

Separate Yourself

Continued from Page 3

one today is still a sin. Murder has always been a sin. Beer is not mentioned in the Bible, however, drunkenness is to be avoided. Many insist the dress codes and standards of the Old Testament are only for by-gone days, but the principle that honors the differences in the sexes as God created them has not changed.

Many justify sin and lack of separation with the excuse, "Today is different." Sin is sin and always has been. The principles of what is iniquity needs to be learned from God's Word and then applied.

When one lives far from the edge of being "wrong" or sinful, they will seldom have to worry about "falling into sin." My first pastor taught that principle well.

Pastor Fedena drew an imaginary line on the platform and walked along it. He said that many Christians do not want to live a separated life, yet they still want to have an appearance of being a Christian.

They are so close to sin that it takes little to unbalance them spiritually. He illustrated this by stumbling off the line and tripping down the platform's steps.

"But," he went on to illustrate, "Those that have learned the wisdom to stay away from anything that would tempt them or even give an appearance of their doing wrong, get far away from that 'tolerable' line." He moved far away from the imaginary line

separating right and wrong. It was pointed out, "As I get farther away from the questionable 'gray' area, you will see that I am getting closer to God." Living far from the edge of wrong protects us from being tempted and falling into sin.

He went back to the line of "what-one-can-get-away-with-and-still-not-be-involved-in-sin." As the preacher tried to balance on the line again, he warned, "Those that live close to the edge of where they were before they were saved cannot lose their salvation when getting too close to their old lifestyle, but they can get re-involved in it. They may lose their testimony and being a witness as a godly example will be ruined.

"When referring to Christian hypocrites, those that got too close to the edge and fell into sin are usually referred to. It is much safer to get far from the tempting edge and closer to God. If it is questionable, give God the benefit of doubt and stay away from its involvement."

That is what separation is all about: separating oneself from anything that will make one fall and hurt the cause of Christ. That is why God wants us to separate from many things of this world and, of course, from sin.

God loves us and does not want His children hurt by sin or weakened by its temptation. Separate yourself from the world and unto God.

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Bill Brinkworth

An important biblical teaching is believers should be separated from sin and ungodly activities as much as possible

New Testament believers were also warned to be as far as possible from the unfruitful, ungodly works of unrighteousness.

God wanted His people nowhere near the grasp of harmful, contagious sin.

The Bible tells us much about living a separated, godly life:

☞ From the beginning, God did some separating. God separated the unrighteous world from Noah and His family when He sent the flood. The ungodly perished.

In Old Testament times, God repeatedly warned His people to separate from the ungodly so they would not end up doing the sins the enemies of God were committing.

"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean

thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."

Isaiah 52:11 Also: Jer. 51:6.

☞ God says not to do the sinful or "close to appearing sinful" activities they do. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," II Cor. 6:17*

☞ Our example, Christ, lived a separated life. We claim to be "Christ-like," which is what "Christian" means, so we also should live a separated life. *"For such an high priest [Jesus] became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" Heb. 7:26*

A different way of living does not save anyone. "Not cursing, chewing, or hangin' around with those that do" is a good practice, but it will not make one saved.

However, when one acknowledges one's sin, realizes

Continued on Page 2

Separate Yourself

Continued from Page 1

the price that will ultimately be paid for it, accepts Christ's payment for one's iniquity, and accepts Him as Saviour, that person is saved from the penalty of sin. That person will be changed on the inside, and changes on the outside should soon follow. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

II Cor. 5:17

This "new creature" should want to live the way the Lord wants him to live. He will produce godly fruits (actions that are pleasing to the Lord), not because he has to do them to keep his salvation, but because his new "heart" wants to do them for the Lord. A saved person should desire to please his Saviour. *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth... 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."* Eph. 5:8-12

The new-hearted Christian should realize that much of the way he used to live was not pleasing to the Lord. To please the Lord, he should want to separate himself from sin and its temptations.

For centuries, separation from sin and even the "... appearance of evil ..." (I Thes. 5:22) were preached from most pulpits and practiced by most Christians lived differently. They spoke, dressed, believed, acted, and thought differently. They were ashamed, as were their families, when they were involved in sin or even imitated the lifestyles of the unsaved.

This thinking and lifestyle are foreign to many of today's Christians and are often ridiculed by them. One would be hard-pressed in most churches and Christian households to be able to tell any difference between some "Christians" and the unsaved.

Some church leaders and believers spend more time excusing, justifying, and explaining their worldly thinking and lifestyles than remembering one of God's most important commandments to His believers — to live holy.

"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God." Lev. 20:7 Also: I Peter 1:16.

We are on God's winning side, and we are to live like it. We are not to live like the ungodly.

When a Christian lives the way God commands, the ungodly will separate from him. Godly living convicts the ungodly, and rather than change their way

of living, they often will alienate themselves from the source of their "feeling guilty." (Read Luke 6:22.)

The majority of Christians fail in the area of separation. They want the comfort of knowing they will go to Heaven, but their sincerity is lacking.

Most will not separate from the places they should not be. They also act, think, dress, and look like the ungodly. Their desire is to fit in like everyone else.

It would be more helpful for Christians if they had the attitude, "I'm a Christian. If the Bible shows me to do something, I will do it without question. If the world thinks I am peculiar, then that is their problem. As for me and my house, I will separate from the world and its many questionable behaviors. I will look, act, talk, and behave like the Bible says a Christian should."

We should not strive to fit in and appear like everyone else. Remember when your mother would say to you, "If your friends jumped off a bridge, would you do it?" We did not like her admonishment, but too many are doing that spiritually and following what everyone around us is doing.

The question or place of confusion for many is, "Well, what is it I should be separated from? What are the ungodly works of wickedness I am to keep away from?"

Reading the Bible will reveal the main source of what should be avoided — sin. There are more sins than those found in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20). One counted over 600 sins.

"Well, many of the sins are for Old Testament times," is often the retort. The Old Testament, particularly the Law, is the schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24) that teaches us what God likes and dislikes. Since God never changes, what was a sin to Him in those days, unless there is a retraction or permission given in the New Testament, is still iniquity today.

People feel more comfortable with a list of sins. However, because of man's devices, dealings, and different times, sins change. A list of sins from Old Testament times would not always apply today.

Scales no longer have weights, so the sin of "false balances" would not be valid for most today. However, the principle behind that sin, cheating and deceiving, can still be applied today.

There were no guns in 1200 BC, but killing someone with

Continued on Page 4

***"If you're a Christian,
why would you even
want to act, live, look, or
even talk like the devil's
losing side!"***