

Taboos

What is a taboo? Taboos are things that you are not supposed to talk about because it will offend people if you do. They are things that you are not supposed to do because, if you do, you may get into trouble from the law or become outcast from society or from whatever group of friends you may belong to. Many times a taboo is a sin, and many times a taboo is illegal, but there are many other taboos that are neutral. There are even situations where the Truth of God is considered taboo!

This study will look at the subject of taboos and explore the relationships between taboos and God's Word as well as taboos and God's people.

I. Definition

The dictionary definition shows just how much of our life is under the subject of taboo just by the different definitions it gives of the word.

A. System or act of setting apart a person or a thing as accursed or as sacred.

1. An example of a negative Biblical taboo: Galatians 1:8
2. An example of a positive Biblical taboo: 1 Kings 8:62-64

B. An item that is either prohibited or consecrated according to social custom.

1. tax collector: Matthew 18:17
2. wealth: Ezekiel 28:4

C. A practise that is excluded or prohibited according to authority or to social custom.

1. associating with sinners: Luke 7:39
2. associating with lepers: Luke 17:12-13

Since most people connect taboos with embarrassing or naughty things, we will focus on that category of taboo for the rest of the study. You will notice, though, that not all taboos are taboo among all groups within our society. Also, was it very important or simply very normal in one group may be a complete taboo in another.

II. Things that were taboo in Bible days but are not now:

1. Leviticus 21:18-23, 2 Samuel 6:6, Ezekiel 44:15-16
2. Joshua 7:15; Amos 2:1-3
3. John 4:7-9
4. Deuteronomy 14:8
5. Numbers 19:11
6. Jeremiah 22:3; Psalm 94:22

7. Romans 1:26-27

8. 1 Corinthians 6:18

9. Deuteronomy 22:5

III. Things that were not taboo in Bible times but are now:

1. Ephesians 6:5

2. Acts 4:12

3. Ephesians 6:22

4. John 4:9

5. Matthew 15:11

6. Mark 12:19

7. Others that were not even issues in Bible times:

What subjects are taboo today that weren't taboo in the generation of your parents or grandparents, or even when you yourself were growing up?

IV.

Things that were taboo back in Bible lands and are still taboo today in North American culture:

1. Leviticus 11:13-20
2. Isaiah 20:3-4; Habakkuk 2:15-16; Ezekiel 16:37
3. Deuteronomy 28:53-57; Ezekiel 5:8-11; Numbers 19:11-13
4. Ezekiel 16:30
5. Leviticus 17: 6-7
6. Deuteronomy 22:5

You will notice that we are not any more free of taboos than the people of the Bible were. All we do is to removed one taboo and place it with a new one.

The most challenging part about belonging to a group, especially when you first enter that group, is to learn its taboos. The more taboos you break, the more of an outsider you will remain.