



Isolating the Saints

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- By the close of the book of Genesis, God had chosen a small, relatively insignificant people to become a teaching nation.
 - The descendants of Heber at the Tower of Babel
 - Abraham left home to become a nomad herdsman; Lot in Sodom
 - Israelites made to live in Goshen north in Egypt
 - Israelites kept in wilderness, required to drive out all Canaanites
 - Judah required to make no treaties with any other nation
 - Returning exiles required to separate from pagan mates

Isolating the Saints

- Why did God isolate His people in Old Testament times?
 - Rechabites - Cities were where one found alcohol, forced idolatry, droit a signor, increased opportunity and pressure to sin - Jer. 35
 - Neighboring nations rife with idolatry - Judges
 - He wanted a nation to be a living example of His goodness, protection, and providence
 - He wanted to teach His people to depend on Him - Deut. 4:32-39

Isolating the Saints

- But it was a lonely way to live
 - Psalm 38:9-15
- Like all things that God wills, does, and commands, when the conditions change and the purpose ceases to be relevant, He changes His command; He can do this because He is God

Isolating the Saints

- Does God want His people to live in isolation today?
- Some scriptures seem to imply this
 - 2Cor. 6:14 - 7:1

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- But Jesus and His apostles taught that we are not to be isolated
- “In the world, but not of the world” is not found in scripture in that form, but it is there in principle.

Isolating the Saints

- John 17:14-18 - “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

Isolating the Saints

- Matt. 5:13-16 - “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Isolating the Saints

- Phil 2:15 - “That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”
- 1Peter 2:12 - “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

We Need Insulation, Not Isolation

- Difference makers
 - Acts 17:6 - “They dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’”

We Need Insulation, Not Isolation

- Christians who have moved from membership to discipleship
- Who consider their difference as a blessing
 - Matt. 16:24 - “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”
- Who are not impacted by this world because they know the Lord, and they have eternal life
 - John 17:3 - “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

We Need Insulation, Not Isolation

- Paul never admonished Christians to leave Corinth. He gave them the means to defend themselves against temptation and to press forward with the Gospel.
 - 1Cor. 10:13 - “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- A life that manifests contrast
 - 2Cor. 6:14-16 - “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Contrast in our walk - righteousness, purity of life, pleasing to God
 - Phil. 1:27 - “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”
 - Rom. 13:14 - “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Contrast in our wisdom
- A life governed by the word of God has no common ground with a life governed by the flesh.
 - John 3:20 - “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”
 - 1John 1:7 - “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
 - Matt. 5:14 - “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Contrast in our wisdom
- A life governed by the word of God has no common ground with a life governed by the flesh.
 - 1Peter 4:1-4 - “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Contrast in our worship
 - John 4:24 - “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
 - Matt. 15:9 - “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
- The word “concord” in verse 15 connotes harmony. It refers to musicians who play the same piece of music the same way at the same time. We get the word symphony from sumphonesis. There is disharmony between Jesus and everything evil.

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Distinction in fellowship
 - 2Cor. 6:16 - 7:1 - “Therefore Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. 18 I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty. 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Deut. 22:10 - “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together”
- The ox and donkey were two vastly different animals. The ox was clean, the donkey was not. They possessed two different natures. To yoke them together was to invite trouble.
- Walking with the world often results in walking like the world
 - 1Cor. 15:33 - “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- In as much as our relationships with those in the world do not involve sharing in their sins, we may maintain relationships
- Paul didn't change to suit the crowd; he lived to please Jesus
 - 1Cor. 9:19-23 - "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- We maintain steadfast convictions
 - Gal. 2:20 - “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- How did Christ live in the world without being part of the world?
 - Luke 7:34 - “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”
 - Heb. 7:26 - “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens”

We Need Distinction, Not Distance

- Even in this present world, we can shine as lights reflecting the glory of God
 - Phil. 2:15 - “That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”
 - 1Cor. 10:31 - “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”