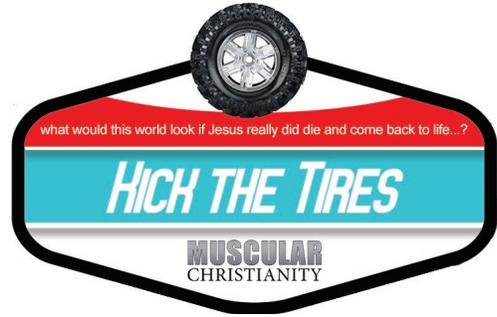


I) Intro

There are three sides to the topics we're dealing with in our society today. There's what's _____, there's what's _____ and then there's what's _____

**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit,
but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,
because many false prophets have gone out
into the world. (1 Jn 4:1)**



You have to "kick the tires."

II) What Does it Mean to be Wise?

**The fear of the _____ is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
(Prov 9:10)**

By framing your thoughts according to what's specified in God's Word along with the Guidance that He promises (Ps 143:12), you're now on track to do the right _____ at the right _____ in the right _____ for all the right reasons (Matt 5:48).

III) Ask the Right Questions

A) When Contending with the Enemy (Mk 11:27-33)

The fact that the Pharisees were willing to validate John as a prophet despite his non-existent resume (Jn 1:19) but not Jesus demonstrates that weren't looking to _____ Him as much as they were trying to _____ Him.

C.S. Lewis reinforces this by saying that "The most dangerous ideas in a society are not the ones being argued, but the ones that are _____."

Consider the following:

Does the Bible endorse slavery?	What was the punishment in the Old Testament for kidnapping?
	How could Abolitionists base their argument against the slave trade on the Bible if Scripture supported it?
Don't I have the right to choose?	Does your baby have the right to live?
Is the Bible reliable?	Is the integrity of the Bible dependent on the accuracy of man or the Ability of God?
Why does God allow suffering?	Why did Jesus have to die?

B) When Contending with Yourself

Satan is described in Scripture as both a snake and a lion. Put those two illustrations together and you have something that is as _____ as it is _____. He's not posing as a home run hitter. Rather, he's just trying to get on _____.

1) Politics, Race and COVID-19

In the absence of wisdom...

- Unity becomes _____
- Love becomes Neglect
- Peace becomes Indifference
- ...and however you want to be perceived as compassionate, in the absence of wisdom you become an _____

Ask the right _____. Test the spirits. Kick the _____.

i) Politics

God calls King Cyrus, "my shepherd" in Isaiah 44. But in the very next chapter...

For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. ⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not _____ me...(Is 45:28)

...another question which better accommodates the whole of Scripture as opposed to those passages that restrict God's usage of individuals to those that honor would be, "Would you have _____ for King Cyrus?"

ii) Black Lives Matter

God evaluates individuals according to their _____ and not their uniform or their ethnicity (Dt 24:16; Ez 18:20; 1 Cor 3:13). To project the character flaws of a select few on to an entire institution or people group is the very definition of Racism, yet this is the approach represented whenever you hear the term, "Police Brutality" or "White Supremacy." From that standpoint, those who use those terms are the very thing they claim to despise and theirs is an agenda of _____ and Deception rather than Direction.

So, the question isn't "Do black lives matter?" The question is, "Do you evaluate a person according to their _____ or their character?"

iii) COVID-19

The Corona Virus is a very real sickness that can be lethal. Statistically, however, the chances of a person dying from Covid-19 are comparable to dying in an _____ accident.

Volatile issues are sometimes labeled as "divisive" and therefore something to be avoided altogether in order to better foster a Christian sense of unity, peace and compassion (2 Tim 4:3).

In the middle of the spectrum you have Scripture being applied in ways that resonate as "accurate," but because the application consists of the Bible being deployed in a manner that is incomplete, the result falls short of true obedience (2 Tim 2:15).

And then there's the Truth where topics are being processed according to the whole of God's Word and the resulting approach is profoundly positive (Rom 12:1-2).

P.S. To write in another name on the ballot or to abstain from the voting process entirely is to withdraw your support of "King Cyrus" and insist that unless God provides the kind of leader that's consistent with your expectations than God's Activity goes unnoticed and both the wall and the Temple

Proverbs 21:16 says,

Whoever strays from the path of _____ comes to rest in the company of the dead. (Prov 21:16)

To throw caution to the wind is not responsible, but anything taken to the extreme is never wise (Ecc 7:16-18). So the question isn't, "Do we trade the economy for the elderly?" as much as it's, "At what point does 'caution' become destructive?"

IV) Conclusion

Let's review some of the verses that we looked at today:

We just concluded that anything take to the extreme is never wise:

Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself? ¹⁷ Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool—why die before your time? ¹⁸ It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all _____. (Ecc 7:16-18)

In other words, you want to be prudent. In Proverbs 8:12, it says:

I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. (Prov 8:12)

Prudence is a companion of wisdom and wisdom is...

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Prov 9:10)

Whether you're talking about being prudent or avoiding extremes, it all comes down to being wise. And true wisdom is based first and foremost on the Perspective that comes from God.

However obvious a particular issue may be, it's always good to "kick the tires" and test those things that would appear to be givens by asking the right questions. It's in the context of those questions that you're able to discover the assumptions that may be lurking behind those dispositions and it's there where you can ensure that you're not being merely smart...

...but you're being truly wise.

Test the spirits. Ask the right questions. Kick the tires.



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