

# OpenTheo

## Should I Patronize Businesses That Collide with My Moral Beliefs?

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### #STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether we should patronize businesses that collide with our moral beliefs, promote the LGBTQ lifestyle, or pay for employees to travel to other states for abortions and why God makes us with certain desires if he calls those desires sin.

\* As a Christian, should I patronize businesses that collide with my moral beliefs, and what about businesses that have homosexual and transgender employees?

\* Do I have a moral obligation as a Christian to not go to Disney World because of how they promote the LGBTQ lifestyle?

\* How do I, as a minister, help people wrestle with concerns about doing business with companies that openly pay for employees to travel to other states for abortions?

\* Why does God make us with certain desires if he calls those desires sin?

### Transcript

[Music] [Bell] I'm Amy Hall. I'm here with Greg Koukl and you're listening to Stand to Reason's #STRask podcast. Greg, this morning we have a few questions that are very, very similar.

So, what I think what I'm gonna do is read all three of them because they give a slightly different take. Okay. And then you can, we can go through each one one by one, you can address the specific things to those questions.

Okay. But I've been receiving a lot of questions that are similar to this. First one comes from Cindy.

As a Christian, should I patronize businesses that collide with my moral beliefs, i.e. I'm against abortion, transgender ideologies, homosexual relationships, etc. What about those who have homosexual and transgender employees? The next one comes from

Katie. I have a friend who said we should not be going to Disney World because of how they promote the LGBTQ lifestyle.

Thoughts? Is this a moral obligation as a Christian? Thanks. And the third one comes from Caleb. I'm a minister.

How do I help people wrestle with concerns about doing business with companies and brands that openly pay for employees to travel for abortion? Is this a render to Caesar? What is Caesar's scenario? Or is this something pro-life Christians have to flee from entirely? Well, I think there's a broad, a broad principle that applies to all three of them because, as you pointed out, these are all asking the same kind of question. And that question is, what is the moral impact if we patronize an enterprise that itself promotes something immoral or in some sense? I was going to say morally inappropriate, but it's the same thing. And the general response because we've covered this a number of times over the years because it does come up.

And in fact, sometimes it comes up quite aggressively with Christians who say, "It is wrong for you to this, this, this, the other thing we're going to boycott it if you're not involved in the boycott, then you're somehow participating in the evil that this enterprise is involved in." So let me try to clarify, make a distinction. Okay? There are some businesses that are themselves an evil enterprise. Okay? Planned Parenthood.

They exist to promote something evil, abortion. Being involved with Planned Parenthood, or let's just say if they had a Planned Parenthood thrift store, when you go in and you buy something from that thrift store, that money is going to the organization and the organization's whole purpose is to do something evil. Okay? That's one distinction.

The other distinction is organizations that from whom you purchase a product or a service who then as an organization use some of their proceeds for illicit enterprises or immoral enterprises or encouraging immoral things. And to me, that's a very different thing. In the first case, your money is going, even though you're purchasing a product, it is going directly into an immoral, to support an immoral project.

That's the whole point. When you purchase from another company that waves the rainbow flag, for example, you are purchasing a product from them and you're paying for the product. You are not paying for the rainbow flag and all that the organization is in favor of regarding that.

You're paying for the product. If you make the case that if you buy a product or service from someone who is involved in something illicit or immoral and therefore you are somehow party to that, then you can't buy from anybody. Even Christian organizations, Christian enterprises, Christian businesses, whatever you purchase from them, you can't be guaranteed that the individual is not going to use the profits from that business in a way that you would not morally approve of.

Well, your patronizing of that business does not morally connect you to the personal use of the profits of the person who renders the service to you or sells you the product. That's the simple moral equation. I do not think there's more responsibility that actually is transferred in any of these cases.

Now, having said that, I think there is a conscience issue. Some people say, "Well, I don't feel comfortable buying from them if this is their point of view." I said, "Fine, then don't do it. Go somewhere else where you feel more comfortable." If you feel you're contributing by your patronizing that business, then don't patronize the business.

My wife, when we give things to a thrift store, she doesn't like to give to goodwill. And the reason she doesn't want to give to goodwill is because they support some of these things. I don't think she has a moral obligation not to do that.

I mean, the purpose of giving to goodwill and what they do is to redistribute these things in a cost efficient way to people who are poor. But as an additional thing, they're also pro-abortion, apparently. So she wants to take into a Salvation Army.

The problem is we've had some difficulty with Salvation Army in the last couple of years, as the regular listeners know. So I don't know that that's much better. I drop stuff off of goodwill for myself.

So I don't have a difficulty with that. But if somebody does, then don't do it. Very simple.

And rather patronized businesses that you feel good about. Now, other people may want to make a political statement and they vote in a sense with their pocketbook. So they might say, "Disney, we do not like what you stand for."

Even though if we go to your park, we are paying for a service rendered and we are not directly participating in the other things that you support." Even so, we don't want to support you. We are trying to have an impact on you by not going. That's what standard boycotts are about.

We're going to boycott you so that you change your policy. Now, that's kind of a political statement. That's another category and people are free to do that.

But if they do patronize Disneyland, it doesn't mean there's something morally reprehensible about them, morally compromised about them. So that's my general approach. Maybe there are some things that are just so, some organizations that are just so obscene that one might be able to make a case that it is immoral to patronize them.

I think the example I gave with Planned Parenthood is a case in point, but that's because the organization has no morally legitimate function. That's the difference to me with the other organizations. Now, there are a lot of differences of opinion that people have about this and it's reflected in the variations between Cindy and Katie and Caleb.

Okay. But I think it helps tremendously to make this distinction between purchasing a product or service and paying for that on the one hand and somehow your money being complicit in an immoral act on the other. And if that second way is the way people want to look at it, they're going to have a hard time purchasing from anybody, it seems to me, because they're looking at Costco.

Those folks are leftist. You're doing a lot of their political policies and what they support. This is true about many, many, many organizations, hard to do anything with any computer in any technology without employing the services, one way or another, of Google, Facebook, Twitter, all of these leftist folk.

Look at Bill Gates. Look at Bill Gates is doing. You got to Microsoft anything? Does that mean you're complicit with Bill Gates take over the world with his billions? I don't think so.

So the one aspect of this you haven't covered yet, Greg, with Cindy's question about what about those who have homosexual and transgender employees? Do you have any issue with that? I don't know why that would be a difference. You may decide not to go there. Although I'm not sure why you would do that.

But I think that patronizing the business doesn't somehow encourage their lifestyle. They just have a job. In fact, in my view, that's the weakest of characterizations, because we want to honor every human being's appropriate liberty to make a living.

Do you think that business is higher fornicators? Or adulterous, no, adultery is one of those things that is a sin that's kind of kept under wraps because it's still considered somewhat ignominious or whatever, but certainly not fornication. So people living together and everything. So where are you going to draw the line? I don't think there's any problem.

I think what you said is really good, Greg. We're not objecting to them making a living. That's not a legitimate objection.

I think that's the only thing that would come across if you were to boycott some business because that doesn't make sense. I agree with that. There is a thing, though, and I'm just thinking about my own emotional reactions to things.

There are times when I am in certain environments where there are all kinds of things that are aggressively on display, and I am that I disagree with, and I'm not comfortable with this. There may be restaurants that people might go or businesses where certain lifestyles are flaunted are in aggressive display or whatever. And look, if you don't feel comfortable, then that's okay.

That's fine. Just don't go. Go somewhere else.

So I think that's another aspect here, but that's a personal subjective matter that is not a moral matter in my view. So as I was thinking about this question, what comes to mind for me? Because I think you did a great job, Greg. You've already mentioned some of the things that I was going to mention, but just some things to keep in mind as you're determining this because I agree.

I don't think there is a cut and dried answer to this question. But what comes to mind for me is 1 Corinthians 10, 23 through 32, where Paul's talking about you eat anything that sold in the meat market without asking questions. But if they say this was given to an idol, then now you have considerations that you have to think about because the way I see that applying here is you don't have to go in and look and see what every business is giving money to or what their position is on everything or all those things.

You go in, you go to buy shoes or whatever it is, and you purchase the shoes and that's fine. There could come a point where now it's so flagrant that what they're promoting, where they're making that a big part of their identity as a store. At that point, now you have to think about some other things.

And just going by what Paul says here, a couple of the other things you need to consider are first, will others be emboldened to go against their conscience if they see you patronizing that business? Because in the issue with the food offered to idols, what Paul says is, if anyone says to you, this is meat sacrificed to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who informed you and for conscience sake. I mean, not your own conscience, but the other man's. In other words, if they are, it's against their conscience, and you mentioned this before, to go to this store and they see you, will they be emboldened to you? Will they be emboldened to go against their conscience? And Paul says, that's not a good idea.

And then the other question I think you have to ask is, has it gotten to the point of this organization and their identity as promoting certain things? Will people in the culture interpret your purchases as promoting what that company promotes? And that just depends on how vocal the company is. So I think those are two things. The third thing is that you already mentioned, does it trouble your conscience? And if it does, don't go.

So those are three things that you can consider. And I think it's a case by case basis. Yeah, I know I'll never go to any Disney Enterprise again.

I've seen some of their movies. Still, my daughters like them. And for me, there's a time.

And in fact, some of, I mean, most secular movies have questionable elements in them. But what was this magic family one they just did this last year? Was that a Disney one? In Kanto? Yeah, in Kanto. There were some very sweet things about that.

But I didn't like the ending because in the ending, this spoiler here, everything was

returned to normal when they realized that normal wasn't what was important. But something else was important, right? Why are you chuckling? Because I had a conversation about this very thing, but we won't go off on that. Go ahead.

Okay. Anyway, I actually disagree with you, but go ahead. Okay, but in any of it, the, the, the, I'm not.

Last time we went to all the times we've gone to Disneyland, we've had passes almost every single time, except for once we didn't have pass for Eva. And so it cost us half a grand for Eva to walk through the gate. Five hundred dollars.

Just to put Eva have Eva purchase what we needed. Everybody else had passes. She didn't.

Never going to do that again. But it's partly, it's not just the expense. It's also partly all that money is going to this, you know, enterprise that is not what frozen Walt would have envisioned.

I don't know if his body is frozen in a chamber somewhere. That's what somebody said. But when I was a kid, I grew up with the, with Disney, you know, and Walt doing the introduction to every TV show.

It was wonderful. But that has radically changed. And so I'm not going back to any of their things.

So that's a perfect example. You've looked at all these different things. You've looked at what, how your purchases will be interpreted by other people and how you interpret it.

And their, their vocal, the crease in the vocal nature of what they're promoting. So all these things, I think are important to consider. Okay, Greg, let's do one more here.

This one comes from Sarah. Why does God make us with certain desires if he calls those desires sin? Well, you know what's interesting? I mean, the way I would put it is the desires that God gives us are not sin. The desires can be used in an inappropriate way.

So let's take sex. Sexual desire is a good thing. It, it promotes procreation.

It promotes closeness and identification in relationships. And it's a bonding factor. It is enjoyable.

There are all kinds of good things from it. However, it's so powerful that if it's, if it's used in a wrong context, it creates harm. Okay.

So it isn't the sexual desire that is wrong. It is the abuse of the sexual desire. Okay.

And that I use that as a prominent example. But this is true just about everything that

taken to an extreme. These things that are naturally part of being a human being become problems.

And they are taken to an extreme because we're fallen. All right. So I don't know what Sarah's, Sarah had in mind there.

My suspicion is that why would God give us a desire for sex or for what some people consider or the Bible might teach is illicit if it's wrong? I mean, why would God give us a desire this wrong? Well, this presumes that God gave you the wrong desire. A lot of people say this kind of thing. Homosexuals will say, well, God made me this way this way and God doesn't make junk.

Why would you assume that God made you the way you are now? That, by the way, could be used to justify anything. Any kind of vice. Well, God made me this way and God doesn't make mistakes.

Okay. Well, the problem there is that God doesn't make you that way. God gives us sexual desires, for example, to be used in a particular way.

That's good. But if it's used in a wrong way, then it's bad. God gave the desires.

He didn't give us the desire to use it in a wrong way. That comes from man's fallenness. I'm thinking here too of Romans 1 and the idea of God giving us over to our fallenness.

So even in that sense, God's not giving us the desires. He's removing his restraint from our fallenness. Man exchanged the good thing for the bad thing and that God let them go.

So the idea that we are fallen is central to understanding this whole thing. I was also thinking about Jesus and his temptations in the wilderness because the devil was tempting him to good things. Jesus was supposed to be the ruler of the world.

Jesus, as human beings, we eat. That's a good thing. But he was tempting him to use it in a different way.

That's good observation. Greg, we're out of time. Thank you Sarah and Kayla, Katie and Cindy.

We appreciate your questions. Hopefully that was helpful. All of you who have questions about going to businesses and things like that because we do get a lot of questions about that.

Alright, we hope to hear from you soon. This is Amy Hall and Greg Cockel for Stand to Reason.

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