

Additional Admonitions

1 Thessalonians 5:22

Lesson 5c

Part 2

1 Thess. 5:22 abstain [avoid] from every form [kind] of evil.

1. The word “abstain” is from “apecho” [ah **peh** koh] meaning “to avoid, abstain.”

a. Paul earlier used the word “abstain” in this epistle. (1 Thess. 4:3-4).

1 Thess 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; {that is,} that you **abstain** from sexual immorality;

1 Thess 4:4 that each of you know how to possess [control] his own vessel [body] in sanctification [holiness] and honor,

b. Believers were to avoid “fornication” [immorality] that was a strong temptation before and after conversion.

c. Paul taught Christians to “flee” “fornication.” (1 Cor. 6:18).

1 Cor 6:18 Flee immorality. Every {other} sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

1) Some temptations are so great that the divine mandate is to “flee” from them.

2) This is what Joseph did to keep himself pure when seduced by Potiphar’s wife. (Gen. 39:10-14).

3) Those who allow themselves to remain or to be put in tempting situations are in real danger of succumbing to fornication.

4) Heaven alone knows how many people, young or old, who have become fornicators who never intended to commit fornication.

2. It is not enough to “hold to the good” (1 Thess. 5:16) if abstaining from every form of evil is not diligently and faithfully followed daily.

a. Things that **seem innocent** or **not too bad** can lead to a relaxing of the admonition “hold to the good.”

b. Many or most Christians now tolerate and even accept and practice things they used to abhor.

c. A sinful culture slowly or quickly leads many of God’s people to cease abhorring sin and even to practice or tolerate it.

3. Christians certainly need to read Psalm 1 and 2 Corinthians 6. (Psa. 1:1; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Psa. 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of

sinner, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

- **Sin is progressive.**
- It is easy to gradually accept things that lead us to accept and practice things we would never do in the beginning.

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

- Being “bound together with unbelievers” is dangerous in every kind of association.
- It is also dangerous in marriage and in friendships.

2 Cor. 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? “Belial” is a transliteration of the Greek word Paul used and means “worthless, wicked.” It is one of the names of Satan.

2 Cor. 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, *"I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

- It is important that we keep ourselves, as much as is possible, separate from those who practice evil and unclean things.
- It is sad that often children and young people are stuck in a sinful environment and cannot escape it.
- Some are able to overcome this sinful environment and pursue the Lord, but most are not that strong.

2 Cor. 6:17 *"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,"* says the Lord. *"And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."*

2 Cor. 6:18 *"And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"* Says the Lord Almighty.

4. Paul gave this warning against the false teachers who denied the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:33).

1 Cor. 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

- a. It is dangerous to closely associate with those who deny the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of mankind occurring when Jesus comes again.
- b. Denial of the resurrection logically leads to an immoral life because it implies there is no hereafter and accountability of one's sins. (1 Cor. 15:32).

1 Cor. 15:32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, *let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*

5. There has been a lot of discussion about the word “form” or “appearance.”

- a. This word comes from “eidos” [ay dahs] that can be rendered “form, kind” or “appearance”

1) Paul is commanding there must be the abstinence of the practice of evil in all its forms

2) It also means they are to avoid or abstain from false prophecy [teaching], but are to hold fast to good [true] prophecy [teaching].

b. It seems best to interpret it with the idea of “form” or “kind.”

c. Though Christians must be cautious, **it is impossible to avoid every appearance or semblance of evil.**

1) Jesus gave the appearance of evil when He ate with sinners (Matt. 9:11-12), but He did not participate in the evil of these men.

Matt 9:11 When the Pharisees saw {this,} they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

Matt 9:12 But when Jesus heard {this,} He said, "{It is} not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

2) He was called “a friend of tax-collectors and sinners” because He would eat with them and teach them. (Matt. 11:19).

Matt 11:19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

3) When one attempts to convert a sinner, this may give the appearance of evil but this is far from the truth!

4) Paul gave the appearance of evil when he entered the Synagogues and had fellowship with those who rejected Christ as the Messiah

5) Paul did not compromise the truth, but he used the Scriptures to teach them Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

6) Many were converted to Christ because Paul had the love and courage to meet with them and teach them.

- His conduct might appear to be a violation of what he was teaching in this epistle, but this is far from the truth!
- He was an inspired apostle and teacher who did not enter the Synagogue to compromise the truth of the gospel, but to convert Jews to Christ who is the One and Only Savior of the world.

7) **Working with unbelievers might give the appearance of evil** that may or may not be the case.

- In a sinful world it may not be possible to always work with Christians.
- Though this does not seem to always be possible, Christians must be cautious that their employment does not weaken or destroy their faith.
- It is so easy to tolerate evil, gradually accept it, and then embrace it.

7) **Living with an unbelieving spouse or family could give the semblance of evil.**

- See instructions to wives with unbelieving husbands. (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

1 Pet 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any {of them} are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,
1 Pet 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

- Note believing wives were not taught to leave their unbelieving husbands, but to be “submissive” to them.
- This was and is the general rule, but this general rule would have a few exceptions.
- A Christian wife would be forced to leave her unbelieving husband if forced her and her children to practice sin. The same would be true if he beat her.
- A Christian wife would not be forced to live with her unbelieving husband if he demanded she give up her faith in Jesus.
- A Christian man or woman was not expected to remain with an unbeliever who chose to leave the marriage. (1 Cor. 7:12-15).

1 Cor 7:12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

1 Cor 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.

1 Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

1 Cor 7:15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such {cases,} but God has called us to peace.

8) **One must have contact with the world to reach lost souls.** (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20).

- God does not expect His children to live in a spiritual bubble, but to be “the light of the world.” (Matt. 5:13-16).

9) We are not to withdraw from the world, but we must exercise great caution not to be corrupted by it.

10) To avoid all contact with evil doers one would have to leave this world. (1 Cor. 5:10).

1 Cor. 5:10 I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, **for then you would have to go out of the world.**

6. It is vital that a Christian mature in faith to discern good from evil. (Heb. 5:11-14).

Heb 5:11 Concerning him we have much to say, and {it is} hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes {only} of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

- a. Those who are mature in faith draw closer to God and His Son.
- b. The mature in faith have their senses trained to discern between good and evil, and are not as easily led into sin.
- c. The more mature a person becomes in the faith he/she sharpens his/her ability “to discern good and evil.”
- d. Those mature in faith recognize the devil never gives up and he attacks Christians in a host of ways.
- e. If one way does not work, the devil simply employs a different way until he finds one that works.

7. Christians must not see how close they can get to evil, but must avoid it in all its forms.

- a. Avoidance of evil is for the spiritual benefit of the believer.
- b. This also keeps believers from leading weaker Christians into evil.
- c. Often those who believe they are strong and are not easily led into sin influence weaker Christians to succumb to evil.

8. Christians must seek the help of God and believers to be victorious. (Matt. 6:13; Jas. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7,8; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 3:13;10:24).

Matt 6:13 'And do not lead us into temptation [trials], but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

- See James 1:13.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- The holy God **never tempts** us to do evil.
- The meaning of Matthew 6:13 is we should pray that God will not allow us to be tempted or tried beyond our ability to remain faithful.

1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- The devil is powerful, but he is not all-powerful and he can be resisted.
- To keep the devil away one must “draw near to God” and He “will draw near” to us.

Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is {still} called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Heb 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another;} and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

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