

Karen Hale is recovering from back surgery.

Ronnie Riggs will be having surgery soon**.**

Sammie Minchew fell and hit her head and has a small skull fracture around her sinuses.

Lynn Taylor, Don Taylor's sister in law, had surgery last week at MD Anderson.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, J. C. Whitfield

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Larry Hicks, Catherine Parker

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, May 24th at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 30th will be Senior Sunday. We have 6 graduating seniors. Brooks McKelroy, Tristan Strickhausen, Aly Wingfield, Eric Caballero, Isabella Leal and Khoa Tran. We will have a congregational meal after service. If you will be staying for the meal, please let the office know. We need an estimate on how many we will have.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, June 1st at 8:00 a.m.

VBS is tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 19-Thursday, July 22nd. For more information, see Abbey Perkins.

We will resume Sunday evening service on Sunday, June 6th. The new time for evening service will be 5:00 p.m.

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2. Identify the ethical issue(s). Remember what we said above, that moral principles and/or virtues must support competing interests to have a genuine ethical dilemma. So the point here is not to identify the two (or more) choices that you might make; just because there are alternative courses of action doesn't mean you face an ethical dilemma. It's the principles and virtues that are at stake that count, so it's critical that we identify them.

3. What additional principles and/or virtues are relevant? Usually, after identifying the values at the core of the conflict, there will be others that have a bearing on the case. We need to get them into the discussion to help weigh the respective interests.

4. List the alternatives. Given the conflict, what alternatives are available to resolve it? We can probably rule some things out pretty easily; but in general, the more possible solutions we can come up with, the better the chance that we choose a good one.

5. Compare those alternatives with the principles and/or virtues identified. The point here is to eliminate some of those potential alternatives based on the values we have already acknowledged as being at stake. In an ideal world, one possible solution is found that satisfies all of the competing principles/virtues; more likely, this just helps us to eliminate some possible alternatives. Usually at this point we realize we have to make a choice, weighing one or more values more heavily than the others. We need to have a good reason for doing that rather than just trusting our gut. And if we don't yet have a clear decision, we must…

6. Consider the consequences. These aren't the primary basis of our decision making compared to principles and virtues, but they shouldn't be ignored. Examining them will help us to weigh those competing values. We should consider both the positive and negative consequences, how likely they are, and how beneficial or severe they are—some will be more substantial than others.

7. Decide. At some point, we have to stop the deliberation process and actually make a choice. This will not always be easy or painless; we can make a good decision and still not sleep well precisely because dilemmas are difficult by definition.

This isn't intended to be like a computer program where we input all the data and the right, easy answer automatically spits out. As we saw in our hypothetical Wednesday evening that basically evenly divided the class—and if you were not there, I would encourage you to watch the recording on YouTube—we can all go through this process and come down on opposite sides of a decision for good reason. But the hope is this will help us to be more intentional—more Biblical—in making our decisions in life when we face ethical dilemmas. I'd encourage you to try to think through this model, and, if this sounds useful to you, to come join us next Wednesday night!

Bryant Perkins