Intro:
- 1 Cor. 9:21 like Paul, we must make decisions regarding cultural behaviors
  - live as those around us, within the boundaries of the law of Christ, for an opportunity to reach them with the gospel

- this lesson: Biblical Guidelines Regarding Cultural Behavior
  - note: have time just to review guidelines, and make only a few applications, mostly for the young folks

What are some decisions we have to make regarding cultural behavior?
- clothing, modesty
  - 1 Tim. 2:9-10 adorn with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly
    - standards of modesty change over time
      - pics: styles 19th century vs. 21st century
      - illus.: 1st supreme court chambers, balcony, short curtain, modesty curtain, so men from lower level looking up wouldn’t see the women’s ankles
      - illus.: modest women in the Lord’s church in USA today would be considered dressed immorally in the 1st century – true of all the women in the assembly today
  - modestly is different from culture to culture in the world today
    - pic: 21st century styles - USA woman vs. Afghanistan woman wearing burka
    - illus.: modest women in the Lord’s church in USA would be considered dressed sinfully in some areas of the world today, and physically punished or killed

- adornment of physical body
  - 1 Pet. 3:2-4 adorned properly, not with braided hair or jewelry or costly garments, but with good works professing godliness (rf - 1 Tim. 2:9-10)
    - the hairstyle and jewelry and cost of clothing is not so important, but the professing of godliness
      - these things must send the right message, and be in harmony with the godly works we do as God’s children

- other decisions
  - piercing
    - Gen. 24:47; Ex. 32:2 OT, God’s children wore nose rings and earrings
    - today, nose rings have a bad connotation in some cultures, and in others they can be either good or bad depending on the details
  - tattooing
    - Lev. 19:28 Israelites commanded not to cut or tattoo their bodies, as the pagans did
    - today, tattooing has disseminated throughout pop culture, and young folks are pressured more than ever to get tattoos
- decisions about our conduct
  - **Heb. 13:18** we are to conduct ourselves honorably in all things *(rf - vs. 15-17)*
  - **games:** change over time
    - *illus.: when Ms. Irene was growing up, and even a young adult,* playing any game with a deck of cards was considered by some people a sin
  - **technology**
    - *illus.: many sinful behaviors have come about because of technology* that Christians must stay away from, *such as sinful video games and internet pornography*

- we must go to God’s word and apply principles to determine appropriate cultural behaviors today
  - **in the culture we live in**
  - **in other cultures,** to teach God’s word to people in other places, and to conduct ourselves properly when visiting them
Guidelines relating to expedients – things that we employ to fulfill general commands – illus.: “go” to the store

- 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24 criteria of expedients – recent adult auditorium class, bulletin

- summary:
  - lawful (in accord with God’s word)
  - helpful (expedient, KJV; profitable, NASB; beneficial, NIV and NRSV)
  - edify (builds up)
  - not our master (not have control over us, not addicted to)
  - good for our neighbor (not self-serving)

- illus. Paul – applying these guidelines regarding cultural behavior
  - 1 Cor 9:19-21 Paul keep Jewish customs when with Jews, and Gentile customs when with Gentiles
  - visa versa would be lawful, but not helpful or edifying or good for his neighbor
  - 1 Cor. 9:22-23 Paul did all things for the sake of the gospel, for an opportunity to save some

- illus.: some things we don’t want to think or say, if we truly live this way
  - I don’t care what they think
    - we do care what they think, so we can reach them with the gospel
  - they shouldn’t care what I do
    - we want them to care about what we do, so they pay attention to us, and our manner of life, because we teach Christ in everything we do
  - it’s my business, and no one else’s
    - we want all our public affairs to be their business, so we can reach them with the word of God
  - I don’t care if that hurts them of not, they should keep their nose out of it
    - we care about everyone, and know that hurting them lessens our influence regarding Christ
  - I don’t care if I’m addicted – it’s my body
    - addiction is a sin, and we care about all addiction

- not only are we concerned about something being lawful but also:
  - helpful, edifying, not our master, good for our neighbor
Additional guidelines as they apply to choosing appropriate cultural behaviors

- 1 Cor. 6:19-20 we glorify God in our bodies
  - Phil. 1:20 we must exalt Christ in our bodies
- 1 Tim. 2:2, 10; 4:7-8 our outward appearance and behavior should profess godliness
  - everything about us should proclaim that we’re Christians
    - illus.: bodily adornment and conduct, not imitate sinners – music, TV stars
    - illus.: #460 The World’s Bible – send a message of salvation, lead others to Christ
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- Rom. 12:17 we do things that are honorable and respectable in the sight of all men
  - 1 Cor. 9:21 always obeying God in everything
  - 1 Cor. 9:19 make ourselves slaves to all, to win some
  - Christians aren’t on the cutting edge of pop culture, because many think it’s dishonorable and disrespectful
    - illus.: Christians in 2010
      - won’t do some things that Christians in 2050 do, because it’s become accepted by public in general, and not just pop culture
    - illus.: young Christians
      - don’t do things they’re parents believe are dishonorable or disrespectful
    - illus.: tattooing
      - not honorable and respectable in the sight of all men

- Rom. 6:12; 1 Jn. 2:16 we don’t engage in lustful and licentious (sensual) behaviors
  - lust: a strong desire to sin
  - licentious: unbridled lust -- excess, absence of restraint, indecency, and wantonness
    - note: the Greek is often translated “sensual” in the NASB
  - we control our desires, so that we hate sin and don’t dwell on sin
    - therefore, we don’t unloose sinful desire and behave licentiously
    - illus. dances:
      - we don’t participate in dances because of the lust and licentiousness people are engaging in

- Rom. 14:23; 1 Th. 5:21-22 we don’t engage in questionable behaviors
  - if we’re not sure it’s right, based on Scripture, we don’t do it (Col. 3:17)
    - illus.: peer pressure
      - if your friends try to get you to do something, but you’ve never heard of it and not sure what it is, and whether it’s right, just don’t do it

  - illus.: some things we don’t want to think or say
    - what I do with my body is my business
      - not true, it’s God’s business
      - we don’t engage in lustful or licentious (sensual) behavior
    - I don’t care what other people think
      - not true, we care because we only want to do things that are honorable and respectable in the sight of all men
    - I’m not sure if it’s right, but I’m doing it anyway
      - not true, we only do the things we know are right (Col. 3:17)
guidelines: lawful, helpful, edifies, not our master, good for our neighbor, glorify God in our bodies, do things that are honorable and respectable in sight of all men, not engage in lustful and licentious behaviors, not engage in questionable behaviors

Young folks and new Christians must rely on the sound judgment of mature Christians
- young folks and new Christians have time to grow and mature in Christ
  - Pr. 22:15 “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”
- young folks and new Christians have to take time to grow and mature in God’s word
  - Heb. 5:13-14 must grow in the Lord, exercising senses with God’s word, so can discern between good and evil
- young folks and new Christians have to take time to grow and mature in God’s word
  - until young folks and new Christians grow and mature in faith through God’s word, they need to rely on the sound judgment of mature Christians
    - Pr. 8:33 “Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.”
    - Pr. 10:8 “The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined.”
    - Pr. 12:15 “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”
    - Pr. 19:20 “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.”
    - Ec. 7:5 “It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools.”
- young folks and new Christians have to take time to grow and mature in God’s word
  - the young who are wise (age and faith) will seek wise council and lean upon it, knowing they lack the knowledge of the mature
    - young folks, know that you are not wise enough to make every discussion on your own, and you need the wise council of the spiritually mature

Summary / Inv.
- review PP: Biblical guidelines regarding cultural behavior