

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

Our walk as a believer is a precious thing. We meet the Lord at the altar of grace where we learn the old testament picture of the offering is made clearly understood by the person and work of Christ at the cross. Our salvation, our life is all in Him. Without that we are hopelessly lost. But in Christ we are children of the most high God! A place of greater nearness to God is not possible. It behooves us then as children of God, to be known as such to be seen in this world a people who are circumspect in our walk that we may honor Him in everything we think, say, and do, where we go, who we spend time with, what we choose to spend our time on. 1Peter 1:14-16 reminds us (as his children), to be Holy, for God is Holy. The children of the Father are counseled to bear the image of their Father in their living.

Questions concerning our associations then, naturally must be part of our conscious desire to rightly bear his image. Before we consider anything, it is good to remind ourselves of the value of having our Lord before us continually. As we live, waiting to hear that blessed shout, our goal is to go forth unto Him, *“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Hebrews 13:13-14). In so doing, we will have a frame of mind to view things of this life from His perspective, Holiness.

In our daily living then, it is important to have a fair understanding of each situation we encounter in order to correctly assess and make good decisions. There are times when different things come to us in this life that we must assess and address. In order to make sound judgments, it is good to know we have the word of the Lord as our guide. Our place is to take the time to search the scriptures, to see the light that is cast on for each of these situations in order to maintain a godly character to our testimony, one which honors Him in everything, (Col 1:18).

In the old testament, the tabernacle is an excellent picture of how we as sinners can approach God. We enter on one end of the tabernacle looking to God who is at the other end of the tabernacle in the Holiest of Holies. As you would enter at the east gate, the first thing in front of us is the altar of burnt offering. That is where we see in type, our sin being dealt with. Without that, we can proceed no further in our approach to God. Passing beyond this, our sin question being settled, the next thing in our path as we approach where God is we encounter the laver. Here there is what we might call ceremonial cleansing. The new testament analogy to this in John 13 where Jesus washed his disciples feet. Jesus told Peter that he was “clean”, which means his sin has been judged and dealt with.

So, in the laver and the action of our Lord Jesus we learn that we must frequently, personally, encounter the washing away of the things that happen daily which make us “dirty” for lack of a better word or defiled. The character of God is Holy and never associated with anything that is defiled. We cannot approach Him to commune with him if we are defiled, so attention to this matter is paramount to our having fellowship with Him. We can only fellowship with Him at His level, Holiness. Defilement is not there, if we would walk with Him, these matters of the things of this life must be rightly dealt with, hence the instruction, *“Be ye Holy for I am Holy”*.

There is great joy when as a company we can walk together in fellowship in the Lord. As we have seen, that fellowship with one another with God is a Holy thing. Life here on this earth will

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

continue to bring us to things which are defiling to us. Some of this is simply unavoidable, some is not. In either case, when we become defiled, it must be dealt with so we may proceed to fellowship with our Lord and savior. Now, if we are not exposed to a thing which defiles us, it is not necessary for the cleansing. However, we are defiled daily and the cleansing is needed if we desire to walk with our Lord and one another.

The question comes in then as to understanding this defilement. First of all, we are sinners by nature and we need no help in becoming defiled. We can easily accomplish this all alone. But there are outside effects, things that come in through our eyes and ears. Some of it is plain, a bumper sticker, a person at work or school talking of things that are not right, and so on while other things that defile are not so plain. Sometimes it is as subtle as an attitude of people we encounter. Whenever these kinds of things happen, we are affected. These things take our mind off the Lord and we are now occupied with things that do not honor Him. When these things are present, they become internalized so to speak and affect our way of thinking. If they are not confessed and judged, they will eventually come out and the defilement is manifested by things we say or things we do or both.

Daily, we are confronted with things of this world where we must make choices of what we will allow ourselves to see, hear, and do. Many Christians, for example have chosen to homeschool their children. As parents, we don't allow our children to go to inappropriate movies, etc. As adults, we choose where we go as an example for recreational purposes. Why we may ask do we do this choosing? The answer is simple, exposure to these things make us dirty. Proverbs 4:14-15, 1 Thess 5:22-23 gives clear instruction in this regard. Therefore, we choose to refrain from exposure and consequent influence by the things that will be there.

In regards to our fellowship, it is paramount to be always reminded that Christ is in the place of the most high. He is the most preeminent, Col 1:18. He owns this position as the most High God. He owns this position as the creator of everything and He owns this place by virtue of his giving his life as a sacrifice for us at Calvary, where he bore the judgement we deserved. He paid a price we could not pay! Now, we have the privilege to manifest that truth in our living and activities, and our activities naturally, include being with other people. We do affect one another, that cannot be denied. What effect we have on one another is a thing we can manage by our walk with the Lord personally. A fair question we can ask is what about being around people who carry with them ideas teachings which do not hold Christ in the highest place? Today it is common thing to take the name of Christ, Christians, Christian communities, Christian circles, Christian activities and so on. In this realm of Christendom there is truth and falsehoods. There is good and there is bad. Of all these things the ones that ought to trouble us the most are the things that do not hold Christ in his rightful place.

This is commonly seen in the church systems where a man is placed over a congregation. It is a designed practice. It actually is a pattern we have seen before in the tabernacle. Further, the blessing of the priesthood of every believer is suppressed. These things do not put forth Christ in His rightful place and in so doing dishonor him. That is not right. What does God say about this? 2nd Timothy 2 says to depart from those things. Isaiah 42:9 speaking of the coming of Christ, we read, "*Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.*" And in Hebrews 10 we see "*Then said he, Lo, I come*

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” The question must be answered, if these things for Israel are not to be observed anymore why, do we as gentiles live in professing Christendom as though is the way we ought to behave? In this defective model today, this man is the authority, he is the teacher, he is the caregiver, etc. In all these things the manifestation of Christs high place is not seen. This is dishonoring to Him. Associating then with this environment directly or indirectly will have a negative effect on us. This we cannot deny.

Jesus Himself said that *“the things which come out of a man are the things which defile”*. The question is, *how did it get there in the first place* that it is possible for it to come forth? The Word of God gives many examples of real events and things that show how this happens.

Exodus 34:12-16: God warns Israel against making covenants or intermarrying with the idolatrous peoples of Canaan, lest they be ensnared by their practices and worship false gods. This passage highlights the danger of spiritual contamination through unholy alliances.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4: Similar to Exodus 34, Moses instructs Israel not to intermarry with the surrounding pagan nations because it could turn their hearts away from God towards foreign gods, leading to spiritual defilement and judgment.

Numbers 16: Korah, along with Dathan, Abiram, and their followers, rebelled against Moses and Aaron's leadership. God judged them severely by causing the earth to swallow them up. This event underscores the consequences of aligning with rebellion and disobedience, which can lead to spiritual defilement and destruction.

Joshua 7: Achan's disobedience in taking forbidden items from Jericho led to defeat in battle for Israel. Achan's sin not only brought judgment upon himself but also affected the entire nation, illustrating the principle of corporate responsibility and the potential defilement caused by association with sin.

Ezra 9: Ezra learns that the Israelites have disobeyed God's command by intermarrying with the surrounding pagan nations. This intermarriage was seen as a form of spiritual defilement because it led the Israelites away from pure worship and obedience to God's laws.

Psalms 106:35-39: The psalmist reflects on Israel's history of mingling with the nations and adopting their sinful practices, which led to spiritual defilement and provoked God's anger against them.

Ezekiel 22:26: The prophet Ezekiel rebukes the priests for not distinguishing between the holy and the common, and for failing to teach the difference between clean and unclean. This highlights the responsibility of spiritual leaders to maintain purity and prevent defilement among the people.

Malachi 2:11: Malachi addresses the issue of intermarriage with foreign women among the priests, condemning it as an abomination that profanes the sanctuary of the Lord and leads to spiritual impurity.

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

1 Corinthians 5:9-11: Paul instructs the Corinthian church not to associate with immoral people. He clarifies that he doesn't mean avoiding all immoral people in the world, but specifically those who claim to be believers yet live in unrepentant sin. The concern is that such association can corrupt the moral and spiritual integrity of the church.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17: Paul warns against being unequally yoked with unbelievers. He uses this analogy to emphasize the importance of maintaining spiritual purity by not forming close partnerships or relationships with those who do not share the same faith or values. The concern is that such close associations can lead to compromise and spiritual defilement.

Ephesians 5:5-7: In this passage, Paul warns believers against partaking in the sinful practices of the world. He emphasizes that those who engage in immorality, impurity, or greed have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. Therefore, believers are urged not to be partners with them, as such associations can defile their own spiritual standing.

1 Timothy 5:22: Paul advises Timothy to be cautious about laying hands suddenly on someone. He warns against sharing in the sins of others through hasty actions, which could lead to personal defilement or compromise of one's own integrity.

James 4:4: James speaks directly about spiritual adultery by being friends with the world. He warns that friendship with the world is enmity with God. This passage underscores the spiritual defilement that can occur through close association with worldly values and practices.

2 John 1:10-11: John advises against welcoming false teachers into one's house or giving them a greeting. He warns that by doing so, one becomes a partaker in their evil deeds, suggesting that such association can lead to spiritual contamination.

Revelation 2:14-16: Jesus criticizes the church in Pergamum for tolerating those who hold to false teachings and practices, such as the teaching of Balaam. This highlights the danger of allowing false teachings or practices to infiltrate the church, leading to spiritual compromise and defilement.

Revelation 2:20-23: Here, Jesus addresses the church in Thyatira for tolerating a prophetess named Jezebel, who was leading God's servants into sexual immorality and idolatry. Jesus warns that those who follow her teachings will suffer severe consequences unless they repent. This passage highlights the danger of spiritual contamination through false teachings and sinful practices.

Revelation 18:4: In the context of the fall of Babylon, a symbolic representation of worldly corruption and idolatry, believers are called to come out of her to avoid sharing in her sins and receiving her plagues. This emphasizes the need for separation from worldly systems and practices to maintain spiritual purity.

These passages from the Old Testament, New Testament and Revelation scriptures all serve to illustrate and emphasize the importance of maintaining spiritual purity by avoiding associations

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

and practices that lead to disobedience, idolatry, or compromise with sin. They bring to light the principle of holiness and separation unto God, and guarding against influences that can defile one's relationship with Him and fellow believers. These passages collectively emphasize the importance of guarding one's spiritual purity by being discerning about associations and relationships, avoiding close ties with those who could lead one into moral or spiritual compromise. The principle is to maintain a lifestyle that reflects the values and standards of God's kingdom rather than those of the world.

To help in this study, here is some research that has been compiled over the course of several years to help understand meanings of words and concepts in the scriptures that apply to this topic.

Dictionary Definition of Association: The state of being associated; fellowship; companionship. A body of persons associated for some common purpose involving interest, action etc.

Biblical Usage: No references in the New Testament for the word "association."

Related Scriptures: Avoid those causing division, etc. (Romans 16:17-19) The conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15) The effect of association with those who deny the truth and hold false doctrine (1 Cor. 15:33) Withdraw from those walking disorderly (2 Thessalonians 3:6) Don't keep company with the disobedient (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15) Depart from iniquity (2 Timothy 2:20-21) Partaking of others' evil deeds (2 John 7-11) Cannot bear them that are evil (Rev. 2:2)

The Word Leaven: The biblical use of this word describes the effect of bad associations. Leaven was forbidden in all offerings to the Lord by fire (Leviticus 2:11; 6:17). Being bred of corruption and spreading through the mass of that in which it is mixed, it symbolized the pervasive character of evil (WE Vine).

One of the ways the kingdom of Heaven is represented is like leaven (Matthew 13:33). This suggests corrupt doctrine. The leaven of the Pharisee and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6, 11). The leaven of moral evil (1 Corinthians 5:6-8) The leaven of doctrinal evil (Galatians 5:9; 2 John 7-11). An Old Testament example of Association defiling is found in Joshua 7:11

Dictionary Definition of Evil: Anything impairing happiness or welfare or depriving of good. Moral badness. Injurious; mischievous, morally corrupt, wicked.

Biblical Usage: Our word for evil is usually translated in the New Testament by three Greek words.

1. **Kakos** – (adj) Whatever is evil in character...In distinction from Ponerous, the second word, which indicates what is evil in influence and effect, malignant. **Kakos** is the wider term and often covers the meaning of ponerous. **Kakos** is antithetical to kalos (fair, advisable, good in character); and also antithetical to agathos (beneficial, useful good in act). Hence, **Kakos** denotes what is useless, incapable, bad. The noun of this word is kakia and means wickedness, depravity, maliciousness.

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

· That which is morally or ethically evil, whether of Persons (Mt. 21:41; 24:48; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 2:2) or Qualities, emotions, passions, deeds (Mk. 7:21; John 18:23, 30; Rom. 1:30).

· That which is injurious, destructive, baneful, pernicious (Lk. 16:25; Acts 16:28; 28:5, Titus 1:12, James 3:8; Rev. 16:2).

2. Ponerous – This denotes evil that causes labor, pain, sorrow, malignant evil. It is used with the meaning of bad or worthless:

· In the physical sense (Mt. 7:17-18)

· In the moral or ethical sense in terms of Persons (Mt. 7:11; Lk. 6:45; Acts 17:5; 2 Thess. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:13) or evil spirits (Mt. 12:45; Lk. 7:21; Acts 19:12, 13, 15, 16), or a generation (Mt. 12:39, 45; 16:4; Lk. 11:19), or things (Mt. 5:11, 6:23, 20:15, Mk. 7:22; Lk. 11:34; Jn. 3:19; Gal. 1:4).

· With the meaning of toilsome or painful (Eph. 5:16; 6:13; Rev. 16:2)

Strong's Concordance brings in the additional thought of ponerous causing labor, annoyance, hardship, peril, pain and trouble. It is of a bad nature or condition that brings physical disease and ethical wickedness.

3. Phaulos – This primarily denotes slight, trivial, blown about by every wind. Meaning common, bad, in the sense of being worthless, paltry or contemptible, belonging to a low order of things. Evil things vs. good things (Jn. 5:29; Rom. 9:11; 2 Cor. 5:10). “He who practices evil (things) hates the light” (Jn. 3:20). “Envy and strife are accompanied by every vile deed” (Jm. 3:16).

Every book in the New Testament except Philemon refers to evil. The following are some examples: Evil speech (Mt. 5:11), Evil age (Mt. 6:23), Evil thoughts (Mt. 9:14), Abhor evil (Rom. 12:9), Abstain from all appearances of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

Dictionary Definition of Defile: To make foul or dirty. To tarnish the brightness of; corrupt the purity of. To befoul, make ceremonially unclean or pollute.

Biblical Usage: This word is translated from at least 4 Greek words. 1. Koinoo – This denotes to make common, hence in a ceremonial sense to render unholy, or unclean. Things from within defile (Mt. 15:11, 18-20). Ceremonially defilement (Acts 21:28). Ceremonially cleansing (Heb. 9:13). What God has cleansed is not defiled (Acts 10:15; 11:9).

2. Miaimo - Primarily to stain, tinge or dye with another color as a staining of a glass, hence to pollute, contaminate, soil or defile. This is used of: Ceremonial defilement (Jn. 18:28). Being made unclean (Lev. 22:5, 8; Num. 9:13, 20). Moral defilement (Titus 1:15-16). A root of bitterness defile many (Heb. 12:15). The lust of uncleanness (2 Pet. 2:10). Pollutions of the world (2 Pet. 2:20). Moral and physical defilement (Jude 8).

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

3. Moluno – This properly denotes besmear, as with mud or filth, to befoul. It is used figuratively of a conscience defiled by sin (1 Cor. 8:7), of believers not defiled (Rev. 3:4) and of those who have kept themselves from fornication and adultery (Rev. 14:4).

The difference between mianino and moluno is that the latter is not used in a ritual or ceremonial sense as miaimo is.

4. Spiloo - to make a stain or spot so to defile. Used of the defiling effects of the tongue (James 3:6) and of moral defilement, spotted, (Jude 23)

5. Phtheiro – To destroy by means of corrupting, bringing a worse state.

- Defiling the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:17)
- The effect of association with those who deny the truth and hold false doctrine (1 Cor. 15:33)
- The danger of corrupt minds (2 Cor. 11:3)
- False teachers corrupt themselves (2 Pet. 2:12)
- Apostates corrupt themselves (Jude 10)
- The harlot corrupted the earth (Rev. 19:2)

I have found that in the course of learning there is a method which has been very useful to a great many. It is this:

Observation. What does this passage say?

Interpretation. What does this passage mean?

Application. How do I apply the meaning of this to my living?

These are most helpful in gaining a right understanding of the scriptures. If we stop here however, it is very possible to come to the wrong conclusion and we may go off the road and fall in one or the other ditch anyway. There is a fourth step which must be considered if we aim to rightly divide the word, and this is the most important step. Many fail to include this in their research and reasoning and trouble is often the result. This last and most important step is called ***Correlation.***

The question must be asked, is this conclusion in harmony with the rest of the scriptures? Here is where the truth is revealed. If it cannot fit with the rest of the word of God it is not correct and we must reassess and modify.

This is where the Holy Spirit can give the most help. It is such a wonderful thing that the Lord sent his Holy Spirit after He ascended into glory. He is not just here, but lives within each of us! PRAISE HIS NAME! It is Gods own Spirit who will interpret His word to us when we approach Him in sincerity desiring to learn His most Holy ways.

Dear reader, I ask you, please consider these thoughts in light of the glory of the person of Christ, our creator, Lord and Savior. The scripture tells us that these are difficult days in which

Some Considerations of the Characteristics of the Christian Walk

we live, and even one definition uses the term savage! You have just read much about not being tied with things that defile. It is needful to understand. However, the real power is when we fix our eyes on Christ and go forth unto him! We are a sanctified people, set apart unto him from this world, set apart for a purpose unto Him for his glory.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9 notice the Thessalonian saints were known to be turning first unto God, *“and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”* The emphasis is that the turning is to him first and from idols as a result of first turning to Him. In Mark 3:14, we see the Lord choosing them that they might be with him. Notice it is His choosing that they might be *with Him*. This desire of our Lord then is our Lords desire for us today. Acts 15:19 we see the Gentiles turning *to* God. Turning first to Him has the effect of leaving all else. The more we seek Him the more we see Him for who he is, the more we love Him, the more we are changed from glory to glory.

Our prayer for you dear reader, is for Holy right and good in your walk as you seek to honor our soon coming Lord and Savior in your walk.

Brian Prigge