



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Confronting wrongdoing

### CONFRONTING ISSUES GRACIOUSLY

*Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. James 4:17*

Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). I don't know whether Jesus had old Jeremiah in mind, but there is one thing for sure: In his day Jeremiah never had to worry about people saying many nice things about him. He was despised, persecuted, and forsaken by friends.

On occasion Jeremiah would stand in a public place and weep openly for his nation. None could say he did not have heart, but few wanted to really listen to what he was saying.

Are things much different today? Have you gone to the school board lately to complain about what your son or daughter is being taught which violates what you believe is wholesome or right? Have you gone to the town council, or to the seat of your public government to question their allowing sex-related businesses to coexist with schools and churches in the same neighborhood? *Condom distribution at school, but no Bible Club?*

You quickly discover that not everyone is on the side of children, what was once considered community decency, and God. And that's when you are confronted with the issue of dealing with wrong or hibernating and running the other way--fight or flight; but before you really do either, consider the following guidelines when you are confronted with a situation you feel is wrong:

**Guideline #1:** Pray about the issue before you do anything. This often helps you deal with anger and outrage and helps you channel those feelings productively.

**Guideline #2:** Talk to others in your community or peer group. It is amazing at times how many people are seriously annoyed by something but feel as though they must be the only ones bothered by it. Your raising the issue may be the catalyst which God can use to accomplish great good. Evil has a way of insidiously creeping into society like dandelions in a spring lawn unless someone does something about it.

**Guideline #3:** Do some research. Find out what the law is, or who is in authority in charge of a given situation. If it is the school, you need to know whether the policy is that of a teacher, the head of the school, the school board or whom.

**Guideline #4:** Raise the issue without raising your voice if you possibly can. If that doesn't work, then you may need to escalate the protest. Talk to a teacher, then if you get nowhere, talk to the principal. If you can't get any satisfaction, talk to the school board. I am amazed how individuals respond to public pressure as well. When one parent objects to something, someone may or may not pay much attention to the issue. But when 30 parents all object to the same issue, it gets attention and plenty fast.

**Guideline #5:** Don't give up when you know you are right. When a businessman who is a Gideon asked to distribute free Bibles to grade school children, the school principal replied, "Over my dead body!" Two years later, the same



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man had a heart attack and died. The same business man went back and asked the new school administrator the same question, and this time he was told, "Certainly, we'd be glad to have you do that."

Edmund Burke, the British patriot, once said, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Never, never sell short your influence! Make your voice heard. It may be all that it takes to move others to take a stand for right.

Resource reading: James 4:1-17.