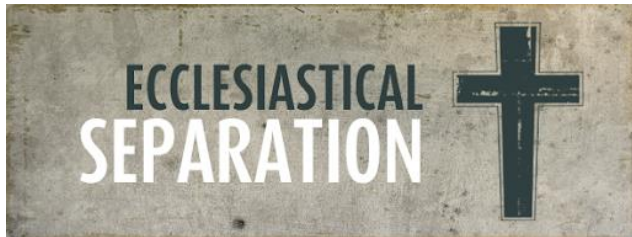


Eight Reasons for Ecclesiastical Separation

Pastor Kelly Sensenig



Ecclesiastical what? The word church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*. So, ecclesiastical separation simply means separation from other churches because they are in some measure practicing spiritual, doctrinal, and

worldly departures from what is sound doctrine and sanctified living. Should we separate from churches and brethren that are not practicing and holding to the doctrine of Bible separation? The Bible informs us that there comes a time when we must withdraw ourselves from evangelical churches because of the worldly and doctrinal compromises occurring in these church fellowships. We need a clear statement and reaffirmation of the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation today.

Douglas McLachlan once remarked:

“To our forefathers the doctrine of separation was a *conviction*. To many of our fathers still living today the doctrine of separation was received as an *inheritance*. To the fundamental Christian parents of the fathers the doctrine of separation has grown to be a *convenience*. To many children of these parents the doctrine of separation has become a *nuisance*.”

Although the teaching on Bible separation has become an extinct dinosaur in many evangelical churches the faithful pastor needs to keep addressing the Scriptures that clearly teach this doctrine. There is a need for a carefully defined, Biblically based, and compassionately implemented concept of Christian separation. Separation has fallen on hard times. But to reject separation is to depart from something that should be part of Biblical Christianity and our personal lives as believers. Ernest Pickering appropriately said Biblical separation is the “story of a struggle” what will not end unto Jesus Christ returns.

The Bible warns that separation will be rejected by those who turn from New Testament Christianity, and we see this happening within the professing church (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Failure to instruct in sound doctrine (including Bible separation) is the reason for misconduct and the cultural impotence of Christians.

Pastor David Moss writes:

“Separation has been practiced by God’s people in every era of human history: by the nation of Israel, by First Century Christians, by Reformers in the 1500’s, and by Believers in the early part of the Twentieth Century. It is not a new doctrine and it has perpetual relevance to every generation and to every culture.”

Some of the reasons for rejecting separation can be summarized in this way.

- Because separation promotes division.

Of course, this is exactly what separation is supposed to do when it states in Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” Division is sometimes necessary to keep a church spiritually healthy and free from contamination with the world and apostasy.

- Because separation is not a major doctrine.

But who decides which doctrines are major and minor? The “doctrine according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3) is a reflection of the doctrine of separation and what could be more important than mirroring the holiness of God in your life? Furthermore, the more precise people are in their doctrinal understanding of the Bible they more stable they will be in the faith (Col. 1:23). Remember that every practice belongs to some doctrine (Eph. 4:1). Of course, doctrine without practice is dead, and practice without doctrine is blind. We must remember that God has called us to live redemptively – not worldly (Titus 2:14).

- Because separation is legalism.

Legalism has become a theological cuss word that some Christians use against those who practice Bible separation. But living a separated life is not practicing legalism for legalism consists of using a law or works approach to gain or merit salvation (Acts 15:1) which is something that has nothing to do with practicing Biblical separation. Misinformed Christians also think that having rules or discipline is legalism. If this were the case God would be the greatest legalist that ever lived because He gave 613 commandments in the Old Testament.

Paul, the champion of grace taught the importance of discipline (1 Cor. 9:24-27) and that grace was not antinomianism or an open license to practice libertinism or radical individualism without restraints (Rom. 6:1-2). Grace actually disciplines us so we can deny worldly lusts and ungodliness and live a godly life (Titus 2:11-12). Living under grace involves reliance upon our union or identity with Christ to provide us with daily victory (Rom. 6:1-15). The Grace Dispensation does not promote liberty from all ethical restraints but freedom from enslavement to sin. For many Christians today grace has gone wild! But grace is not to bring us to a state of disgrace but transformation in character and conduct.

➤ Because separation is unloving.

The “non-loving” argument is a smokescreen used by advocates of a non-separatist viewpoint to make those who practice separation to be unkind and not possessing Christian love toward others. But separating from someone because of their sin is not an unloving act but demonstrating to them that we do love them and want them restored to a proper walk and relationship with God (Gal. 6:1). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that love always “Rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). Biblical love is not “wishy-washy. Christ said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (Jn, 14:15). Love and obedience accompany one another in life.

So, the non-separatist movement among evangelicals has redefined love as acceptance of carnality, overlooking sin and false doctrine, and creating a breach with God’s holiness and glory. We are to love others in the truth (2 John 1:1) and love is walking after God’s commandments (1 John 1:6). Charles Spurgeon said: “I am quite sure that the best way to promote union, is to promote truth.” Of course, loving others does not mean I must agree with them on everything and compromise with them. In fact, we are to love God above all others and follow His will for our lives (Mark 12:30).

➤ Because separation does not promote peace in the body of Christ.

It’s clear that God has not called us to smoke the peace pipe with apostasy and the saints who are participating with worldliness in the church. It’s not always possible to promote peace (Rom. 12:18). Therefore, we must never compromise to promote a false unity and peace that is not based upon truth and God’s

standard of Bible separation (Rom. 12:2). We are never to promote unity at the expense of doctrinal purity (Jude 3-4).

- Because we are commissioned to remain in churches – not separate from them.

Some have taken the argument “Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain” (Rev. 3:2) as the green light to remain in liberal and worldly churches who may be drifting from the historic roots of Christianity and into pagan forms of Christian rock music. But this argument breaks down for the simple reason that Sardis was not an apostate church or necessarily a worldly church like Thyatira. They had simply lost their zeal for the things of the Lord and needed revival.

In general, anti-separatists use the churches of Asia Minor to teach that we should remain in local churches even when they are not doctrinally perfect and corrupt in some of their practices. But they fail to see that God reveals His sore displeasure with their compromises and shortcomings and in some cases promises to judge them for their lack of repentance (Rev. 2:5; 3:19). Christ’s instructions to these churches does not reveal God’s entire mind on the Biblical subject of separation from apostasy and worldliness. But the point of Jesus is this: “Fix what is wrong!” We know from other Scripture that if something cannot be corrected (Eph. 5:11) we need to separate from the disorderly brethren (2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15) to stop the spread of sin (1 Cor. 5:7), maintain ethical integrity, and properly represent God’s holiness and glory (1 Cor. 10:31).

- Because Jesus prayed for unity among all Christians in John 17.

The John 17 argument that we all may be one is one of the most popular arguments for ecumenical practices. Jesus said in John 17:11: “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” The New Evangelicals have always based their unscriptural unity on the basis of this high priestly prayer of Jesus. However, the prayer of Jesus for unity has already been answered. Jesus did not make this prayer looking ahead to the New Evangelical Movement of compromise that would begin in 1948 and which continues to the present! He made this prayer in light of His ascension (John 17:1) and the coming of Pentecost which would begin the baptizing ministry

of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would unite the regenerate people together into a spiritual unity, which would be called the body of Christ or New Testament Church (John 17:23). The prayer of Jesus has already been answered.

This verse does not deal with organizational unity but with the theological and spiritual unity or tie that we have together in the body of Christ (John 17:20-21). Jesus' prayer does not speak of organizational ecumenicalism but spiritual ecumenicalism which brings people into the living body of Christ – the Church (1 Cor. 12:13).

The extremes and diversions to living a separated life must also be avoided.

- Asceticism (Col. 2:20-23). God has not called us to become hermits in a monastery or give up the basic comforts of society to gain or merit justification before God. In the area where I live the Amish believe rubber on tires is worldly, owning cars and trucks is a taboo, and that electricity is of the Devil. They practice asceticism to gain or merit salvation. They do not understand the message of free grace (Rom. 3:24).
- Legalism (Acts 15:1; Gal. 3:3). This is the effort to become spiritual through strictly adhering to a legal system with the ultimate mindset and goal of contributing to one's salvation or maintaining a person's justification before God (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 5:1). Legalism may also consist of ex-cathedra rules like the Pharisees or legalists of Christ's day enforced upon the people which were based upon faulty interpretations of God's truth and the inventions of manmade ideas (Mark 7:8). Biblical separation is not fanatical.
- Judgmentalism (Matt. 7:1-2). There is a place for righteous judgment (John 7:24; Matt. 7:16, 20) but the type of judgment Jesus spoke about in Matthew 7:1-2 involves setting yourself up as being better than others ("holier-than-thou") and comparing yourself with other Christians. This practice is strictly forbidden (2 Cor. 10:12) and is not to be the spirit behind Bible separation. Our separation is part of our priestly sacrifice to God (1 Pet. 2:5).

Separation is a Biblical concept in both the Old and New Testaments. It is transdispensational in nature. The principle teaching of Bible separation is the

same in both Old and New Testaments. It revolves around marking a clear distinction between the holy and unholy, the clean and unclean, and the reverent and irreverent (Lev. 10:10; 23:36; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:14-17). To ignore the teaching on Bible separation means to sidestep God's will and purpose for our lives which is to live holy and consecrated unto God.

Of course, the intricate laws (Exodus 30:19-21; 35:3; Lev. 1-7; 5:2; 11; 19:19; 35:2-3; Numb. 6:18; Deut. 22:10-11; 23:1-4, 12-13; 21), which were previously used as typical lessons and teaching tools (Heb. 9:9, 23-24) to express God's desire for holy living and worship, have been rescinded for New Testament living (Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Col. 2:16-17). However, the moral and ethical principle of holiness which they taught (Lev. 20:25; 22:4) remains intact for daily living and worship under grace which are fulfilled through the Spirit's New Covenant ministry (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:15-16).

Tabernacles, temples, and typical lessons in feast days (Lev. 23) are no longer God's plan for the Church. These ceremonial laws were comparable to object lessons designed to teach practical holiness in the Christian life (Lev. 11:44-47; 19:1-2; 22:31-33) and worship (Lev. 23:2-4). They could be viewed as teaching tools to help the people understand that God was holy, and they were required to live in a holy fashion (Ex. 19:3-6). The intricate laws between the clean and unclean and the entire Mosaic code was a perpetual reminder of God's holiness (Lev. 19:2; 20:7, 26) and that Israel was to be set apart from the pagan nations around them (Ex. 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 14:1-2; 28:1) under the Old Covenant of the Mosaic law.

Of course, Israel's separation was not only typical but ethical in nature for they were not to adopt the sinfully depraved actions of the pagan nations that surrounded them (Lev. 18:26; 20:27; Deut. 18:9-12; 20:18; 32:16; 2 Kings 17:15; 2 Chron. 33:2; 36:14; Ezra 6:21; 9:1; Jer. 7:30; 10:2). Today in the Grace Dispensation, grace believers are also commanded to separate from pagan people and their ways (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Pet. 4:2-4) but not in an exclusive or restrictive manner as Israel did since we are called upon to reach out to lost heathen Gentiles (Mark 16:15). Peter learned this in the vision of the sheet (Acts 11:5-9). It's obvious that there has been some change in the outworking of the program of God today. But the ethics of Bible separation remain unchanged. This is why Nehemiah was commanded to build a wall.

John Miles, the president of the Bible institute where I attended, concluded: "God gave a book in the Old Testament to picture separation, the book of Nehemiah. We perhaps have asked, 'Why did God put such an emphasis on a wall?' It is because God is picturing something to us in the Old Testament which is His pattern for separation throughout the Word of God."

Nehemiah 4:6 says, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." Everyone today wants to tear down walls, but before you do this, you should find out why it was built! Many times we must erect walls to remain separate from the enemy, compromise, and worldliness. Without lines and walls, we become open to errant doctrine, pagan belief systems and practices, and will end up following "every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14).

Now to our main objective in this study. Let's consider the importance of ecclesiastical separation from other churches, the brethren, denominationalism, and ecumenicalism. What does the Bible say about these things?

2 Thessalonians 3:6 reveals this about ecclesiastical separation:

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition (*passed down ethical and Biblical instructions, all the Scripture given to the Church, including apostolic example designed to regulate behavior*) which he received of us."

This is a Biblical imperative – not a suggestion. In this study, we want to address the specific need to separate from those brethren whose churches are practicing worldliness, disorder, irreverence, and promoting errant teachings contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10; 2. Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1). The Bible teaches there is a separation that must be practiced from churches that are not necessarily apostate, but which have begun to compromise for reasons such as popularity, numerical growth, acceptance among the evangelical community, and fearing what man might think of them (Prov. 20:25). Perhaps these churches and pastors are beginning to allow contemporary rock music in their services, permitting immodest dress and other irreverent practices, accepting Charismatic and other errant teachings, cooperating with ecumenical or inter-denominational practices, and allowing women preachers within their services and congregational meetings.

God has called us to separate from all of these departures in doctrine and deportment of living.

Dr. John Whitcomb has observed a general rule:

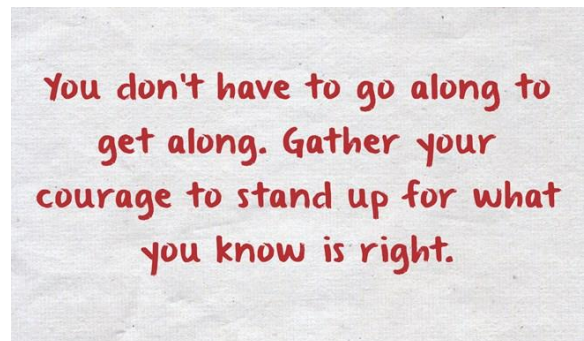
“The only possible way to perpetuate His truth is to separate it from all forms of error and compromise. A refusal to recognize this fundamental fact is the fatal blunder of modern ecclesiastical ecumenism in all its forms, including evangelical ecumenism. Truth cannot be perpetuated through compromise and compromise cannot be avoided without separation.”

Here is the point. When it comes to standing against error, worldliness, unbiblical philosophies, the mixture of psychology with Scripture, and overlooking the clearly defined lines of biblical orthodoxy and ethics, a believer must practice Bible separation.

M. R. Deehan wrote:

“There are times in one’s life when silence is not a virtue and failure to speak out against an evil becomes a sin.”

Here is an important question: Why can’t we just “go along” to “get along?” The Bible gives us the answer. It’s because God has called us to separate from those churches that are promoting error in relation to doctrine, which would also include the doctrine of sanctification or separation (“the doctrine which is according to godliness” – 1 Tim. 6:3).



The word “separate” (2 Cor. 6:17) means to strike or mark off boundaries and put parameters around your life, so you will not be affected by compromise on any level, including worldliness and mimicking the unregenerate lifestyle of the ungodly. God wants us to establish boundaries and parameters around our lives. We must mark the boundary lines and not cross over them today. God has called us to ecclesiastical separation from those religious movements and ministries which are corrupt in teaching and practice. We must share a strong conviction against going “over the line” and getting close to the “borderline.” For instance, we don’t want to pitch our tent toward pagan worship or ecumenicalism

(Gen.13:12) and eventually end up inside the ecclesiastical gates and walls of compromised Christianity or Christendom (Gen. 19:1).

To prevent this from happening, we need to strike a distinguishable line and create clearly defined boundaries against the enemy, so we might “separate” or make a clean break from all apostasy and everything that would promote apostasy, worldliness, and pagan worship. In a day when the boundary lines are disappearing and being erased God has called us to separate from all religious departure in both doctrine (teaching) and deportment (behavior).



Remember that broader parameters of fellowship can eventually bring us to the place of loose doctrinal positions and cause us to lack separatist convictions. Almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it. Scripture repeatedly warns that mixture with those who are in error will contaminate us (1 Kings 11:2; 2 Kings 21:2; Deut. 18:9 - “thou shalt not learn to do after their

abominations”). Don’t mimic the world system! An old Plymouth Brethren once said to me: “God hates a mixture.” This is good advice in times like these.

Eventually our doctrinal position and separated practice will become weakened when we fail to separate from those movements, men, and ministries which are corrupt in teaching or practice. The old adage says that “Bad company corrupts good morals.” This is still true. 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns us: “Be not deceived: evil communications (companionships) corrupt good manners.” The bottom line is this. If we cooperate with error and worldliness long enough, we will begin to soften our heart toward it and eventually accept it as a normal part of Christianity. In short, it will rub off on us! Wrong associations are bound to adversely affect us sooner than later.

Martyn Lloyd Jones warned:

“Be careful with whom you associate with if you want to stand fast in the faith.”

We need a refresher course on the teaching of Bible separation from the fellowships (church services) of worldly and compromising brethren who promote

questionable practices in their congregations. This practice may not be popular, but it is needful unless we want to just “go along” to “get along” and not obey God’s Word on Bible separation. Accommodation or tolerance is the popular trend of the day (Rev. 2:20). Sometimes we put up with things we should put out of our personal lives and churches. Stick to your Fundamentalist/separatist roots or moorings. Don’t sell principle for popularity; instead, “continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of” (2 Timothy 3:14). After all, Fundamentalism ceases to exist when separation ceases.

Harry Ironside once said:

“If it’s new it’s not true, and if it’s true it’s not new.”

Good advice! This means we should not second guess God’s Word on Bible separation. Instead of bowing before God’s will, we can find ourselves examining it and evaluating it. We can look for a loophole and try to escape from God’s will instead of practicing it. Our responsibility is to simply accept what God says about Bible separation and practice it in our personal lives and church fellowships.

Beware of the drift of the times. Remember that it’s easy to be neutral. God hates a mixture and so should we. Also, participation softens the heart toward apostasy or worldliness and the pressure to compromise standards of separation is always working against us. Compromise always takes a man further than he intends to go. Remember that what we tolerate and allow we finally embrace. Therefore, we must set the limits, draw the lines of separation, and never cross the lines. This principle can be seen in the familiar words: “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (Deut. 22:28) and “Remove not the old landmark” (Prov. 23:10). Stick to the clear road markers that God’s saints have followed for centuries.

Someone said:

“It’s not the good old days but good old ways that we must follow.”

We live in a day of “feel good” religion instead of “old time” religion. However, we must remember that God does not compromise on any issue and neither should we. This means we must stay anchored to our landmark of Bible separation. And never forget: “The most dangerous deviation is the one closest to your own position.” It’s far better to say, “No!” The Bible position must be held therefore “turn not from it to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 1:7).

There are eight reasons for ecclesiastical separation.

CALLING: The Biblical basis for all separation, whether personal or ecclesiastical as emphasized in this study, is the holiness of God. God has *called* us to represent purity for the Bible has summoned us to holiness. This is the foundational reason and purpose for all ecclesiastical separation. Our desire to live separate and not condone doctrinal departure and disorderly/worldly conduct within local churches and our own personal lives boils down to this very thing. God is holy and we should emulate His character in everything we do, where we fellowship with other believers, and how we worship with God's people. Everything must emulate God's holiness if we want to be more like God and live godly lives.



We must not only take time to be holy but live holy! 1 Pet. 1:14-16 declares: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance (*the course of our past life*): But as he which hath called you is holy (*the character of God*), so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (*the course of our present life*); Because it is written, Be ye holy (*the command*); for I am holy" (*the character of God*). The holiness of God means that He is absolutely and perfectly separated from all evil and sin and in everything that He does because of His intrinsically purity (Job 34:10; Hab. 1:12-13; 1 John 1:5). Dr. Charles Ryrie commented: "In respect to God, holiness means not only that He is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others."

Yes, God is the greatest separatist that ever lived! This means we should emulate God in our Christian life and practice separation from sin (holiness). Separation is rooted in holiness or God's character and ways and therefore we should emulate God's separation from sin (Lev. 11:44). Dr. Ernest Pickering, in his book on *Biblical Separation* makes a valuable point: "God's demands upon His people are based upon His own standards. Truth and holiness are inseparable companions. If God is separate from evil, He expects His people to be so. ... God's holiness demands not only holy individuals but also holy congregations. ... Certainly we cannot achieve

the purity that God alone possesses, nor can we even achieve perfect purity on a relative human scale; nevertheless, our goal and objective is purity.”

Leviticus 20:26 is also a good summary verse for the Biblical basis for separation: “And ye shall be holy unto me (*command of God*): for I the Lord am holy (*character of God*), and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine (*consecration to God*).” 1 Thessalonians 4:7 reconfirms our calling. “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” Separation is holiness in action.

Dennis W. Costella correctly states:

“The Biblical doctrine of separation is based on one of God’s essential attributes - His holiness. He never looks upon sin with the least degree of tolerance, and this necessarily extends to His will concerning the conduct of His children.”

There is no darkness in God (1 John 1:5-6) and therefore we should seek to emulate this quality of Christlikeness in our lives which necessitates separation from sin and the world (2 Cor. 3:18). Separating from worldliness (rock music, corrupt literature, the seductive media and cyber world, philosophies, attitudes, etc.) is necessary if we are going to live a life consecrated to God. The influence of the world in believer’s hearts and lives destroys their sensitivity to what is truly acceptable to God (Rom. 12:2).

Ecclesiastical separation will result in believer’s separating from what we might term as the “middle-of-the-road” churches, organizations, and movements which do many good things but at the same time repudiate the doctrine of Biblical separation by their adoption of worldly methods, which do not maintain ethical and doctrinal integrity, and which promote ecumenicalism with those who also teach errant doctrine.

It’s true that separation includes separating *from* something, but it also conveys the through of being separated *unto* Someone (God). In other words, all our separation must be directed toward God and is a personal matter between the believer and God. All separation must be



Godward in its focus (“perfecting holiness in the fear of God” - 2 Cor. 7:1). Separation is to be practiced out of a loving slave relationship with Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 7:22-23) and offered up to God as a holy priestly offering (1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 13:15-16; Rom. 12:1). Colossians 3:23-24 states: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily (*out of soul*), as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

Floyd Barackman said: “We initiate and express holiness by separating ourselves from that which is morally unlike God and by ourselves apart unto Him and His will for the manifestation and use in this world.” Lewis Sperry Chafer said: “Separation as a doctrine represents the human side of sanctification. Separation is from something unto something else ...” God expects us to enter the arena of separation and He has empowered us to come out victorious. God has called us to be Grace Age separatists in a way that brings glory to Him.

Biblical separation is a calculated decision to withdraw or separate ourselves from the people, places, practices, perspectives, plans, and patterns of the world system so we might be holy and honor God with our daily lives. We should not go beyond Scripture when practicing separation but follow God’s dictates on Scriptural separation. It is important to draw distinguishable boundaries between ourselves and the world.

Romans 12:1 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” In Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 2:9 God’s people are called “peculiar” people meaning that they are a special people separated unto God for His purpose and glory. Our separation or sanctification means to be separated *from* something (2 Cor. 6:17) and *unto* Someone (1 Thess. 4:3-4). The Godward focus of our sanctification is important. We are doing it to please the Lord (2 Tim. 2:4) and glorify Him through properly representing His character and ways (1 Cor. 10:31).

Like conversion, we must first turn to God from idols (1 Thess. 1:9). If one is first separated unto God, he will be separated from the world. Included in this point would be the underlying motive that all our separation is done out of love for God (Matt. 22:37). I will serve Thee because I love Thee! If we forget that we are really giving ourselves to the Lord Jesus and living for Him as we practice separation

then our separation will become an empty, hypocritical, ritualistic, and legalistic practice. However, if we practice Bible separation unto the Lord first and foremost it becomes a beautiful expression of our love, loyalty, and a New Testament priestly sacrifice to Him (1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 13:15-16). True Biblical separation always starts by yielding to God and desiring to be what God wants us to be (Rom. 6:11-13; 12:1). Separation is a matter of obedience to the Lord and a testimony before others.

Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” Behind all separation should be a heart prepared to seek the Lord. Dr. Ironside used to say, “Do not traffic in unfelt truth.” A proper heart attitude is essential to separation. Tenderness of heart is an absolute necessity to both learn and apply the doctrine of separation to our lives. The Christian is to have a spirit that will produce a passion for holiness. Proverbs 23:26 says, “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” Psalm 119:32, “I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.” We must do “the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6). God is looking for your heart! When God has your heart, He has everything – your eyes, feet, ears and total obedience. Tozer once said: “Keep your heart with all diligence and God will look after the universe” (Prov. 4:23).

Our holy calling of separation should be reflected in what we condone and associate with in relation to church meetings and services, missionary boards, Bible colleges, and other religious affiliations. God has called us to holiness in all our partnerships, companionships, and church fellowships. Therefore, I must choose to part company with fellow believers anytime I must misrepresent God’s holiness or character in a local church setting by participating with carnality, worldly music, or errant philosophies and teaching. Remember that when I continue to attend a worldly church that promotes false doctrine and unseparated practices, I eventually put my stamp of approval on the very things that are occurring within the church and its worship services.

God has “called you out of darkness into his marvellous (*amazing and wonderful*) light” (1 Pet. 2:9). We have a call from God to live a holy life which means to be set apart from worldly and fleshly things and separated unto God. This means we should be an example in our Christian life (1 Tim. 4:12), representing God’s holiness, which extends to what we condone and practice in church services and

gatherings. I am to be an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20) - not a promoter of worldly compromise. Woe unto that Christian who gets along with the world and wins its praises! (John 12:43; 2 Tim. 3:12). There are too many “easy riders” in the church today that want to ride loose in the saddle. But God has called us to live a pure life that reflects His holiness.

Separation is holiness in action. It is putting into practice what we believe about God’s holiness. It is standing up for God’s purity and separating from churches, when necessary, in order to defend, maintain, and honor God’s holiness and glorify God (“*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*” – Hab. 1:13). The same should be true of God’s followers. We should want to emulate His holiness by refusing to participate with and condone those things which do not align with God’s holy character and ways.

Someone said:

“Holiness is a command to be obeyed, a course to be followed, and a commitment to be kept.”



Many Christians make the claim that they want to go to larger churches “where things are happening.” However, we must remember that whenever Christ is truly honored and the Word is faithfully preached in a church, this becomes an important place to meet. We must also remember that

God has never been impressed with the majority (Luke 12:32 - “little flock”). Noah, the prophets, Caleb and Joshua, John the Baptist, and Jesus were not in the majority. They were not part of the mainstream and yet God blessed them. The Lord will also bless us, even when we refuse to participate with the religious majority, involved within the compromising and ecumenical practices of our day. We must remember that the stress of the New Testament is on the local church, not the ecumenical crusade.

So out of love for God and respect for His holiness, it should be our desire to represent Biblical separation in the best possible light and approve only

“excellent” or superior things (Phil. 1:10) within the local church and our personal lives. The issue is not: “But there are good things happening, people are getting saved.” The greater issue is: “Are bad things taking place which are a clear violation of God’s holiness, righteousness, and which do not glorify God?”

Nobody is against good things happening and the salvation of souls! However, we should take our stand against the bad things which violate God’s holiness and realize that God’s work done in God’s way without compromise does bear fruit (“fruit unto holiness” - Rom. 6:22) and brings Him glory (1 Cor. 10:31). “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17). The same should be true of our lives. We can share the Gospel without compromising God’s holiness. To conclude that souls cannot be reached or saved without ecumenicalism and the introduction of rock music is an affront on the sovereignty of God (John 6:44; 12:36). God draws people to salvation – not ecumenicalism, rock music, and other worldly gimmicks.

Music is still the big issue that continues to corrupt and carnalize the local churches through adopting a form of paganized sound and the same rock idiom that Satan has historically used to promote sex, drugs, and rebellion against God. Churches and Christians actually believe people won’t be converted to Christ without using the same type or style of music as the unsaved listen to. My response to this type of thinking is simple. We must remember that God is “Lord of the harvest” (Matt. 9:38) and not man with his movements and methods of maligned music and pragmatism which are designed to reach the lost.

Again, some naive Christians will tell you that we need to adapt to the unsaved lifestyle of people for they cannot get saved without Christian rock music, especially if they have been involved in secular rock music. That’s like saying a drug addict won’t get clean without taking a lesser form of the same drug or those enslaved to pornography won’t be released from porn unless they dabble with a small amount of porn. Of course, the church gurus are still saying, “God can use anything by turning it into good.” Really! Can God use sex, drugs, pornography, child molestation and somehow turn these things into good and glorify Himself? The argument is nonsensical and laughable if it were not so serious.

I need to reiterate this. Never forget that God is sovereign – not music! He does not need Christian rock music or any other method that man invents to get the

attention of sinners. Souls are saved because of the Gospel message (Rom. 1:16) - not because of pagan-sounding music. Faith comes by hearing the truth – not by rock music (Rom. 10:17). In fact, the sound of rock music breeds confusion to the wayfaring sinner who needs to repent of his old lifestyle and ways (Luke 24:47).

If the musical style is familiar to the unregenerate person, it becomes a comfort to him because it is non-convicting. The musical style of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) itself is non-convicting. The sinner wants his lifestyle to be validated musically. This can keep him from seeing himself as God sees him (Rom. 3:10). Christian rock music makes people comfortable in their lifestyle and does not produce a large enough chasm between God and the sinner (Rom. 3:23) and how much they need a Savior from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Dear Christian, stay the course. “Keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). The music, methods, and ministries that we promote and participate with should doctrinally, ethically, and musically represent God’s righteous and holy character. Satan loves to grease the tracks when we begin to compromise and not follow the path of Bible separation, consecration, and holiness. The devil doesn't much care which side of the road we run off if we end up in the ditch! Sometimes we take others with us and “both fall into the ditch (Luke 6:39). This is a sad but true reality.



COMMAND: God has also commanded us to live a separated life which is another reason to practice ecclesiastical separation. The Greek word behind “separate” (aforidzo) speaks of a marked boundary line. It means we are to draw a line and not go beyond that line. We must set the limits and draw the lines. And they are not gray lines as everyone speaks about today! There are clear boundaries to be marked off. Let us learn where the limits are and by God’s grace endeavor to establish the lines, so we do not compromise and become another statistic of a Christian who has jettisoned their Biblical moorings and jumped off the separation ship for the so-called greener pastures of the modern or New Evangelical Movement. The attitude of Scripture is one of complete separation from all evil and darkness.



2 Corinthians 6:14 states: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (*joined together with them in following and promoting their evil agenda and wicked ways*): for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

John Talley wrote: “The professing church is filled with spiritual apathy, moral laxity, doctrinal compromise, and unbelief. Paul exhorts the saints not to be yoked with a

species which is a different kind. The Christian is incompatible with the heathen species.”

In other words, God has commanded the believer to separate from the unrighteous practices of pagan unbelievers which run contrary to God’s Word, and which do not represent His glory. Paul was referring specifically to idolatrous practices of the heathen world of his day. Of course, the application to unbelief and religious paganism today is very real within the ranks of ecclesiastical Christendom which consists of false religions, liberal Protestantism, apostate denominationalism, and Roman Catholicism. Sadly, there is another type of paganism (musical paganism) occurring even within churches that preach the Gospel. This becomes another contemporary reason for separation.

We are aware of how many churches during these last days have adopted the heathenism of rock music by wedding together the sound of the rock culture with words related to Christianity and the Gospel. They also imbibe and tolerate secular humanism in the teachings of secular psychology and seek to Christianize it by using the Bible to support humanistic ideas. This is what Paul is teaching in this section of Scripture (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Don’t mix paganism with Christianity, whether it’s religious apostasy or other pagan concepts, and bring them into the work of God. We are not to support a paganized form of Christian music or other unethical and doctrinal departures which are becoming the norm in the contemporary church.

The verses found in 2 Corinthians 14-15 present unchanging principles of Bible separation that apply to these types of heathen practices and ways. The commands of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 bring out the error of mixing with pagans and pagan unbelief by presenting various contrasting questions: “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?” ...

There are two opposing and incompatible systems in the world today and I must get on the side of “righteousness” and “light” instead of “unrighteousness” and “darkness.” We are not to build bridges with the enemy or pagans but erect walls (Nehemiah 4:6-17). Again, why did God put such an emphasis on a wall? It’s because He is teaching His people about the importance of separation from the ungodly. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were unbelievers, and they hated the wall and did everything possible to stop the building of the wall because the wall separated God’s people from them.

Satan and the unbeliever wants amalgamation and infiltration, but God wants separation. Today the saints want to tear down the walls but before you tear down a wall find out why it was built. Who is on the Lord’s side? We must demonstrate that we are on God’s side by refusing to associate with unrighteousness, darkness, error, and worldliness. We should erect walls and not tear them down. Why? So we do not end up compromising with false teachers, apostasy, and cultural contamination with the world.



Based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, there are four principles related to Bible separation that we should follow. These principles would directly apply to separating from non-believers but also believers who act like non-believers and adopt pagan ideas and practices in their churches. The principles do not change regardless of who the people are and what they are practicing.

These commands are timeless and applicable in all situations.

✓ **Righteousness demands separation from apostasy and worldliness – 14a**

“for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?”

Whatever is unrighteous I must cut off and separate from and not participate with it in any way.

✓ **Light demands separation from apostasy and worldliness – 14b**

“what communion hath light with darkness?” (metaphors for purity and sin)

Whatever is not pure I must separate from and not condone it.

✓ **Christ demands separation from apostasy and worldliness – 15a**

“And what concord (*agreement*) hath Christ with Belial”

Whatever Satan creates and promotes to cause rebellion against God, I must separate from and not participate with those practices (the occult, pagan practices, musical rebellion, etc.). Belial (worthless and lawless one) is another name for Satan. Belial began rock music and therefore in some way we associate with him when using a rock rhythm and idiom in our worship and churches. We cannot agree with Satan’s ways and what He has promoted. Therefore, musical rebellion needs to be separated from to honor God over Satan’s ways.

✓ **Partnership demands separation from apostasy and worldliness – 15b**

“or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel” (*the unbelief of unsaved people*)

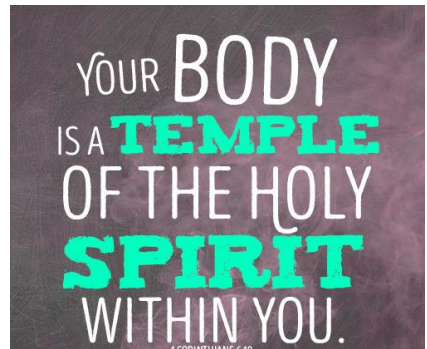
Whatever I partner or mix with I promote and condone. I put my stamp of approval on it. The point is this. we are not to have any “part” with unbelief and paganism which is practiced by unbelievers. This means Christians are certainly not to mimic these heathen ways and adopt them into their own lifestyle and churches. Jeremiah 10:2 says, “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...” Matthew 6:8, “Be not ye therefore like unto them.” This is a clarion call for Christians to be different from the world around them.

✓ **God's temple demands separation from apostasy and worldliness - 16**

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God...”

Whatever does not agree with God's indwelling presence inside my body, I must separate from, so I can glorify God in my body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says: “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”



Since I am the temple (holy shrine) of God, since God lives within me, I should represent Him, His character, and ways, and honor or glorify Him with the temple of my body. I should never attempt to use my body (God's dwelling place) with idolatry (pagan ways and practices) which are not in agreement with God's ways.

For these reasons we are commanded to “come out from among them (*their sinful and compromising ways – their places, programs, and pagan ways that are not holy*), and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing” (*corrupt doctrine, practices, and departures from God's holiness*). 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 means that I must ecclesiastically (in a church setting) separate from *anyone* that is the enemy, *everyone* who represents the enemy, *anybody* that mixes with the enemy, and *anything* that reflects the enemy.

Alliances, associations, and companions are always a critical factor in our ultimate destiny in life. Alliances always give birth to accommodations that can and do lead to dangerous commitments. The ultimate outcome is always governed by our choice to separate or not separate from the ungodly. Once again, Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, though well intended, was not a good thing. 2 Chronicles 19:2 reveals this: “And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD.”

God's work done in God's way produces only good results. But God's work done in man's way can produce good and bad results. It becomes a mixed bag that results in compromise, distortion, and confusion between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, the devil's work and God's work.

When in doubt, don't join. When in doubt, don't participate. When in doubt, don't condone something that is questionable in practice. There are long-term effects or consequences when mixing with the ungodly ways of people. It eventually takes a spiritual toll upon our lives. Carelessness by one generation can produce untold damage on many generations to follow. Those who insist on peace at any price will ultimately lose everything. Fundamentalism is about guarding and laying the right foundation for future generations. Psalm 11:3 asks, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Dr. Bob Jones Sr. wisely observed: "It is always wrong to sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate." This is exactly what King Jehoshaphat did and he and many others suffered the tragic consequences for his compromise. Therefore, we must separate from the enemy and ungodly.

"Who is on the Lord's side?
Who will serve the King?
Who will be His helpers,
Other lives to bring?
Who will leave the world's side?
Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side?
Who for Him will go?"

2 Corinthians 6:17 again states: "Wherefore come out from among them (*their sinful, corrupt, ungodly, and worldly ways*), and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you." Leviticus 20:24 also states: "I *am* the LORD your God, which have separated you from *other* people." Remember two things. Satan wants us to practice *syncretism* instead of *separation*. Ezra 6:21 also states: "And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat." The message of separation is strongly taught in both Old and New Testaments. Separate from the pagans – don't be like them. Jeremiah 10:2 says, "Learn not the way of the

heathen” and Jesus taught in Matthew 6:8 – “Be not ye therefore like unto them”).

Also, don’t forget that “What is popular is not always right and what is right is not always popular.” Let me reiterate something. We sometimes put up with things that we should put out of our lives. Today we must make a determined choice to separate from the contaminated practices that have invaded many local churches and even our own personal lives. Whatever God calls me to do is the most important task at hand and I must do it! We must come to this conclusion: “Here I stand; I can do no other.”

COMMISSION: God has commissioned me to separate ecclesiastically (in a church setting) from disorderly brethren on the basis of holiness, the principles of Bible separation, loyalty to God, and the glory of God.



2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 states: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition (apostolic teachings) which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.”

The Bible is teaching that there is a need to separate from some of the brethren when they become involved in disorderly living. In this case it was referring to separating from a lazy brother who would not work (2 Thess. 3:10). Of course, this “tradition” (Greek “paradosis” - the words and writings of the apostles) extended far beyond laziness! They were the body of precepts delivered to the people through oral and written tradition.

This separation may pertain to barring them from church meetings because of the nature of their disorderly conduct.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 goes on to say:

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”

Notice that the separation is not for *revenge* but is *remedial* in nature, to create shame in the offender and bring about their repentance and transformation.

Some of the brethren were leading openly unruly lives and Paul had to call them out and warn the local church about these brethren in his first epistle.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”

Apparently, the warning had not been heeded. For this reason, some discipline needed to be put into practice and separation was necessary from these lazy and disorderly brethren. Their offense was idleness and deliberate loafing which led some to interfere in the work of others and expecting others to provide for their needs.

2 Thessalonians 3:11-12

“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”

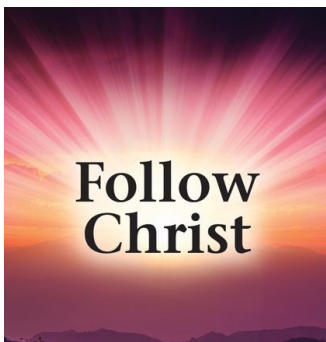
There were lazy and loafing brethren in the church assemblies that needed to be reprimanded for being loafers, not working, and bugging other people for money. Paul was advising the local church to separate from these brethren to teach them the errors of their ways. This may have been a separation from these brethren in the stated gatherings of the church as Paul had taught in Corinth (1 Cor. 5:11). The severity of the sin depends on the type of separation, which might include complete separation in all aspects of life, or partial separation in church gatherings only. We recognize by these commands that there are times we may need to separate from other brethren in relation to church gatherings due to their unruly, unbiblical, unethical, and ungodly way of living.

The application can extend to the way they present themselves in worship and imbibe paganism in their church gatherings which is so prevalent today. We might have to separate from some of the brethren on the basis of the “disorderly” principle (2 Thess. 3:6,11). We simply cannot have fellowship with them on a church or ecclesiastical basis because of their disorderly worship and conduct in their church meetings. Separation may not be necessary outside the church unless

the believer is committing immoral and reprehensible behavioral sins that call for total shunning and separation (1 Cor. 5:1, 8, 10).

I remember talking to several pastors at a large eating place. We had a good time talking together about many different things. Eventually we got into some of their doctrinal and church practices which ran contrary to “sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:9; 2:1) and “sound decorum” (1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Heb. 12:28). I was very open and said to them, “Guys, I might have a good time with you in the restaurant, but I cannot fellowship with you in your local churches because of the things you promote.” They were promoting some charismatic confusion regarding healing and imbibing Christian Rock Music which dishonors God.

Many Christians have forgotten Christ’s call to discipleship. They need to reread the contract. Jesus calls us to forsake and separate from anything and anyone that keeps us from following and honoring God with our lives.



Jesus taught in Luke 14:26-28: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”

Are we willing to count the cost of separating from those who might keep us from running the race effectively (Heb. 12:1) and pleasing the Lord (2 Tim. 2:4) with our lives? This would include those who might be our friends but who are not properly representing God’s holy character during church services. We must put the Lord first and honor Him above everyone else and anything else. We are to be loyal to God and His ways. This is the simple truth that Jesus was teaching. Family, friends, or foes, it makes no difference, we must honor God and follow His truth. Counting the cost while following the Lord and separating from evil might include loss of money, notoriety, earthly recognition, friends, and other privileges, but it will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

Again, Jesus was a friend of sinners, but He did not become like sinners in His practice and ways for he was “undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26).

Someone has said: "If you have to do wrong to stay on the team, you are on the wrong team." Get off the team! The issue is not making or keeping friends but pleasing the Lord and maintaining a consistent testimony (John 8;29). You should never go into the mud with a pig. You will both get all dirty - and the pig likes it. Remember that a person is known not only by the company he keeps but by the company he avoids. Proverbs 24:1 declares, "Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them." D.L Moody said that Christians would not have to give up the world when they get saved because the world will give them up. Tozer adds this about friendship: "To seek to be friends with those who will not be the friends of Christ is to be a traitor to our Lord."

Allow me to reiterate a forgotten truth. There are times we must separate from worldly brethren who are bringing shame to the Lord and upon their church ministries by their actions and worldly compromises. We are told to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6). The word "disorderly" has a military background and was used of soldiers who marched out of step or who broke rank. Here it refers to believers walking in a disruptive and sinful manner. They are out of step with God and the church. Some were shirking their daily responsibilities in life and were leeching off the other church members. 2 Thessalonians 3:14 again confirms: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." This means we are to separate from men, ministries, and movements that do not represent sound doctrine and sanctified living.

John Miles, the president of the Bible institute, where I attended, once wrote: "Believers can lead us into compromising positions more quickly than anyone else. So though we long to fellowship with believers and recognize the unity of the body of Christ, if a believer leads us into a compromising position, where our loyalty to God is going to be questioned and compromised, then we have to part company with that believer. This seems like a contradiction to many, but again we must remember the most important thing in life is to be loyal to God and to do His will. Jesus taught, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself (say no to himself), and take up his cross (the will of God) and follow me.'"

The Church is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-24). Jesus expects us to be loyal to Him. The Lord has NOT called us to be loyal to people, churches, or institutions before the Lord. We are to be loyal to God (Rom. 12:1) and love God and the truth

(Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3) before anything or anyone else. Accommodation of worldliness is friendship with the world (James 4:4). This reminds me that personal friendships have drawn many people into compromising positions and when this happens a person's loyalty to God has been brought into question. Following Christ and loving Him more than anything else means we will not compromise with other brethren. It must be Jesus first.

A right motive of the heart should never become an excuse for disobedience or compromise. We should never treat sin with compassion and end up compromising. 1 Peter 3:11 says, "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it." Seeking peace is important but turning away from evil is more important. The word "eschew" means to turn aside, turn away from, shun all evil. Job was a man "that feared God and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). The believer must go out of his way to avoid evil.



We often want to stay in the vicinity of evil and eventually find ourselves being overcome or at least compromising our position against evil. Be careful of little compromises (Gen. 19:20). Once again, Satan likes to grease the tracks when we begin to compromise. Like sin, compromise will take us further than we want to go, keep us longer than we want to stay, and cost us more than we want to pay. The pressure to compromise standards of separation is always upon us.

If we must conform and compromise with the world (Rom. 12:2) to maintain our friendship, then we should relinquish our partnership and friendship. This may be true even in relation to attending the same local church because of the spiritual breach and compromise going on in a specific local church. Psalm 119:63 says, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." This should be true in relation to our church fellowships and even personal relationships outside church. We should never compromise. Our motto must always be: "No reserves, no regrets, no retreats!"

Psalm 1:1 speaks of our overall separation from the ways of ungodly people and the importance of not compromising when it states: "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.”

There are 3 ways we can compromise with sinners. In dealing with this issue the psalmist says we should not participate with the ungodly, sinners, and scorners. Remembering these three forms of compromise can be helpful as we seek to live a life of purity and separation.

1. Casual Compromise

The verb “walketh” means to stroll along with the ungodly and suggests a little flirtation and casual compromise with ungodly people. This is almost an imperceptible process. It’s the first step of compromise with sinners and their ways. A walk seems harmless enough, but it can bring us into a surface relationship with the ungodly, or unsaved person, which can adversely affect our lives.

When we make a casual compromise with the sinner, we begin to follow their “counsel” (advice). When we follow their advice, our thinking is reshaped. Small compromises with the ungodly affect us! If we walk with the ungodly our spiritual thinking can become infected. We can begin to cater to their way of thinking and philosophy in life.

Don’t follow the advice of the ungodly. Don’t let them instruct you. Don’t let them advise you how to live, what your priorities or goals should be, and how to dress or look. Don’t listen to them if they say it’s okay to drink a little, flirt a little, and indulge a little. We need to stop listening and following the advice of the devil’s crowd! Their counsel is not God’s counsel. The ungodly should not tell us how to run the church (seeker friendly churches). They are in no position to give us advice unless it’s practical advice. They can tell us the best way to plant grass seed, fix our car, do our taxes, etc.

2. Considerable Compromise

This speaks of greater compromise. The text goes on to say, “nor standeth in the way of sinners.” This is when we find ourselves moving from walking to standing in the way of sinners. First, we make the casual compromise, and our thinking is reshaped (we follow their counsel). But in this next step our living is redirected!

We first receive their counsel and now our conduct is reshaped. We move into greater compromise.

The term “way” means we now want to travel with them and go in the same direction as they are going. The term “standeth” speaks of a more settled compromising position with sinners of this world, where we begin to follow their lead and direction, and do what they like to do, instead of what God wants us to do in life.

When we “stand” with sinners our conduct is starting to be reshaped by them. We become open to their ways and living and allow the ungodly to start changing the course of our lives.

Here is the downward spiral. When we are walking along with the ungodly (receiving their counsel) we eventually end up standing with them (moving in the same course or direction) as the ungodly. When this happens, we will find ourselves developing and practicing some of their same patterns and habits of living. When you are sledding down a hill, you cannot stop. The same is true when we compromise with sinners. Once the momentum gets moving, we were on a collision course for disaster! We have a terrible wreck!

Who should I have for my companions and closest friends in life? Who am I to be united with in heart and soul?

Psalms 119:63 is worth repeating:

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts.”

Here the word “companion” speaks of someone who I am united with in close relationships. People who have a godly fear and who practice living out the truth of God’s Word in their lives are to be my closest friends. This would include school friends, close friends in life, and a lifelong mate.

Who are your closest friends? Are they truly born again and saved? Are they living for the Lord? Who do you spend much of your time with?

3. Complete Compromise

This is the third and final step of compromise in this downward spiral. The word “sitteth” speaks of a fully compromised position with the ungodly sinners of this

world. We have now come into full-blown compromise and cooperation with sinners and are seen always glorying in the same things they glory in and always doing the same things they are doing. This is when sinners take us far away from godly living and from the path that God wants us to walk. This is when sinners capture our hearts and control us, when we find ourselves laughing at the same things they are laughing at, even when they are scorning or mocking righteousness and godly things. This is the lowest level of compromise.

Peter lingered with the ungodly for a time in his life. He stood with the enemy and sat with the ungodly. But Luke 22:55 then says that “Peter sat down among them” and in doing so denied the Lord (“I know him not”) to keep himself acceptable with the crowd. Abraham lingered with the ungodly when he went down to Egypt. Lot lingered with sinners or stood in the way of sinners when he went into Sodom and “sat in the gate” (Gen. 19:1).

Allow me to reiterate the warning of 1 Corinthians 15:33:

“Be not deceived: evil communications (*companionships*) corrupt good manners.”

Dr. John Whitcomb again has observed:

“All things being equal, bad apples make good apples go rotten, and the good apples do not make the rotten ones any better.”

Solomon saw that, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). In other words, if you hang around with creeps long enough, you will become one of them! Proverbs 14:16 says: “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” One does not need a Ph.D. to understand the meaning of this exhortation. God is telling His people to stay away from those who teach or practice what is evil and not imbibe their words and ways.

Again, note the progression of Psalm 1:1. First, it’s *walking* (casual compromise – when sinners reshape our thinking). Second, it’s *standing* in the way of sinners (a further compromising position where sinners begin to redirect our living and change our conduct). Third, we then find ourselves *sitting* with the scorners (a fully compromised position - possessing a totally compromising and cooperating position with sinners).

This final step and stop on the downward spiral is when we allow sinners to totally restrict our spiritual growth. This last position with sinners is when we “join their club” and laugh with them, as they mock truth, righteousness, goodness and godly things, and allow them to totally absorb us in their sinful patterns of living.

The word “scorners” refers to people who mock God and the things of God. They ridicule the Bible and what is right and are conditioned and patterned for evil. Our secular humanistic *colleges* are full of scorners today. Many of them are atheistic professors who don’t care one iota about the Bible. They are left-winged godless radicals. Our *congress* is full of scorners today! The left-winged liberals want to destroy the Ten Commandments, manger scenes, and everything that represents Christ, Christianity, and righteousness. They are haters of God!

Christendom today is full of scorners. They reject the key doctrines of Scripture such as the blood of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the virgin birth of Christ. A man may be religious and wear religious garb and dog collars but still be a scorners! Our *communication* system is full of scorners! Scorners of God today are seen on TV and on social media. We should not be entertained by scorners! There are also scorners in our companionships of life. When you are seated with the scornful (close companions with them) you begin to laugh at their godless jokes, talk their godless talk, and think about their godless things! It rubs off on you. When you laugh at holy things and openly disobey God’s holy laws, you have reached a low level in life.

It’s called the “seat” of the scornful so only the scornful can sit in it. Again, this means that if you sit in this seat, you join their club! You become comfortable with them, and they are comfortable with you. You become like them. This happens too often with Christians who are pressured and pulled into the crowd.

Remember the old saying:

“Compromise ties your tongue so that you cannot rebuke error.”

If you follow the wrong *counsel*, then you will eventually stand with the wrong *companions*, and finally sit with the wrong *crowd*. 1 Corinthians 15:33 against states: “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (right conduct).

The road to compromise normally follows three steps.

- A change of MOOD (toleration toward the enemy)

The church begins to tolerate those who teach doctrine and methods contrary to Scripture. It begins to accept light rock music and other questionable practices which will ultimately lead to greater compromises (1 Cor. 5:6, 9). Remember that the Bible is not a tolerant book.

- A change of METHOD (the end justifies the means)

The church which once taught Bible separation and holy living begins to change its methods or practices for sake of Gospel outreach. They drop ethical standards of decency and purity, move into the realm of entertainment and worldliness by imbibing a rock idiom, they begin to teach things contrary to sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1), and make all kinds of Scriptural, ecumenical, and philosophical compromises (1 Tim. 6:20). Many want to remain in a religious, no-man's land.

- A change of MOVEMENT (Neo-Evangelicalism)

Ultimately there is the abandonment from the old evangelical movement of Bible separation. This occurs when a church decides to become part of the ever-growing movement of newer evangelical Christians that have abandoned the doctrine of Bible separation from apostasy and worldliness, who possess a tolerant attitude toward unproven science (evolutionary thought), who embrace different views on eschatology and dispensationalism, who reopen the subject of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy, and possess a growing willingness to converse and ecumenically unite with liberal theologians and denominations.

The watchwords of fundamentalism are: "Be not unequally yoked;" "Come out from among them.," "be ye separate;" "touch not the unclean thing;" and "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (2 Cor. 6:14-17). But the watchwords of the New Evangelicals (compromised Christianity) are "stay in;" "associate;" "infiltrate;" and "dialogue."

Often small compromises increase, trends develop, and momentum toward an unbiblical position builds. Small decisions can have large consequences. Proverbs

22:3 states that “A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”



Dr. G. Campbell Morgan spoke of the need for separation and not compromise: “There is a toleration which is treachery. There is a peace which issues in paralysis. There are hours when the church must say NO to those who should ask communion with her, in the doing of her work, upon the basis of compromise. Such standing aloof may produce ostracism and persecution; but it will maintain power and influence. If the Church of God in the cities of today were aloof from the maxims of the age, separated from the materialistic philosophies of the schools, bearing her witness alone to the all-sufficiency of Christ, and the perfection of His salvation, even though persecuted and ostracized and bruised, it would be to her that men would look in the hour of their heartbreak and sorrow and national need. The reason why men do not look to the church today is that she has destroyed her own influence by compromise.”

“There is no perfect church.” Christians will use this excuse to put out the light of conviction in their own heart and give themselves permission to compromise in a ministry that harbors Christian rock music and ecumenical practices. It is better conclude: “There are no perfect people but there are churches that do not compromise, and which take a strong separated stance against all error and worldliness.” The classic example of compromise occurred when Jehoshaphat (the godly king of Judah) and Ahaz (the ungodly king of Israel) got together and made a military alliance (“joined affinity with Ahab” – 2 Chron. 18:1). But Jehoshaphat was the one who suffered greatly for the compromise – almost losing his own life. He was rebuked for his compromise by Jehu who said, “Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD (2 Chron. 19:2).

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.” Charles Woodbridge warning against anti-Scriptural compromise states: “It is wise for Christians who desire to remain loyal to the Word of God to keep their eyes on that Word and not to deviate from its mandate no matter how strong, persuasive or magnetic the forces of compromise may be.”

Some have tried to create a distinction in the teaching of Bible separation by claiming there is “first degree” separation from apostates and “secondary degree” separation from those Christians who aid, abet, and overlook apostasy through ecumenical evangelism and other compromises. Some teach we should separate from the apostates, but we should not separate from other brethren. Of course, the Bible makes no distinction in the practice of Bible separation. To talk about first-degree and second-degree separation is linguistic gymnastics. We are to separate from all unbelief and the “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11) and not participate with unbelievers or believers who promote errant teachings, unethical practices, and deeds of darkness (Mark 16:17; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6).

God has not called us to be a “half-way separationist.” This is why we need to practice ecclesiastical separation from all those movements, men, churches, and religious organizations that are apostate in nature, but also separate from those brethren and churches which have corrupted themselves with the culture, promote unwholesome teachings and unethical practices, and which unite with apostasy through compromising with other men and ministries that are not standing on truth (Jude 3). Let’s set the record straight. The Bible knows nothing about “degrees” of separation from evil (Amos. 5:15; Ps. 119:63; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:11; Jude 23). We are to hate evil in all of its manifestations. The Scripture states, “abstain from all appearance (every form) of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22).

Charles Spurgeon remarked:

“That I might not stultify my testimony, I have cut myself clear of those who err from the faith, and even from those who associate with them.”

He got it right. There are no degrees in it. There are different types of separation but not different degrees of separation. Separation is only one thing – separation.

A seminary student once asked his instructor: “Most of us are not like you. We don’t have the same depth of your knowledge or your personality. We have not fought the spiritual battles that you have fought. How are we going to endure the challenges of the ministry?” The student said, “I’ll never forget his response. It has become a hallmark statement of my service for Christ.” This is what my instructor shared with me. “Tim,” he said, “you don’t need my personality, you need to be a man of conviction.” In looking back, the student said, “There it was! I still get

emotional when I remember what the Lord did in my heart that day. God gave me hope. Be a man of conviction. Know what you believe and be willing to die for it. Be willing sink the whole ship on principle.”

Why do Christians compromise? Sometimes those who once exhibited godly Christian character and lived by solid Bible principles change and go in another direction that is dishonoring to God. Why do Christians change? Sometimes it's because they never possessed real conviction (or weak conviction) about certain matters. They have preferences but not strong Biblical convictions. Other times compromise happens because of misplaced loyalties. Christians are more loyal to a church which has gone wayward in doctrine or practice, or they become more loyal to denominations, movements, institutions, and even personalities than being loyal to God (Luke 9:23). Remember that we are to follow the truth – not people or personal preferences.

Others compromise out of desire for recognition, receiving the praise and plaudits of men, and because of peer pressure and the fear of controversy (John 12:43). Of course, the Bible says, “the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” We should fear the controversy that God has with us and not the controversy of being at odds with the world and the enemy.

Love for sin also causes one to compromise (James 1:14). We need to take full responsibility for our sins. Remember that anyone can make excuses for wrongdoing simply by claiming the status of a victim or blaming others. Also, wrong teaching about grace and liberty, turning it into a type of libertinism can result in Christians compromising Biblical values and surrendering to vices (Titus 2:12-14). Jeremiah 5:31 says, “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” We can also become firmly rooted in compromise by developing a blindside to our spiritual condition (Rev. 3:17).

Charles Spurgeon once said: “Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it.” Misplaced loyalties to certain movements, denominational structures, institutions and even personalities will cause people to compromise. Instead of our loyalties being placed in earthly movements and men, our loyalty must be directed to God and His absolute truth

and precious Word. Also, a love for the world, desire for recognition, fear of controversy, peer pressure, weak convictions and personal deception are all reasons why Christians compromise. When God's people and churches crumble under the pressure of being outside the mainstream and the pressure of bigness they can find themselves compromising.

If a person is careless and superficial (shallow) instead of being precise and caring about spiritual details, he will eventually be swept away in the New Evangelical tide of compromise. Carl Laney said, "We must not compromise and call sin anything less than it is." Vance Havner said: "Sometimes we mistake compromise for charity and put up with what we should put out." This is true. Many of us find ourselves "getting along by going along." Please remember that the most dangerous deviation is the one closest to your own position. If we are not careful, we can become comfortable with compromise! But if we continue to possess a sensitivity toward sin (Matt. 6:13) we will not compromise.

"I want a principle within
Of watchful, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.
I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or wrong desire,
To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire."

Many years ago, Carl F. Henry admitted that Evangelicalism had drifted too far away from its historic roots. In his own words, "We have gone too far!" How sad, that one of the leading advocates of this unseparated newer evangelical movement recognized the unhealthy drift away from the truth of separation and standards. We must always remember, whenever we compromise, we have gone too far! Furthermore, we can never tell where the compromise will end! So don't become a fence-straddling compromiser. It won't end well for you.

Someone has stated that "In our age we have made an idol of tolerance." The church has created an atmosphere of leniency. The easy-going and doctrinally generic church is becoming the norm. This is because the church has become tolerant of doctrinal error and worldliness and does not want to make waves among the people. Tolerance might be termed "latitudinarianism" which speaks

of not having any precise limits. When you have no limits, you will become tolerant of those things that should be shunned (“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel” - Rev. 2:20).

One passing note of clarification on separation. Separation is not the answer to every different decision between brothers and sisters. We should express some patience and love among the brethren who are obviously seeking to do what is right. John Ashbrook states, “Be careful not to run up the red flag for every mistake or differing decision. Wait to see if it is a pattern. If a man always comes out on the wrong side, it will be obvious that he is new evangelical, and it will be time for separation.”

In other words, stop wearing your straight jacket to church and always looking for something that you can bring against another brother or sister. There may be some minor disagreements. Use some charity in your dealings with fellow believers. We need to work together and adjust to one another and come to agreement on what we will expect as a group and what is most important. Within any group there will be differences of opinion. The question is this. Are the differences vital to the maintenance of the separatist position that we need to hold? Remember that the main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things! Ashbrook concludes: “Separation is not the answer to every disagreement between brethren.”

As committed Christians, we must live to honor, glorify, and promote God’s character in our personal lives and church fellowships (1 Cor. 10:31). This is because our truest and best friend is God (James 2:23) and we should want to respect and honor Him. This should also be true in our interpersonal relationships with other people. The Bible says, “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). Is it unwise to have many friends? No, but this proverb warns that if a person has many friends, there is the real possibility that some of them will end up being false friends (Jer. 38:22). Close friends can always be trusted and of course, our greatest friend is God.

We have learned from the Bible that salvation should result in separation. We who are saved are to separate ourselves from sin, sinning believers, false religious teachers, worldliness, and pagan ways. Some teach



there are never any reasons to separate from the brethren. Of course, this is not true as we have seen in various Scriptures. Let me summarize some things to help us understand the why, when, and where of Bible separation.

There is **PERSONAL SEPARATION** which is separation from the unfruitful works of darkness and all unrighteous ways (1 Cor. 6:18; 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14; Deut. 7:3-4; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:11). We are called upon to practice our position in Christ and put off or separate from the “old man” and practice “new man” living (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:8-10).

There is also **FAMILY SEPARATION** (separation that occurs within the family of God). We are instructed to separate from disorderly, sinful, and worldly brethren because of sexual sins and other deplorable sins which are worthy of church discipline and separation (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:2, 11-13; 2 Thess. 3:6; 14-15; 1 Tim. 1:18-20). Family separation sometimes includes ecclesiastical/church separation from worldly brethren whose churches are being overrun with a rock idiom, who practice ecumenicalism, and which are involved in other doctrinal compromise and worldly contamination.

More specifically, we are told to separate from **the sinning brother** who will not be reconciled (Matt. 18:15-17), from the **immoral brother** who continues to practice his open sin of rebellion (1 Cor. 5:11), from **the unequally yoked brother** who joins together and participates with the doctrinal error of unbelief (1 Cor. 5:11, 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14), from **the lazy/disorderly brother** (2 Thess. 3:6-15), from **the doctrinally errant brother** (1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-21), **the disobedient brother** who openly and consistently defies the traditions of apostolic teaching (Scripture) such as Biblical separation, order, reverence, holiness, righteousness (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6-14) and from **the heretical brother** who seeks to divide a ministry or God’s people with false doctrine, extra-scriptural experiences, and worldly practices (Titus 3:10).

In commenting on the individual Christian who was “delivered to Satan” under Pauline excommunication in 1 Timothy 1:18-20, Pickering states: “The principle applies whether the professing believer is in our own local church or in some other kind of connectional relationship to us, such as denominational affiliation.” In other words, we must separate from all those who profess Christianity who are

involved in doctrinal corruption. This leads into our next category of Bible separation.

There is also **ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION**. This is a separation from the demonism and paganism associated with false teachers and religious apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15; Rev. 18:4). The Scriptures are clear on the matter of ecclesiastical separation. "Come out from among them" (2 Cor. 6:17) and "Come out of her" (Rev. 18:4). We are not to associate with pagan religion in any way, whether it's through direct participation or indirectly supporting or promoting it in some manner. We are to steer clear of it. This is why we must separate from liberal Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and other false religions.

1 Timothy 6:5 reminds us to separate from apostates and their teachings when he states: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." These are the clerical perverts of our day who turn their collars backward to gain respectability while engaging in reprehensible teachings and sinful ways (2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Jude 4-16). They are men of the cloth but not men of God. They are preaching "another gospel," "another Jesus," and are backed by "another spirit" (a demonic spirit) as stated in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

The issue of not participating in ecumenical evangelism is a Scriptural issue. It is not necessarily an issue with people per se. There are many leaders and church gurus who will fellowship with a diverse group of religious people and denominations without considering their doctrinal departures and paganized forms of Christianity. In fellowshiping with these different groups, they become complicit with the error of their ways (Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:22) taking on the "appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). Therefore, the Bible believing separatist must refuse to attend ecumenical rallies that promise diverse groups of religious institutions and denominations, some of which are corrupt in doctrine and practice. In doing so, they become a "partaker of their evil deeds" (2 John 1:11). "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:7). Our presence sends the message of endorsement and the sanctioning of their errant philosophers and ways.

Remember that the believer can *directly* fellowship or participate in unrighteous acts (Eph. 5:11, 2 Cor. 6:14, 17). But a believer can also *indirectly* participate and

promote another person's sins and errors (1 Tim. 5:22). Our presence in a place like the temple feasts in Corinth, where one could eat during a pagan service, makes us complicit with the error even though we are not interested in what is occurring (1 Cor. 10:20). We must be careful of the corrupting power of error and the danger of dabbling with it. If by cooperating with a believer or even a church which is walking contrary to Scripture, we become partaker or sharer in the wrongdoing. 1 Timothy 5:22 reveals that we are to "**Lay hands suddenly on no man (ordaining someone to ministry), neither be partaker of other men's sins (by ordaining someone who is doctrinally and morally corrupt): keep thyself pure**" (by not sanctioning or associating with a doctrinally corrupt and ethically compromised person).

Within the context of the local church, these principles need to be applied to the cooperation and fellowship between churches and what missionary agencies will be supported by the fundamental church. They also need to be applied to the kind of speakers that will be invited into the church and who can become practicing members in the context of a local church assembly. Church leadership must make separatist decisions to protect the purity of the local church and keep it from being harmed by savage wolves (1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 2:14-16, 20-23; Acts 20:29-32). The leadership of the local church should also be involved in disciple training (2 Timothy 2:2) and teaching "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3) so that a brother can join a ministry and keep its testimony clean (1 Cor. 5:1). However, if a brother is openly defiant, does not have a teachable spirit and is without repentance, then there must be separation (1 Cor. 5:11). The command is very clear.

Once again, Paul states that we must "note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14). Paul was obviously giving instruction in this section of Scripture concerning separation on the local church level. His point is clear. There can be no church or religious-oriented fellowship with a brother who consistently promotes worldliness and doctrinal departure in his life. Christians who dislike Biblical separation often protest that we cannot help the erring brother if we separate from him. This is not true.

One reason for separation is to help those who err to see the seriousness of their error. It can help them to see a clear distinction between true and false doctrine, right and wrong, and help to promote change in their lives (1 Tim. 1:20). Many excuse themselves from obeying Biblical separation by saying they are ministering

to the disobedient. This is errant reasoning that flies in the face of all clear Scriptural revelation and logic. We are to minister to them only as they remain teachable and reachable. But if they remain persistent in their rebellion and unrepentance, we need to obey the teaching of Scripture and separate from them.

We must again note that different types of offences are treated differently. How far to remove ourselves from an offender varies according to the severity of the sin. The separation from those brothers committing immoral and gross sins involves a complete severing of fellowship on every level – church and social life. No encouragement or aid of any kind is to be given to this brother (“not to keep company” and “not to eat” - 1 Cor. 5:11). However, there is another type of separation that still allows for a certain amount of interaction and contact which can provide words of encouragement toward another brother (“admonish him as a brother”), even though you must ecclesiastically separate and disagree with his actions and teachings (2 Thess. 3:15).

Each separation case must be decided on its own merits and degree of departure. We must understand that many times there will be a refusal to fellowship with worldly brethren who are disobedient to God’s holiness and truth in the context of the local church setting, while not refusing total fellowship in social life.

According to Scripture, we must separate from a persistently disobedient and disorderly brother in the realm of our own church fellowships where holiness must be maintained, and also separate from other church fellowships that are promoting wrong teaching and worldly compromises. In other words, we cannot openly fellowship with some brothers and sisters in church life if we want to honor God’s holiness in our stated gatherings. In short, we cannot compromise with them and condone their ways. However, we must remember that they are still our brothers and sisters, and we should try to gently warn and encourage (“admonish”) them to serve the Lord faithfully and do what is right (2 Thess. 3:15).

Patience (2 Tim. 2:24-25), forgiveness (2 Cor. 2:7), and restoration (Gal. 6:1) should be our real goals in all our separation. We should possess a loving and receptive spirit toward the erring brother and always be ready to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) even when we find it necessary to separate from him on a local

church level and must disagree and separate from his social practices and places of compromise. Beware of a hot head and a cold heart!

Once again, we may have a certain amount of interaction and encouragement on a social level with disorderly brothers, those who may not be as separated as they should be in their own lives, if they have not committed the kind of reprehensible sins that Paul mentions (1 Cor. 5:11). Paul says, “count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:15). For example, I might play a game of tennis and fellowship with a brother outside the church who may not be as separated as myself in various areas. But I would refuse fellowship with him on a local church level where I must endorse his belief system or cooperate with such things as his ecumenicalism or so-called Christian rock music.

I might take this brother out to eat knowing that he truly does love the Lord and take the opportunity to speak to him about greater dedication to the Lord’s holy will. The same would be true about fellowshiping with family members who may be charismatic in their beliefs and somewhat liberal and compromising in their church affiliations. I might be able to fellowship with them in certain aspects of social life (work, family gatherings, picnics) since they have not committed immoral sins. Nevertheless, I would need to withdraw fellowship from any worldly-minded brother regarding church ministry and from any of his actions which would compromise my own personal testimony.

A brother who is living in open, sexual sin, or who is a known drunkard and adulterer is a different situation. I could not even eat with this brother outside the church assembly, due to his open and flagrant sin and the severity of his sin. 1 Corinthians 5:11 once again makes this very clear (“not to keep company” and “not to eat”). I must repeat something. Different types of offences are treated differently. How far to remove ourselves from an offender varies according to the severity of the sin. Each case must be decided on its own merits. There is a place to stop and a place to start. We must search for a frame of reference and seek to apply these Scriptures to our ministries, fellowships, and social life, or else we will become polluted by compromise, or at least endorse sin by fellowshiping with a worldly brother or sister.

Also, when it comes to separation from the unsaved, let us remember that the Bible does say, “Yet not altogether” (1 Cor. 5:10). Although we strive for practical

and personal separation, we do not practice isolation (“out of the world”). This is a good reminder. We can remain “in” the world and not become part “of” the world (Rom. 12:2; James 4:4; I John 2:15-17). We become of the world (mixing with the world system) when we fail to counteract the wicked culture and compromise separation commands and principles. The false view of separation is asceticism, legalism, and isolationism but the false view of liberty is compromise, license, and libertinism.

There are four things to remember as we find the needed balance in our separated living.

- ✓ I cannot live in a bubble.
- ✓ I cannot go out of the world.
- ✓ I cannot become unloving.
- ✓ I cannot compromise with the world.

Practical Bible Separation For Everyday Living

At this point, let’s reflect on some practical aspects of Bible separation in our everyday living from those places and people that can have a corrupting influence on us and taint our Christians testimony. 1 Peter 4:3-5 warns against returning to the activities characteristic of an unsaved lifestyle: “For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings (*drinking, carousing*), and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*.”

This means that the believer must deny himself of worldly entertainments, social vices, and cultural activities which foster the flesh and encourage carnality in their life. On the other hand, the believer must pursue godliness by carefully selecting behavior that demonstrates godliness. Interestingly, the Bible is full of lists that outline the difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, the right from wrong, and the true versus false (Gal. 5:19-23; 2 Thess. 3:6-15, 1 Tim. 5:11-15; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Pet. 4:3-5). God was not a legalist just because he created various lists denouncing specific sins.

The same is true regarding Christians today who make clear distinctions between right and wrong actions based upon God's commands for Bible separation. Christians who make these distinctions are not legalistic because the raw form of legalism involves depending on one's own power to follow a list of rules or regulations to reach spirituality and in the end merit or earn salvation (Acts 15:1; Gal. 3:3). Legalism is an unwarranted stigma placed upon Christians who seek to make a clear distinction between the fleshly and spiritual, truth and error, the holy and unholy, and right and wrong based upon the clear commands of Scriptural revelation.

Titus 2:11-12 also states: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching (disciplining) us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." This reminds us that grace teaching should not result in libertarianism where grace is turned into license to practice fleshly sins that stem from the old nature. God has called us each believer to "possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thess. 4:4).

Grace teaching is not a "free for all" or "live and let live" philosophy. It involves the discipline of godliness, ethical living, and sanctification (holiness). We are not to turn liberty into a license to sin or fulfill the flesh in self-pleasuring activities (Gal. 5:13). The liberty to which we have been called in Christ is not one of indulgence but one of freedom from sin. Therefore, keeping God's commandments on Bible separation and consecrated living are not a burden (1 John 5:3) or legalism as so many conclude, but they are rather an act of loving obedience to Christ who delivered us from the enslavement and empowerment of sin (John 8:32).

Living a separated life means that I strive to separate from those sinful places in society which might be considered "hell holes" and where absolute filth and sinful degradation is practiced. I am commanded to separate from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). However, we must still function as believers within the basic commerce and settings of life since separation is not isolation ("Yet not altogether" - 1 Cor. 5:10). We must remember that the principles of *fellowship, agreement, endorsement, cooperation, and association* with unrighteous or unholy actions applies to all those places that we choose to attend in society which are not the normal meeting places for commerce, daily activity, and living.

Places such as stores, malls, restaurants, and employment may promote certain evils (alcoholic beverage, distasteful magazines, books, the playing of rock music, etc.) but we would have to go out of the world to avoid them completely (1 Cor. 5:10). We are not condoning, promoting, associating, and participating with the sins of the culture when we are seeking to merely live and function within society. Bible separation primarily deals with those places of religious apostasy, worldly settings, atmospheres, and movements of pagan rebellion that can be easily avoided if the saint chooses to apply separation to his life (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Here are some questions to ask. What are some of the primary things that are trying to be conveyed and promoted in a place or certain activity? What is the overall emphasis of a place or activity? Does the activity and place tend to convey a consistent and dominant pattern of unwholesome entertainment? Believers should want to avoid taking on the appearance (1 Thess. 5:22) that they are identifying or associating (1 Cor. 10:20; Eph. 5:7, 11) with the questionable, extreme, radical, worldly, and unbiblical movements or practices within our society. We are to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14) – not darkness or chameleons that seek to blend into society and culture.

When it comes to separation from specific places within society we must consider the principles of Bible separation. Bible separation means that we do not “touch” (attach or associate) ourselves to the “unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17) by *directly* or *indirectly* participating with those places, programs, practices, and people that are openly defiant, ungodly, and pagan. In other words, we should avoid those public places and arenas of life (movie theaters, casinos, sitting at a bar counter, sleazy beer holes, restaurants that promote scantily dressed women, etc.) where pagan practices, such as ungodly music, dancing, drinking, immorality, sexual promiscuity, and gambling are openly glorified in excess and rioting (1 Pet. 4:4). There are lines to be drawn in the sand. We can’t go out of the world, but we can separate from the world (Rom. 12:2), the culturally corrupted forms of evil in the world (1 Thess. 5:22) and refuse to have “fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11).

As we have been discussing, when it comes to separating from a brother in Christ we might ask several questions. What worldly sin or compromise is a brother promoting? Must I separate from him on a church level? Must I separate from him on a social level? To what extent must I separate from him on a social level in

view of the types of his worldliness and sins? Is there a difference between fellowshiping with a brother who may think somewhat differently than I do on certain subjects such as divorce, music, and Bible versions and a brother who is involved in a sexual relationship outside marriage? Is my decision a matter of personal, family, or ecclesiastical separation? Our focus in this study has been on ecclesiastical (church) separation. So let's return to this specific subject.

Titus 3:10-11 says: **“A man that is an heretick** (*schismatic – a divider, someone causing factions*) **after the first and second admonition reject** (*shun, avoid, separate from*); **Knowing that he that is such is subverted** (*warped or twisted in his thinking*), **and sinneth** (*not repenting of his divisiveness*), **being condemned of himself”** (*condemned by his own continuation in his error, showing who and what he really is, even after the church has called him to repent*).



Who is this man? Paul could be referring to an unbeliever promoting false doctrine or a Christian (an erring member of the church) promoting senseless teachings and causing division over insignificant issues. This person must be dealt with if the church is to survive. Paul seems to suggest here that even Christians (professing believers) can become dividers by what they say and do. Christians can bring division and cause a destructive influence within the church.

This is the type of fellow who plays one note on his banjo and plays it to death. Soon he gathers around himself a group of people with a negative outlook, and the rest of the people he drives away. He will divide an assembly rather than abandon his hobbyhorse. No church should put up with such nonsense. If after one or two warnings, he refuses to repent of his ways, he should be expelled from the fellowship of the local church and the Christians should refrain from having social contact with him. Hopefully, this ostracism will bring him to repentance and to be more balanced in handling of the word of God.

Romans 16:17 declares:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions (*dissension*) and offences (*snares and stumbling blocks*) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

John Ashbrook said:

“We will never hit the mark by shooting in the general direction.”

Marking out or singling one’s attention on those who are causing divisions and doctrinal corruption may include unsaved false teachers or even God’s people who are corrupting themselves and the church with errant teachings which do not align with apostolic and Scriptural teachings (1 Tim. 1:20). Contentious and divisive people (Rom. 14:15) can cause others to stumble, so they should be avoided. Paul teaches this type of church discipline in his other letters (1 Cor. 5:9–13; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10).

People will say, “Doctrine divides.” Yes, it does, but so do unruly and worldly actions of believers. This is why we need to practice Bible separation from those who are out to divide the local church with their silly conclusions, worldliness, and other divisive teachings.

As we have seen, there are various Bible verses which teach ecclesiastical (church) separation, a separation from believers who have in some measure erred from the faith and gone astray into worldly practices (2 Thess. 3:6-7, 11-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:20-26; Titus 3:10).

These principles of Bible separation need to be applied to the cooperation and fellowship between churches and what missionary agencies will be supported by the local fundamental church. They will also be applied to the kind of speakers that will be invited into the church and who can become practicing members of a local church assembly. The leadership of the local church should be involved in disciple training (2 Timothy 2:2) which includes teaching “the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3) so that a brother can join a ministry and keep the church’s testimony clean. However, if a brother is openly defiant and does not have a teachable spirit, then there must be separation. The call is clear and to the point. We must “note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (2 Thess. 3:14).

Of course, even if one believes there are no Scriptures that warrant separation from the brethren because of certain specific actions, the very fact that we are called upon to be holy like God (1 Pet. 1:15-16) and practice sanctification (be set apart or consecrated unto God (1 Thess. 4:4) in purity and holiness would be grounds to separate from unruly brethren. We cannot practice holiness (purity,

moral uprightness, sacredness, reverence) and sanctification (consecration and separation unto God) when we are practicing and participating with things which are not holy and consecrated to God (Eph. 5:10).

So we must invoke the timeless principles of Bible separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17), our loyalty and faithfulness to God (1 Cor. 4:2; Luke 14:26), and the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31) as the ground for Bible separation from unruly brethren. God's glory is to be upheld above church fellowships and friendships. This means we are not to mix with the unruly actions of brethren on the basis of holiness, the principles of Bible separation, loyalty to God, and God's glory. For these reasons alone, there are times we must separate from the brethren, who have defiantly or ignorantly chosen to live in an unruly manner.

CORRECTION: God says that correction of the unfruitful works of darkness is necessary and is another reason why we must practice ecclesiastical separation. If we understand the next verses in this study, we will understand the need for Bible separation from all ungodliness. Ephesians 5:10-11 says, "Proving (*testing or examining*) what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (*refute or correct*) them." Proving and reproof are important aspects of Bible separation. We cannot sweep the dirt under the carpet and forget about it.

Dr. Fred Moritz said: "We should not be afraid of healthy, biblical negativism when it is combined with godly, biblical positivism. We must keep them both. Even the electricity in your home needs both the positive and negative poles." You will notice that there is a positive result related to this command ("Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" and a negative ("have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"). There is also a corrective measure related to this command ("but rather reprove them"). In other words, we cannot sit around and say, "You are okay and I'm okay" and sing kumbaya together. We cannot say, "It really does not matter" and try and cover up sin and uncleanness (Prov. 28:13). Instead of covering up sin we must correct it. Remember that correction is also a mark of true love (Rom. 12:9; 1 Cor. 13:6) and friendship. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6).

We need to keep "proving" (1 Cor. 5:10; Thess. 5:21) or testing and examining everything with the mindset to "reprove" (refute or correct) everything by the

truth of Scripture (Eph. 5:11). This proving (testing) and reproof (correcting) of wrong ideas and works of darkness would include our own personal feelings since feelings can be deceiving. Erwin Lutzer said: "A Christian life based on feeling is headed for a gigantic collapse." Someone else reminds us that "A Christian whose life is built on emotionalism without Bible truth resembles an amusement park roller coaster."



Someone humorously concludes this: "It is dangerously possible for activity to be no more than a dizzy whirl around a central emptiness." Feelings can sanctify worldliness and that which is unethical and false. Many have a zeal they claim comes from the Holy Spirit, but their zeal is not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). Dr. Wiersbe said: "If you have the Spirit without the Word, you blow up. If you have the Word without the Spirit, you dry up. If you have both the Word and the Spirit, you grow up."

Yes, we are to test everything and only approve the good. Therefore, we are called upon to "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...hold fast" (Rev. 3:2, 3). Elsewhere it states: "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16). In order to do this, we must keep proving (testing) and reproof (correcting) our direction and decisions in life, the carnality within church ministries, music and worship that is a carry-over from the rock culture, pagan ways and cultural worldliness in the local churches, false teaching, and everything that does not align with the Word of God.

To "fellowship" (Eph. 5:11) or participate with something that is spiritually flawed and fleshly means to put our stamp of approval upon it. To not correct that which is sinful, dark, and unfruitful is a clear violation of God's holiness. If we don't "reprove" (refute, find fault with, correct) the wrong within local church gatherings and even in our personal daily Christian living, it means that we are complicit to it, willing to accept it, and promote it within the church and our personal lives. The defense of truth means the exposing of error. Defending the light means exposing the darkness (1 John 1:5). If we defend the light the darkness will be exposed.

Judge With Righteous Judgment



Reproving or correction (Eph. 5:11) demonstrates our disapproval of compromise or carnality and involves a necessary righteous judgment. Jesus taught we are to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). In other words, we are not to judge hypocritically (Matt. 7:1; 2 Cor. 10:12)

without Biblical principles and directives but we are to judge righteously using the Scriptures as the basis for our discernment and judgment. This means we are not to overlook the doctrinal corruption, errant philosophies, and worldly patterns or actions of unbelievers (Matt. 7:16; Rev. 2:2, 6; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-10), and even those who might be believers (2 Thess. 3:6-14; Titus 3:10). Instead, we are to bring needful judgment against those who oppose truth and who are adversely infecting and affecting the lives of saints.

The word “judge” (Greek - krino) means to distinguish, decide, scrutinize. This is what discernment really is (Heb. 5:14). Judgment is when we can decide what is right and wrong. Discernment is linked to a seasoned, developed, and biblically informed mind (Psalms 119:66, 104, 130). Discernment can only flourish in an environment of faithful Bible study and teaching.

Harry Ironside said this about the spiritual man: “He is able to see the difference between what is of God and what is of man, what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit, what is of the new and what is of the old nature.”

If we are only out to be nice, mild-mannered folk, who never say anything negative, we should either change our name or change our calling! God has called us to holiness, and this involves the need for correction and righteous judgment so we might maintain our own purity and the purity of others.

Righteous judgment involves a natural and constant assessment of what is right and wrong (1 Thess. 5:21 – “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”). As we go through life, we will necessarily make assessments on what is right and pleasing to the Lord (John 8:29). This kind of judgment is necessary and spiritual (1 Cor. 2:15). It is to be a natural part of our daily living as discerning, Grace Age believers. We are to “approve things that are excellent” or superior (Phil. 1:10). This judgment does not necessarily involve personal confrontation with every

person that we meet whom we might disagree with. Rather, it manifests itself as a settled conviction in our own heart as we walk with the Lord in the light of His holiness and Word (1 John 1:7). Psalm 119:66 says, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments."

Someone remarked:

"The current popular notion that judging others is in itself a sin leads to such inappropriate maxims as 'I'm okay and you're okay.' It encourages a conspiracy of moral indifference which says, 'If you never tell me that anything I'm doing is wrong, I'll never tell you that anything you're doing is wrong.'"

There is a place for righteous judgment. All Christians should realize this. We are to pass judgment upon homosexuality and other sexual sins, communism, atheism, pedophilia, and satanic practices of the underworld to name just a few. But our judgment and assessment of the rock idiom, immodest dress, and the charismatic confusion in the church is also a proper judgment. Being judgmental is often looked down upon in evangelical circles but we can express proper and righteous judgment in grace and with uncompromising allegiance to truth and holiness (Col. 4:6).

John Ashbrook once said:

"You cannot preserve a position without crusading for it."

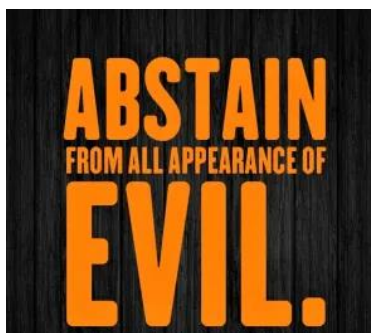
Today everyone wants to be a nice guy and not practice Bible separation. Nobody wants to denounce anything. Many Christians are so open to everything that their brains are falling out! The primary message of the church should not be, "We're a nice place; you'll like us." Instead, the message should be, "This is a holy place where sin is despised." The so-called Church experts (gurus) say today that the church should seek to make sinners comfortable so they will want to attend. We are to adopt the philosophy of being "seeker friendly" which means to play the same perverted rock music as the unsaved listen to and mimic their dress and lifestyle, so they feel comfortable in our presence. But it is a travesty upon God's House to think that someone can attend church and live in open sin without being confronted and convicted about it (1 Cor. 5:11). I can't imagine that a practicing homosexual would have sat comfortably under Paul's teaching in Ephesus or Corinth.

God has not called us to get along or agree with everyone. God does not want us to fellowship (partner, associate) with the darkness. Rather, God wants us to correct the darkness of worldliness and compromise by exposing it and taking a stand against it. Of course, if we are going to curse the darkness, we should light a candle! The candle that must shine forth today in the midst of much ecclesiastical darkness is God's standard of truth and holiness which forbids participation with those who are promoting error, carnality, and worldliness. The darker the night, the brighter the light (Matt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15).

1 Thessalonians 5:21 again declares that we are called upon to **"Prove all things;** (*scrutinize, examine, discern, or test everything by the standard of truth*) and see if they are pure and something worthy of our fellowship and unity. We are then instructed to **"hold fast that which is good"** (*retain what is right – stick to the truth*). Romans 12:2 says **"that ye may prove (discern) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** In other words, we need to be discerning and as a result oppose all forms of evil.



In today's world and culture everything must be weighed in the balance of God's holy will. In the end, we are to **"hold fast (retain, keep secure and in firm possession) that which is good"** which means to embrace wholeheartedly those things which are pure and wholesome. Romans 12:9 is similar and reminds us of the attitude we are to have toward error and all evil practices: **"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."** However, it's not enough to just embrace the good, we must also make a point to separate from the bad for the Bible goes on to say, **"Abstain (hold oneself back) from all appearance of evil"** or every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).



To abstain speaks of distancing ourselves from evil, avoiding it, keeping away from it. All sin, error, and wrongdoing must be shunned. Scripture does not give believers permission to expose themselves to evil. Verse 21 ("prove all things") is balanced by verse 22 ("Abstain from all appearance of evil"). When something is tested

by the truth and we condemn it, we must also make the effort to separate from the evil or worldly practice or else all the testing and proving is to no avail. In a similar way, holding fast to what is good, proper, and right is very important but it too must be balanced by separation or abstaining from every form of evil or else the good can be overcome by the evil and the good ignored. Of course, knowing to do good and refusing to do it is a sin (James 4:17).

This command (“abstain from all appearance of evil”) in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 not only means to avoid the direct forms of evil but would also pertain to taking on the outward appearance (form) that we are compromising and participating with something that is questionable in practice. In other words, this is not only referring to everything that is *intrinsically* evil but also what may *outwardly appear* to be evil falls under this category of warning.

Here is one illustration. The full understanding of this command reminds us of the importance of not associating and supporting satanic holidays like Halloween because this holiday is intrinsically evil. But this command also extends to refusing to support those men,



mission boards, and other movements of a religious nature which do not incorporate sound doctrine and sanctification into their living and policies. We should not directly or even indirectly through support, acceptance, and cooperation participate with men, movements, and ministries which do not represent godliness and righteousness for it would take on the outward “appearance” that we are condoning and accepting the very things which we should disavow and separate from.

We cannot forget the principle of wrong association even if some have abused it over the years by becoming so narrow-minded and nit-picking that they can only fellowship with themselves! The old adage must be repeated: “Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater!” In other words, we should never betray the

principle of Bible separation taught in the Bible because we gag on some personality who may have abused the principle.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary wisely observes:

“What may only appear to be bad also falls under this warning. However, ‘while believers should abstain from actions which will knowingly offend others, it is not always possible to abstain from everything which may appear evil to a narrow and foolish judgment’” (quoting Edmond Hiebert).

Here is the obvious point. When I knowingly and purposely attend churches where spiritual compromise is being promoted (worldly music, wrong doctrine, works of the flesh) I to some degree endorse or sanction it by my presence, in some measure fellowship with it, and in some ways conform to the error that is taking place. William Edward Biederwolf once said: “By doing those things that are contrary to God’s glory we sanction a lower tone of Christianity than His approval warrants.”

The Corinthians were eating a meal where the worshipping of idols was occurring. No, they were not worshipping idols, but their presence was forbidden in this place on the ground that they also were participating and fellowshiping with demons (“I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” - 1 Cor. 10:20). The separation principle is that we condone what we fellowship with or participate with in our local churches and other religious movements.

The up-to-date application is easy to understand. Our presence in worldly and compromising church services demonstrates our approval of what is occurring but also involves in some measure our participation with the error. We can’t overlook and dismiss what the Bible is teaching on this matter of wrong association. Our associations convey something and demonstrate our commitment to something. If we associate it with worldliness or error, then we are sending a clear message of our approval and endorsement of it when God has called us to refute or reprove those things which do not align with His character and ways (Eph. 5:11).

RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM?

Syncretism is the practice of blending ideas from different religions, philosophies, and worldly/humanistic practices.

Often this practice results in imbibing a mixture of truth and error. It turns people into chameleon Christians allowing them to blend in with the society and culture. This is why proving what is right, clinging to what is right, while at the same time distancing ourselves from what is wrong and evil are important in the matter of Bible separation. We need to hold down the fort by “holding fast” (retaining the good) while at the same time distancing ourselves from the evil.

In the above verses (1 Thess. 5:21-22) we are to examine *everything* carefully and shun whatever is unsound, corrupt, or erroneous. Doing anything less will result in compromise with the enemy and world. So many in the church today are being overwhelmed by the “Trojan-horse ploy” by calling for the integration or mixing of secular ideas with Biblical truth. Others are easily duped by *anything* labeled “Christian.” They don’t carefully examine everything like the Berean (Acts 17:11). Therefore, they don’t hold fast to the truth, and they don’t shun evil. As a result, they are left vulnerable to false doctrine and cultural contamination. This is why the doctrine of separation is necessary. Proverbs 23:23 reminds us to “Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” We should be willing to pay a great price for truth and be unwilling to sell it so that we go about doing our own thing and having our own way.

So here is the truth. We cannot fellowship or partner with those things which represent darkness and the devil’s agenda (“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” - Eph. 5:11). Instead, we must prove what is right and correct what is wrong (“but rather reprove *them*”). We need to speak out against the unfruitful works of darkness which are occurring in the church today and seek to correct the doctrinal errors and unethical practices that stem from wrong teaching.

Dennis Costella writes:

“Compromised fellowship clouds the issues, dulls the spiritual discernment and silences Scriptural reproof!”

Being sincere is not enough. We must also do what is right and correct the wrong, not approving it, but separating from it. Bob Jones Sr. used to say: “Do right!” But we might add some more similar conclusions. It’s never right to do wrong in order to do right” (Rom. 3:8). There is never a right way to do a wrong thing. It’s never right to do a good thing in a wrong way. There is a right way and wrong way to do

God's work. The right thing to do is to do the right thing. And finally, it's not a matter of who is right but what is right.

My friend Dr. Wendell Heller once said, "We are to do right because it is right." It appears that too many Christians want to enjoy the thrill of *feeling* right but are not willing to endure the inconvenience of actually *doing* right. We might do well to remember that retreat from the wrong direction is the only wise move in the right direction. Some things are just right to do ("for this is right" – Eph. 6:1). The man who wants to do the right thing and does it is a good man for "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way (Ps. 37:23). Someone remarked: "When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil." So we must concentrate on doing what is right all the time.

Pastor David Moss has said: "The essential element of faith, however, is believing that God is right about everything." This is always our starting point. God is always right (Gen. 18:25). We might be sincere when mistakenly taking the wrong medication, but in the end, we would be hurt for using something that was harmful to us. You might be sincere in what you are doing but sincerely wrong! Love and sincerity are not a mark of spirituality unless they are grounded in right doctrine and actions for love "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6). Our actions can only glorify God when they are based upon truth. This is why Psalm 97:17 commands us: "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil." Revelation 2:6 adds: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Yes, we should hate false doctrine, worldliness, sin, and all uncleanness.

George Ladd of Fuller Seminary was not concerned about contending for truth when he said how an evangelical Christian "must often be satisfied with hypotheses, probabilities, possibilities, rather than in dogmatic certainties." This is man's message, but it is not God's message! God wants us to hate the evil and love the good. This is a dogmatic certainty! We are called upon to hate all evil ways (Rom. 12:9; Ps. 97:10a; 119:104, 128, 163), specific sins (Prov. 6:16-19) and apostate practices (Rev. 2:6). We do not hate people (Matt. 5:44) but the sins and evil practices that people commit. John Miles again states: "We should not hate them (apostates or false teachers) but their counterfeit religion because it is utterly false and is sending millions of people to hell because it rejects the biblical Christ."

2 Timothy 2:19 adds this timely command: “And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” We are not to accept, overlook, or endorse wrong doctrine, error, and worldliness in the church. When correction does not work then purging and departure is necessary. As previously stated, many times we “put up” with what we should “put out” of our personal lives and churches. Ephesians 5:7 states it in a clear fashion: “Be not ye therefore partakers with them” whether it’s through *direct* contamination or *indirectly* through condoning and compromise with worldliness and errant doctrine. Any questions? God’s Word settles the matter quickly by calling us to Biblical separation.

Correction and rebuke go hand in hand. They are two peas on the same pod. Sometimes the saints need some old-fashioned rebuke. We must take the necessary rebuke and eat it! Titus 1:13 says, “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.” The word “rebuke” specifically means to “chide, charge sharply, tell a fault, find fault” with the view to forbid some course of action. We are commanded to rebuke false teachers and erring saints (Titus 1:11-13; 2:15; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Peter 2:15-16). If a donkey could rebuke the false prophet of Balaam, surely those in authority have the right to rebuke false teachers. Loving rebuke is a necessary function of church life, even among Christian brothers and sisters.

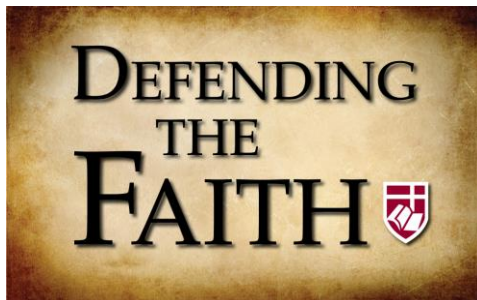


Correction and rebuke go hand in hand. They are two peas on the same pod. Sometimes the saints need some old-fashioned rebuke. We must take the necessary rebuke and eat it! Titus 1:13 says, “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.” The word “rebuke” specifically means to “chide, charge sharply, tell a fault, find fault” with the view to forbid some course of action. We are commanded to rebuke false teachers and erring saints (Titus 1:11-13; 2:15; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Peter 2:15-16). If a donkey could rebuke the false prophet of Balaam, surely those in authority have the right to rebuke false teachers. Loving rebuke is a necessary function of church life, even among Christian brothers and sisters.

Rebuke is healthy and needed to help the saints remain focused, to bring them to the place of repentance, and keep the sheep from straying from truth that needs to be embraced and followed. Boldness in rebuking sin is the result of being filled with the Spirit (Acts 13:9-12). Our problem today is that the Bible condemns our sin, and many Christians don’t want to be rebuked for their wayward living. 2 Corinthians 13:10, “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.” It is very unpopular today to be negative about anything or say anything unkind. But sound Biblical rebuke is needed today. This is because God has not changed, and the challenge has not changed! God wants us to live holy even as He is holy.

Proverbs 27:6 reminds us that “Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.” When a friend rebukes us, we should be grateful to him. We need loving rebuke at certain times in our lives when we are riding the fence or making bad decisions. The Scripture commands preachers to preach the Word of God with conviction, correction, warning, rebuke, and authority (2 Tim. 4:2, 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:10, Tit. 2:15). All true preaching will involve some rebuke with the application of Scriptural content to everyday living causing conviction and change to occur in the hearts and lives of people (Acts 2:22-24; 37; 17:22-34). True preaching will not fail to apply the “such like” works of the flesh to the lives of the people (Gal. 5:19-21). Preaching and sharing the truth with conviction, correction, warning, rebuke and God’s authority is needed today.

Preachers must beware of the fear of hurting the feelings of people. We can share corrective and cutting truth while possessing a loving heart of concern for the wellbeing of other Christians (Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19; 1 Pet 1:22; 2 John 1-6). It has been said that truth without love is brutality but love without truth is hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9). It is a mark of maturity when we can share corrective truth with our fellow Christians and do it in love (Eph. 4:15).



George Ladd of Fuller Seminary was not concerned about contending for truth when he said how an evangelical Christian “must often be satisfied with hypotheses, probabilities, possibilities, rather than in dogmatic certainties.” This is man’s message, but it is not God’s message! God wants us to hate the evil and love the good. This is a dogmatic certainty! Finally, reproof or correction (Eph. 5:11) involves defending the truth. We are commanded to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 1:3) and not compromise the faith (the truth) in any way. Dr. Fred Moritz warned: “To forsake biblical militance is to start down a slippery slope that will inevitably lead to disaster in theology, association, and practice.” We are called upon to defend the truth but also allow the truth to transform our lives (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Earl Radmacher said, “The truth of God establishes our vision, straightens our course, and resets our compass on the North Pole of accurate thought.”

The battle for the Bible continues! The battle for the truth will never end. We are on the battlefield for the Lord! So we must continue to be a good soldier in the Lord's army 2 Timothy 2:3 says, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Don't put down your sword. Remain in the battle. The old saying is true: "If you don't stand for something you will fall for everything!" Martin Luther came to this conclusion: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God ... God help me! Here I stand."

The expression "the faith" (Jude 1:3) points to the doctrines that Christians should believe and practice based upon the teachings of Scripture. This would also include the Grace Age doctrine of Bible separation ("the doctrine according to godliness" - 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17). The Bible does not distinguish between greater and lesser doctrines. This is man's artificial distinction. For instance, the doctrines of Creationism (the origins of the earth and man) and Pneumatology (Holy Spirit) are just as important as the doctrines of soteriology (salvation) if one wants to know and live by the truth. We are to be custodians of the truth (including sanctification) and not compromisers of truth (1 Cor. 4:2). We are in a battle and must "earnestly contend" (fight, struggle, agonize) over the truth. Tozer again writes: "Error is not silent; it is highly vocal and amazingly aggressive. We dare not be less so."

This means we are to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) and stand up for what is right. There can be no turning back. We must remain in the battle and keep doing what is right despite many who have chosen another path. Many in the evangelical community have somehow gotten the idea that God has said to Himself, "Everybody is doing it, so I'll lower my standards to the conditions as they are." But we must remember that God never changes in His holy character (Malachi 3:6) and never lowers His standards or adjusts Himself to what is unethical and unholy. Although the whole world was sinful in Noah's day, God did not change.

Pastor Bruce Oyen said, "It is not a question of knowing what to do; we can easily learn that from the Scriptures. It is a question of whether or not we have the courage to do it." 1 Corinthians 16:13 says, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Be brave like a man and stand up for what is right! And remember that what is popular is not always right; what is right is not always

popular. And don't forget that error rides on the back of truth. We are called upon to follow the truth – not people or positions.

We are living during the “Last Days” madness when many signs of apostasy and ethical departure are occurring in the professing and progressive church (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; 1 Tim. 4:1). Rolland Starr said it best: “And as bad as it is, it's going to get worse.” So put on your safety belt and hang on. Be courageous and keep standing up for what is right. “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 1:7). Someone has humorously said: “To avoid criticism say nothing, do nothing, and be nothing.” This about sums it up. God has called us to be courageous and not a coward!

CONFORMING: Romans 12:2 commands us: “And be not conformed (*molded*) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove (*discern, know*) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” We conform to the world when we give in to the ways of worldly brethren who want to play a form of rock music in the church and eventually we give up and conform or pattern ourselves after the world system. Therefore, not conforming to the world is an important part of our ecclesiastical separation. The world is an organized system made up of a set of ideas, people, activities, and purposes that are opposed God and take us away from God. The world has its own success, plans, programs, purposes, pride, lusts, pleasures, dominating principles and motives. The underling basis of the world is the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

The old saying is still true:

“Don't let the world squeeze into its mold.”

Ezra 9:1-2 speaks of the people's sin of cultural conformity: “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."

We must not allow our homes and churches to be affected and influenced by our ungodly culture whether it be the world's music, literature, philosophies, programs, ideas, heathenism, and gimmicks. Biblical separation (non-conformity) is not about our own personal feelings but God's feelings (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Remember that the outcome of our lives should be determined by what God says and not what we say. God's wisdom of non-conformity is much better than our debunked wisdom of conformity to the culture (James 3:17).

We must remember that sowing and reaping always take place in the framework of time (Gal. 6:7-8). That which is sown will become magnified and multiplied many times over. Something seemingly insignificant can ultimately have enormous consequences. So God has called us to separate from cultural contamination by not conforming our life to it and making decisions based upon it. Discernment is the ability to see the long-term consequences of a present course of action (Heb. 5:14).

Here is the point. We must apply truth to cultural issues for the culture is where the world system operates. God says conforming to the world is wrong ("and be not conformed to the world"). We can mold ourselves to the world (our present pagan culture). In order to practice separation, we need to have our mind transformed which is described as "the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). We need to think right about spiritual things versus worldly matters. In fact, we need to be a pre-thinker, so we are not pressured to compromise with the world.

As we have already studied, we are to "abstain from all appearance of evil" or every kind and form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). What is counterfeit or not spiritual in nature should be rejected and avoided. We should not conform to it in any way or fashion. Douglas McLachlan is correct: "The world thrives on conformity; it gags on diversity." Anybody who wants to be different than the world system will be seen as some kind of strange person - "wherein they think is strange that ye run not with them to their same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Pet. 4:4).

There is a tragic price that Christians pay when they eagerly conform to the world system. Remember that God wants us to be a *transformer* and not a *conformer*!

The word “transformed” speaks of a metamorphosis (to change into another form). We are to manifest the life of a butterfly coming out of its cocoon (“newness of life” – Rom. 6:4) and not pattern ourselves after the old ways and lifestyle of our past for we have by virtue of the New Birth and position in Christ become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Now we must act like it! We must put our position into practice.



John Miles is correct when stating: “We will never really believe in separation unless we believe that God has changed us, made us a new creation, and indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit.” M.H. Reynolds also declared: “As Christians, we must be committed to being outwardly different. Our lifestyle, our philosophy, our standards and our conduct must be distinct from that of the world in which we live.” The Bible teaches we can conform to the world and sinful practices of others directly and even indirectly by becoming a “partaker of other men’s sins” (1 Tim. 5:22). In this case, it’s by ordaining and sanctioning another man who is teaching error or living a worldly life. The principles of endorsement and wrong association cannot be stated any clearer than this.

We can partake in the errant and worldly lifestyles of others when we sweep the dirt under the carpet and choose to participate and compromise with worldly brethren. The Bible also states in 2 John 1:11 that we become a “partaker (sharer) of his evil deeds” when we go along and give our approval of those men and movements who are promoting errant doctrine and worldliness. Although this is referring to apostates, the principle being taught applies to all our church affiliations.

I cannot wiggle out of what the Bible is teaching on associating with worldliness and doctrinal corruption, and conforming or patterning ourselves after ungodly and unwholesome practices. We need a good dose of Bible separation now and then to remind us how God’s expects us to live. God wants good separators, but Satan wants good conformers! Let us never forget this as we partner with others. Satan’s program involves inserting imitations and substitutes for the real thing.

Beware! Satan is always pushing his program. It has been said: "Satan is not fighting many churches; he is joining them." For this reason, we need to wake up and smell the coffee, take a reality check, and stand against sin!

Here is some practical questions of application. What kind of message are we sending before God and others when we participate with those churches that teach error and which promote a form of pagan music and worship adopted from the rock culture? Are we not sending the message that we are in agreement with their doctrine and worldly practices? Are we not conforming to it instead of separating from it? The point is this, where we go and what we associate with does matter. We have a testimony to uphold. If we conform to the world we can quickly lose our testimony.

1 Timothy 4:12 talks about our general Christian testimony:

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example (a pattern in an ethical sense) **of the believers**, (to avoid the possibility of justified criticism) **in word** (speaking – avoiding forbidden speech but engaging in kind speech), **in conversation** (conduct of living, deportment of life), **in charity** (our motive, goal, and loving spirit toward God's people and service), **in spirit** (wholesome affections and also intense enthusiasm), **in faith** (confidence or trust in God as well as faithfulness, steadfastness, dependability), **in purity**" (holy actions as well as motives in relation to sanctified and separated living).

Romans 12:2 declares: Don't conform – transform! We cannot forget the enduring principle that what we cooperate with we condone! For this reason, I must know what churches believe and what they are doing, keep my eyes open, and remain discerning by having my "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). Of course, this does not mean that we should develop the Elijah Syndrome which concludes: "I'm the only one left that has not bowed the knee to Baal" (1Kings 19:18). Nevertheless, we should maintain proper discernment and not allow ourselves to become sloppy in our church associations and what we condone and cooperate with in relation to our church fellowships and ministries. Much that is taking place in the church today is not true spirituality or revival. Beware of the false revival that is manipulated by man.

CARNALITY: 1 Corinthians 3:3 says, “For ye are yet carnal.” This can be true of our Christian lives when we are influenced by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Under this heading we want to primarily focus on worship and separating from disorderly brethren (2 Thess. 3:6, 11, 13) who are practicing a carnal type of worship and fleshly entertainment (showbiz) musical expression that has been adopted from a secularized, pagan form of rock music. Because of the carnality aspects of worship running rampant in the church we must practice ecclesiastical separation from those churches and brethren which imbibe this form of entertainment and worship.



God says carnal or fleshly worship has a corrupting influence because it seeks to mix light with darkness or paganism with Christianity (2 Cor. 6:14-17). The Bible reminds us that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). This means if the people in the church are not living holy lives, the entire church in some sense is seen to be leavened. But also, leaven spreads or permeates within a church and affects others. There is a spiritual lesson to be learned from the baking of bread. Leaven permeates the dough and causes the bread to rise so errant doctrine and worldliness, including carnally based worship, can leaven and spread within a church causing it to become permeated with doctrinal, worldly, and carnal corruption.

The gradualism of corruption (a little leaven or carnality) sets into our local churches when we don’t deal with and remove the evil. Even a small amount of tainted meat spoils an entire sandwich. In a similar way, a little leaven (false doctrine, sin, worldliness, and carnality) can eventually expand and cause much havoc in our personal lives and churches. When leaven is left go it continue to grow.

David Cloud said:

“One of the greatest problems among Bible-believing churches today is the phenomenon of gradualism. Worldliness and ecumenical philosophies and charismatic music and many other injurious things are gradually making inroads into fundamentalist churches. This makes the problem difficult to detect and even more difficult to correct.”

Leaven eventually has a corrupting influence on everything. We would never want to eat a sandwich that is half spoiled. We wouldn't want to compromise our health by eating a mixture of spoiled and healthy meat. The same is true regarding our spiritual health and worship in the local churches. Many churches seek to adapt the perverted sound of a rock culture (musical rebellion) by adding Christian lyrics or words and they begin to imbibe and teach various forms of psychology instead of the sufficiency of God (2 Cor. 3:5).

God hates a mixture between that which is holy and unholy during our times of worship ("And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" - Leviticus 10:10). This is a timeless principle. It never changes. Although the implementation of God's holy standards may change or vary from law to grace the standard itself remains the same - be different, be holy (1 Pet. 1:15-17). One thing is certain, the New Testament reiterates the Old Testament ethical or moral law of separating from pagan practices and heathen ways (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Ezra 6:21).

Let's specifically reflect on carnal worship. Remember that Jeroboam made worship *convenient* but certainly not *correct* in God's eyes (1 Kings 12:28-30). He adopted a pagan form of worship. How we worship is very important to God. We can worship ignorantly (John 4:22), irresponsibly (Lev. 10:1), irreverently (Heb. 12:9), worldly (Lev. 22:20-22; Mal. 1:8), and carnally (1 Cor. 11:20-21; 29-30). Cain chose to worship in his own fleshly way rather than to obey God in his time of worship (Gen. 4:3-8). God can look down on our worship and conclude that it is "strange fire" (Numb. 3:4; 26:61) when it does not reflect His holy character and ways. The so-called fiery zeal and enthusiasm of many believers today, including their worship, is comparable to a "false fire" offered up to the Lord.

Dr. Bob Shelton once said:

"There is so much wild fire out there today, we do not remember the real fire!"

He was referring to the real fire of worship that reflects God's glory – His holy nature and righteous ways (Rev. 15:3). Everything else is a false fire manipulated by man. Psalm 96:9 declares, "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." This is a holiness that does not reflect worldliness and pagan forms of worship, including the rock idiom that has been created to glorify Satan and not God by promoting sex, drugs, and rebellion against God. Satan

knows what he is doing but many within the church does not know what he is doing (Eph. 6:11). Satan is always pushing his program even within the Church.

Tozer is correct when he states:

“The temptation to introduce new things into the work of God has always been too strong for some people to resist. Misguided people have tried to glamorize church life who think that they know more about running God’s work than Christ and His apostles did.”

This is especially true in relation to modern evangelical worship. The principle of clean and wholesome worship has been revealed in both the Old and New Testaments (Jeremiah. 7:11; Malachi 1:8; Ex. 25:18-22; Matt. 21:12-13; Acts 7:33; Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20). God does not put up with worldliness and sin in the places where He meets with His people. The meetings of God’s saints are to be “holy convocations” or sacred assemblies (Lev. 23:2, 4) and not celebration times designed to entertain people, glorify man, and feed the old nature through the perverted sounds of rock music.

Lehman Strauss once remarked:

"But many of the saints are disturbed and concerned about some of the self-styled, flashy combo groups who move from church to church with a new dress and a new beat that has no serious and reverent sense of God."

One Christian said to me, “We should be able to set aside differences in worship and just focus on the Lord.” The point is well made that we must focus on the Lord. But condoning and accepting those things such as pagan music or a party spirit which dishonors the Lord will not help us to focus on the Lord nor glorify Him – His holiness and purity (Lev. 19:2; 20:7; Ps. 29:2; 96:9).

If we are going to focus on the Lord, as we should, then we will not accept a pagan form of worship and unholy actions in our time of worship. We should not condone false teaching, disorderly actions, women preachers (1 Tim. 2:12), and ungodly music (pagan worship). We should not overlook those things that bring dishonor to the Word of God and the holy and righteous reputation of God’s name (Col. 3:23). Anything that dishonors God because of worldly practice and disobedience causes us to lose our focus on the Lord and His glory.

Scripture makes it clear that it is not enough to simply do the right thing; we must also do it in the right way. 2 Timothy 2:5 says we should “strive lawfully” (that which is agreeable to ethical norms) and therefore agrees with the teaching of God’s Word. As New Testament priests, we want to offer “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God” (1 Pet. 2:5) in our times of worship since God has called us “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). The rock idiom is a dark world. We are not to mimic it in any way. God places a high and holy standard upon His House and the gathered meetings of His people. God demands reverence and order (1 Cor. 11:17-21; 14:33, 40). Psalm 89:7 declares, “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”

We must maintain a reverent and orderly standard in the local churches and refuse to participate and endorse worldly worship or any false teaching in the local assemblies. A.W. Tozer again remarks: “But a man who has passed through the veil and looked even briefly upon the holy place of Isaiah’s God can never be irreverent again.” The problem is people gradually become numb and insensitive to worldliness in the church and reverence takes a back seat in many local churches.

Hebrews 12:28 calls us to “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” When we participate with those ministries or movements that promote worldly worship in their services, or when we cooperate with those who promote or represent false teaching, then we are not expressing reverence toward God. Obedience in the area of worship is far better than superficial outward conformity to a certain style of worship which does not reflect God’s purpose or character in worship. 1 Samuel 15:22 is the age-old reminder: “to obey is better than sacrifice.” We must learn to worship God on His terms and not our terms! Pagan worship does not conform us to God’s image (2 Cor. 3:18) nor has God ever accepted defiled or pagan worship which He deems as “strange fire” (Num. 26:61).

To state it simply, God does not accept a reworked pagan-style (Jer. 10:2) of worship for His glory (“Let us do evil, that good may come” - Rom. 3:8). We must stop making deals with sinners! Jesus was a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34) but He never did compromise with sinners (Heb. 7:26). Yes, we want lost people to attend our churches, but we do not help them if we mimic their way of life, culture, and

worldly practices instead of being salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14). Don't go with the flow! The current of compromise is very strong.

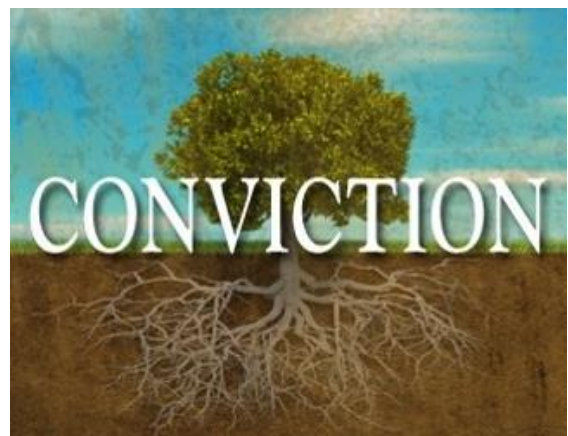
William Orr said this about worldly amusements:

"I think we ought to understand clearly that the philosophy of the Bible is never one to prohibit enjoyment. God wants us to be happy, and He has filled the world with innumerable opportunities for joy and pleasure. God's prohibitions are always concerning things which are harmful. Being a wise heavenly Father, He is concerned lest we miss the real things in life and participate in some things of which we will be eternally sorry."

CONVICTION: Daniel 1:8 says, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." No doubt many things forbidden by the Law were served on the king's table, so to partake of such food would defile the Jewish people. It can also be concluded that the food had been sacrificed and offered to pagan gods before it was offered to the king. To partake of such food would be contrary to Exodus 34:15 where the Jews were forbidden to eat flesh sacrificed to pagan gods.

Similar problems would arise in drinking the wine. To abstain from the Old Testament prohibition against "strong drink" (Prov. 20:1, Isa. 5:11), Jews customarily diluted wine with water and did so for purification reasons. Some added 3 parts of water to wine, others 6 parts, and some as much as 10 parts of water to 1 part of wine. The Babylonians and pagan people did not dilute their wine. This reminds me that there are many Babylonian believers in the church today who want to drink alcohol (strong drink) which the Bible forbids. So both the food and the drink would have defiled these Jewish young men. Daniel knew the requirements of the Law governing what he should and should not eat and drink.

"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Now this is a conviction! It was a conviction that stems from the heart which means that it comes from our innermost being and control center. It's real – not fake! It has deep roots. It means we are standing on a fixed purpose which is rooted in the truth. It means we will not waiver back



and forth like an unstable drunken man (James 1:6). Our conviction is based upon our faith in what God says in His Word knowing that the truth does not change. Conviction means we possess a “moral center” in the midst of the moral chaos surrounding us.

Daniel’s conviction was not a “fly by night” type of conviction that blows in the wind one way and then changes its course when the wind is blowing in another direction with every wind of doctrine and change (Eph. 4:14). We are talking about the importance of Biblical convictions based upon the unchanging and timeless commands, ethics, and principles of God’s Word.

Some of God’s people have personal preferences but preferences are not the same as conviction based upon revealed truth. Personal preferences might change but not Biblical convictions. Conviction does not change when it is aligned with the truth of God’s Word. Other Christians are living by *convenience* but not *conviction*. For instance, it may be convenient for a Christian to attend a Bible-believing, fundamental church because it’s close to his home, but he may not really listen to the teaching of Bible separation and apply it to his life. Others might follow the crowd out of convenience and not possess real conviction to live a godly and pure life. But a Holy Spirit driven Bible conviction is not moveable. We need to be willing to sink the whole ship on conviction. Courageous commitment stemming from strong convictions is essential if we are going to stay on course. We need to stay devoted to divine priorities and maintain a strong and unwavering conviction in Bible truth.

Hebrews 5:14 speaks of having our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” This is conviction. We determine right from wrong and stand up for what is right. We don’t back down. We don’t cave to the culture of corruption. 1 Corinthians 15:58 reminds us to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” This also speaks of possessing a strong conviction to remain constant in doing what is right and serving the Lord. You are sedentary, you won’t bend or move in the wrong direction. Jude 1:3 again reminds us to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” If you “earnestly contend” (strenuously struggle on the behalf of something) it means you have conviction about it. You don’t waiver back and forth and “hee-haw” around when it comes to standing up for truth and what is right.

Let's refresh our minds one more time about standing up for what is right as found in the book of Joshua.

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."

When the Bible says "turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" it's talking maintaining your Biblical conviction and not going with the culture, the wind, the here and now. It means you won't compromise with anything, anyone, anywhere.

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."

We are to plow a straight furrow and refuse to turn to the right or left. We need to keep on the firing line! We know the Biblical narrative of the three Hebrew men who refused to bow the knee to the king's golden image but those who don't were to be cast into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:10-11). When the king encountered the three men for not worshipping the image of himself, he gave them an ultimatum of bowing or burning! They did not take the easy road and compromise God's truth and bow down and worship a man.

Here is what they said to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:16-18:

"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we [are] not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Here is conviction and courage on steroids! These men were unwilling to bend to the pressure. They stood their ground without any compromise. This brings up an important and timely question: "Are we willing to be cast into the fiery furnace?" Are we willing to take the heat, so to speak, and not compromise with

the rest of the crowd? Conviction will keep us from compromising the truth, our goals, and consecration to God.

How about Daniel? A plot against Daniel was carried out by jealous officials. If someone petitioned or prayed to anyone else but King Darius for a period of thirty days, they would be thrown into the den of lions (Daniel 6:4-8). Daniel refused and was cast into the lion's den.

Daniel 6:10-11 states:

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”

Daniel once again stood in the gap (in this case it was the lion's den) and did not waiver in his Biblical convictions. As God's people we need to stand up for righteousness, for what is true and holy, and stop trying to play hide and seek! We have an obligation not to compromise. Daniel was not going to pray to Darius but to His own God and Heavenly Father. He stood his ground. He was strong in his convictions. Nothing would keep him from doing what is right – not even the lion's den. So Daniel was cast into the lion's den and God took care of him (Dan. 6:16-22).

Now here is the application of this story to our lives today. Are you willing to be thrown into the lion's den for your Biblical convictions? In today's terminology, “Are you willing to be thrown under the bus for standing upon the truth and your convictions?” Talk about conviction! We should be willing to go into the lion's den, if need be, based upon our Biblical convictions. Like Daniel, we should refuse to go with the flow but instead remain constant in our Bible centered and heart-felt conviction. Whether it's the fiery furnace or the lion's den, God will give us the courage to stand upon Biblical ground and not waiver in our convictions which are based upon the truth.

Conviction keeps us from turning away from the truth as many will do in the last days (2 Tim. 4:4). It keeps us from the slippery slope of compromise with the corrupt culture and world system. When we are strong in our Biblical conviction,

we won't slip on the banana peel of pressure, political correctness, and wokeness in the church. We will hold the line, (Rev. 3:11) not cross the line, and not get close to the line.

We need to be like Daniel and purpose in our hearts not to defile ourselves with drink, drugs, and other dangerous diversions from the truth which are directly linked to the world, the flesh and the Devil. We need to possess strong conviction based upon God's unalterable truth. The world, lust, and Satan can captivate our hearts and overtake our lives. But our resolve and victory is found in the Lord.

“Standing by a purpose true
Heeding God's command
Honor them, the faithful few
All hail to Daniel's band.

Dare to be a Daniel
Dare to stand alone
Dare to have a purpose firm
Dare to make it known.”

CONSIDERATION: God wants us to consider five questions regarding the matter of ecclesiastical separation. These questions are rhetorical in nature. This means the questions are asked in such a way that the answer is to be understood. **Amos 3:3: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”** No! This is especially true in church outreach and ministry since different philosophies would collide. There needs to be a basic agreement regarding ministry, music, and the general matters dealing with Bible separation within the church ministry. We must agree on purpose, procedure, and practice. We need to be rowing in the same direction.



Here is the second question: **Job 14:4, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.”** That which is unholy cannot give birth to that which is holy. This principle teaches that which is unclean (worldliness and wrong doctrine) cannot result in anything that is clean and good. This is an impossibility in both

the physical and spiritual realms. For instance, good doctrine cannot come out of bad doctrine. Nothing clean can be produced from Contemporary Christian Rock Music since it mimics musical rebellion. God cannot approve and use unclean things in His work since they go against His character of holiness and the perfect standard of His righteousness for “The LORD is righteous in all his way, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17). Pagan music is still pagan despite the introduction of Christian words. Fornication and adultery is still wrong despite what the culture says. A pig is still a pig. The mixing of the clean and unclean can only produce skewed and mixed results and breed confusion (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Again, that which is unholy cannot give birth to that which is holy.

The next question is interesting. **Jeremiah 13:23 asks, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”** No, this is not a racist question but a question that is teaching a simple principle. In this instance, Judah was as incapable of reforming herself just as a dark-skinned Ethiopian was incapable of changing his skin pigmentation or as a leopard was incapable of removing its spots. In other words, her sin was so ingrained that she was accustomed to doing only evil. This parallels the situation in the modern churches today. The church people are so infiltrated with compromise and worldliness that many times it becomes impossible to change them for “my people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). Therefore, we are commanded to separate from them and remain pure in our worship, doctrine, and associations.

Psalm 11:3 asks the fourth question: “If the foundations (truth and order) be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” This was said in relationship to the condition of Israel’s kingdom. When applying this principle to our day of compromise it means basically this: “If we lose the foundation of holiness (truth, order, and separation) then what can the righteous do?” Let’s answer this question in two ways.

First, when the foundational basis of the truth concerning Bible separation is lost and full-blown worldliness overtakes a church ministry, then there is nothing we can do with this particular church or ministry. At this point it is impossible and futile to try and “strengthen the things that remain” (Rev. 3:2). The people have made their decision, and this means we must make our decision and separate

from the errant philosophies, doctrines, and musical rebellion. When the foundations of truth are forsaken for fleshly pursuits, we have no other choice. Second, when corruption overtakes a church ministry, we must lay the foundation again with new church ministries which are not imbibing worldliness in their ranks. The foundation is to reengage in practicing holy Bible separation that is directed toward God (Rom. 12:1| 1 Pet. 2:5) and which is for His glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23; 2 Thess. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:11). We must rebuild the foundation in our personal lives and with new church ministries that are not imbibing cultural contamination with worldliness.

Each new generation must see to it that the foundations of truth and holiness remain intact. Will you be part of the present generation of Bible separatists that will build and maintain this important foundation? Are you ready to rebuild the foundation when necessary if compromise overtakes the personal lives of others and church ministries? When the foundations of a church are lost, we must take action and rebuild the foundation and maintain Bible separation for the next generation. It's always too soon to quit! Keep building.

Here is the final question. **1 Kings 18:21, "How long halt ye (pass over) between two opinions?"** In other words, make up your mind which way you are going to go – the world's way or God's way! In the war of right and wrong we cannot afford to be neutral. Stop straddling the fence. Stop beating around the bush. Make your choice. You can't be neutral in the battle. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. likened the neutral Christian to a soldier who compromised during the civil War. The soldier 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! Remember that the easy way out is the wrong direction. Furthermore, if we are a double-minded type of person we won't stand very long but suffer defeat (James 1:8).

Many Christians claim the Bible does not teach what they term to be an unloving doctrine of ecclesiastical (church) separation from the brethren. They conclude this practice is divisive and does not unify the saints. However, the Bible states in unmistakable terms some very important reasons why we must separate from the brethren on a local church level. We must be obedient to God's Word on this matter (2 Thess. 3:6-14; 1 Cor. 5:2; 11-13; 1 Cor. 10:20; Eph. 5:6-7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:17-21; 4:10; Titus 3:10).

Also, we cannot forget that genuine love and unity are always centered in truth (Eph. 4:13; 2 John 1-4). Unity is based upon our agreement of the truth, not on how we feel about each other. This means that true love for Christ and others does not sweep worldliness or error under the carpet and seek to ignore it. Love is not mere sentiment; it certainly does not mean broadmindedness and a non-critical acceptance of everything. Love always “rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). Love and truth are inseparably bound together and creates genuine unity. 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.”

1 Peter 3:11 declares: “Let him eschew evil (*turn aside or turn away from it*), and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.” True Biblical peace and unity is never the by-product of doing wrong. Peace and unity never come about by compromising with error, worldliness, and false religion. The motto “Peace at any price” is not a Biblical axiom. 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 sin and error will occur. Genuine love for God will seek obedience to the Lord’s commands regarding separation from apostasy, false doctrine, and unethical patterns of worldliness (John 14:15, 23; Phil. 1:9-10). I John 5:3 says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments...” The Bible declares the church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth which would include upholding the standard of sanctification in its assemblies.

1 Timothy 3:15 says:

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

If we must overlook the truth for the sake of unity, including the truth of sanctification (1 Tim. 6:3), then we must not join that church and refuse to associate with it.

**Will the Real
Schismatics
Please
Stand Up?**

Since the church should behave properly and be supportive of only that which is truthful and pure, we are instructed to separate from a heretical (divisive) brother who seeks to divide a ministry and God’s people through introducing false doctrine, extra-scriptural experiences,

and worldly practices which do not align with God's standard of truth. The Bible again reminds us that "A man that is a heretick (*divider*) after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3:10). This is God's summons to separation.

Some have concluded that the separatists are divisive (schismatic) because they refuse to fellowship with certain brethren, congregations, and movements. However, in view of the hour and compromising times in which we live, we must ask the question: "**Will the real schismatics please stand up?**" We must remember that it was the worldly and compromising brethren and New Evangelical Movement, a compromising movement openly opposing Fundamentalism, which created the original rift or division in many churches by incorporating ecumenicalism, worldly music, and other unseparated ways into church life and ministry. This breach has grown to monstrous proportions and will likely never be repaired again until we get to Heaven and worship together before the throne singing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5:12).

Matt Costella remarked:

"Divisions are caused by the brother who does not practice sound doctrine – the doctrine of separation is no exception – and the fundamentalist is required to separate from him. The fundamentalist is not trying to be unloving, schismatic or exclusive. He simply desires to be obedient to the Lord and His Word above all else!"

So mark this down, the real heretics or schismatics (division makers) are the unruly and unseparated brethren who have strayed from the Biblical foundation of separation by promoting ecumenically folly, unsound doctrine, a paganized form of worship music, and cultural compromise. For this reason, we must separate from these brethren and not participate with their ministries which promote and cooperate (fellowship) in some measure with apostasy and other non-separated, worldly, and compromising practices such as charismatic teachings, the ecumenical involvement (transdenominational), irreverent and immodest practices, musical rebellion, etc.). Although we love the brethren, we must love God more (Mark 12:30). Fundamentalism is not about hating God's people; it's about loving God and His Word above all else (Luke 14:26).

In this study we have learned the importance of practicing separation from brethren (genuine Christians) who have erred from the faith in doctrine and practice. Let's summarize some of the basic reasons.

- Because God commands it (2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Cor. 5:11).
- Because of gradual corruption and compromise occurring in the local Church (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
- Because obeying God's Word on separation can bring spiritual restoration to erring brethren (2 Thess. 3:14-15; James 5:19-20).
- Because of gaining or losing eternal reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 John 8, 10-11).

Of course, loving the brethren does not mean that I must agree with them on every issue, do everything with them, or attend their churches. However, if a Christian has many friends in a 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 its doctrine, practice, and worship. For many, it seems less divisive for them to just sit back and brush things under the carpet instead of making any waves. Of course, this mindset flies in the face of God's call for ecclesiastical (church) separation (2 Thess. 3:6).

Franky, the son of Francis Schaeffer, once said:

"Everybody wants to be a nice guy; no one wants to be a bad guy. Bad guys are disruptive to cozy fellowships, are theological and ecclesiastical whistle blowers – and few want to hear the whistle. As a result of well-meaning efforts on the part of many to be nice, the cutting edge of Christianity is being dulled."

If something is bad you can only put so much sugar on it! Therefore, the wisdom and enduring words of Proverbs 4:14-15 should be heeded: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

This is the power of negative thinking! This truth must be applied to our friendships, associations, churches, and anything or everyone that would weaken our spiritual life and separated stance. In other words, do everything you can to stay far away from sin. Don't see how close you can get to the line! Don't straddle the fence. Don't walk on a tightrope above a ferocious crocodile! Don't take chances with sin and compromise. You should go as far as you can on the right road! Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong. Live responsibly. Discipline yourself (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Discipline and determination are rare virtues in the modern Christian community. Don't set yourself up for sin. Be



cautious. Be smart. A wise person senses danger and takes action to avoid trouble. We should make the point to avoid sin and compromise, turn away from it, and not give it a chance to have its fling in our lives (Rom. 13:14). It is our submission to the Spirit and our sensitivity to His prompting which enables us to live a disciplined and Christ-honoring life.

John Ashbrook again states:

“Thousands of churches have fallen into the new evangelicalism while trying to be silent fundamentalists.”

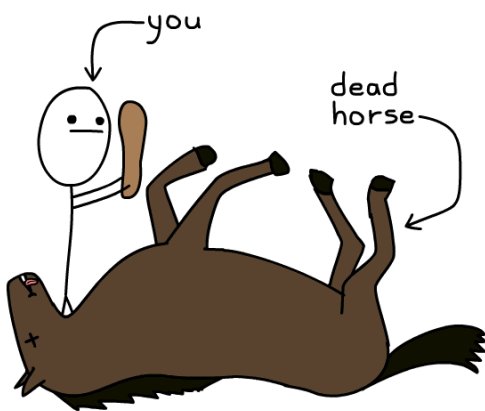
We must break the silence and continue to sound the alarm against apostasy, worldly Christianity, compromise, and nominal Christianity (Rev. 3:17). If we don't fight, we eventually will give up the ship. The tragedy of compromise relates to both doctrine and ethics. It is seen in many religious movements and churches today. The only way to break this pattern of compromise is to teach the truth of Bible separation to the next generation (“the generation to come” – Ps. 78:4, 6) and live the truth before them with a passionate love for God and others.

Today pastors are to lead the local congregations and churches – not vice versa. The Bible teaches that God has called church leaders to be overseers (Acts 20:28) which means they are to have authority over the assemblies. Other Christians are to submit to this authority (Heb. 13:7, 17). Dr. Charles Ryrie has well said: “Twice in Hebrews 13 we are reminded that there are rulers in the local church who in the exercise of their responsibilities will have to set guidelines, exercise authority and discipline, and make rules for the members. Exactly what this may involve or how far it may go is not stated, but the principle is clearly established. Without it, there would be anarchy in the church.”

The unseparated music, immodesty, irreverence, and a type of false freedom (modified libertinism) that is being practiced within the local churches and personal lives of God's saints is part of the anarchy we see occurring today. Pastors are imbibing the culture and allowing their congregants to live like the world instead of teaching them “the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3).

Of course, there is a big difference between lording it over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5:3) and old-fashioned preaching that condemns sin, convicts, and cuts through to

the heart (Acts 2:37). A pastor is given the responsibility to “rebuke with all authority” (Titus 2:15; 2 Tim. 4:2) and at times “use sharpness” (2 Cor. 13:10). Yes, it is the preacher’s business to pry into the worldly lives of his flock occasionally and give them a challenge about their unseparated living. Like Paul, pastors are to be “gentle among you” (1 Thess. 2:7) but at the same time they are to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2) which includes denouncing false doctrine, apostasy, sin, and worldliness in the lives of the people. Vance Havner once remarked: “A preacher is to have the mind of a scholar, the heart of a child, and the hide of a rhinoceros.”



In taking time to study this subject, I’m not attempting to beat a dead horse! We cannot allow separation to die in our churches and personal lives. I’m trying to get on the horse and proclaim the truth about Bible separation for its desperately needed in our local churches and individual choices. The church needs to saddle up once again and ride with the truth of Biblical separation in all areas of their life and worship.

1 Timothy 4:16 states: “Take heed unto thyself (*watch your own life*), and unto the doctrine (*the teaching in church ministry*); continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” as people replace sinful patterns of living with transformed living (Phil. 2:12; James 5:19–20). Paul’s words are a pointed reminder of the awesome burden of responsibility that congregational leaders carry today as they share life transforming truth.

Let’s review the eight reasons for ecclesiastical separation once again to be sure that we are making “full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5) as Paul states or fulfilling our ministry by devoting our time and service to the work of the Lord. Fulfilling our ministry would certainly include teaching “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) as found in Scripture which would take into account the subject of Bible separation.

- **CALLING:** Our holy calling requires ecclesiastical separation. God has called me to represent purity (“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” or living (1 Peter 1:15-16). This would include what we condone and associate with.

- **COMMAND:** God’s command to live differently from a pagan society requires ecclesiastical separation. God has commanded me to separate from unrighteous practices and not associate with them in any way “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? (2 Cor. 6:14-17).
- **COMMISSION:** God has commissioned me to separate ecclesiastically (in a church setting) from disorderly brethren (2 Thess. 3:6-14) and forsake all for Jesus Christ (Luke 14:26-28).
- **CORRECTION:** Our mandate to discern error and not fellowship with worldliness (darkness) requires ecclesiastical separation. God says we should discern and test everything by the truth and refute or correct the unfruitful works of darkness. Ephesians 5:10-11 – “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
- **CONFORMING:** Refusing to pattern ourselves after the world system requires ecclesiastical separation. God says conforming to the world (cultural contamination and worldliness) is always wrong (Rom. 12:2) - either by *direct* participation or *indirect* association with it (“abstain from all appearance of evil” - 1 Thess. 5:22). Don’t be a conformer but a transformer!
- **CARNALITY:** The carnality of a reworked form of pagan rock music in the local churches and other debunked and unscriptural theories (1 Tim. 6:20) requires ecclesiastical separation. God says carnal living and worship has a leavening or corrupting influence which seeks to mix light with darkness or worldliness with Christianity. The Bible teaches “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). The *gradualism* of corruption sets into our personal lives and local churches when we don’t remove it and deal with it.
- **CONVICTION:** Like Daniel, we must purpose in our hearts not to defile and corrupt ourselves (Dan. 1:8). We plow a straight furrow and refuse to turn

to the right or left. We keep on the firing line! We should be willing to go into the fiery furnace and lion's den, if need be, based upon our Biblical convictions. We will not go with the flow but remain constant in our Bible centered and heart-felt conviction.

- **CONSIDERATION:** When we consider what God's Word says on the matter of separation we are required to practice ecclesiastical separation. God wants us to consider five questions. Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Job 14:4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Jeremiah 13:23 also asks, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Psalm 11:3 asks the fourth question: "If the foundations (truth and order) be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Finally, 1 Kings 18:21 asks, "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

Instead of asking "What will happen if I obey God's will?" we should ask "What will happen if I disobey God's will?" Beloved, the grass is not greener on the other side, so remain on the side of fundamentalism and separation and don't be pulled downstream by the current of compromise.

Many fundamental pastors holding to the doctrine of Bible separation are crying the blues because they sometimes will lose people to more worldly and compromising churches. However, we must remember that the Bible reprimands us for possessing a complaining and grumbling spirit (Exod. 15:24; Numb. 14:2; 1 Cor. 10:10). Mumbling, grumbling, bumbling, and stumbling is forbidden! Practicing the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2) should be our most important occupation (Rom. 12:1-2) and we must always remember that God has "not despised the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10). Little is much when God is in it!

Dearly beloved, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees" (Heb. 12:12). Stop pitying yourself and drowning in your sorrows. Make a new commitment to truth and "the paths of righteousness" (Ps. 23:2) and keep on the firing line. Jesus encourages us in Revelation 2:25 with these words: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."

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

It’s always too soon to surrender. Don’t abandon ship. Stick to the stuff. God does not measure success by bigness, numbers, and glamour, but by faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2). Not all that passes as God’s blessing is God’s blessing and a sign of true success. In Joshua 1:8 God tells us what success is about: “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.”

Many people will say today, “God is blessing me.” This often becomes an overused statement and artificial cliché that man uses to approve of his own worldly doings and unseparated actions. Others say, “We felt the leading of the Lord in making this decision.” Often the Lord is given the credit for man’s mistakes and bad decisions! Quite frankly, we can view things as coming from God and the Lord’s leading when in reality our decisions and actions are skewed by our own priorities, wants, greed, disobedience, and a lack of discernment, commitment, and love for the Lord (Mark 12:30). Many Christians who claim to be successful are a successful failure in God’s eyes. Gordon MacDonald said: “I think we need to be constantly reminded that Jesus, by the standards of cultural success models, was a miserable failure.”

Dearly beloved, don’t abandon the ship of Bible separation. Hebrews 13:13 says, “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Don’t leave the Old Evangelicalism (“the old paths” – Jer. 16:6) for the New Evangelicalism of unseparated living and compromise. Don’t become “weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). God is doing far more than we realize and “our labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

“Right is always right and wrong is always wrong
And you must learn to separate the two.
If you love the right the Lord will give you light,
So seek the right in everything you do.

Do right till the stars fall, Do right till the last call,
Do right when there's no one else to stand by you.
Do right when you're all alone,
Do right though it's never known.
Do right since you love the Lord,
Do right, Do right."

Ecclesiastical or Church Separation

(At a Glance)

Associating with worldly, doctrinally corrupt, unseparated churches and their brethren can be summarized in a simple fashion.

- **PARTNERSHIP** = 2 Corinthians 6:14; Amos 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14

Our presence with moral or ethical corruption means we are partnering with something that God does not approve. Don't fellowship or partner with error, worldly brethren, and disorderly local churches with their compromising mission boards, don't participate in ecumenical rallies, refuse to partner with worldly, carnal, and pagan forms of worship, etc.

- **PROMOTION** = Ephesians 5:7,11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:19

Our fellowship or participation with that which is errant, worldly, and apostate ("the unfruitful works of darkness") means we are promoting and endorsing that which is errant in doctrine and unethical in deportment (practice). What is dark we are to steer away from and remain salt and light in the church and world (Matt. 5:14-15).

- **PARTICIPATION** = Eph. 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 John 1:11; 1 Corinthians 10:20

Participation means we are cooperating with that which is not pure and holy. We must refuse to endorse or promote error and worldliness on every level – individually but also ecclesiastically (religious organizations, church ministries, worldly brethren). We should not partner with evil in any form and with anyone who practices evil or anything that represents darkness (1 Thess. 5:22). Our

presence and cooperation with that which is impure, whether it be people, places, or religious movements, means we are participating and complicit with it. Avoid participating in worldly and carnal practices through *direct* involvement or *indirect* association. Draw a line in the sand and don't cross it.

- **PURPOSE** = Daniel 1:8, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself."

Our presence in an atmosphere of carnality and worldliness means we compromise with the world system and neglect our holy purpose to refuse defilement and honor God. We are not to corrupt ourselves and become defiled doctrinally or in deportment of living. Purpose before God that you will do what is right and not practice or promote evil in any way. What we need is Biblical conviction today. Again, we should be willing to sink the whole ship on conviction.

- **PURSUING** = Mark 12:30; Luke 14:26

Pursuing Christ in discipleship will keep us from compromising. Our presence in particular meetings and movements means we become disloyal to our Master. Love the brethren, even those we might disagree with (1 John 4:7-8), but love God more by remaining loyal to Him, sticking to sanctification (separation), and following His ways over man's ways.

Pursuing Christ involves Bible separation and means we "won't go along to get along." It means we will not "smoke the peace pipe" with false teaching, rebellious music based upon the rock idiom, worldly worship, and disorderly brethren within church (ecclesiastical) settings. It means we choose the narrow road and take up our cross and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). In following Christ there is a willingness on the part of God's people to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and even maligned by the world around them because Christian values expose secular values (1 John 3:13).

As someone has well stated, "May God help us to stand, withstand and understand!" Beware of reasoning about God's Word – obey it. At the same time beware of a strong head and a cold heart! Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). Be always ready to bring healing to others (Gal. 6:1). God has not called us to be a wrecking machine but to promote guidance, healing, and love toward others. A.W. Tozer said: "We need a return to a gentle dogmatism that smiles while it stands

stubborn and firm on the Word of God that lives and abides forever.” Now that is balance!

Lastly, remember that we are not to compare ourselves with other brethren and develop a “holier-than-thou” attitude for the Bible says that “they measuring themselves by themselves (*their own standards see no need for improvement*), and comparing themselves among themselves (*to determine who is more spiritual*), are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12). We are not the last ones who have refused to bow the knee to Baal!

A Simple Separation Summary

- Mark them (Romans 16:17-18; Phil. 3:17-18).
- Avoid them (Rom. 16:17-18).
- Be not unequally yoked together with them (2 Cor. 6:14).
- Come out from among them (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Ezra 10:11-12).
- Make no league with them (Judges 2:2).
- Build up a wall to keep them out (Nehemiah 4:6-17).
- Sound the trumpet against them (Nehemiah 4:18, 20; Num. 10:9).
- Do not meet with them (Nehemiah 6:1-4).
- Have no fellowship with demons (1 Cor. 10:20; 1 Timothy 4:1).
- Have no fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Deut. 18:9).
- Don't be deceived by them (1 Cor. 15:33).
- Beware of them (Matt. 16:6, 12; Matt. 7:15; Phil. 3:2).
- Reprove or correct them (Eph. 5:11).
- Shun their babblings (2 Tim. 2:16-17).
- Purge yourself from them (2 Timothy 2:21).
- Turn away from them (2 Tim. 3:5).
- Withdraw thyself from them (1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Thess. 3:6).
- Rebuke them (Titus 1:11-13; 2:15; 2 Peter 2:15-16; Prov. 24:24-25).
- Reject them (Titus 3:10).
- Offend them instead of please them (Gal. 4:16).
- Do not receive them (2 John 10-11).
- Name them (2 Timothy 3:8; 4:14; Rev. 2:6, 15).
- Warn about them (Acts 20:28-31; Col. 1:28; Ezekiel 33:7).
- Preach against their sins (Matt. 23:13-33; Rom. 3:9-23).
- Preach to them about hell (Matt. 23:14, 27, 33; Luke 13:3; Gal. 1:8).

- Abstain from associating with them, participating with them and condoning their evil doctrines (2 John 10-11; 1 Cor. 10:20; 1 Thess. 5:21-22).
- Hate their evil ways (Rom. 12:9; Ps. 97:10a; 119:104, 128, 163; Prov. 8:13).
- Fight against them and do not condone them (1 Cor. 15:32; Jude 3).
- War against them and not with them (1 Tim. 1:18).
- Cut them off from religious fellowship (Gal. 5:12).
- Judge them (John 7:24; Heb. 5:14-15; 1 Cor. 2:15).
- Try (test) them (1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:21-22).
- Examine their fruits (Matt. 7:15-16).
- Have no companionship with them (Psalm 119:63).
- Do not follow them (John 10:1-5; 2 Peter 2:2).
- Do not be deceived by them (2 Timothy 3:13-14).
- Do not fear their reproach (1 Peter 4:12-14; John 15:18; 1 John 3:13).
- Do not accommodate their teachings (Rev. 2:25; Rev. 3:11; 2 Thess. 2:15; Rev. 2:6, 15; Joshua 1:7).
- Identify their apostasy as satanic (Rev. 2:9, 13; John 8:44).
- Follow Christ instead of their compromises (Luke 14:25-29, 33).
- Go into the world to save them – not into their churches (Mark 16:15).



Any questions?