

DOES ACTING IN CHRISTIAN LOVE ALWAYS MEAN

ACTING IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ONE IS HURT?

Examine and discuss the process by which you measure the risks of personal suffering involved in an act and the possible benefits to self and to others resulting from that act. Discuss situations in which you yourselves have been involved, or select one or two of the situations on this page for analysis. As you examine a situation, attempt to answer questions such as these:

How might you respond to this situation? For each response you suggest, answer these questions:

What risks would you be taking by responding this way?

Who else might suffer as a result of this response?

What benefits might come to yourself and/or to others from this response?

Are the possible benefits worth the risk? Why???

Does acting in Christian love always mean acting in such a way that no one is hurt? Your reasons--

You are driving alone along a busy highway on a cold, rainy night. You are already late for a very important appointment, an appointment that could change your life drastically. Suddenly, the car ahead of you swerves on the rain-slickened pavement, skids broadside, then smashes through a retaining fence, down a small gully, and lands upside down in a shallow creek. As you slow your car you can watch the scene below, you see the driver of the car struggling to open the door and you notice smoke and flames beginning to lick out from the sides of the car hood. You have a severe heart condition; unnecessary strain could result in a heart attack.

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One of your best friends telephones you to say that his son is being held in custody, the result of his third arrest in two years. You know that the boy has a history of petty thievery, broken promises, and gross disrespect for his parents. You also know that he is terrified of going to jail and has often said he would do anything to avoid being jailed. Your friend begs you to post the \$5000 bail required to set his son free until his trial. You have \$5000 that you saved over a period of fifteen years for the education of your two children, now in high school.

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Living next door to you is a couple with two small children. You have grown quite friendly with this couple and have noted that they are intensely proud of their children, love them deeply, and care for them conscientiously--most of the time. You have also noted that this couple has a tendency to drink heavily on Friday evenings and to spend the weekends intoxicated. During these weekends, the children are generally neglected and often physically abused by their parents. You notified the authorities of this condition some months ago, and the couple was warned that if their weekends of intoxication did not cease, the children would be taken from them. The couple tried hard, but in the last month, you have noticed that they have reverted to their former practice. This past weekend, the children were again physically abused by their drunken parents, although by Monday afternoon the parents appeared genuinely repentant and seemed sincere in lavishing love and care on their children.