

Cultural Influences

23. We should be cautious not to allow our pre-Christian, non-biblical _____ to cause us to make decisions that violate God's will (Genesis 16:1-2; 15:2-4; Ephesians 4:17-18; See Principle 10 in Ephesians).

Reflection and Response

What steps can we take as Christians to avoid being influenced by non-biblical values that once were a part of our decision-making process as unbelievers? (See Ephesians 4:20-24.)

Blaming Others

24. We must avoid blaming others for our own _____ (Genesis 16:5; Proverbs 30:21-23; 2 Corinthians 4:2).

Reflection and Response

What are some of the most frequent ways we rationalize our behavior—even as believers—and blame others for our own mistakes?

Growing Spiritually

25. We should use the negative results of personal mistakes as an _____ to grow spiritually (Genesis 16:15-16, 17:1-2; Colossians 1:11-12; See Principle 7 in Ephesians; Ephesians 3:14-16, 3:20-21).

Reflection and Response

How can we balance dependence on God and at the same time, fulfill our human responsibilities?

Improper Subjectivity

26. We must be cautious not to interpret _____ subjectively in order to support what have been personal mistakes (Genesis 17:15-18; Proverbs 3:5-6; See Principle 18 in Hebrews; Hebrews 12:1-2).

Reflection and Response

How can we guard against erroneously interpreting circumstances and even Scripture in order to support our desires that may seem to be right—but in fact, are wrong?

Water Baptism

27. As born-again Christians, we should demonstrate _____ our identification with Christ's death and resurrection through water baptism (Genesis 17:23-27; Romans 4:11; See Principle 7 in Romans; Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:27-29).

Reflection and Response

What often happens when Christians believe that water baptism is an element in God's plan of salvation rather than an illustration of what has already happened when we are saved by grace through faith? (See Ephesians 2:8-10.)

Trusting God

28. In order to help others overcome their skepticism and unbelief, we are to first and foremost trust God to _____ in their lives (Genesis 18:1-2a, 9-15; Hebrews 11:11).

Reflection and Response

When Jesus dealt with Thomas and his doubts, how does this event correlate with the way God dealt with Sarah and her doubts (see John 20:19-28)?

Spiritual Regression

29. Even though we are growing spiritually, we must be careful not to regress to old _____ of sinful behavior (Review Principle 16 in Genesis; Genesis 20:1-3, 9-13; 1 Corinthians 10:11-12; See Principle 21 in 1 Corinthians; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Reflection and Response

What precautions should we take in our Christian lives in order to avoid regressing to old patterns of sinful behavior?

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES

23. Principle 10 in Ephesians—Walking in Newness of Life

Since God chose each one of us to live holy lives, we are to become what He created us to be.

25. Principle 7 in Ephesians—God’s Power

In order to live in God’s will, both as individuals and as communities of faith, we must not only understand God’s power, but we must experience this power.

26. Principle 18 in Hebrews—Our Primary Focus

Though God has ordained that we be encouraged by heroes of faith, we should always focus our thoughts first and foremost on the Lord Jesus Christ.

27. Principle 7 in Romans—“The Father of Us All”

Since we are saved by faith and faith alone, we must clearly understand that “good works” have no part in making us righteous before God.

29. Review Principle 16 in Genesis—Seeking God’s Wisdom

When we face difficult circumstances, we should always seek God’s wisdom so that we’ll continue to walk in His will.

29. Principle 21 in 1 Corinthians—Lessons From Scripture

As we read the biblical story, we are to learn lessons that relate particularly to God’s discipline on His people when they persistently violated His will.