

SEPARATION AND HOLY LIVING

KEY VERSE:

Having therefore these promises ... let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Corinthians 7:1).

II Corinthians 6:14. Are ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

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

18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 John 2:15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16. From all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

1 Timothy 2:8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness, and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Background Scriptures

John 17:14-16; 1 Peter 3:8-12

Devotional Reading

Colossians 2:6-15

Central Truth:

Holiness of heart prepares one to live pure and holy in an impure world.



THE LESSON EXPOSITION

BACKGROUND

The difference between the holy and unholy, the righteous and the wicked, the godly or spiritual and the worldly is more than mere names. The difference is essentially one of opposite and antagonistic natures.

Righteousness or holiness is the essential nature of God. Whatever is righteous or holy harmonizes with and expresses the moral nature of God. Whatever is sinful or unholy is so because of its disharmony with and antagonism toward the holy, moral nature of God.

Sin and worldliness are more than mere arbitrary rulings of a deliberate body; they are moral, ethical, and spiritual qualities of nature. Outward manifestations are so serious because they manifest and demonstrate a moral condition of nature that is at enmity with God (**James. 4:4; Rom. 8:7**).

The enemy of God, the Church, holiness, and spirituality is doing all that he can, and using everyone who will cooperate with him, to neutralize, nullify, and destroy any institution or influence for vital, godly religion. However, the divine call still rings out for sanctity and separation that will reflect holiness and godliness and expose sin and worldliness as forces set against God.



I. SEPARATION IN LIFESTYLE (II Cor. 6:14-18)

II Corinthians 6:14. **Are ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** The reference here seems to be to the Old Testament prohibition of yoking an ox and an ass together, or the wearing of garments made of mixed fabrics. These prohibitions or admixture have a deeper meaning than mere ritual or rule. They reveal the incompatibility of duplicity with the singularly holy nature of God. In this passage Paul seems to be setting down a principle chiefly for marriage, but the principle has a much wider application. The principle is just as applicable to men's pleasures and pursuits. **What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?** The contrasts posed are the most impossible. Fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness is a moral impossibility. The two forces are inherently and absolutely arrayed in deadly conflict with each other. **What communion hath light with darkness?** There is absolutely no common ground of coexistence of light with darkness. The one totally annihilates the other.

15. What concord hath Christ with Belial? The term **Belial** has come to mean Satan in Scripture. **Genesis 3:15** shows the absolute antagonism which exists between Christ and Satan. It reveals Satan wielding his most fierce blow in his attempt to destroy the virgin-born Son of God, a blow which only wounded the heel of the Son. The declaration is that the wounded heel shall crush the head of Satan in utter death and destruction. **What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?** Faith is as incapable of admixture with unbelief as light is with darkness or sin with holiness.

16. Ye are the temple of the living God. The human personality is fundamentally spiritual. Being spiritual, it is in league with one or the other of the two opposite spiritual kingdoms in the world. Either God or Satan inhabits and controls the human spirit. It is an almost inconceivable honour and privilege that the living God proposes to inhabit the human spirit (**Eph. 3:16-19**). To have God dwell in one is to experience fullness and fulfilment. To have Satan's idols as gods is to feed on ashes and be filled with nothing (**1 Cor. 8:4; Isa. 44:20**). **I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** It is a marvel that God would be willing to identify Himself with those who were His enemies. The fact is that God has taken the initiative to make man His by redemption and to identify with him by paying the price to redeem him to Himself.

17. Wherefore come out from among them. Here is the great battleground. If one is to belong to God and identify with Him, he must experience a complete change of identity both inwardly and outwardly. It is impossible to be identified with God and against Him with his enemies at the same time. The real crisis is an identity crisis.

18. Ye shall be my sons and daughters. This is not talking about a universal fatherhood. If one would have God as his father, there must first be a death or complete separation from and abandonment of sin and sinful cohorts. **The Lord Almighty** can produce in one this greatest of all miracles.



II. SEPARATION IN AFFECTIONS (1 John 2:15-17)

1 John 2:15. Love not the world. This scripture is not a prohibition against loving the world of men. For God so loved the world that He gave Himself for it. The world that "God so loved" is the world of humanity – this world Christians are to love and seek to lift to God. Neither is this statement a condemnation of a proper regard for and care of the physical world of nature. When God completed the creation of this world, He declared it to be "very good." It is not only not wrong, but a duty, to love what God loves, and as God loves as nearly as possible. The world that Christians are not to love is "the present condition of human affairs, in alienation from and opposition to God" (Vine). It could be further described as the whole materialistic, humanistic system of persons, places, pursuits, and pleasures, organized apart from God, from which God is left out, that ignores God's will and acts independently of Him. J.B. Phillips renders it the "whole world-system." If one loves, enjoys, and delights in the "things" of the spiritual kingdom set against God, he does not love God, and vice versa.

16. All that is in the world is demonstrated through **the lust of the flesh**, or the craze for sensual satisfaction; **the lust of the eyes**, or overpowering passion to obtain anything and everything which appeals to one; and **the pride of life**, the exalted sense of one's self-importance because of wealth or position. All these dispositions are contrary to the nature of God and vital Christian experience.

17. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Anything worldly is temporal. Moral, spiritual accomplishments are enduring in this world and into the next. There are no delights compared to those associated with moral, spiritual achievements. They provide exhilaration of soul here and perpetual pleasure in heaven.



III. SEPARATION IN ADORNMENT (1 Tim. 2:8-10)

1 Timothy 2:8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands. "This reveals that in any place where men meet to worship God, or where there are human needs, prayer is in order. Prayers from temples and cathedrals are no more acceptable to God than those offered in the humblest chapel or from the poorest home. Prayer links heaven with earth and secures spiritual and temporal blessings that will not be given unless man prays (**Matt. 7:7, 8**). While God does not restrict the worshiper to one particular posture, since there is a reference here to **lifting up holy hands**, He is very demanding concerning the character of the one who prays. The uplifted hands suggest reverence, adoration, dependence, supplication, submission, and expectancy. But those hands must not be stained by unforgiven sins, and the spirit must be free from resentment and lack of faith in God. The motive of the one who prays must be pure as well as his outward actions" (Terry Pollard).

9. That women adorn themselves in modest apparel. God demonstrated His attitude toward nudity and immodesty in the Garden of Eden when He prepared garments for the first human couple. Since man's fall into sin, there has been a direct relationship between immodesty and immorality. David's awful sin was fomented by beholding the nudity of Bath-sheba. Paul hurled out the challenge that because God has invested so much in Christians, they are to glorify Him in their bodies and in their spirits, which both belong to God. Nudity and immodesty are a shame to the person so unattired and an affront and insult to a holy God. This admonition might also be stated, "to dress modestly, with decency and propriety." Any activity for which decent attire is improper is certainly an improper activity. **Not with braided hair** – elaborate, decorative hair styles. J.B. Phillips renders Peter's admonition: "Your beauty should not be dependent on an elaborate coiffure, or on the wearing of jewellery or fine clothes, but on the inner personality – the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a thing very precious in the eyes of God." Christians should be real, not artificial or bedecked artificially.

10. Which becometh women professing godliness. It is not an accident that modesty and plain beauty cause Christians to be identified for what they are in the world. It is an honour both to a person and his Lord to be suspected of being a Christian.

Surely it is no honour to either God or the Christian to be suspected of being a sinner because of one's deportment. One is a traitor who dons the attire of the enemy. It is a wonderful privilege to be identified with God, the Bible, holiness and holy people.



"KEY" COMMENTS

Having therefore these promises ... let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Cor. 7:1).

These promises to which Paul referred are listed in the closing **verses of chapter 6**. They are made to the regenerated ones and are "exceeding great and precious." They are given upon the condition that God's children "come out from among them [the unbelieving, sinful world], and be ... separate ... and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:17). "These promises" are: **(1)** I will dwell in you; **(2)** I will walk in you; **(3)** I will be your God; **(4)** You shall be my people; **(5)** I will receive you in a father-child relationship.

Filthiness of the flesh. Corinth was a very licentious county, and those people had been saved from low, vile lives. Perhaps sin did not seem to them as "exceeding sinful" as it really was (and is). There had been one case of gross immorality among them (1 Cor. 5). Therefore, special warning was given against outward sins in which the sinful spirit employs the body, i.e., idolatry, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, swearing, fighting, deceit, etc. By indulging in these fleshly sins, both the body and spirit are polluted. And the more they are indulged, the greater is the defilement. Also, the more one yields to the fallen flesh, the stronger are its temptations and the weaker one's resistance.

Since the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, proper care is to be taken, and harmful habits (tobacco, alcohol, gluttony, etc.) to be avoided. And note that responsibility rests with "us." Don't expect God to do it all – "Let us cleanse ourselves."

Filthiness of ... spirit calls attention to inward sins. These are heart sins, or sins of the spirit. They are usually termed "traits of carnality." This condition cannot be forgiven (having not been committed), but must be cleansed. Sins of the spirit include pride, malice, wrath, envy, covetousness, impure lusts, evil imaginations, etc. They can be controlled with partial success by a strong effort to suppress them. However, everyone who has tried this course can testify that such an experience is not to be coveted earnestly, and that at times he was not totally successful in his suppression. Therefore, it is clear that the best efforts at cleansing one's spirit are not sufficient. We, with John, find that only "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Note that the blood is the cleansing agent for **all** sin. Be it known unto all that sin is not part of man's nature; it is only a deep stain upon that nature and is, therefore, cleansable. Christ came for the express purpose of producing a pure and holy race. Through His cleansing blood comes the answer to David's earnest prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

Perfecting holiness. "Whenever we get rid of all our unholiness, then our holiness is perfect, i.e., complete, has the field without a rival ... When you get saved from all the 'filthiness of the flesh and spirit,' your holiness is complete, though you may be but a spiritual infant contemplating growth into manhood" (Godbey).

Martin Luther said, "A Christian is a new creature in a new world." He has a new heart, is under new government, serves a new Master, obeys new laws, is actuated by new fears, influenced by new love, and animated with new delights and new joys.

- A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God



EXPOSITION

DOCTRINAL DISCUSSION

Separation or being set apart is very definitely one of the meanings of the Greek word *hagiazō*. It is the temptation of all of God's separated ones to tend to blend with this present world as the world spares us persecution. It is so easy for even holiness people to discount what another holiness person says. Following are some quotes from people that are not "one of us."

William Barclay, in his book **Letter to the Hebrews**, comments on **Heb. 11:13-16**, "They [the patriarchs] lived forever as strangers. The writer to the Hebrews uses three vivid Greek words about them. **(a)** In **11:13** he calls them *xenoi*. *Xenos* is the Greek word for 'a stranger and a foreigner.' In the ancient world the fate of a stranger was hard. He was regarded with hatred and ... contempt. In Sparta *xenos* was the equivalent of *barbaros*, barbarian. The stranger and the barbarian were one and the same thing. **(b)** In **11:9** he uses the word *paroikein*, to sojourn, of Abraham. A *paroikos* was a resident alien. A *paroikos* ... had to pay an alien tax. He was a kind of licensed sojourner in a place. He was always an outsider and only on payment a member of the community. To put it in modern language, all their lives the patriarchs never had any human society, other than their own clans, to which they belonged. **(c)** In **11:13** he uses the word *parepidemos*. In any community a *parepidemos* was a person who was staying there temporarily and who had his permanent home somewhere else."

Surely, this **describes Christians as pilgrims and strangers down here**. Someone has said that this life is only a bridge on which we are to cross to our permanent home. It was never intended that we build a permanent home on the bridge! Christians are outsiders in their walk, in their talk, and in their home country! Surely this indicates a separation for the Christian.

W.H. Griffith Thomas stated, "1. What are we to understand by this reference to 'the world'? It cannot ... mean the material world or the world of man, but rather the world as apart from God (**1 John 2:15**). It is the equivalent to what the Apostle Paul calls 'this present evil world' (**Gal. 1:4**), even though a different word is used in the latter passage. The world is thus not so much a sphere as an atmosphere, and includes everything which is sinful or likely to be."

"2. But what, more definitely, is 'the world'? The line cannot be drawn with absolute clearness. There are certain things in the world about which there is no question. But there are others which may be described as border lines, and each one must decide for himself in fellowship with God whether a thing is 'worldly' for him. The great principle of Paul applies here, 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin' " (**The Apostle John, Studies in His Life and Writings**).

He went on to state that the call comes, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." This appeal is necessary, because of the danger of loving self and sin rather than God.

He further writes, "We are to love the world back to God, and in this sense we cannot love the world too much. Indeed, our attitude to those around us should be actuated by what Paul so beautifully calls 'the philanthropy of God' (**Titus 3:4, Greek**), but any that has not for its object the winning of the world to God is certain to bring evil in its train."

Separation from the world can mean that we are to be careful lest we become a stumbling stone or an occasion to fall in a brother's way (**Rom. 14:13**). The words "occasion to fall" come from the Greek word *skandalon* and it means to become part of a trap on which bait is put to catch something. In this case we have become the bait trigger that causes our brother to fall.

Dr. Dale Yocum wrote a series of articles on the matter of adornment that were printed in **Gems of Truth**. These can still be obtained through the editor of these Sunday school lessons. You would have to consult them for price and availability.

Of course, none of the things quoted or said in the above-mentioned articles will affect the person who is not loving God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. The person who mistakes license for liberty will castigate every "thou shalt not" as legalism. He will quote with glee, "He whom the Son sets free is free indeed." That is all very true, but it is freedom "in the Son" and "in the Spirit" rather than in the flesh. Others will interpret according to the "letter" and forget love in their legalism!

Separation and holiness must never be used as a cloak for our failure to work in the world for the salvation of the world. The person that is holy, will, if he maintains it by prayer, fasting, and obedience, be insulated from the world until it will not short circuit his separation from the world or his holiness. Insulation is our fortress, not isolation.

Holiness is a state in which love is the dynamic that **impels** us to be soul winners. To paraphrase Paul, "Woe is me if I fail to win others by the gospel to Christ."

Separation from the world is not ostentatious. No holy person is standing on the street corner shouting out his goodness, but he is proclaiming God's goodness and His ability to save to the uttermost. He saved me. Paul declared, and many of us feel the same way, "sinners of whom I am chief."

C.E. Cowen used to tell a story about a person that was not well versed in the Scriptures or perhaps in anything else! But he had a standard response when he could not answer a question. He said, "I don't know about that, but let me tell you my experience."

Holiness is our state in the Lord, love is our dynamic enabling by the Spirit, and activity is one of the results.

Holiness in one's heart is by grace, and if it is true holiness, it will bring about its own separation from the world. But in direct proportion to the amount we cool off in the Spirit, to that degree we will become lovers and imitators of the world!



FOCUS

WORKING WITH THE WORD!

Paul spelled out in questions, which are really statements, that Christians have neither "fellowship," "communion," "concord," "part," nor "agreement" with the kingdom of darkness. These words are all aimed at one teaching, and that is that there is a very real difference between God's people and the people of the world. "The call is to avoid those close relationships with the heathen which compromise Christian consistency in worship and ethics (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13). No Pharisaical exclusiveness is intended. For the sake of winning men, Paul would seek to conform to the pattern of the culture in which he found himself (**1 Cor. 9:19-23**) – not, however, at the expense of the integrity of the Christian faith and its moral standards" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**).

Separate (II Cor. 6:17). The doctrine of separation is so important, and at times controversial, that one needs to be sure what the Bible is saying. Thayer says that this word means "to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate." One must be careful to keep a sane and scriptural balance when teaching this subject. On the one hand, it is the Christian's duty to love all men and be kind, hospitable, and friendly. The Perfect Example, Jesus Christ, ate with publicans and sinners. On the other hand, there is the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This is certainly a prohibition against entering into certain alliances, for instance marriage, with non-Christians. It is in keeping with broad-based Bible principles that Christians be separate from the world in their goals, ambitions, treasures, delights, standards of dress, and standards of conduct. I am firmly convinced that God works from the inside out, and that one needs to exercise patience toward those on whom He is still working. But it is just as true that what is done in the heart will make a very substantial difference in the way one thinks, looks, and acts.

World (1 John 2:15-17). This word was considered in lesson 8, but definition of the "world" should be expanded because it is so vital to this lesson. The **Pulpit Commentary** defines "world" as, "all that is alienated from God." It goes on to say that when John forbids the things of the world, "He is forbidding those things, the love of which rivals, and excludes the love of God – all those immoral tendencies and pursuits which give the world its evil character." So "world" is not a reference about the physical world, but a system of living sponsored by evil men with evil desires. Far more is involved here than simply a way of dressing or fixing one's hair. While these things are important, let us not forget that the toys and treasures of this world, though very legitimate, can be deadly to a person's spiritual life. Worldliness has often been poorly defined, causing people to allow the "mammon" of this world to subtly control their lives. Only by keeping our hearts "head over heels in love with God" can we keep ourselves pure from the love of the world.

Modest ... shamefacedness ... sobriety (1 Tim. 2:9). These three descriptive terms are given as general principles which should govern dress. Look at them in order. "Modest" means to be "well-ordered," "orderly," or "seemly." "Shamefacedness" is translated as "reverence" (Heb. 12:28), and can be defined as "restrained." "Sobriety" is (a) "of sound mind, sane, in one's senses ... (b) curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate" (Thayer). This verse might be translated, "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety." If we follow these principles, they will dictate the right details concerning suggestiveness, appropriateness for the occasion, and costliness.

DICTIONARY

Belial (BEE-lee-ul) – II Corinthians 6:15 – Satan.
braided hair – 1 Timothy 2:9 – Elaborate decorations in hair arrangements.



POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

A Separate People

With the entire world in His choice, God placed His ancient people in a very remarkable situation. On the north they were walled in by the snowy range of Lebanon; a barren desert formed their eastern boundary; far to the south stretched a sterile region, called the howling wilderness; while the sea – not then, as now, the highway of the nations, facilitating rather than impeding intercourse – lay on their west, breaking on a shore that had few harbours and no navigable rivers to invite the steps of commerce.

May we not find a great truth in the very position in which God placed His chosen people? It certainly teaches us that to be holy, or sanctified, we must be a separate people – living in the world, but not **of** it – as oil, that may be mixed, but cannot be combined with water.

- Guthrie

Keep Your Wings Dry

If you will go to the banks of a little stream and watch the flies that come to bathe in it, you will notice that, while they plunge their bodies into the water, they keep their wings high out of the water; and, after swimming about a little while, they fly away with their wings unwet through the sunny air. Now, that is the lesson for us. Here we are immersed in the cares and business of the world; but let us keep the wings of our soul, our faith, and our love, out of the world, that, with these unclogged, we may be ready to take our flight to heaven.

- J. Inglis

The Dove on the Wire

Just out of reach from my window stretches a wire which carries a heavy current of electricity for light and power. It is carefully insulated at every pole that supports it, and is carried well out of common reach. If I could lean out far enough to touch it, death would be swifter than the tiger's leap or the serpent's sting, as swift as a lightning stroke.

Yet, the doves light on it and take no harm. They fly from my window sill where I sometimes feed them, to preen and rest upon it in safe content, and then fly off again to their search for food or nesting. The secret is that, when

they touch the full-powered wire, they touch nothing else. They give themselves wholly to it. My danger would be that, while I touched the wire, I should also be touching the earth through the walls of my house, and the current would run through my body into a channel for escape. But they rest wholly on the wire and experience neither dread nor danger. They are one with it, and they are safe.

So would God have us seek our safety in complete self-surrender to His power and love. It is when we reach one hand to Him while yet we keep fast hold of some forbidden thing with the other that we are in danger. Christ enjoined us to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, with all our strength. When we do this, we are safe. - Pillar of Fire



Notes: Instruction tips

The lesson this week addresses the subject of separation and holy living. Jesus in His prayer in John 17:15 asked not that we be removed from the world, but that we would be kept from evil while around evil. II Corinthians 6:17 tells us to be separate from the world. Consideration of separation from the world as we live holy lives is made in the following discussion questions. Suggested answers are given.

1. **What is meant by situational ethics?** This is the philosophy that there are few if any definite right or wrong answers for some circumstances we face. The situation and background of the people will help determine which actions, reactions, or responses are right and which are wrong. There are no absolute black and white answers. The rightness or wrongness of a response may vary from person to person and situation to situation. Man's opinions are the highest to be considered when determining a course of action.

2. **Discuss how situational ethics does or doesn't fit into Christianity.** In today's church world there are many who claim, by actions or attitudes if not words, that there are few if any directives from God's Word that are to be followed by Christians the world over. They seem to ask, "Who is a preacher, teacher, friend, or family member to try to tell anyone what God's definite directives are for particular situations of life?" It seems that few converts are expected to make distinct separations in many areas of their lives – not just in the first few weeks of their Christian walk, but even after months or years. It seems that the explanation is that man is not supposed to give light and direction. The situation dictates certain actions or reactions with their low level of knowledge of God's will. Older professed Christians even claim to have new light on old issues. They claim that God's Word is no longer applicable as situations and times change. The situation should dictate to a large measure what is right and wrong concerning an issue. Eventually, it seems there is little difference in the sinner and the saint. They look alike and in some cases act a lot alike.

The Bible has some things to say about the issue of separation from the world.

- a. 1 John 1:7 tells us that we must walk in the light God has given us if we are to remain a Christian. This indicates that light to be followed comes from God, not man.
- b. II Timothy 3:15-17 and Psalm 119:11 indicate that the Bible can give us direction for right living before God and man. Psalm 119:105 tells us that God's Word is a lamp for our feet and light for our path. Therefore, it would seem that God's Word can and does have much to tell us about God's demands for holy living. It will supersede our own views (1 Cor. 14:37).
- c. James 4:17 and 1 John 3:6-10 indicate to us that we must follow God's rules for our lives – both the do's and don'ts – or we will be living in sin. We must obey the scriptural guidelines for living.
- d. Romans 14:10-12 tells us that we will all stand before God to be judged on an individual basis. For what will we be judged? - For the deeds we have done in our life. God's Word and light to us will be the criteria against which we will be judged. Argument that it seemed all right to do or not do certain things because others were doing so will not be good enough at that time (II Cor. 10:12).
- e. Romans 12:2 and II Corinthians 6:17 tell us there should be a separation from the world. We should not think, act, speak, and dress like the evil world. We are different! Why? Because God lives within us and as a holy God demands holy living from His holy people.
- f. II Corinthians 5:17 indicates that Christians live differently than they did as sinners. It's not simply a matter of professing, it's also a matter of possessing and living the life.
- g. Exodus 23:2 tells us, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." In one sense it doesn't matter how many others are doing something or are not doing something. If something is right, it is right; if it is wrong, it is wrong. Complicity or lack of complicity by people does not make an action right or wrong.

It would seem apparent that if a person is to live holy before God and men, he must follow God's rules and not the mores or beliefs of man. For the child of God, situational ethics are very dangerous criteria by which to allow his life to be governed. God's Word is unchanging, absolute, and definite (Matt. 24:35; 5:18). We must follow it to please God!

3. Some things about which we have questions are answered in the Bible. Others are answered sometimes less apparently. With this in mind, what are some guidelines for determining right choices for our lives?

- a. Does it violate God's Word?
- b. Does it violate any light God has given me?
- c. Does it help or hinder my relationship with God?
- d. Does it help or hinder my influence on others?

If something violates God's Word to us through either the Bible or personal light, we must not do it. We also need to refuse to do the action or make the choice if it will hinder our relationship with God or diminish our **Christian** influence over others.

4. When considering guidelines for proper Christian living, two terms arise – general convictions and personal convictions. Define each.

a. **General convictions** – God-given rules of conduct that apply to all people. They are positively or negatively given in the Bible.

b. **Personal convictions** – God-given rules of conduct that apply to the person to whom they are given. That person must follow those rules in order to have a proper relationship with God. God generally speaks to the individual at some time about the specific rules. These convictions are applicable only to the one whom they are given. (They should not be preached or taught as guidelines for others to follow.)

5. In order to live a proper Christian life, we must have the proper attitude, actions, and appearance (AAA Lifestyle). The Bible gives some general guidelines for all to follow in each of these areas. Cite some examples of such general convictions.

Attitudes:

- a. We must love God totally (Matt. 22:37).
- b. We must love our fellow man (Matt. 22:39).
- c. We must live by faith even if we don't feel spiritual (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:17).
- d. We must allow God's peace to rule in our hearts (Col. 3:15).
- e. We need to possess traits of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and forgiveness (Col. 3:15).
- f. We need to have wisdom from God that is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated (James. 3:17, 18).
- g. We should not have traits of carnal anger, wrath, and malice (Col. 3:8).
- h. We should not have traits of envy and strife (James. 3:14).
- i. We should be compassionate (1 Peter 3:8).
- j. We should have hope and patience (Rom. 12:12).
- k. We must not love the world nor the things of the world (1 John 2:15).
- l. We should possess the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Actions:

- a. We need to pray (Rom. 12:12).
- b. We should contribute to the needs of the saints and be hospitable (Rom. 12:13).
- c. We should bless those who wrong us (Rom. 12:19, 20).
- d. We should rejoice and sorrow with others (Rom. 12:15).
- e. We should treat others equally as relates to the plan of salvation (Rom. 12:16).
- f. We should not return evil for evil (Rom. 12:17).
- g. We must be honest (Rom. 12:17).
- h. We should live peaceably as much as we can (Rom. 12:18).
- i. We should not avenge ourselves (Rom. 12:19).
- j. We should treat our enemies right (Rom. 12:20).
- k. We should try to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).
- l. We must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14).
- m. We must be separate from the world in our lifestyle (II Cor. 6:17).
- n. We must not be conforming to the norm of the world, but be transformed by God (Rom. 12:2).
- o. We need to let God's Word dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16).
- p. We must do in word or deed things pleasing to God (Col. 3:17).
- q. We must do God's will (1 John 2:17) and walk after Christ Jesus (Col. 2:6).
- r. We must put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24).
- s. We must obey God's laws not man's whims as relates to spiritual living (Acts 5:29).
- t. We must not be an idolater, fornicator, adulterer, effeminate, homosexual, thief, covetous person, drunkard, reviler, or extortioner (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).
- u. We should not buy or sell on the Lord's Day (Neh. 10:31).
- v. We must keep the Sabbath holy (Neh. 13:15-22).
- w. We must not steal or murder (Ex. 20:13, 15).
- x. We must have nothing before God in our lives (Ex. 20:3).
- y. We must not take God's name in vain (Ex. 20:7).
- z. We must honour our parents (Ex. 20:12).

Appearance:

- a. Women are instructed to dress modestly (1 Tim. 2:9).
- b. Women should strive to attract with good character rather than outlandish attire (1 Tim. 2:10).
- c. Women should have long hair as a symbol of subjection (1 Cor. 11:15).
- d. Men should have short hair (1 Cor. 11:14).
- e. Women should wear only clothing for women, to properly distinguish their gender (Deut. 22:5).
- f. Men should wear men's clothing for similar reasons (Deut. 22:5).
- g. Women are admonished to be adorned with a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:3-5).

6. Cite some examples of personal convictions some people may have.

- a. Must wear dark hose.
- b. Must not wear toeless shoes.
- c. No facial hair for men.
- d. No ties for men.
- e. Must wear a black tie.
- f. Must wear dark clothing.

7. What attitudes should we have when determining our limits of separation from the world?

- a. Not my will, but Thine (God's) be done (instead of not Thy [God's] will, but mine be done).
- b. Be open to anything God says – don't have your mind closed to new light.
- c. Desire to get close to God and to follow His will as closely as possible.
- d. If a question of uncertainty arises, purpose that God will be given the benefit of the doubt.

8. **Define worldliness.** One has called it "anything that robs us of our heart throbbing intensity for God."

9. **Why is there so much worldliness and spiritual anaemia in the church today?** People seem to have lost the focus of loving and serving God totally. Many are selfish – "whatever makes me feel good, I will do!" Numbers are pleasure-maddened. Others are seeking after materialism. Undoubtedly, many are living such a life due to a lack of prayer, Bible reading, and a total commitment to finding and following God's will. As the focus gets away from God and His will, it's so easy to rationalize and justify actions – many of which are contrary to God's will. Spiritual weakness sets in as God is pushed aside by man and his programs. The church, lacking power with God, is then unable to pray down conviction on sinners. It finds it hard to pray out their own salvation and don't try to force your beliefs on them. The result is often lifestyles contrary to God's Word, even within the church. God cannot and will not bless and strengthen such a person or church. Spiritual weakness occurs, with spiritual death the end result.

The Bible tell us repeatedly to strive to please God (1 John 1:7; Jas. 4:17; 1 John 3:6-8). We must not let the mores and norms of this world be the guiding forces for our individual and church lives. We must purpose to be separate from sin and the world and yet united with God and His will!

ILLUMINATING ILLUSTRATION

The large red letters flashed toward me like a neon sign: "Try Me, I'm Pure!" Reaching for the bottle of "Pure Maple Syrup" on the breakfast table, I scrutinized more closely the manufacturer's label. I read further: "No additives, no preservatives ... JUST NATURALLY GOOD!" "Beware of imitations" – "Keep me in the refrigerator!"

But the advertisement "Try Me, I'm Pure!" intrigued me most, as the word "pure" had been much in my thoughts recently. The natural food stores have always stressed many pure products. The oatmeal cereal, peanut butter, and honey on my pantry shelf read "pure" in a prominent place on their labels. We all like to drink pure water if available, and some of us have strong feelings against commercial foodstuffs that include additives or preservatives of any kind. In the majority of instances, we prefer the genuine to any imitation.

The concept of purity is threaded throughout the entire Bible, from the pure prayer of Job in the oldest of scriptures to the pure water of life in Revelation. Unlike the ad on the syrup bottle on my breakfast table, we discover very early in life that we are not "Just naturally good!" Even after becoming born-again Christians, we find a further work of grace is needed in our hearts.

I also noticed that the particular bottle of maple syrup on my kitchen table was imported, for it was stamped with the national emblem of another country. One hymn says, "Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart." My desire is to have the image of Jesus stamped on my heart so there will be no doubt but that I belong to Him. In all my relationships with others, I want to be able to say, "Try Me, I'm Pure."

- Jeannette

Davidson in God's Revivalist



PERTINENT PRINCIPLES

* The separation of holiness is not merely a negative one, out of and away from something, but a separation to something, or better expressed, to somebody.

- S.D. Herron

* If we are going to retain personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, it will mean there are some things we must scorn to do or to think, some legitimate things we must scorn to touch.

- Oswald Chambers

* God's standard of holiness can be met by those who resist every kind of defilement.

* A ship is safe in the ocean as long as the ocean is not in the ship, and a Christian is safe in the world so long as the world is not in the Christian.

FURTHER THOUGHT

I believe that a Christian man should lead a separated life. The line between the church and the world is almost obliterated today. I have no sympathy with the idea that you must hunt up an old musty church record in order to find out whether a man is a member of the church or not. A man ought to live so that everybody will know he is a Christian.

- Dwight L. Moody

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT

The Christian, while in the world, is not to be of the world. To him, to live should be Christ. Whether he eats or drinks or whatever he does, he should do all to God's glory. You may strive to be rich, but be it your ambition to be "rich in faith" and good works. You may have pleasure; but when you are merry, sing psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. In your spirit, as well as in your aim, you should differ from the world. You should be separate from the world in your actions. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done; if it be wrong, though you would gain by it, you must scorn the sin for your Master's sake. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity.

- C.H. Spurgeon