

The Importance of Separation

Scripture

“When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. “For they have taken some of their daughters [as wives] for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of [those] lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.” So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God.” (Ezra 9:1-5 NKJV)

Devotion

God had commanded that Israel not marry foreign wives. As it is written, “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them [and] utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their [sacred] pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you [are] a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” (De 7:1-6 NKJV)

The principle is clear, bad company corrupts good morals. The wicked will always pull down the righteous. It is silly to think that your good behavior will turn a sinner from his/her way. Only God can change the leopard’s spots (Jer. 13:23). It’s true that our good works may be used of God to draw sinners to Himself, but righteous deeds will never change a corrupt heart. That requires the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit, and those that become yoked with unbelievers set themselves up for a life of disappointments and frustration.

If you are considering marriage as a believer, make sure the one you love, loves God. Do not be naive and take their confession as Gospel truth, but discern their condition by their works. This is to be done by considering more than faithful attendance. You must look to the things of the spirit.

“ . . . The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those [who are] Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22-25 NKJV)

“Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?” (Lu 11:39-40 NKJV)

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” (Mt 7:15-21 NKJV)

Look carefully at the issues of the heart. Also, do not forget to ask the Lord for discernment. Make it your main goal to be pleasing to Him, and He will show you the way.

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1Jo 5:21 NKJV)