

THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

TEXT: (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, NIV)

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

¹⁷"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." ¹⁸"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

¹Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

KEY VERSE: "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17, NIV).

INTRODUCTION

A. The Need for Separation

1. "I am not asking that you remove them from the world, but I ask that you guard their hearts from evil, For they no longer belong to this world any more than I do" (John 17:15-16, TPT).

B. Five Areas of Separation in the Early Church

1. "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (I Timothy 6:9-10, NIV).
2. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (I John 2:15-17, NIV).
3. "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Romans 13:1, NIV).
4. "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God" (I Timothy 2:9-10, NIV).
5. "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight" (I Peter 3:3-4, NIV).
6. "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:3-4, NIV).

C. Benefited by Separation

1. "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (I Timothy 4:8, NIV).
2. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Timothy 6:6, NIV).

I. FELLOWSHIP WITH THE WORLD

1. "If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (I John 1:6-7, NIV).
2. "For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil" (Proverbs 5:3, NIV).

A. The Heart Cannot Love Both God and This World

1. "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15, NIV).
2. "No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24, NIV).

B. The Pleasure Is Short-lived

1. "[Moses] chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Hebrews 11:25, NIV).
2. "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me" (Psalm 51:3, NIV).
3. "They bound [Jesus], led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.' 'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.' So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:2-5, NIV).
4. "The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever" (Jonah 2:5-6, NIV).

C. Five Things You Can Do with Temptation

1. "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, NIV).
2. "Flee from sexual immorality" (I Corinthians 6:18, NIV).
3. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16, NIV).
4. "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11, NIV).

II. A PLEA FOR SEPARATION

1. "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17, NIV).
2. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Corinthians 5:17, NIV).

A. Jesus Attracted Sinners Because He Was Different

1. "Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26, NIV).
2. "When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner'" (Luke 7:37-39, NIV).

B. God's People Have Always Been a Separate People

1. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.
...At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food" (Daniel 1:8, 15, NIV).
2. "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before" (Daniel 6:10, NIV).
3. "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up'" (Daniel 3:16-18, NIV).
4. "[Nebuchadnezzar] said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods'" (Daniel 3:25, NIV).

C. Separation Goes Beyond the Heart

1. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20, NIV).
2. "Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him" (I Corinthians 11:14, NIV).
3. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27, NIV).
4. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5, KJV).
5. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (I Peter 2:9, NIV).
6. "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" I Peter 2:9, KJV).

III. Why Should We Be Separate?

A. Commanded of the Lord

1. "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy"" (I Peter 1:15-16, NIV).
2. "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?" (II Corinthians 6:14, NIV).
3. "'If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'
The priests answered, 'No.'
Then Haggai said, 'If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?'
'Yes,' the priests replied, 'it becomes defiled'" (Haggai 2:12-13, NIV).

B. Ambassadors of Christ

1. "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20, NIV).
2. "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody" (II Corinthians 3:2, NIV).

C. Ye Are the Salt of the Earth—a Preservative

1. "Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (Matthew 5:12-13, NIV).
2. "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:23-24, NIV).

D. Ye Are the Light of the World

1. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV).
2. "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (Philippians 2:14-15, NIV)
3. "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26-27, NIV).

Conclusion:

1. "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (II Corinthians 7:1, NIV).