

DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION

- I. Preliminary considerations.
 - A. The doctrine of separation (i.e. the necessity to avoid or remain aloof from certain types of people) is clearly advocated by the Word of God. Ps. 1; Prov. 14:16, 16:17, 23:17-21, 26-28, 24:1,2
 - B. This doctrine finds its source in the conflict between God and Satan, positive and negative volition, and between light and darkness. Jn. 3:19-21; Gen. 1:4
 - C. Doctrine in the inner man provides the believer the necessary discernment to separate from that which will ultimately prove to be spiritually detrimental. Prov. 2:10-16
 - D. Failure to separate from that which is opposed to God's plan places the believer in the very real but dangerous position of becoming like the one with whom he associates. Prov. 22:24-25
 - E. Further, failure to separate has severe spiritual repercussions, as seen in the very pointed comments of James. James 4:4
 - F. The realities that govern the angelic conflict mandate that separation will always be an issue for all believers. IICor. 6:14-15
 - G. This doctrine is one of the critical doctrines that is necessary to fulfill the principle of spiritual growth and Ph₂ sanctification. IICor. 7:1
 - H. The believer should recognize that the doctrine of separation has both a positive and a negative connotation.
 1. On a negative note, we are to separate ourselves from that which is in opposition to the plan of God, those people, places, or things that are incompatible with the pursuit and application of doctrine, which is our most pressing responsibility (MPR).
 2. On a positive note, we are to focus on the reality that when we separate from that which is incompatible with the righteousness of God, we are separating ourselves to God, which has great benefits. IICor. 6:17-18; James 4:7-8
 - I. Separation will be ultimately enforced by Jesus Christ, as witnessed in the judgment of the sheep and goats, the Laodicean Church, and finally all men. Matt. 25:32ff; Rev.3:14ff, 20:15
- II. In the Old Testament, Israel was commanded to stay aloof from their Gentile neighbors as God's Priest Nation. Lev. 18:24-28; Deut. 7:1-4, 18:9-14
 - A. This doctrine was taught in Codex 2 (the ceremonial code); it indicated that physical association with items that had been declared unclean by the Lord rendered the person ceremonially unclean. Lev. 5:2-3, 11:4-25
 - B. This was designed to teach the spiritual reality that association with that which is opposed to God and His plan defiles the believer spiritually.
 - C. Israel was commanded to remain separate from:
 1. The religious practices of the nations around them. Lev. 20:1-7
 2. The opposite sex of these nations, something that adjusted believers recognized even before the Mosaic Law. Gen. 24:3, 28:1; Deut. 7:3-4
 - D. When they observed these restrictions and separated from the pagan culture around them, they were blessed; when they did not, they fell under the cursing provision of the Mosaic Covenant. Deut. 28

- E. Ultimately, failure to separate led to their separation (expulsion) from the land of promise. Lev. 20:22-24; Deut. 31:15-22
- F. Positive Jews will be challenged to separate from their geographic niche and return to the land of promise during Daniel's 70th week. Jere. 50:8, 51:6,9-10; Zech 2:6,7
- G. In the Mosaic Law, the passages regarding the distinction between the clean and the unclean are designed to teach the doctrine of separation. Lev. 10:10, 11:47, 20:25

III. Believers are commanded to practice the doctrine of separation with respect to unbelievers. II-Cor. 6:14-18; James 4:4

A. The actual translation of verse 14 is **stop becoming unequally yoked people with unbelievers.**

1. The construction of μή (me) with the present imperative of γίνομαι (ginomai—to become) indicates that these believers were to stop an action that was already in progress.
2. The term ἑτεροζυγέω (heterozugeo) means to be yoked together with an animal of a different kind; hence, to be mismatched, or wrongly bound together. Deut. 22:10
3. Examples of being wrongly bound together with unbelievers includes:
 - a. Regular social life or vacations with unbelievers; this includes one's family, friends apart from doctrine, business associates, and all negative volition.
 - b. Entering into business partnerships with unbelievers.
 - c. Membership in clubs, societies, or organizations where either the goals or activities compromise Bible doctrine.
 - d. Dating or marrying unbelievers.

B. When a believer is unequally bound together with an unbeliever, he violates the fundamental issues of the angelic conflict, as seen in the rhetorical questions that follow.

1. All these questions are posed without providing an answer, since the answer to all of them is obviously **none or nothing.**
2. **What partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness?**
 - a. The term μετοχή (metochē) is used only here in the New Testament, and has the nuance of participating in something together, a partnership.
 - b. This question is designed to highlight the reality that believers, who have been made righteous by faith in Christ, cannot effectively enter a partnership with those that willingly continue to live outside the law of God. Matt. 7:23
 - c. In Ph₂, it is impossible to pursue righteous principles and maintain allegiance toward those that choose to operate in the realm of lawlessness. IJn. 3:4
 - d. This question underscores the reality that the believer and the unbeliever have a completely different set of standards.
3. **What fellowship has light with darkness?**
 - a. The term κοινωνία (koinonia) denotes what is shared or held in common.
 - b. In Genesis, God established the fact that light and darkness were distinct and would always remain separate. Gen. 1:3-4
 - c. Darkness is used to portray Satan and his viewpoint, while light is used as a figure for God's essence and His viewpoint. Jn. 3:19
 - d. Since all unbelievers willingly choose to reside in the realm of darkness, from which we have been delivered, we cannot continue to fellowship with those in the kingdom of darkness. Col. 1:13

- e. This question stresses that a believer and an unbeliever share absolutely nothing in common spiritually.
- 4. **What harmony has Christ with Beliar?**
 - a. The term συμφώνησις (sumphonesis), comes from the verb from which our word symphony is derived; it speaks of different instruments sounding together in harmony and indicates a state of shared interests or an agreement.
 - b. The term **Belial/Beliar** (be liar) is a cryptic term for Satan, and refers to that which is worthless.
 - c. If the Cornerstone of the plan of God does not have any agreement with His antagonist, how can the believer expect to find harmony with the spiritual offspring of that enemy? Jn. 8:44
 - d. This question emphasizes that we have different lords or masters.
- 5. **What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?**
 - a. The term μερίς (meris) means a part, portion, or share, and looks toward the reality of Ph₃. Col. 1:12
 - b. The reality is that we are going to be forever separated from all unbelievers; the fact that they have no share in our eternal life or inheritance is here emphasized.
 - c. Failure to separate in time contradicts this eternal reality.
 - d. This question is designed to accentuate the fact that we have completely different destinies.
- 6. **What agreement has the temple of God with idols?**
 - a. The term συγκατάθεσις (sunkatathesis) means a mutual agreement that is determined by a group decision or vote.
 - b. The individual believer is a temple of God (ICor. 6:19), while the Church corporately is the dwelling place of the Living God. ICor.3:16
 - c. Believers are the true place in which the Living God chooses to dwell; how can there be any agreement with an idol, which is nothing more than an image or likeness of a phantom god?
 - d. This question stresses the truth that we are the reality, as opposed to the unreality of idols; how could lifeless entities cast a vote for the Living God?
- C. Separation from unbelievers does not involve absolute disassociation, nor should this doctrine be pressed to that extreme.
 - 1. If it did, the believer would have to die and go to Heaven. ICor. 5:9-10
 - 2. If this were the case, the believer would cease to be a fragrant aroma to believers and unbelievers alike; one could not be an effective ambassador of Christ. IICor. 2:14-17, 5:20
 - 3. There are legitimate times when the believer can socialize with an unbeliever; however, the occasion should certainly involve presenting the gospel. ICor. 10:27
 - 4. However, if the offer of salvation is rejected, and the unbeliever manifests antagonism toward the plan of God, the believer must be willing to curtail or discontinue his efforts. Matt. 7:6; Mk. 6:11
 - 5. Jesus Christ set the perfect standard in this regard while He was on earth, remaining undefiled and separate from sinners, yet regularly in contact with them. Heb. 7:26; Mk. 2:16
- D. Conclusions regarding separation and the unbeliever.
 - 1. First, pray about these matters; the believer should seek God's will and guidance, knowing that He will bless one that desires to please Him. IICor. 5:9

2. When considering if a given situation constitutes being unequally yoked, the believer should ask himself if he has or will have to compromise doctrine in any way to maintain the association.
 3. While it is necessary for believers to have contact with unbelievers for the purpose of doing business, going to school, paying debts, and conducting their daily lives, believers must avoid situations that constitute violations of the principles in II Corinthians 6.
 4. In short, the believer should recognize that he does not truly share anything in common with unbelievers now, and he has a radically different destiny than the unbeliever.
 5. Zeal to evangelize the lost should not cause any believer to compromise the truths of doctrine by emphasizing patriotism, good citizenship, secular achievements, or anything else in order to gain entrance into arenas to which he would otherwise be denied access.
 6. That is not only a violation of the doctrine of separation, it is contradictory to what Paul and the other apostles practiced. Acts. 9:27-28; Eph. 6:19-20
- E. The believer must recognize that applying this doctrine can, and often will, bring upon him the wrath of those that are negative. Jn. 15:18-20; IPet. 4:3-7
- F. Every believer must simply be willing to accept the maligning/slander as undeserved suffering and commit his cause to the Lord, Who will ultimately provide vindication IPet. 4:14-16
- G. On a positive note, if one is seriously positive and desirous of fulfilling God's plan for his life, the believer often will not have to apply this doctrine; negative people will apply it for the believer and separate from him. Gen. 4:16; Matt. 12:14; IJn. 2:19

- IV. It must be recognized that there is a distinction between the positive believer and the negative believer in time that will ultimately be manifested in God's reward system, indicating that separation is an issue with other believers. Jn. 3:20-21; ICor. 3:12-15
- A. The distinction between those that are positive and those that are negative is seen in their habitual attitude toward coming to the **light/truth**, as reflected in their commitment to Bible class. Jn. 3:21
- B. Those that are positive are willing to expose themselves continually to the truth, while those that are negative do not; this manifests the underlying conflict that truly exists between adjusted believers and maladjusted believers.
- C. When dealing with believers, believers must accept and honor the assessment that comes from Christ, recognizing that **you will know them by their fruits**. Matt. 7:16,20
- D. It is clear from Revelation 3:14-18 that Jesus Christ makes distinctions between believers based on His observations.
1. The reality by which Jesus Christ makes His assessment is the **works/deeds** of those He examines, and He always judges with righteous judgment. Jn. 7:24; Rev. 3:14
 2. Jesus Christ distinguished between the two extremes that exist in the Church; the **cold believer**, who rejects Bible doctrine entirely, manifesting maximum negative volition to the truth, and the **hot believer**, who makes Bible doctrine his priority, and exhibits maximum intake and application of the same.
 3. Verse 16 targets believers/churches that attempt to take a middle ground between the two extremes of **cold or hot**.
 - a. Jesus Christ bases His evaluation on their works (vs. 15), which must be works that He rejects; these works do not qualify as Divine good production, and must fall into the category of human good.

- b. He declares that these types of believers are spiritually lukewarm in His view, and employs an anthropopathism to emphatically declare His revulsion toward them.
- c. The fact that this type of believer does not set well with God causes Him to vomit him out of his mouth, suggesting a forcible separation from Christ.
- d. It should be evident that these are believers that go to church, read their Bible, and are engaged in going through the motions of the Christian way of life. It includes:
 - 1.) Those that stay in ministries that are not committed to the teaching of sound doctrine, verse by verse, in context, seeking to communicate the **whole purpose of God**. Matt. 5:18-19; Acts 20:27,32; IITim. 3:16-17
 - 2.) Ministries and believers that exclude certain doctrines in their teaching or personal life, like this doctrine of separation, or that teach certain doctrines for their personal gain, approbation lust, or popularity. Acts 20:20; Tit. 1:11
 - 3.) Ministries that are devoted to the traditions of men and exalt non-biblical approaches to the Christian way of life. Mk. 7:5-13; Col. 2:8
- 4. It should be evident that a believer does not have to be in a lukewarm church to be lukewarm; a believer can be in an adjusted ministry and still fall into the category of being a **hearer and not a doer**. James 1:22-25
- 5. Therefore, lukewarm believers fall into the category of negative volition and, ironically, are in a worse standing before the Lord than the **cold believer**. Rev. 3:15
- 6. The mental attitude of these believers equates the acquisition of material things as directly relating to their relationship with God.
 - a. They tend to suspect that their success in the pursuit of the details of life and their comfortable surroundings equate to their relationship with God.
 - b. However, the opposite is actually true; they are completely deluded as to their standing before the Lord.
- 7. The words of Jesus Christ in verse 18 indicate that there is a corrective for their situation, if they will only avail themselves of it.
- E. Therefore, if believers fall into the category of negative, the doctrine of separation is in order, as evidenced by the applications of Jesus Christ Himself. Mk. 3:31-35
- F. Positive believers are commanded to separate from all people that do not adhere to categorically sound doctrine.
 - 1. One such category consists of those that will not consistently work. IIThess. 3:6-14
 - 2. The serious nature of this exhortation is seen by the fact that Paul invokes the very authority of Jesus Christ when making this command.
 - 3. The word $\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$ (stello) means to set in order or arrange, and when used of persons means to keep aloof, keep away from, avoid, or steer clear of a person.
 - 4. The person in view is called $\acute{\alpha}\tau\acute{\alpha}\kappa\tau\omega\varsigma$ (ataktos), which is a military term for a disorderly soldier, one who was undisciplined, out of step with his troop, and who refused to follow his marching orders.
 - 5. This refers to those that are out of step with Bible doctrine and with Paul's own example, which is the tradition of sound doctrine.
 - 6. Paul's example of applying sound doctrine related to the fact that he did not request or receive any money from the Thessalonians; he worked to support himself and his team so as not to burden the new converts financially. IThess. 2:9; IIThess. 3:8

7. For a believer to refuse to support himself and to impose on the good grace of other believers because he is too lazy to work is an affront to the doctrine and the example he had observed in Paul. II Thess. 3:9
 8. Paul provides the necessary corrective in verse 12 by **commanding and exhorting** this type of believer to get a job, pay his own way, and stop being a burden to others.
 9. He makes it plain in verse 14 that the doctrine of separation demands that all believers in that local church cease and desist from social life with this believer.
 10. The purpose is to force the errant believer to come to grips with the fact that he is violating his marching orders and needs to correct his course.
 11. There is no command here to eject the believer from the assembly, or remove him from the membership; rather, the positive believer is to provide the necessary verbal corrective about this area of failure, as he has opportunity. II Thess. 3:15
 12. Positive believers are to use tact in their approach; one should not use this as an opportunity to vent his anger or frustration toward the offender by treating him as an enemy.
 13. This rebuke should be administered with the appropriate concern one has for a brother in Christ, recognizing that the goal is restoration. Gal. 6:1
- G. Positive believers are to be alert to those that cause strife and division in the local church and separate from them. Rom. 16:17-18
1. The verb σκοπέω (skopeo) means to look at, contemplate, to consider, or keep a watchful eye on someone or something; hence, to be concerned about certain types of people.
 2. **Divisions and hindrances** refer to their tactics of divide and conquer, seeking to make other believers stumble by promoting their erroneous point(s) of view.
 3. Their target is the doctrine that adjusted believers have been consistently taught over the years; they may eventually (and often do) focus their hostilities on the communicator.
 4. The command here is the present active imperative of ἐκκλίνω (enklino), which means to bend out of line, turn away, turn aside, avoid, or shun; the verbal form emphasizes continual or ongoing action.
 5. One example of this would be believers that seek to divide and conquer by promoting factions and cliques. I Cor. 3:5-6
 6. Another example would be believers that want to take believers aside and straighten them out about the doctrinal mistakes of the pastor-teacher. Tit. 1:9-11
 7. As a positive believer, one must learn to recognize those individuals that may come to him with a façade of godliness, employing techniques of flattery and praise in order to win the believer's trust. Ps. 5:9; Prov. 26:28, 29:5; Jude 16
 8. Recognize that their purpose may be to deceive those that are spiritually ignorant, unlearned, or naïve, and use them to advance their own agenda.
 9. These people often approach the believer with compliments about how astute he is, while attempting to separate the believer from his shepherd, and from the precepts of sound doctrine.
 10. Although they may be quite pious overtly, using all the terms with which the believer is familiar, those that engage in these types of activities are people that are **slaves, not of our Lord Jesus Christ but of their own emotions**. Rom. 16:18
- H. Believers are to be alert to other believers that practice status quo carnality in any of the areas listed in Corinthians. I Cor. 5:9-13
1. Although this teaching was directed specifically toward the Corinthian Church, it is applicable to any local church in history.

2. The Greek term for **associate** is συναναμίγνυμι (sunanamignumi) and is literally to mix together with, and means to intermingle or associate.
3. While not mixing together with these types does not forbid all contact, it does forbid pursuing or maintaining social life with these types of believers, since this appears to endorse their lifestyle choices.
4. The types of overt sinning include:
 - a. Immorality—sexual reversionism, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, etc.
 - b. Covetousness—monetary reversionism, greed, which is a form of idol worship, and is manifested in those that are never satisfied with what they have, placing material possessions above the application of doctrine. Lk. 3:14; Phil. 4:11; Col. 3:5; ITim. 6:7-8; Heb. 13:5
 - c. Idolaters—religious reversionism, those involved in the worship of things other than God; this includes all forms of religious worship that do not find their basis in the Word of God. Essentially these people worship a god of their own making.
 - d. Revilers—verbal reversionists, those that slander, gossip, and malign, those that stir up trouble with their speech. Tit. 3:9-11
 - e. Drunkards—alcoholic reversionism, those that consistently engage in the abuse of alcohol, which is the enemy of SG₃. Gal. 5:21; Prov. 23:29-35; Eph. 5:18
 - f. Swindlers—another form of monetary reversionism; the term ἄρπαξ (harpax) means one that is vicious, ravenous, rapacious, and destructive, caring only for the satisfaction of his own desires. Matt. 7:15
5. Paul is not referring to incidental sinning, since **we all stumble in many ways and there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.** James 3:2; Eccles. 7:20
6. He is dealing with believers that blantly engage in these behaviors, rationalizing them, and refusing to deal with sin via rebound and doctrine.
- I. Adjusted believers must recognize that religious reversionism will abound in the last days, false teachers will be the norm, and lukewarm believers will be all too willing to embrace them. IITim. 4:3-4
 1. The last days are a period of history characterized by arrogant, selfish people that project an appearance of positive volition and commitment to the truth, but are often functioning under human good systems of religion. II Tim. 3:1-5
 2. Positive believers are instructed to identify false teachers, who manifest an overt façade of godliness, that can be quite deceiving.
 3. There is a segment of these false teachers that exploits access to the household via radio, television, tapes, books, the internet, etc. and leads astray females, who make easy targets due to their emotional natures and natural lack of discernment. ITim. 2:14-15; IITim. 3:6-7
 4. The key to halt this phenomenon is for the adjusted husband to enforce the doctrine of separation on those under his authority, and for the woman to acclimate to this doctrine. Eph. 5:22-24
 5. The last days are characterized by a proliferation of organizations like the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Scientology, The Theosophical Society, Unitarians, and The Unification Church to name a few.

6. The west has seen an influx of religions from the east such as Islam, Buddhism, Bahai, Hinduism, and even humanistic Judaism.
 7. While the mother/son cult has taken many forms throughout history, the current manifestation is found in Roman Catholicism. Rev. 17
 8. This also includes those “Christian” religions that are not committed to teaching sound doctrine, who manifest an overt form of godliness; this involves the Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Nazarenes, Church of Christ, Pentecostals, Charismatics, etc.
 9. All para-church organizations like Promise Keepers, Healing/Prosperity Crusades, Campus Crusade, Focus on the Family, Gary Horton and his kind, Youth Camps, Salvation Army, and others that are not sanctioned by the Bible would fall into this category.
 10. The believer must be very discerning about those that do claim to be promoting sound doctrine, since false doctrines have been advanced by those that otherwise have a relatively sound ministry; this includes doctrines like Lordship salvation, the edification complex of the soul, or angelic salvation.
 11. This deluge of false teachers and false teachings make the last days a particularly dangerous time in which to live; the believer must maintain an attitude of vigilance and remain separate from such defiling influences. IPet. 5:8-9
- J. These spiritual realities make it clear that there is a time and place for applying the doctrine of separation on a personal level toward other believers, and particularly those that are not part of a sound ministry.
- V. The government of the local church as it relates to the doctrine of separation.
- A. The leadership of the local church is to enforce this doctrine on any member of the congregation that brings public reproach on the body by publicly flaunting and continuing to engage in STA activity. ICor. 5:6-7
 - B. The example of this is found in Paul’s instructions for dealing with the incestuous Corinthian. ICor. 5:1ff
 1. The situation involved a believer that was engaged in a sexual relationship with his step-mother.
 2. Paul stresses the fact that this is not a rumor; it is a report that was continually spreading around the Roman Empire about this church.
 3. He chastises the congregation for tolerating this sexual perversion, which Paul says unbelieving Gentiles viewed as repugnant.
 4. He rebukes the spirit of pride that existed in the Corinthian church in very strong terms, by saying that **you are/remain in a state of complete arrogance.**
 5. He indicates that the proper response to this situation was righteous indignation, which manifested itself in sorrow for the reproach that was brought on the body of Christ in Corinth.
 6. He orders them to expel the offender, commanding the church to enforce this excommunication.
 - C. God’s design in separation is to produce sorrow in the offender as a direct result of other believers, and the church at large, avoiding him. IICor. 2:6
 - D. The goal of the sorrow (lack of fellowship and support of positive believers) is to bring the errant believer to a change of mind. IICor. 7:8-10
 - E. If there is any incidental contact with the wayward believer, each believer is responsible to simply make the issues clear to him without rancor. IIThess. 3:15

- F. Those that respond and make the appropriate adjustment(s) are to be forgiven and accepted back into fellowship with all comfort and encouragement. IICor. 2:7
 - G. Separation is an example of love in action; when believers fail to apply this doctrine, they negate these important principles.
 - 1. True love ἀγάπη (agape), which is manifested only through the application of Bible doctrine while in fellowship, always has the best spiritual interests of the object of love in view.
 - 2. The best interests of one who is maladjusted to sound doctrine are best served by withdrawing fellowship and approval, in an attempt to get his attention and change his mind.
 - 3. Failure to separate may manifest some sort of misplaced, emotional, human viewpoint attachment or affection, but does not manifest real love.
 - 4. The Word of God provides no reason for a positive believer to establish or continue to have social life with those who are not fulfilling the command to grow in grace and knowledge, which is manifested by consistent attendance in class and application of the doctrine learned. IIPet. 3:17-18
- VI. Positive believers must be willing to apply this doctrine even toward the closest family members that are negative. Matt. 10:34-39
- A. Although Jesus is the Prince of Peace, His purpose at the First Advent was not to establish peace, not to establish some religion or thought process on which everyone would agree.
 - B. Harmony in any area of life comes only when men and women think alike regarding the truth that Jesus Christ brought; however, since most are negative, and only the few are positive, conflict erupts. Amos 3:3
 - C. The **sword** is the agent of separation and is a reference to the doctrines of Scripture that divide even the closest of relationships. Heb. 4:12
 - D. Matthew used the word διχάζω (dichazo), which means to divide in two, to separate, or to turn someone against another, to express the purpose of Jesus' coming. Matt. 10:35
 - E. His coming only makes plain what is true already; there is a rift between positive and negative volition that is very real.
 - F. Persecution is a regular feature of the angelic conflict, and believers are not to make peace with negative family members by denying the realities of Bible doctrine. Mk. 4:16-17
 - G. The positive believer may find that he experiences more hostility from his religious but negative relatives than he receives from those that are irreligious.
 - H. Jesus Christ makes the dogmatic assertion that those who refuse to apply this difficult doctrine in the face of family pressures manifest that they love their negative relatives more than they love Him. Matt. 10:37
 - I. Believers must be willing to **take up the cross**, which means that they must put the Lord and His word above all relationships; believers should be willing to do the will of God, even when it is painful.
 - J. Those that **lose their life** are those that recognize that they have been bought with a price and must apply doctrine, even when it appears not to be in their best interest to do so.
 - K. Those that apply these difficult principles are the ones **who find their life**, a reference to the Ph₂ and Ph₃ blessings that will come to those whom God honors for their obedience. Mk. 10:28-31
 - L. Jesus not only taught this doctrine, He applied it under the pressures His family placed on Him to compromise the truth. Matt. 12:46-50; Jn. 2:3-4

- M. Abraham is an example of a believer that initially failed in the application of this doctrine, but who ultimately separated from his negative relatives. Gen. 12:1, 11:31-32, 12:4, 13:9
- N. The believer must understand and believe the principle that God will establish sound relationships with other positive believers; these are the relationships that ultimately are satisfying. Mk. 3:33-35
- O. Dating, marriage and the doctrine of separation.
 - 1. Under the principle that forbids being unequally yoked together, believers are not to pursue or establish relationships with unbelievers of the opposite sex.
 - 2. Since positive believers should avoid becoming entangled with negative believers (bad company corrupts good morals), obviously one should not initiate a romantic relationship with a negative believer. ICor. 15:33
 - 3. All believers must learn to wait on the Lord in general, and this is no more true than in the 2nd Divine Institution of marriage.
 - 4. Further, remember that it is better to be single, fulfilling God's plan in time, than it is to compromise doctrine and get into a relationship that may become a real cause of grief. Prov. 11:22, 21:9,19, 27:15
 - 5. Again, the real blessings in life come to those that honor God and apply His word to these issues. Prov. 19:14, 31:10ff
- P. One cannot appeal to this doctrine as a justification for refusing to honor father and mother, which only relates to providing physical support for one's aged parents. ITim. 5:4,8

VII. Conclusions.

- A. There can be no doubt that the doctrine of separation is taught throughout the Bible, and that it is an issue brought on by the very nature of the angelic conflict.
- B. There are several sound reasons to apply this doctrine when it becomes necessary.
 - 1. To protect the believer and his family from corrupting influences. ICor. 15:33
 - 2. To attempt to bring the maladjusted to their spiritual senses. IICor. 2:7
 - 3. To fulfill the commands to apply it, and remain within the directive will of God; an adjusted believer does not desire to become God's enemy. James 4:4
- C. Failure to apply this doctrine impartially adversely impacts spiritual growth and the witness of the life; one should avoid all associations that compromise Bible doctrine.
- D. When dealing with other positive believers in the local church, recognize that failure in a particular area, which is not severe enough to present to the leadership for disciplinary action, is not grounds for separation.
- E. Generally speaking, if people are in class, pursuing MPR, are oriented to the pulpit, and applying, there is no reason to separate from them.
- F. In any questionable situation, pursue God's will through prayer, attendance in Bible class, seeking Divine guidance, and He will bless your mental attitude desire to please Him.
- G. When you come under pressure by separating from the negative or lukewarm, remember Proverbs 24:19-20.
- H. Further, remember the blessings that are promised to those that apply this doctrine. Ps. 1:1-3; Mk.10:28-31; IICor. 6:16-18