

Comfortable with Compromise

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Not long ago, I was speaking to a very nice Christian couple at a grocery store. They were talking about the inroads of Christian Contemporary Music into their home church. The true separatist knows that this kind of music is nothing more than the sound of a rebellious and perverted culture and a system that is against God. Nevertheless, this Christian couple was trying to accept this so-called religious music as part of the new way of church life in the 21st century. Their words, which were addressed to me, went something like this: "If we will just focus on the Lord and forget about these other issues we could serve and worship the Lord together." Upon hearing these words, I knew immediately that I was listening to several Christians who had grown comfortable with compromise!

If we are not careful, we too will become comfortable with compromise. We can become numb to the inroads of worldliness in the church and in our own personal lives as Christians. Over a period of time, we can become accustomed to listening to worldly music and participating in worldly worship and other worldly vices and activities in our lives, so that we eventually become comfortable with compromise. And those things that we once deemed unholy are now seen to be holy and acceptable to us and we now believe they are acceptable to God. In the end we somehow sanctify wordiness and mold ourselves after the pattern of this world (Rom. 12:2).

In this study, I am going to say some things that are not very popular. But they need to be said in light of the hour in which we live. We must remember that what is right is not always popular and what is popular is not always right. Compromising truth, Scriptural standards and neglecting the Biblical position of holiness\separation seems to be the accepted norm within mainstream evangelicalism. With the spreading of the "spiritual aids" epidemic of Contemporary Christian Rock Music and the abandonment of anything that is conservative in nature, such

as traditional hymns, standards and reverence for God's house, and convicting preaching dealing with sin, we must remember what God expects from our lives as His children. In short, God expects His children to live holy lives and not compromise with the world system in any way.

1 Peter 1:15-16 gives to us the timeless command found in both the Old and New Testaments: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." When we maintain holiness in our thoughts, lives, and churches, we will not become comfortable with compromise.

There are eight Biblical instructions that will keep us from becoming comfortable with compromise.

1. There is the command to not compromise.

If believers would wholeheartedly embrace God's command to not compromise, they would not become comfortable with worldliness and compromise. We need a generation of believers who are willing to stand in the gap and be counted as Christians who will not compromise and take the path of least resistance. God is not happy with our compromise with church ministries that do not uphold "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3) and who do not represent the holiness of God's character (1 John 1:5). I think all of this compromise today within the church and individual lives makes God very disappointed with His people.

God told Joshua in Joshua 1:7:

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua 23:6

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left."

The Lord repeatedly warned His people to not deviate from the straight path and the acceptable and holy path that He had called them to walk. God warned Israel that the reproach of men could very well be their spiritual downfall. Their concern with what others said about them or what others would think about them as a nation could cause them to seek unholy human alliances and lead them to make compromises with the enemy. Instead, the people of God were called upon to trust the Lord and seek only His approval. Furthermore, they were commanded to not deviate from the path of holiness or truth in any way. Any movement to the right or to the left would become compromise in God's eyes.

Today the "right" is seen as being the conservative and good way to move whereas the "left" is the more liberal direction. But this is manmade terminology. The path of uncompromising allegiance to God does not move in any direction – right or left. It is described as being a straight path that does not swerve in any direction. When we begin to move to the right or to the left, we begin a downward spiral. We must remember that any movement in one direction or the other will start us on the road to compromise that will eventually lead us to become comfortable with compromise and accept that which should not be acceptable.

Psalm 1:1 gives to us the uncompromising position and a detailed understanding about the downward spiral of compromise: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

This is the true separatist's uncompromising position. There should be no allowance for walking, standing or sitting in the presence of evildoers and their worldly sins and accepting their ungodly pattern of living. The child of God is to have within his heart and life no place for *casual compromise* with the world ("walking") or *rooted compromise* with the world ("standeth") that speaks of a stronger endorsement and favorable attitude toward the ungodly world with its practices. Then there is the *established compromise* ("sitteth") which consists of a deep-seated, settled and full acceptance and participation with the ungodly practices of the world. It is selling out to the spirit of the world system. Please note the progression of compromise that can take place in the believer's life. This is what happens when we fail to

remain separate, as we should. We begin a process of compromises that lead to an end of full-blown compromise with the world.

This is the way compromise usually takes place in our hearts and lives. It is not a sudden thing but a subtle and gradual process where we become watered down until we accept what we should not accept, walk where we should not walk, stand where we should not stand, and sit where we should not sit.

Spiritual compromise is usually a slow process. It begins as a casual walk in the wrong direction and then begins to mushroom into a more rooted position with the ungodly and their worldly practices. Finally, we become entrenched, seated and overcome with the ungodly practices of the world. Those things that were once deemed as irreverent have now become reverent, forbidden actions that were once thought to be wrong are now right, and those areas that were once seen to be a clear violation of God's standard of holiness are no longer looked upon as unholy. When this happens, we have grown comfortable with compromise!

Note once again the downward spiral in these words – “walketh, “standeth”, sitteth.” A little compromise will finally end in a position of acceptance and approval with ungodly ways.

Galatians 5:9

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

Here is the point. if you begin to casually compromise, you will sooner or later be fully entrenched in compromise. It's just a matter of time.

The old saying is still true:

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”

Remember that if you give an inch to Satan, He will take a yard! We know compromise has occurred in our own personal lives when we have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth that we once knew. The powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and carry it to a place of spiritual shipwreck (1 Tim. 1:19). Few Christians finish their lives with the same Biblical-based

and separated convictions that they began with when they were open to God's leading and teaching about holiness. This occurs because of gradual compromises that take place in their hearts and lives over a period of years. Beware of even casual compromise. Alas, it can very easily lead to a deep-seated and established compromise of truth, Biblical standards of separation and God's holiness.

Let me ask you a few soul-searching questions. Are you making spiritual advancement in your Christian life? Have you grown comfortable with some compromise in your own life? What level of compromise have you adopted? When it comes to compromise God demands total abstinence!

Nehemiah would not compromise with the enemies of Sanballet and Tobiah who tried to get him to come down to a village and talk about the building of the wall of Jerusalem. Their words of compromise sounded very religious, worldly, and ecumenical ("Come, let us meet together" – vs. 2; "Come, now therefore, and let us take counsel together" – vs. 7; "Let us meet together in the house of God" – vs. 10). These are the same cries of compromise that are being propagated today. The religious world of ecumenicalism wants us to join up with their plans and worldly agenda, but God has always taught His people to keep the wall of separation erected from the ungodly plans and practices of the world and never form any compromising positions that would lead them away from doing what is good, holy, and acceptable in God's eyes (Rom. 12:1-2). Nehemiah was not about to compromise. He would not waiver and neither should we in such an ecumenical hour of religious and worldly compromise with false doctrine and worldly pragmatic methods of evangelism. We must shut the door on all compromise as Nehemiah did.

Nehemiah 6:3

"And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"

Nehemiah 6:11

"And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."

Dear friend, the New Testament parallel is easy to see. A New Evangelical is someone who has abandoned the old evangelical position of Bible separation. Only a New Evangelical with an axe to grind could miss what God is saying in both the Old and New Testaments. God's Word states it very clearly in the Second epistle to the Corinthians. It is God's clear and unadulterated word concerning compromise with false religions and the believer's attempt to mingle with the ungodly and worldly practices of a system that is against God.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 declares:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

God says that we should not go into the liberal and ungodly churches of our day and those compromising ministries that promote unrighteousness and darkness and which steer us away from our holy separation unto God. In doing this we compromise the Biblical standard of separation and holiness. We must continue to uphold the uncompromising example that refuses to condone false teaching, accept sin, and overlook error and worldly practice (Eph. 5:10). Furthermore, we must remember that God does not want us to overlook truth and compromise with any error, worldliness, or ecumenical and unholy practices. This is because there can be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness. Light cannot mix with darkness. These are governing principles that should direct our lives in the decisions that we make and the places that we go. This is true not only in a religious setting but also in our own personal lives and the decisions we must make in relationship to what we do, say, purchase, and where we go.

There was a giant 400-year-old redwood tree that came crashing down one day and no one could figure out why. The tree had

survived four centuries of storms, lightning, and earthquakes. What had caused it to fall? On closer inspection, investigators found that tiny beetles had found their way inside its trunk and had begun eating away its life-giving fibers, weakening its mighty bulk from the inside out.

In much the same way, the devil tries to bring Christians down through small and seemingly insignificant compromises. While we are fighting and resisting him in one area, he may be setting up house in another area of our lives. Satan will find ways to creep into our lives for the purpose of eroding our foundations until our fibers have become undone and we come crashing down to the ground. Show me a person who has moved in a wayward spiritual direction or fallen away from their walk with the Lord, and I will show you a person who started making compromises in his or her life long ago.

2. There is the cause of compromise.

We must understand how compromise takes place so we can catch ourselves before we become comfortable, complacent, and compliant with compromise. Let me mention several causes or reasons why God's people compromise.

➤ Spiritual slumber

The first reason or cause why God's people become comfortable with compromise is stated in the words of Jesus in Matthew 13:25: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." This is how compromise takes place. This is the sole reason or cause of compromise. God's people become sleepy and spiritually lethargic and undiscerning from a spiritual perspective and refuse to see what is going on.

Hebrews 5:14

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

The church has lost her will to discern between good and evil in the present hour. Blessed are those who can see what is happening!

Many in the church today don't want to see what is happening and they refuse to search the Scriptures and expose the compromising positions of men and ministries. As a result, they continue in their spiritual slumber and in time become insensitive to the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) and the "old faith" and God's plan of holiness for their lives and for church life.

Jesus said in Matthew 26:41:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus warned His disciples about becoming spiritually lax and lazy. When this happens, we can very easily be overcome with temptation and compromise our own spiritual walk by giving in to sin and worldly practices of the flesh. There is a desperate need today for God's people to be discerning concerning what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-20). But discernment can only occur in an environment of studying the Bible and when we arise from our own spiritual slumber.

Ephesians 5:14 commands:

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The enemy works when God's people are sleeping. This has always been true throughout the history of the church. We cannot afford to be spiritually lethargic and apathetic toward God's holiness and teaching on Biblical separation. As we continue to sleep and drift into the sea of compromise, the end will result in a spiritual shipwreck in relation to truth and righteousness.

1 Timothy 1:19

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."

➤ **Spiritual blindness**

Spiritual drowsiness can ultimately lead to spiritual blindness in relationship to certain spiritual aspects of Christian living. It is possible for believers to live in a blind and self-deceptive state toward

what is right and holy in God's sight. There is such a thing as Christian blindness to spiritual truth and realities dealing with separation from sin and the Christian life.

2 Peter 1:9 says:

"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

It is possible to be a Christian and become insensitive and blind to certain aspects dealing with spiritual living. Christ said to the Laodicean believers that they did not even know they had grown blind and insensitive to spiritual things.

Revelation 3:16-17

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

When Jesus says that this church was "lukewarm" he was telling them that they were compromising. The lukewarm state is the compromising position of many churches today. They are neither cold nor hot in relation to upholding certain truths and holy practices. Many churches want to ride the fence and not make waves concerning certain doctrines and holy practices that need to be upheld in the assemblies to maintain reverence. The end result of this lukewarm position of compromise is blindness. It is a sad but true reality that believers can become blind to certain truths, commands for separation, and various spiritual realities dealing with Christian living. Truth that is not eventually embraced is in danger of being lost! But God wants the church to heal herself of her spiritual blind condition and see her compromise by looking at Isaiah's holy God and repenting of her lack of spiritual awareness.

Revelation 3:18-19 says:

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with

eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Luke 6:39 records what Jesus said about spiritual blindness:
“And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?”

I think this is an accurate description of many mega churches today and preachers that are willingly and ignorantly blind to certain spiritual realities. As a result, they deceive people into a false sense of worldly antinomian liberty and promote many other deceptive teachings and worldly aspects of living that stem from the flesh. The end result is that both the preacher and the people fall into the ditch of compromise and miss God’s richest blessing.

I once saw a charismatic preacher on TV hooking people up to a truck battery. He claimed that the people were receiving the Holy Spirit electricity through their body. What a deception this was to these people. I think this is one case where the blind was leading the blind and both fell into the same ditch! Many today have fallen into the hole of compromise and they don’t even know that they are there!

Hebrews 3:13 also speaks about the deceitful character of all sin when recording: “But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” This text is saying that sin can rake you over the coals. Sin can deceive you and make you think that you are living a spiritual life when in reality you are living carnally and compromising truth and righteousness. Yes, we can become hoodwinked by sin! Sin is like a con man that likes to confuse our minds and cloud our thinking concerning the truth and what is holy and right.

The Scriptures reveal several patterns of behavior through which Christians become vulnerable to self-deception. First, we can deceive ourselves when we hear the Word of God but don’t practice it. James 1:22 says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” Second, we can deceive ourselves when we say that we have no sin, but in fact do have sin controlling our lives. 1 John 1:8 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Someone said:

“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.”

Today a great many people (even Christians) sear their conscience. They don't always change their ethical behavior, but they begin by changing their ethical standards that are rooted in truth. And once they adjust their Biblical-based standards to accommodate the behavior of others, it's only a matter of time until they become desensitized to sin. What does God think of spiritual deception? He despises it. Deception is an extremely serious issue facing the church today.

John Calvin observed:

"The human heart has so many crannies where vanity hides, so many holes where falsehood lurks, is so decked out with deceiving hypocrisy, that it often dupes itself."

➤ **Sinister enemies**

Ephesians 4:27 says:

“Neither give place to the devil.”

Of course, the devil and his emissaries (demons), who are the spiritual enemies of Christians, are behind all compromise. To “give place” to the devil means that the believer actually compromises with the allurements and temptations of the devil. This word speaks of giving over a portion of some space or marked off area to the Evil One. It means that you give up some territory to the devil and compromise with him. Each believer must learn that it is very possible to give up territory in their heart to the devil through a series of subtle compromises. When we do this, we begin to compromise with the devil's ways and schemes (Eph. 6:11).

It is very important that we do not give the devil any ground or any chance to work in our hearts and lives by letting down our guard and compromising. If we are not careful, we can give up a certain portion of our heart to the devil and find ourselves compromising with his methods instead of God's methods. This is why we are told to not be “ignorant of his devices” (perceptions) or the way the devil is thinking

to overtake our lives (2 Cor. 2:11). We must try to stay one step ahead of the devil. When God's people begin to make subtle compromises in their hearts the devil gets a foothold or beachhead in their lives. Giving place to the devil is giving up certain convictions that we once held and surrendering ground or territory to him that we once possessed. When this takes place, we have compromised and will find ourselves in the devil's web.

➤ **Spurious convictions**

When God's people lack true inner conviction in their hearts about "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3), they eventually find themselves compromising. But be sure that whenever someone compromises outwardly, they have already compromised inwardly their hearts. When we lack true inner conviction, it is then that we open ourselves to the possibility of compromise. As a pastor, I have seen this happen many times in the lives of God's people. Even when instruction is given to hide the truth of God's Word in the heart (Ps. 119:11) many believer's fail to do this very thing. Instead of letting the truth of God's Word sink into the deep recesses of their heart, they only respond to truth in a surface way, without any real conviction and desire to do what is absolutely right and honorable to God. Instead of possessing strong convictions about separation from sin and all ungodliness (Titus 2:12), they lack true inner conviction of the heart.

The old adage is still true:

"A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

When a believer does not base his separated decisions and living upon strong inner conviction, he is only one step away from compromising with New Evangelicalism, worldliness, sin, and the devil. Weak convictions are another reason why many of God's people compromise. It's why God's saints need to have inner conviction in their hearts today, convictions which are rooted in the unchanging doctrinal teaching concerning separation, and which stem from godly fear and a desire to properly represent God's holiness. Conviction of heart will keep God's people from compromise. Where there is no conviction there will be compromise.

Psalm 119:10

“With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.”

Psalm 119:34

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”

Conviction in the heart will keep us from wondering from truth and righteous living. It will keep us from compromising with the enemy and the world system. For the most part, those who compromise never had true inner conviction of heart. The illustration of this can be seen in 1 John 2:19 which says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” What we need today is genuine inner conviction based upon truth. What we need is a principle within! This will keep us from compromising with all error, worldly programs and music in the church, and the Last Days ecumenical church.

“I want a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near;

I want the first approach to feel
Of pride, or fond desire,
To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire.”

➤ **Secular peer pressure**

John 12:42-43

“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

Peer pressure also causes many believers to compromise. This is true not only on a personal level but a church or ecclesiastical level. Many believers and churches want to feel accepted by mimicking the

same compromises withing Christianity, not considering that these practices are unholy and irreverent before God. Sadly, many Christians and church organizations compromise because of the pressure of the evangelical community and their desire to fit into mainstream evangelicalism. For many the price tag is too high to remain separated unto God. The pressures to compromise and be like others override God's clear commands to be separate and live a life free from spiritual compromise and contamination. Instead of "proving what is acceptable to the Lord" (Eph. 5:10) and refusing to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11) and seeking to "reprove them" (Eph. 5:11), many Christians today would rather mix with the majority and take the path of least resistance. Peer pressure can keep us from following the holy and right path. The fear of reprisal from others brings a snare into our lives. It is the snare of compromise.

Proverbs 29:25

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

When we fear how others will look at us and fear the controversy that comes when standing up for the truth, it's then that we have taken our eyes off of Jesus (Heb. 12:2-3), who endured the "contradictions of sinners." Beloved, taking our eyes off Jesus will cause us to become disillusioned and we will eventually find ourselves compromising and drifting with the times.

➤ **Success-oriented philosophy**

A success syndrome has inflicted the present-day church. A desire to fit in and comply with the success philosophy of other ministries and the desire for recognition or acceptance becomes a breeding ground for compromise to occur. Many churches want to be successful like the super churches and for this reason they begin to mimic the same pragmatic methods, sounds, and practices of these giant ecclesiastical corporations of Christendom. They begin to view success from the world's viewpoint instead of God's standards of success.

Joshua 1:8 declares:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

True success is following “all” that is written in God’s Word and doing what is right in God’s eyes without compromising the truth in any way. This means that we must follow God’s path of separation for our lives from a world that is seeking to corrupt our lives (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). True spiritual prosperity and success comes when we are willing to do what is right even if it goes against the wisdom and philosophy of success that the world offers. For many churches today success is nothing more than large numbers of people, big buildings, and mimicking Rock Music sounds that dazzle the mind. The success driven philosophy of today is rooted in the “wisdom of the world” instead of God’s wisdom (James 3:15-17). And yet we find multitudes of Christians and churches buying into the sounds, sights, and secularized programs and names of those connected with the modern trends of success.

3. There is the catastrophe of compromise.

There is a catastrophe that is linked with compromise that should cause Christians to think twice before moving in a wayward direction. When God’s people find themselves becoming comfortable in their compromise with sin and worldliness, it can accurately be said that a spiritual catastrophe has occurred in their lives. The catastrophe that takes place is at least three-fold in nature.

- **Compromise causes God’s people to forsake those who are striving to do what is right.**

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:10:

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...”

There is a catastrophe related to compromise. Compromise always leads people away from those who are seeking to do what is right and holy in God’s sight. It eventually severs relationships that were once bound together in an unwavering stance for righteousness and

holiness. Compromise divides God's people and this will always be the case. Every pastor has felt like Paul at one time or another. Have you ever felt forsaken by friends who have compromised? It is an empty feeling and yet God somehow gives grace to go on (Heb. 6:1) for those believers who want to remain true to His holy standard.

➤ **Compromise causes preaching to become watered down.**

2 Timothy 4:2-4 gives this command:

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The idea is that the people have itching ears (wanting to hear what they want to hear) and the teachers oblige them by scratching their itchy ears (giving exactly what they want). Many would-be preachers tickle the ears of the people today.

D. L. Moody said:

“No man is so corrupt (not to have a preacher), but he will find some one who preaches to suit him.”

This is another catastrophe related to compromise. These are teachers who tell people what they want to hear rather than face them with the truth! They are people pleasers! We have a great many teachers like this today. They are giving the people what they want to hear instead of what they need to hear to bring repentance and change in their lives.

Someone has humorously said:

“God pity the preacher who has grown cross-eyed watching certain faces in the congregation to observe whether the message is acceptable or not.”

Compromise ties the tongue of the preacher and causes preaching and teaching to become generic, watered down, and people pleasing.

It causes preaching to lose its confrontational message and convicting edge.

Dr. Marvin R. Vincent discusses the meaning of this sentence in his *Word Studies in the New Testament, Volume IV*, pages 320–321: “... In periods of unsettled faith, skepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found.”

The apostle foresees a time when people will show a positive distaste for healthy Bible teaching. They will willfully turn away from those men who teach the truth of God’s word with boldness and conviction. The ears of the people will itch for doctrines (teachings) that are sweet-sounding, pleasing to the ears, and comfortable. To satisfy their lust for novel, relevant and gratifying teaching, they will accumulate a group of teachers who will tell them what they want to hear and in this way scratch their ears.

Someone has said:

“The modern pulpit is a sounding board that is merely saying back to the people what they want to hear.”

The fact that these people have an itch means that many want to be entertained by teachings that will produce pleasant sensations and leave them with good feelings about themselves. The goal of many today within the church is that men preach according to the people’s own desires which alleviates their itching ears. Under these conditions, people will dictate what men preach, rather than God dictating it by His Word.

Again, I quote Dr. Vincent, page 321:

“Clement of Alexandria describes certain teachers as “scratching and tickling, in no human way, the ears of those who eagerly desire to be scratched....” Seneca says: “Some come to *hear*, not to *learn*, just as we go to the theatre, for pleasure, to delight our ears with the speaking or the voice or the plays.”

Another writer, commenting on 2 Timothy 4:2-4, summarizes:
“They want religious entertainment from Christian performers who will tickle their ears. We have a love for novelty in the churches today: emotional movies, pageants, foot-tapping music, colored lights, etc. The man who simply opens the Bible is rejected while the shallow religious entertainer becomes a celebrity. And verse 4 indicates that itching ears soon will become deaf ears as people turn away from the truth and believe man-made fables.”

I was talking to a lady one day who said that people don't want to hear about their sin, and they despise any preaching that exposes their sin. This is true. It's easy to go to a church today and get your ears tickled and hear generic preaching that no longer challenges you to do what is right and live separate or holy. Preaching that pleases people becomes a horrible pragmatic trap that keeps people in their own comfort zone of compromise. Non-confrontational and ear-tickling preaching does not challenge the people to live faithfully and righteously before a holy God.

➤ **Compromise causes God's people to become friends with the world system instead of with God.**

When we become comfortable with compromise, we become friends with the world system, which is actually a system of values, vices, culture, ideologies, and secularism which is opposed to God and His ways. This is the greatest catastrophe related to the area of compromise.

James 4:4 asks this soul-searching question:

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

The Bible teaches that we become God's enemy in some measure when we compromise. We cannot change the meaning of this verse no matter how hard we might try. Of course, this does not mean that we are no longer saved and become God's enemy in the sense of separated from God, or by being positionally placed back in Adam (Rom. 5:10). However, when we openly and defiantly compromise with the world as Christians we do become an enemy of God instead

of a friend of God (James 2:23). We become the enemy of God in a spiritual sense because we have adopted the very worldly culture and system that is against God and which killed His Son! This should startle us as Christians and stimulate us to keep pure and steer clear from all worldly compromise and compromising positions with churches who do not teach absolute truth and who are allowing worldly pragmatic methods to overtake their services of worship.

One of the biggest signs of compromise today is when you read how a church holds two different types of services – one traditional service and the other service contemporary. This seems to be a growing trend among many New Evangelical churches of today as they attempt to satisfy the fleshly wants of people. But when you see a church that practices and promotes a dual type of service, you can write the word compromise over its name. When a church caters to the crowd and tries to please the flesh through using worldly music it becomes a compromising church.

A. W. Tozer said:

“We are sent to bless the world, but never are we told to compromise with it. Our glory lies in a spiritual withdrawal from all that builds on dust.”

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. has likened the Christian who compromises to a soldier in the civil War who tried to save his neck by wearing a Confederate jacket and Union pants at the same time. The Yankees fired at his jacket and the Rebels shot at his legs! It never pays to compromise. One compromise eventually leads to greater compromises. I must repeat something. If you give Satan an inch, He will take a yard!

4. There is the character of love and compromise.

People compromise in the name of love. When we wrongly interpret the message and meaning of love we can find ourselves embracing compromise and becoming comfortable in our state of compromise. It is very important to understand the true nature of love, so we do not become comfortable with compromise. Many today equate love with tolerance and love is looked upon as the willingness to accept different viewpoints on doctrinal issues and worldly philosophies in

the church. Love is reduced to tolerance, a spirit of ecumenicalism and a willingness to practice broad parameters of fellowship. The separatist is deemed unloving since he exercises Biblical judgment, discipline and discernment over various doctrinal, ecumenical, and worldly activities or actions within the church. He is seen to be unloving because he uncompromisingly defends the truth at all costs and speaks with conviction and without apology (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 4:13, 29).

Let me ask you several questions related to the topic of love. Was the apostle Paul unloving when he rebuked Peter publicly for his compromise (Galatians 2:11)? Was Paul unloving when he confirmed the worldliness of Demas (2 Tim. 4:10)? Was Paul unloving when he named in the Pastoral Epistles false teachers, compromisers, and troublemakers such as Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17; 4:14)? Was Paul unloving when he forbade women to preach or to usurp authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12)? Was John unloving when he spoke out against Diotrefes (3 John 9-10)? Was Jesus unloving when He condemned the Pharisees and called them snakes and that they were going to be damned to hell (Matt. 23:13-33)? Was the glorified Christ unloving when he declared how He hates the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6)?

Love is not broadmindedness. Love does not mean that I will never possess a judgmental and discerning spirit. Love does not mean that I must accept every doctrine and worldly practice that is introduced in the church. Loving God involves embracing the truth that God has given to us and concludes that we will follow the truth without compromise. Love does not sweep the dirt under the carpet. Where there is love, there must also be truth ("speaking the truth in love" - Eph. 4:15), and where there is truth, an honest dealing with all sin will occur. Confession of sin and cleansing from God will take place because of all known sin. Love is rooted in the truth. Love embraces the truth and tenaciously holds to the truth.

Romans 12:9, says:

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

This verse and the verses that follow seem to stress the nature of true love. How does true unhypocritical love manifest itself? It does so by always speaking the truth, by always standing up for what is right and never doing what is wrong and compromising. True love does not turn a blind eye to sin and unholy actions. True love confronts sin and refuses to participate in unholy actions. It always strives to do what is right, holy, and good. This is the mark of unhypocritical love. Hating various forms of sin is frequently mentioned in Scripture (Ps. 97:10; 119:104, 128, 163; Prov. 8:13; 13:5; 28:16; Heb. 1:9; Rev. 2:6). This is the other side of love that nobody wants to talk about!

The present-day New Evangelicalism says that Fundamentalism is an unloving movement. The separatist is said to be an unloving Pharisee because of his unwillingness to buy into the worldly programs of New Evangelicalism and because of his persistent dogmatism and negativism toward ecumenicalism. But this is an unwarranted conclusion and wrong view of love.

Jesus said in Mark 12:30:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”

We are to love God above any person, movement, or worldly philosophy. The Bible says that I need to love God and His truth first! If we do not submit to the authority of God’s Word, we cannot love God with all of our heart (Deut. 6:5). Love for God always results in obedience to truth (John 14:15, 23; Phil. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 13:6; 1 John 5:3). In 2 Thessalonians 3:4-6 we discover that love for God is mentioned between two other verses declaring obedience to God’s Word.

Del Fehsenfeld Jr. said:

“We are never to relinquish the demands of God’s holiness in the name of love; for the greatest evidence of love is our obedience to His commands.”

This means that I will obey the Bible and measure, mark, and avoid those who are committed to error. A genuine love for God requires

that I care more about His Word and His will than the feelings and opinions and worldly programs of man. Love for God is the beginning and end of the separatist's actions.

1 Corinthians 13:6 says that the true character and nature of love: "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The Bible says that love is discerning and results in approving excellent or superior things. Philippians 1:9-11 states it very clearly: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

Paul is praying not only that the Philippians will continue in the display of Christian love, but also that their love will be exercised in full knowledge and all discernment, so as to honor obedience to God and His Word. True love clings to absolute truth and purity in all of its actions, ambitions, activities, and outward expressions. Love that is enlightened will enable believers to avoid what is questionable or downright wrong in view of the coming of Christ and our accountability toward Him.

This means a Spirit-produced love in the heart and life of the saint is something that sharpens the moral and spiritual perceptions and produces discernment in relationship to all Christian conduct – even the finer points of Christian conduct as the literal rendering would suggest - "the things that are more excellent" (Phil. 1:10). This is an aspect of love that is totally forgotten by New Evangelicals today. Divine love does not simply condemn wrong in those who are loved but seeks to cleanse them from it (Eph. 5:25-26). We love people but we love God more than people (Luke 14:26). Love does not mean that I must compromise with people and become a partaker with their sins. Loving others does not mean that I must agree with them on everything or go with them every place and do everything with them. This is an unbiblical conclusion and expression of love.

Vance Havner once said:

“Sometimes we mistake compromise for charity and put up with what we should put out.”

5. There is the call to obedience instead of compromise.

1 Peter 1:15

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.”

2 Timothy 1:9

“Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

God wants us to be obedient instead of compromise. If we heed His call to obedience and discipleship, we will not find ourselves becoming comfortable with compromise or condoning those things in our lives that God hates. We must hear His call ringing in our hearts today. It a call to remain obedient and not compromise in any way that is displeasing to God, whether it's ecumenical, worldly, musical, or fleshly compromise. Do you hear His call which is clearly revealed in His Word? God summons us to separation.

“Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult
Of our life’s wild, restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, “Christian follow Me.

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world’s golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, “Christian love Me more.”

God’s desire for His people is obedience. This is seen in both Old and New Testament. When we become comfortable with compromise, we have become disobedient to God’s unchangeable standard of holiness. 1 Samuel 15:22 gives to us the unchanging plan of God when Samuel says: “... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” 1 Peter 1:14 adds: “As

obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.” James 1:22 concludes by saying: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

Roy Laurin used to say:

“There is the lip side of Christianity and the life side of Christianity.”

The life side of Christianity is obedience. We must also remember that God is going to honor and reward obedience throughout eternity (Col. 3:22-24; Gal. 6:8-9). We sometimes think that a little compromise will somehow be overlooked by God on Judgment Day. This is not true. God honors obedience and eternity will reveal many surprises! Therefore “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22). God promised rich and true blessing to Joshua even during his earthly life if he was willing to strictly obey and follow the truth (Joshua 1:7-8). Caleb inherited the blessings of Canaan because he “wholly followed” the Lord (Josh. 14:8-9).

Showers of blessing (Ezek. 34:26) always come into our lives through obedience (Malachi 3:10; James 1:25; 1 Pet. 3:9). Deuteronomy 11:27 states, “A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day” – see also Ex. 32:29. The pathway of blessing lies in cooperating with God. Disobedience produces punishment (Heb. 12:6), lack of future reward (Gal. 6:8-9), and chokes out God’s richest blessing upon your life (Deut 11:28).

Joshua 24:24 says:

“And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

God is not interested in our excuses, opinions, feelings, or mega church success. He is interested in our obedience! God promises to bless the obedient practices that we do which are right and according to truth (James 1:25). We are told to be “obedient in all things” (2 Cor. 2:9). Remember: it is obedience, not convenience, that matters to God! Most Christians and churches today simply choose to ignore what the Bible teaches on separation because they are disobedient to God (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

We must ask ourselves these questions today. Is any issue more important than obedience to the Word of God? Is any issue important enough to ever justify disobedience or compromise? We must cut through all the layers of justifiable excuses that lead to compromise with those who are disobedient to God's commands and principles of Bible separation. Many Christians place issues, convenience, circumstances, and even credentials and charismatic personalities of speakers above obedience. These things somehow justify their act of disobedience in failing to separate from a church that has gone sour.

If it is more convenient for them to attend a local church nearby, which may compromise musically and support ecumenical and worldly practices of worship in the church, then some Christians will somehow justify their disobedience. If they have many friends in the church and the atmosphere of the church seems "homey" and "cozy" and all "bubbly" with love, then they somehow use this as an excuse to remain in a church that is not separated in practice. For many, it seems less divisive for them to just sit back and brush things under the carpet instead of making any waves. The motto is this: "Go along and get along." Christians sometimes conclude that they must remain in a church to try and help it and be part of the good things that are happening. So, they justify their decision to remain in a church ministry that supports worldly preachers and practices, a church that is settled in corrupt teachings and carnal activities.

We must remember that above all else, God is interested in our obedience, which includes separating from worldliness and compromise.

Deuteronomy 5:29 says:

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

Jesus is looking for a type of wholehearted sanctified living that is willing to obey and abide by all that is taught in the Word of God. This same inescapable truth was taught by Jesus in John 14:15 when He said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We may be obedient to some known commands and find ourselves in love with the Lord. But as we grow in our desire for holiness and when we

seek to obey all of His known instructions and commands, it's then that we will stretch our love to the highest limits and our lives will be abundantly rewarded. When we love the Lord we will hate all manifestations of evil (Psalm 97:10). The measure of our obedience to all of God's Word always demonstrates the highest measure of our love, loyalty, and commitment to the Lord.

We must remember that God cannot use believers in the way He wants to use them when they are willfully living in an open pattern of rebellion against some of His revealed will for their lives (Rom. 12:102). Impurity keeps us from God's greatest blessing. This is because God only blesses obedient actions. It's true that God may still choose to bless our righteous actions in spite of some level of disobedience that we practice in our lives, but God will never bless our disobedient actions. Never! God is never pleased with actions that run contrary to His revealed will and pattern for Christian living. Nor will those actions or deeds, which are worldly, receive God's blessings or future reward (1 Cor. 3:15).

In addition, not all that is said to be a blessing from God is God's direct blessing. God's true and rich blessing cannot be linked with actions that revolve around error and unholiness. The familiar axiom, "God is blessing me" may only be the result of carnal enjoyment and a covetous heart receiving what it wants. The true measure of blessing both now and in eternity comes when we obey His Word and do what we know is right and God honoring. It never pays to compromise. Let us remember that God never compromises on any issue.

1 John 1:5 says:

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

God is light. No darkness resided in His eternal being. This means He is perfectly holy. Since this is true, God cannot compromise on any issue! The same should be true of His followers. They are commanded to walk in the light as God is in the light (1 John 1:7) and not compromise God's truth, righteousness, and holiness.

John Ashbrook also said:

“Compromise ties your tongue, so that you cannot rebuke evil.” A desire for recognition, fear of controversy, peer pressure and weak convictions are all reasons why we compromise.”

Revelation 2:25 instructs us to hold fast to the position of holiness and truth: “But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.” Revelation 3:3 also states: “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Revelation 3:11 adds: “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

We are to hold fast to truth, which includes the doctrine of God’s holiness and not compromise truth and righteousness and God’s holy character in any way.

“Hold the fort, for I am coming,”
Jesus signals still;
Wave the answer back to Heaven,
“By Thy grace we will.”

6. There is the Biblical complaint of God toward His people who become comfortable with compromise.

God does complain about those church ministries, men, and movements which become comfortable with compromise and take the easy road of tolerance and acceptability. If we understand how God feels about compromise, we will not allow ourselves to become comfortable with compromise. Compromise can be seen when churches begin to tolerate worldliness and unwholesome practices revolving around Rock Music, immodest dress, women preachers and unsound doctrine. A few verses will be sufficient to demonstrate this tolerant or compromising attitude that is in the church today.

- **God complained about the compromise in the churches of Asia Minor.**

The hallowed halls of the church have become worldly jazz sessions that mimic the world and bring the appeal of cultural worldliness into the church. Yes, churches can musically compromise with the world. We find this taking place today as churches continually sell out to pragmatic worldly music and every other carnal form of worship that is being promoted in the church today. We must recognize this blatant compromise and separate from it. We must stand our ground.

Compromise may often begin within the church in a very subtle manner and eventually lead to acceptance of worldly music, certain false teachings of psychology, charismatic teachings, and other worldly forms of worship. We begin to condone that which we once shunned in the church and allow the enemy to advance errant philosophy and doctrine within the church assembly.

Revelation 2:20 speaks about those believers in the church of Thyatira who became comfortable with compromise when saying: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

The fact that this church put up with those things that were clearly wrong is a clear case of growing comfortable with compromise. Many times we put up with those things we should put out of our churches.

Revelation 2:24 speaks to those believers who did not compromise in the church of Thyatira: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

The Bible never calls for tolerance but demands hatred toward all sin, ungodliness, and false doctrine. There will always be those who compromise and those who do not compromise with error, false teaching, and a worldly philosophy or worship. This is why we must examine our lives and always seek to remain pure in our living, worship, and personal walk with God.

Revelation 2:6 speaks of those in the church of Ephesus who refused to compromise: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Revelation 2:15 speaks to those in the church of Pergamos who became comfortable with compromise: "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

Even through there were some good things going on in the church of Pergamos, God did not overlook their compromise nor condone any of their compromises. In a similar way, we cannot overlook compromise in any church or within our own personal lives. We must confront compromise and repent of it or else lose the Lord's rich blessing. It's true that there is no perfect church in relation to people since we are all flawed, but there are churches that do not compromise. There is no excuse for a Christian to attend a compromising church. When a Christian or church begins to compromise, God will not be fully pleased with it and His Word will reveal His displeasure against it.

A desire for recognition, fear of controversy, peer pressure and weak convictions are all reasons why we compromise. If a person is casual, careless and superficial (shallow), instead of being thorough and caring about spiritual details, he will eventually be swept away in the New Evangelical tide of compromise.

Carl Laney remarked:

"We must not compromise and call sin anything less than it is."

Someone else said:

"The most dangerous deviation is the one closest to your own position."

In other words, if we are not careful, we can become comfortable with compromise! Maybe you have grown comfortable with compromise since you put up with church worship that is worldly, versions of the Bible that are not trustworthy and sins which are unholy.

➤ **God complained about the compromise of Israel.**

Tolerance, accommodation and compromise with false teachers, worldly teachings, worldly practices, and apostasy have always plagued God's people. History has shown that God's own people can and do become comfortable with compromise.

Psalm 106:34-35 states:

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works."

This forbidden mixture became the spiritual downfall and erosion of the people of God. Compromise with those who are on a different spiritual path will always slowly erode your own convictions and stance. The pressure to conform will eventually overcome you and you will find yourself giving in to what is wrong and accepting and condoning what is unholy.

1 Corinthians 15:33

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

In other words, if you hang around with those who promote error and worldliness it will sooner or later rub off on you. This is why you cannot afford to condone worldliness in the church and in God's holy sanctuary. We cannot afford to give error, worldliness, and sin any chance to affect us and overcome us. We must separate from it and those who are not willing to defend, uphold and vindicate God's holiness. If you attend a compromising church long enough, you will in time find yourself becoming soft toward sin and worldliness and become comfortable with compromise.

Someone said:

"Almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it."

Exodus 34:14-16 gives this command:

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do

sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

This is the tragedy of compromise! Every man who is in charge of a household should let God speak to his heart today. When we mix with those who are moving in a totally different direction, on a different spiritual plain, we will eventually become affected by their own sin of worldliness. This is why God demands separation.

Ezra 9:1-3 declares:

“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.”

Ezra was horrified to see God’s people once again mix with the heathen people and their false religious system and pagan worship. After all the years of captivity and all they had been through he was dumfounded to see them going back into the way of compromise! If you put up with compromise, eventually the compromise will rub off on you. You will become numb to it and find yourselves excepting and even liking it.

1 Kings 22:43-44 says:

“And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.”

This passage records the compromise of Jehoshaphat. He did not clean out the places of idol worship from the land and in doing so was advocating a false type of pagan worship to the Lord. Dear friend, if we don't clean house in the church today and our own personal lives, we will advocate a pagan culture and its perverted music and worldly ways. The road of compromise is repeated many times in the history of Israel. May it be a lesson that teaches us how God hates compromise among the lives of His people which includes their approach to worship. God does not advocate every form or style of worship as so many are suggesting today. Certain sacrifices of worship are abominable and heathen in nature.

2 Kings 14:4

"Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places."

2 Kings 15:35

"Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the Lord."

2 Chronicles 20:33

"Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers."

Malachi 1:8 shockingly reveals that God did not even receive their form of corrupted worship: "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."

As believers we must be aware that we too can compromise with sin in our own personal lives. We can become cold and calloused toward sin and in time experience a numbing affect toward various sins, error, worldliness, and even carnal forms of worship. If we live too close to the world system and do not separate from it, sooner or later we will be overcome by it. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul exclaimed: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..."

There are many other examples of believers who compromised with the world system and their compromise was displeasing to God. Lot would be one prime example. Although Lot's spirit was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7) he still compromised with the filthy conversation of the wicked! It began when Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12) and then finally "sat in the gate of Sodom" (Gen. 19:1). In some ways, Lot became comfortable with compromise. This reminds us that if we do not draw lines and make ample space between ourselves and the world system, then sooner or later we will find ourselves becoming tolerant and lenient toward it or choose to overlook it. Like Lot, we will find ourselves in the middle of it.

Abraham stopped at Haran, which was a detour to the land of Canaan (Acts 7:4). Apparently, Abraham followed the advice of his father (Terah) and settled in this region for a period of time. God wanted Abraham to keep moving in the right direction but his stop off in Haran was definitely a wrong move and place of compromise. There are many Christians in the place of compromise today! Are you one of them? Instead of going to Canaan they settle down in Haran and get cozy out of God's place of true blessing. God wants us to keep walking to the land of Canaan where the real blessing lies. Don't compromise when you can have the land flowing with milk and honey!

Someone has said:

"In our age we have made an idol of tolerance."

It seems that today the church has created an atmosphere of leniency. Always remember that it is tolerance, which creates division in an assembly who wants to stand by truth. It is not intolerance that creates division. Tolerance or compromise, which leads to participation and acceptance of worldliness, false doctrine or apostasy, softens the heart toward these evils. A tolerant heart will in time become a soft heart that begins to accept and condone those things that God despises.

To win a game of chess, you must corner or "checkmate" your opponent. This means that his king comes under attack by one or more of your pieces, and his capture cannot be prevented. He is

trapped. You have him blocked on all sides. Your opponent may have more chessmen on the board than you, but if his king has nowhere to go, he is defeated.

This fascinating game is similar to the Christian life. Satan is a formidable enemy who takes advantage of our difficulties. When we're under the pressure of adversity and trials, we feel hemmed in and it seems we have nowhere to turn. In such circumstances many Christians will compromise their convictions and settle for defeat. Job's response in the midst of his trials, however, was just the opposite. He kept his heart from evil. We read, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).

In life, powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and eventually carry it to a place of shipwreck. Spiritual drifting is usually a slow and imperceptible process. We know it has occurred when we have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth that we once knew.

7. There is the conviction of separation which keeps us from worldly compromise.

2 Corinthians 6:17 commands:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

2 Corinthians 7:1 concludes:

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The Bible teaches separation from the sinful, evil, worldly, and compromising practices of the unsaved or unregenerate people of this world. The believer is to have no part with their defiled manner of living, which is ungodly and unrighteous. We must separate from their corrupt practices. The practice of Biblical separation keeps God's people from becoming comfortable with compromise.

Separation involves making boundaries and setting limits so that one does not break God's commands and offend His holiness. Setting

necessary boundaries is one way we apply God's Word to our lives and become sanctified by the Word (John 17:17). The world wants good mixers; God wants good separators. The "spirit of the world" (1 Cor. 2:12) or the orientation and philosophy of the world system which calls for mixture and compromise is always trying to break down our separated barriers and holy stance against sin.

The believer must come to understand and apply the commands and principles of Bible separation to his life to maintain a holy stance. If believers do not understand what Bible separation involves then they are only one step away from New Evangelicalism (abandoning the old evangelical teaching of Bible separation). The fact that we are told to separate from unbelievers, apostasy, and worldliness in general (Heb. 7:26; Rom. 12:1-2) would necessitate that we make boundaries and dividing lines so that we do not allow the world to control our hearts, lives, and local churches.

The whole idea behind the word separation involves keeping ourselves far away from worldly defilement (James 1:27). Separation does not mean to walk the fence or see how close we can get to the line without becoming contaminated. Sooner or later, we will step over the line and become corrupted with worldly living. Stop straddling the fence. Don't get close to the line. We need believers with conviction today! Each one of us need to have convictions based upon the enduring truth of Bible separation. Dear Christian friend, if you are not careful, you too will become comfortable with compromise!

Compromise always begins in the believer's heart before it shows up in the actual outward actions and decisions that God's people make. When people compromise in their outward actions it's because they have already compromised in their hearts! Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ..." Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." A believer's heart can be drawn away by the outward success of other ministries and the glory and fame of the world (1 John 2:15-17), or the deceitfulness of riches (Matt. 13:22), and many other alluring practices that Satan brings before our hearts. The heart is the place of decision. It's where all compromise begins.

Beware! The inward thoughts of compromise can take seed in our hearts and eventually they will find a beachhead in our lives (Eph. 4:27). In time, the outward compromise occurs, and believers find themselves growing comfortable with compromise. Compromise with error, false teaching, and unholy or unwholesome practices seems to be the norm in church life today. The drift of the times is one of tolerance, accommodation, and compromise.

Let us examine our lives and hearts and see if we have allowed ourselves to slip into the comfort zone and begun to accept what is not acceptable, ignore what cannot be ignored, practice what should not be practiced, do what should not be done, go where we should not go, and listen to Christian Rock Music, something we should not embrace in our personal lives and church ministries.

Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Beware, lest you become comfortable with compromise and find yourself drifting into the vast sea of New Evangelicalism for which there is no port or return.

The story is told how a hunter one day was ready to shoot a Polar Bear. But just as he was ready to shoot, the bear suddenly spoke up and said, “I can see that you want to shoot me, but I have some value to you if you keep me alive. I can warm you and keep you nice and cozy in this cold weather if I am still living.” The compromising hunter thought for a while and then consented. But the compromise he made with the Polar Bear did not pay off for him. You know how the story ended. The Polar Bear got a better bargain. The bear ate the hunter and the hunter was warmed inside the belly of the great bear. The lesson is simple. It never pays to compromise! This leads to our final point in this study.

8. There is the concern of losing reward which keeps us from compromise.

Beloved, compromise will not pay any eternal dividends when you stand before the Lord. All doctrinal, worldly, and fleshly compromise leads to lost blessing and reward both now and for eternity.

2 John 1:8 records:

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”

The “things which we have wrought” refer to those doctrinal positions on truth that were established among the brethren as they studied the Scriptures. The acceptance of error, false teaching, and deviant paths will cause us to lose truth, which we once held to, and in the end, it will affect our eternal reward. When we lose truth and follow or accept error, we stand to lose reward that we otherwise could have received. The Scripture is very clear about the possibility of believers losing reward for following error and any worldly teaching which results in those practices that dishonor God and “the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3). This is reward that believers could have received had they not compromised with false teaching, error, and worldly or carnal living.

Revelation 3:11

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Without a deep conviction for truth and God’s absolute standard of holiness, we will be swept into the New Evangelical practice of compromise and stand to lose the blessing of reward for eternity, reward we could have gained had we not compromised.

Someone once remarked:

“If you have to compromise your values in order to be accepted, you haven't won a thing, but you've lost a lot.”

This is true from a spiritual and eternal perspective, as it pertains to our future reward.

Galatians 6:7-8 sums it up very well when saying:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the

flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

The believer who becomes comfortable with compromise will lose blessing and reward that he could have acquired had he not chosen to compromise Biblical truth and holiness. The way of compromise is not the winning way! There is a price that we must pay when we become comfortable with compromise. Alas, the world is passing out of existence even as you are reading this study and there will be no reward attached to any of your actions of compromise (1 John 2:17). Those believers who decide to compromise with false teaching, worldly worship, and ecumenical folly will not receive reward for their wayward actions of compromise and living. Granted, we will all receive reward for the right things that we have done but not for any compromising positions and actions we have adopted in our lives. No fleshly actions will be rewarded when we stand before God.

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.”

God is holy and will not reward that which is unholy. The wood, hay, and stubble of fleshly compromise will be burned up (1 Cor. 3:12-13). Only those actions which are holy and righteous will stand the final examination and last in eternal reward (1 Cor. 3:14). I have told many friends and foes the same thing over the years. The grass is not greener on the other side! And when you side with compromise it will not pay in the end! You will be sorry that you became comfortable with compromise and condoned what you should not have condoned and put up with what you should have not put up with.

Obedience will result in greater blessing in this life and the life to come in the form of eternal reward. Knowing more truth and obeying this truth will always bring the greater blessing and reward (Matt. 25:19-23; Rev. 22:12). Not knowing truth and neglecting it, for whatever reason, will result in loss of reward, which we otherwise could have had when we stand before the Lord (2 John 6-7).

In the end, all our ignorance and unwillingness to surrender to God's plan of separation or holiness will not bring any eternal dividends. Following error and connecting our lives with wrong things and sinful patterns because of compromise will certainly affect our eternal reward. That is why we must practice complete obedience and have an open and teachable heart to all of God's known will for our lives (Ps. 40:8; John 4:34). Our obedience will be rewarded in the end. Remember that God does not always settle His accounts in this life. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus! As we willingly surrender to all of God's truth and will for our lives we will be rewarded abundantly in the future. Discipleship involves putting everything on the table and turning it over to Jesus Christ. It entails full surrender, obedience, and commitment to all that is true and right (Luke 9:23).

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 envisions the time of reward:

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

God will have the final say on all of our actions and works. Only those works that are not tainted with worldliness and which are genuine will stand the final test. Everything else will be eliminated as believers pass through the fire of God's omniscience to determine their eternal reward. The Bema Seat will bring out the effectiveness of Christian living as it pertains to high-handed sins, sins of ignorance, sins of omission, sins that have never been confessed, and the sins of compromise. We must always remember that God blesses and rewards believers in proportion to their commitment and obedience to the truth. This means that in the coming day there will no reward for compromise. In fact, reward will be lost because of our compromises.

This is why God wants us to be obedient in "all things" (2 Cor. 2:9) and in "word and deed" (Romans 15:18). Once again, God places a premium on obedience and we can be sure that eternal reward will be given to us in proportion to how we have yielded to God, practiced obedience, and lived a holy life (Romans 6:22). God chooses to bless and reward those good and righteous things that we do for Him in

spite of our ignorance of certain sins. However, we can only expect God to bless our lives in a greater way, as we know truth, yield to truth and to God, and then give our lives and bodies to Him (Romans 6:11-13). This is because only obedience brings God's true and richest blessing and reward (James 1:25; Joshua 1:8).

May God speak to all our hearts. We do not want to look back with regrets for living a life of spiritual compromises. Undoubtedly, we will all have some regrets, but this is no reason or excuse to live a life of willful or ignorant compromise. We must be ready to do God's will and bidding with no reserves and no retreats, so in the end, when we stand before the Lord, we will have no regrets that we have harbored tolerance and compromise in our Christian lives.



An old adage says that if you put a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will leap out right away to escape the danger. However, if you put that same frog into a kettle that is filled with water that is mild and pleasant, and then you gradually increase the heat in the kettle until it starts boiling, the frog will not become aware of the threat until it is too late (cooked frog!). Whether true or not, the illustration certainly speaks to the subject of compromise. Many times compromise occurs gradually. But eventually we can become rooted in the way of compromise. The sad result is that we will find ourselves comfortable with compromise.