

Dealing with the Spirit of Compromise

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 7

SHIPWRECKED FAITH

Chapter 2 12

KEEPING THE RIGHT COMPANY

Chapter 3 18

DOING OUR DUTY BY HIS STRENGTH

CONCLUSION 25

INTRODUCTION

The Bible declares the whole counsel of God. All Scripture is inspired by God. All of it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that we may be thoroughly equipped unto all divine good (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "Man must live by every word of God," and He meant it. Of course, when we fail, we rebound. If, however, we are not obedient in any part of the whole counsel of God, then we are not living by every Word of God.

In Acts 20:27, Paul said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Therefore, when the Bible is so clear, why is it that we sometimes find it difficult to obey the whole counsel of God?

God has charged us with a duty to live by His Word. This includes keeping ourselves from the infections of the world and preventing infections from spreading. This booklet will show

that we cannot afford to be sentimental when it comes to dealing with people who choose to reject God's counsel. There are times to minister to the backslidden, but there are also times when we must avoid those who live contrary to the truth.

At the time, we may not understand why a situation requires us to take a stand that seems to go against a fellow believer. Imagine how God feels when He has to break fellowship with us when we live in sin. The Holy Spirit lives in us to empower us, and the grace of God is freely given to help us. Therefore, we can live by every single word of God.

Chapter One

SHIPWRECKED FAITH

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

“Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

“Holding faith” speaks of the entire human personality leaning on God in absolute trust and confidence with a good, clear conscience. By rejecting truth and thrusting it from the conscience, some individuals have made their faith shipwreck. In this passage, Paul addresses Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom he delivered unto Satan, that they might be chastised and hopefully, repent.

Many of the people who were active believers and then stop following God will have a shipwrecked faith after Satan gets through with them. Yes, there are people who leave churches in peace—they have every right to, for they stand or fall before God alone. But those who depart and turn away from God altogether will wind up shipwrecked, sooner or later. We need to be taught the whole counsel of God and we need to hide it in our hearts, because Satan and his demons are doing everything to deceive and destroy people.

Deceitful Hearts, Sick Heads

Inside of every Christian is a heart that not only is deceitful, but also is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Not only is the whole head sick and the whole heart faint, but we are covered with running sores from head to toe. These sores have not been mollified with ointment (Isaiah 1:6). That is the natural condition of our hearts from God's viewpoint. With this in mind, we should never give the heart a chance to be deceived.

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

“Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

“All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

Evil thoughts proceed from within the heart of every man and woman because all of us have been infected with an old sin nature. This infection stirs the production of evil thoughts that are in every person’s heart, including the Christian’s. There are no exceptions.

These evil thoughts bring adulteries and fornication—unlawful sex in the life of a single person. Then after fornication come murders—either in the mind or in the act. Next are thefts and covetousness—gambling, coveting other people’s possessions. Then, because the person involved in this cycle lives in self-denial, wickedness (a series of infections) and deceit follow. “Deceit” here equals self-denial. This proceeds to “lasciviousness,” a careless lifestyle; an evil eye that turns toward evil things (such as pornography); and finally blasphemy, pride, and foolishness (non-thinking).

All these things come from within, defiling the hearts of men.

Thirteen terrible things in the heart of every

man cause a shipwrecked faith. These infections are in my heart and in your heart, just waiting to develop, waiting to take over, waiting to control. Think of those thirteen wicked things in every heart. Is it any wonder that we need the Word of God? Is it any wonder we need the Cross of Calvary? Is it any wonder we need the local church?

The Quarantine Principle

When I was a salesman, selling from door to door, I could not go into a certain house because a woman in the home had scarlet fever and was quarantined. According to the law, the Health Department posted a sign on the door and no one could enter or leave the house to prevent spreading the disease. The woman was a personal friend of the family. Did we love her? Yes. Yet, because of her condition, we could not express our love as we could when she was well. In time, with the proper treatment, she regained her health, and the quarantine was lifted.

The same principle applies when people who call themselves Christians have spiritual infections. The Bible is the whole counsel of God, and what it says about treating those influenced by demonic infections is crystal clear. In 1 Cor-

inthians 5:11, Paul said, "I wrote unto you an epistle not to keep company with fornicators." That is the Word of God telling me that I cannot keep company with a fornicator. I do not have a choice if I want to remain spiritually healthy.

When a person is quarantined, does it mean we do not love them? No. Does it mean that we will be courteous? Yes. But it also means we must obey the Word to avoid passing on a serious infection. Do I love that person in terms of wanting to help? Yes, I do. Will I be rude to that person? No, I will not. Would I speak to that person as I go by? Yes. Still, the Scriptures tell me not to keep company with them. We are not to eat with them, and we are not to fellowship with them. We are to avoid them. That is what the Bible says, to protect us from becoming infected ourselves.

Chapter Two

KEEPING THE RIGHT COMPANY

We are to avoid the fornicators of this world. Not only that, but we are to avoid the covetous who are jealous of others. We avoid “extortioners,” the people who cheat when they sell. We avoid “idolaters”—those who put other things ahead of being a member in particular with the Body of Christ.

There are times when we will come in contact with such people. We can say “hello” and “good-bye,” but that should be the extent of it. Of course, we have to exist in this world, so there is no way to completely avoid dealing with people who live in overt sins. Otherwise, as Paul said, “for then must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Corinthians 5:10). You might have a friend who you know is living in habitual sin. Politely, you say “hi” and you minister if the opportunity arises, but you would not go to his house to eat. Neither would you fellowship with

him. God commands us to operate this way (1 Corinthians 5:11).

The Bible also says we are to stay away from the “railer,” one who speaks harshly about others or gossips behind people’s backs, using abusive language against others, defaming their character whether it is true or not. The Bible says I am not to eat with a railer.

If we would honor these verses, there would be fear about entering into those sins as a believer. If you know that a brother is living in adultery and you treat him as you always did, then he will keep doing it if he is an evil person. But if you mark him and say, “I cannot eat with you. I’m sorry, but I cannot because the Bible tells me not to.” Then he will see that his actions have a consequence.

Remember, we are still courteous, but we won’t fellowship with him. We are not to keep company with that person.

Be Separated unto God

“For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

“But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that

wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

In other words, God said, "Put away from you the ones who are infected with these sins and who refuse doctrinal approaches to repent and rebound." "That is unkind," you say? That is just being obedient to the Bible. That is not, like the Pharisees, acting "holier than thou," and it is not legalistic, acting on the letter of the law without the Spirit. It is simply obeying the Scriptures. Of course, they could still come to church.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Nor thieves. Nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

A true confession of faith always results in the gift of eternal life. God gives us eternal life forever. If, however, a person was not truly saved, he will not go to heaven.

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the [Holy] Spirit of...God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

The Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked

together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in [you], and walk [with you]; and I will be [your] God, and they shall be my people.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,

“And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

God says, “I want separation. Separate yourselves from wickedness and worldliness.”

This principle of being set apart is particularly important when a believer considers marriage. Although we cannot judge a person's motives, we must use wisdom, which includes discernment. A person may say he is a Christian and even attend church to win acceptance. But this is the issue: Does he hunger for prayer? Does he go to services three times a week? Does

he love to hear the Word of God? Does he enjoy fellowship in the Body of Christ? Do you share the same call and the same vision regarding the local church, soul winning, the mission field, and so on? Many beautiful Christians have compromised God's call on their lives because they married for the wrong reasons.

Marked for Separation

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

If someone causes a division from what you know is right and from the biblical truths that have been taught in the pulpit, avoid him. Even if it is your boyfriend or your girlfriend, take a stand and say, "We are not for each other."

"I beseech you that you mark them." Mark them in your heart. You do not eat with them; you do not keep company with them. You mark them.

These people may attack your character. They may even spend the next six months trying to find out the bad things people say about you. But God is saying, "I beseech you. I plead of you. I beg of you to mark them which cause

divisions contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own emotions; and by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple (those who are ignorant of doctrine)" (see Romans 16:17-18).

Do not fellowship with people who cause division. Do not even say, "They are still good people." Mark them until they name their sin, get right with God, and confess what they have done. You mark them. You mark those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrines that you have learned. Avoid them, for they do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter Threë

DOING OUR DUTY BY HIS STRENGTH

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an ensample.

“(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

“Whose end is [physical death or] destruction, whose God is their [emotions], and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.)

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:17-21).

This is the second time that Paul is writing,

“Mark them.”

“But I can’t do that,” you say. If we say we can’t take a stand with God by avoiding those who go against godliness, then we are compromising the truth and the convictions we have developed since our conversion. The Bible is the Word of God.

Many Christians like to hear about grace; they like to hear about forgiveness; they like to hear about unconditional love. But hearing about convictions with a conversion to God’s standards in the Bible is another matter.

God is holy. Yes, He gives grace. Yes, He forgives—but nobody living in immorality will ever go to heaven. If evidence of God’s chastisement does not show up in such a person’s life, then he is not saved. That is a fact (Hebrews 12:6-8).

We do not know who these people are, but God does. If they can live immorally and God doesn’t touch them, then they were never saved. If they do it and God disciplines them, then they are saved. If they continue in their sin, they have started down a path that will lead them to physical death—the final step in God’s program of chastisement (1 John 5:16). God takes them to heaven before their time. They go home early

and suffer the loss of all rewards.*

Moses told Israel, "The Edomites are evil people, but we need to go to their market places and buy food. Don't chat with them. Don't fellowship with them. Do your business and come right out" (Numbers 20:14-20).

A Duty and a Privilege

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

We should be dedicated to our duty toward God. Our duty is accountability. Although many parents are wonderful, some parents do not have standards for their children in the home, yet they expect the schools to train their children. A Christian school cannot be a reform school. The teachers minister in these schools; they give grace and invest. But parents need to set standards for their children in the home. Some parents are unaware of the wrong things their children are doing. This is evidence of a family out of control.

In Joshua 24:14-15, Joshua challenged the people of Israel to serve God and put away their idols, saying, "Choose you this day whom ye

will serve....but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." He took charge of his house. Many of us need to reevaluate our priorities and lead our families back to the place of honor that God intended.

We have a duty to be with God's people so much more as we see the day of the Lord approaching (Hebrews 10:25). Who would want to be out with the devil's crowd when your church and your pastor are ministering to God? It would be a terrible disgrace to miss ministering to each other and, most of all, to miss being ministered to by God.

If your spouse will not come to church, then you come three times a week anyway. You decide that you are going to follow God, no matter what. Make that choice. Hold to God's standards. Do what the Bible tells you to do. When you step out in faith, God will honor you—and you have honored Him.

The End of Our Strength

"For when I am weak, then am I strong," Paul said (2 Corinthians 12:10b).

Now, the best thing in the world for a Christian is to be helpless. When a Christian is helpless and he takes his helplessness to God, he receives

God's dunamis—God's power, God's ability, God's love, God's help (Ephesians 1:19).

The greatest thing that happened to the prodigal son, in Luke 15:17, was that he came to the end of himself. Psalm 107:27-28 describes those who are brought to a place where they must admit their weakness and cry out for God: "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses." It is a beautiful thing when a person comes to his wits' end; that is when God steps in with wisdom.

Human frailty, when we bring it to God, is the secret to the holy life. Human failure, when we come to God, is the secret to the holy life. The more a person comes to the end of himself, the more God steps in with His love and power.

Our inadequacy brings in God's adequacy. His power kicks in when our power shuts down. When our possibilities are gone, His possibilities become ours. His fullness comes when we become empty. Our importunity gives Him opportunity.

Throughout Romans 7, Paul could not get victory. He could not find success. Finally, he found victory through being forgiven, discover-

ing that there is no condemnation. As a result, he began to experience the Holy Spirit's power (see Romans 8:1-39).

John the apostle was exiled to the isle of Patmos and burned in hot oil three times. He was an old man, probably 106 years old. But on that island, John saw the glorified Christ and wrote the entire inspired book of Revelation. John was weak, empty, and helpless. His strength was hopeless; he had no power. He depended on God's mercy just to live for another day. God came and gave him the book of Revelation.

It is not weakness that destroys us, but not letting God's strength take over. It is not the helplessness that defeats us; rather, we are defeated by not going to God our Helper. In Psalm 46, God is an instant help in the time of trouble. It is not failure that ruins us, but our failure to go to the One who forgives, restores, empowers, enables, and takes over our weakness with His strength. We have no excuse to live a defeated life when we know the victory God is ready to give us.

The next time you are faced with an opportunity to stand with God, consider it a duty and a privilege. When the spirit of compromise suggests ways of getting around an issue, give in to

the Spirit of Truth and trust the Lord for the consequences. Remember that He is waiting to bless you.

*Read *The Great Detective: Sin*, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.

CONCLUSION

If I had gone in to my friend's house while she was quarantined with scarlet fever, I probably would have become infected too. What is worse, I could have given the disease to somebody else. Clearly, the reason God tells us to be separated from those living in sin is that we will not become infected and give that infection to somebody else.

There is not a sin that God has not paid for. There is not a person whom God will not restore. There is not a situation that God will not forgive. There is not a circumstance for which God is not the answer. That is the balance on this subject. We must, however, deal with the spirit of compromise anytime we come up against it.

The Bible says we will be blessed if we keep His commandments. When we stand up for the truth and for what is right, we will be blessed mightily by God.