

## Connected to Christ and Separated from the World

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Some things do not go together: oil and water, socks and sandals, lemonade and milk. In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, the Apostle Paul gives us, as Christians, some great instructions. It's a direct counter-cultural command. He calls us to a life of distinction, separated from idols. In this passage, Paul challenges us to understand that being a believer in Jesus Christ means we can no longer be aligned with the ways of the world.

### I. The Incompatibility of Light and Darkness (vv. 14-16)

Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions: *What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

He uses the imagery of being "unequally yoked"—picture an ox and a donkey trying to plow together. In fact, the Levitical law forbids this. Deut. 22:10 ***"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together."*** They cannot work together effectively because they pull in different directions. As Christians, our direction is Christ; the world's direction is lawlessness.

When Paul tells us not to be yoked with unbelievers, he isn't saying we should isolate ourselves from the world (we are called to be witnesses). We are to befriend, evangelize, and work with unbelievers. Rather, Paul warns against *partnerships* or entangling associations that hinder our faith, compromise our morals, and pull us away from God.

Paul doesn't want us to be isolated, but he doesn't want us to be influenced by unbelievers.

### II. The Instructions to Separate (vv.16-17) We are the Temple! In fact 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 states: ***"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."***

Why must we be separate? Paul says: *"...For we are the temple of the living God"*.

Under the Old Covenant, God dwelt in a physical temple. Now, through the Holy Spirit, He dwells in *us*—individually and collectively as the church. If we are the temple of God, we cannot bring the idols of the world into our lives.

Being "separate" means our habits, our decisions, our relationships, and our moral standards are guided by God's Word, not by culture. It is the process of purification and sanctification—breaking free from the "unclean things" that hinder our walk with God.

### III. The Promise of an Intimate Relationship with the Creator (vv. 17-18) **We belong in God's family!** Finally, Paul gives us the motivation for this separation. It is not just about rules; it is about relationship. *"I will live with them and walk among them; I will be their God, and they will be my people."* God calls us to step out from the entanglements of the world so that we can enter into a deeper intimacy with Him. He promises to be a Father to us—a promise of protection, provision, and love. The cost of separation is far outweighed by the blessing of

being called sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. We are called to a great inheritance than this world: 1 Peter 1:4 ***“to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”***

Practically what can we gain from this passage? If you are unmarried, do not date an unbeliever. Most of my martial counseling comes from unequally yoked couples in marriage. If you are married to an unbeliever, stay married, be the best example of a follower of Christ. We see Paul instructing this in 1 Cor. 7:12-16. If you are in a business partnership, try to buy them out or start your own company. Believers and unbelievers have different values, different perspectives, different motivations. Youth, your friends' matter. Who you hang around influences a lot of what you will and how far you will go. Listen to 1 Cor. 15:33 ***“Bad company corrupts good character.”*** If you want to be successful, get around successful people. It doesn't mean you can't care about, befriend, and share the gospel with others, you just shouldn't be influenced by them.

Let us take an honest inventory of our lives. Are we trying to sit on the fence, attempting to walk with God while pulling the same plow as the world? The call today is to recognize our identity as the holy temple of God. Let us be in the world, but not of it, trusting that his intimate presence is better than any worldly partnership. So the yoke we should put on is the yoke of Christ: Matthew 11:29-30 ***“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”***