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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Straddling the Fence

Bill Brinkworth

“But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. 40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. 41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.” II Kings 17:39-41

Israel of the past is so much like many today. They know there is a God. They believe in Him, at least they claim it with their speech, but hypocritically worship AND live for other “gods.”

There are some sects, that although they claim to be Christian, incorporate praying to statues (idols) and people of the religion's past. To a Bible believer and follower that is clearly false worship honoring a different “god.”

Not all “gods” are as clear as those idols found in some religions. Many of the “gods” are things that get more attention than our Creator and the lover of our soul should be receiving.

These false “gods” can be a job, a spouse, a person, a shiny new car, a house, or anything that makes us put something ahead of the only God. Although justification may be that “I need that thing”, “a man has to work”, or even “God understands that I am in a world and I have to do what I have to do to survive,” the attention those things receive shows God He is not the priority in one’s life. He deserves to be.

God does not understand. He commands us to put Him first! He would not require of us something that is impossible to do.

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deut. 6:5 Also: Mark12:30.

“Well, if I put God first, I will have nothing to live on, people will laugh at me, and I will be an outcast!” most defend by their not putting God as a priority in their life. Much of the lost respect for Christianity comes from that kind of compromising done by so many that claim to be Christians.

God’s Word whispers back, *“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father*

knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Mat. 6:31-33

God will take care of His own and those that are totally relying on Him. One needs only rely on Him. That is the way He wants it.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philip. 4:19

We cannot have it both ways. We should not live for the world and make it the highest priority and tip our hat to God once a week. God should be our leader, not the world’s ever-changing whims. A Christian has no business straddling the fence between the losing and the winning sides.

“Ye adulterers [an apostate: a person that has abandoned his religion and principles] and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:4

We are in the world and do need some things it offers. However, do not make what it temporarily offers your primary concern. To do so is not putting God first.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” Mat. 12:30 Also: Luke 11:23

Get off the “fence” of trying to be on both sides: God’s and the world’s. God will provide and take care of you if you will just trust and obey Him. Make the right choice today¹

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua 24:15

“Walk by new rules towards new ends from new principles. Make a new choice of the way. Choose new paths to walk in, new leaders to walk after, and new companions to walk with. Old things should pass away, and all things become new. The man is what he was not and does what he did not.” — Henry

Vexed by Ungodliness

Bill Brinkworth

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

When given a choice by his Uncle Abraham, Lot chose the choicest of lands to raise his cattle and family (Gen. 13:8-11). He left Abraham (named Abram at the time) the less appealing land and kept the “best” for himself.

His selfish pick may have appeared to be the best choice, however, there was one important matter Lot did not consider in picking where he would live. He did not consider who his soon-to-be neighbors would be. As it turned out, the place he chose to live near were the twin

cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities were known for their rampant sin, particularly homosexuality. It was there that the righteous man, Lot, chose to live.

It was not long before he was involved in the government of the city (Gen. 19:1, 9). He was not only living among wickedness, but he was involved in the choices made to help the city being managed. Shortly, his constant exposure to godlessness and sin affected Lot. The Bible says that he was "... vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked ... in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;" (II Peter 2:7-8). The part of Lot that wanted to live and please the Lord was "irritated, harassed, teased, and disturbed" by the lifestyle he was allowing himself and his family to be exposed to.

As a Christian, we usually cannot live on top of a mountain, away from the world and all sin. Most of the time we have to live around sin, see it in the workplace, hear it on the television, and be exposed to its consequences and involvement wherever we go. However, if we are not wary of it, and do all we can to limit its exposure we too will be "vexed" by sin. It will wear on us, and if we are not careful, sin will be commonplace to us. We will be hardened against it. Seeing or hearing sin will not bother us like it used to. The spiritual part of us will be desensitized to sin's evilness. If we are not careful, we will even be involved in it, and thinking that it is normal because "everyone is doing it."

Despite what the unsaved world is doing, sin is, and always will be, wrong. The only protection from being desensitized to it, or being involved in it, is to do one's best to avoid its contact. If you are vexed by filthy language on television, there may be some channels you should never listen to again, or you may have to stop watching the "hellelevision." Filthy words creeping into your language? Maybe there are some influencing foul-mouths that you should no longer listen to or associate with. Seeing things your eyes should not be seeing on the internet? Limit where you browse, or maybe you will have to stay off the internet altogether. Dirty images you have already viewed plaguing your thought-life? Avoid further looks and recite Scripture verses, particularly about what you are thinking. It is difficult to have the clean Word of God and filthiness in your thought-life at the same time. The filthiness will usually flee!

The key to keeping a holy, unsoiled life and testimony for the Lord is to separate (II Cor. 6:17) from the world. It is possible to remain undefiled in this ever-increasing sinful world. If we purpose in our hearts to not be defiled by ungodliness in this world, the Lord will do His part to help us. He will give the believer "a way to escape" sin's vexing grasp, if the believer wants it!

"If you can get along with the world, then you are out of step with God!" — *Dr. Harold Sightler*

Reason for Alarm

Author Unknown

Thomas Guthrie used to say, “If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the church, any table better than the Lord’s table, any persons better than Christ, any indulgence better than hope of Heaven — take alarm.”

Farewell, Vanity

World Journal Entry of David Brainerd, April 25, 1742

*Farewell, vain world, my soul can bid adieu;
My Saviour taught me to abandon you.
Your charms may gratify a sensual mind,
But cannot please a soul for God designed.
Forbear to entice, cease then my soul to call;
‘Tis fixed through grace — my God shall be my all.
While He thus lets me Heavenly glories view,
Your beauties fade; my heart has no room for you.*

“The one enemy that has taken the most soldiers of Christ out of spiritual warfare is worldliness! Do not be its next casualty!” — *Bill Brinkworth*