"SEPARATION FROM A BROTHER"

2 Thessalonians 3:6-7, 13-16
8-12-2026

INTRODUCTION:

The doctrine of Biblical separation is rooted in a passion for holiness.

***What do we do when a Christian brother persists in a sinful lifestyle?**

I. We must be convicted of:
The SERIOUS <u>MATTER</u> of Separation (v. 6)

A. Separation is an <u>important</u> matter (v. 6a)

B. Separation is an <u>impartial</u> matter (v. 6b)

II. We must understand:
The RIGHT <u>REASONS</u> for Separation (v. 6, 14)

A. A disorderly walk (v. 6)

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The RIGHT <u>METHOD</u> of Separation (v. 6, 14a)

A. *"Withdraw yourselves"* (v. 6)

B. *"Note that man. . . have no company"* (v. 14)

IV. We must have:
The RIGHT <u>MOTIVE</u> for Separation (v. 14b)

V. We must practice:
The RIGHT <u>MANNER</u> of Separation (v. 15)

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INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 1:1 - *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."*

When so-called "believers" or "Bible believing churches" do not take a stand on that which is clearly revealed in Scripture, they must first of all be exhorted (in a loving spirit) to repent and come to a Biblical position; and secondly, if reconciliation will not be arrived at, they must be separated from.

What are the clearly revealed issues over which a believer must separate?

1. **Unbelief** (II Cor. 6:14-7:1)

2. **Unrepentant wickedness** (Eph. 5:11 - *"And have no fellowship with the unfaithful works of darkness, but rather reprove them")*

   SEE: I Cor. 5:9, 11

   "Fornicator" (sexually immoral person)
   "Covetous" (a lustful heart for material things)
   "Idolater" (a worshipper of things)
   "Railer" (a foul mouth)
   "Drunkard" (an alcoholic)
   "Extortioner" (a thief)

3. **Divisiveness & offensiveness** (Rom. 16:17 - *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them")*

4. **False doctrine** (Titus 3:10 - *"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject")*

   SEE: I Tim. 6:3-6

   Compare: Gal. 1:9; II Tim. 2:16-19; II Jn. 10; Rev. 2:2, 6, 14-16

5. **Disrespect for the church** (Mt. 18:17 - *"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican")*

6. **Lazy spongers** (the intentionally unemployed) (II Thes. 3:6-16)

Wrong behavior is always the result of wrong beliefs.

"Some members of the assembly had (evidently) mis-interpreted Paul's teachings about the return of Christ, left their jobs, and were living off the generosity of the church. They

were idle while others were working. (They were victims of false teaching -- II Thes. 2:2 -- believing that since the 'Lord was coming soon' they need not work). Misinterpretations and misapplications of the truth of God's Word can cause endless trouble. History records the foolishness of people who set dates, sold their possessions, and sat on mountains waiting for the Lord to return. Any teaching that encourages us to disobey another divine teaching is not Bible teaching" (Wiersbe, p. 165).

The doctrine of Biblical separation is rooted in a passion for holiness.

***What do you do when a Christian brother persists in a sinful lifestyle?**

I. You must be convicted of:
The SERIOUS <u>MATTER</u> of Separation (v. 6)

A. Separation is an <u>important</u> matter (v. 6a)

"Command" - to pass on an authoritative order

"Brothers" - this injunctions applies only to believers. Church discipline is a "family" matter.

The unsaved may tolerate evil doers in their assemblies, but the *"brethren"* cannot!

"They speak *'in the name of'* as the official <u>representatives</u> and with the <u>authority</u> of *'our Lord Jesus Christ'*." (Hiebert, p. 338)

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - This command is not Paul's - it is Christ's! It is on behalf of Christ that Paul commands God's people to practice Biblical separation. To ignore this command is to ignore clear orders from Christ, the Head of the Church.

"Our" - He is personal (personally related)
"Lord" - He is Jehovah God
"Jesus" - He is Savior
"Christ" - He is Messiah

The command "is <u>not</u> a suggestion which is open to debate or modification. . . but is a binding order which they are expected to obey" (Hiebert, p. 338).

"To separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not [only] our liberty, but our duty" (Spurgeon, "The Drift of the Times: Sound the Alarm!")

B. Separation is an <u>impartial</u> matter (v. 6b)

"<u>Every</u> brother" - The word "every" shows that there is to be no exceptions, no partiality, and no favoritism in the matter of biblical separation.

It doesn't matter who they are, what position they hold, how much money

they give or how well-known they are. God's command to separate must be upheld.

II. You must understand: The RIGHT <u>REASONS</u> for Separation (v. 6, 14)

A. A disorderly walk (v. 6)

"Disorderly" - (*ataktos*: *a* = no
tasso = order, arrangement)

This word was a military term denoting not keeping rank;' to be out of one's place; to be out of order and insubordinate (Vine).

God is referring to someone who is "out of line," someone who is not submitting to the rules of Christianity (hence - "unruly" - NASV).
(cp. its use in I Thes. 5:14; II Thes. 3:7)

In the context, the disorderly walk specifically refers to someone (a male believer) who refuses to work for a living (v. 7-12). This lifestyle might not seek too offensive to many today, yet it is to God! Such a command shows the importance of practical every day living in Christianity.

"To walk disorderly is to live in violation of a set code of conduct" (Bruce Compton, Detroit Seminary).

"Walketh" - does not refer to an occasional, temporary step out of line, but a continual, persistent, present, daily misconduct.

When someone goes astray and is confronted in love (following Mt. 18:15-17), yet still remains unrepentant, then the severance is to occur.

Some of these Thessalonians were "addicted to deliberate loafing" (Hiebert, p. 339).

"Not after the tradition" - This phrase further defines what is meant by a "disorderly walk." It is a lifestyle that is inconsistent with the authoritative teachings that were passed down (hence *"traditions"* - cp. 2:15) by Paul, Silas, and Timothy from God.

"Received" - aorist tense indicating a time in the past when such "tradition" was given.

This teaching was no doubt given in the first epistle to Thessalonica (cp. I Thes. 4:11-12), but was also given by the very lifestyle and example of the missionaries (v. 7).

"Ye ought to follow us" - It is necessary for you to mimic or imitate (cp. I Th. 1:6) us.
If your life is not worth imitating, it means you are walking disorderly.

A LIVING SERMON

I'd rather see a sermon
than hear one any day.
I'd rather have you walk with me
than merely point the way.

The eye is a more ready pupil
than ever was the ear;
Good advice is often confusing
but example is always clear.

B. A disobedience to the Word (v. 14)

"Obey" - to listen with a submissiveness. To hear with a heart to heed.

It's not enough to learn the truth, but to live it. If it is not lived, this is the greatest evidence that it was not truly believed.

"This epistle" - The command to separate if this letter is not obeyed shows the authority of this letter. This epistle came via Paul, but it is from God!

One must hear the truth (of God's Word) before he is required to obey the truth. (You can't hold someone accountable for something you never told them).

III. You must follow:
The RIGHT <u>METHOD</u> of Separation (v. 6, 14a)

A. *"Withdraw yourselves"* (v. 6)

"Withdraw" - to <u>draw back</u> or to <u>shrink back</u> from a professing believer who is living in sin.

The word was used of pulling together the sails on ships and gathering them up. It meant to recoil or pull back.

What God is commanding us to do is to not be "buddy-buddy" with an erring brother. It does not mean to sever all ties, but to become somewhat "cold" toward the offender, so as to break off intimate fellowship with him/her.

This "withdrawing" was for the purpose of showing them that their behavior was unacceptable and that it produced a gap between them and the other members.

B. *"Note that man. . . have no company"* (v. 14)

"Any man" - anyone regardless of who they are

"Note" - from *semeion*, a sign. It means to note for one's self (middle voice); to mark out; to take special precautions towards.

What God is saying is this: "Put a tag on that man" (Robertson)

The verb *"note"* "does not imply that the congregation had a blackboard on which it wrote the names of its black sheep" (Lenski, cited by Hiebert, p. 350).

"Have no company with him" - lit. do not mix together with him; do not mingle; do not associate with; do not combine with.

"This probably meant that these believers were not permitted to share in the Lord's supper, and that the church members would not invite them to their homes" etc. (Wiersbe, p. 172-173)

IV. You must have:
The RIGHT MOTIVE for Separation (v. 14b)

"Ashamed" -lit. "to turn in" (*entrepo: en* = in; *trepo* = to turn). That is, to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct (I Cor. 4:14; Titus 2:8). (Vine, p. 77).

The purpose of avoiding the intimate fellowship of a believer is that they will

become ashamed of their ways and turn from their error.

By associating and being close "buddy-buddy" and acting as if nothing is wrong is the worse thing you can do for him/her. Your life is in no way a source of conviction, but rather you are indirectly condoning their practice by default.

The purity of the church body is a motive for practicing Biblical separation (I Cor. 5:6-9).

When problems in people's lives are not solved, they grow and become worse. "A sliver left int he finger can become infected and cause a toxic condition so serious that surgery may become necessary. If you tell your doctor you stepped on a rusty nail, he will immediately give you a tetanus shot, even though the wound may appear insignificant to you. Church problems are like physical problems: If left unsolved, they grow and become worse, and they infect more people. The local church is a Body; and what germs are to the physical body, sin is to the spiritual body." (Wiersbe, p. 163).

"That which is tolerated in moderation in one generation is excused in excess in the next generation."

However, remember that the restoration of the offender is always an ultimate goal when separation must take place.

Yes, the purity of the Body is a motive, but lets never forget that Christ's desire is that the straying believer come back to the truth and back to the church and back to right living!

There is a lot of pressure in "group disapproval."

It can be very helpful if the intent is not malicious, self-righteously critical, or personally hostile.

V. You must practice: The RIGHT MANNER of Separation (v. 15)

One who is forced to separate from a sinning brother does not do so with a proud, holier-than-thou vindictiveness, but with a humble sadness and grief.

"Count" - to consider, to deem, to reckon, to view. Paul is saying, Don't look at him as an enemy.

"Enemy" - This is where many fundamentalists err in the matter of separation. We tend to write off, isolate ourselves from, and verbally blast those brethren with whom we differ.

"Admonish" - (*noutheteo)* - lit. to place in the mind; to confront and correct the thinking of someone.

Wrong behavior is always the result of wrong thinking. You are what you think. As you think, you do.

The heart of every problem is the problem of the heart.

The authoritative source from which we seek to correct the inner man is the inspired, written Word of God (II Tim. 3:16).

God expects us to "*admonish the disorderly"* (I Thes. 5:14).

We must admonish, not neglect or abandon the misguided and failing brother.

The command to *"admonish"* is not limited to the pastor or "clergy." The command is to the *"brethren"* (plural) (v. 6).

Each believer is responsible to admonish other believers to go astray (Rom. 15:14 - *"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."*)

"Church discipline is to the church member what family discipline is to a child: it is an exercise of, and evidence of correcting love when a parent disciplines his child. It is not a judge punishing a criminal; it is a loving father seeking to make his child a better person" (Wiersbe, p. 170).

"As a brother" - How should we treat a brother?

1) With <u>love</u> (*agape* - unselfish love, which demands our time and energy)

2) With <u>respect</u> (we respect them, not the wrong they are doing)

3) With <u>prayer</u>

4) With <u>patience</u> (v. 13)

5) With peace (knowing that we are doing the right thing (v. 16)

6) With humility (Gal. 6:1 - *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted")*

The Courage to Be Separate
By Douglas McLachlan, p. 19-20

b. We must show love and oneness that is observable (Jn. 13:34-35) while at the same time refusing to participate in a brother's mistakes or sins. This can be done in several ways:

1) We should exhibit grief rather than anger when dealing with the mistakes or sins of true Christians.

a) Often we are all too anxious to expose the faults and mistakes of others.

b) Occasionally it is necessary to do this, but we should not be anxious to do it, nor belligerent in doing it.

2) The deeper the wrong in our brother, the greater should be our compassion for him or his group.

a) We have a tendency to reverse this. If the difference is minor, we find it relatively easy to show love; if it is crucial, we can become hotbeds of ugliness.

b) This negative response can be devastating to the testimony of Christ before a watching world.

c) We must never sanction his deed, but we must deal with it from a context of love.

3) We should approach the problem with a desire to solve it, rather than with a desire to win.

a) We live in a competitive culture in which we all develop the desire tow in.

b) This desire to win has been especially characteristic of theologians from time immemorial.

c) Our real desire should be to find a solution to the problem, if at all possible a solution that will achieve three goals:

(1) Give glory to God's name
(2) Be true to the Bible
(3) Exhibit the love of God simultaneously with the holiness of God.