

Idols

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,
And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”-II Corinthians 6:17-18

How often we gloss over this simple crucial command, *Come out from among them*. Many teach evangelism and Christianity, as if we should come alongside of them. This is the tendency of the natural man, or the carnal man. They would say how will I win them if I stand against them? The trouble is the carnal mind is at enmity with [God](#)¹. The saying (in fishing terms) goes, “I just catch’em and let God clean’em”. The problem is whatever means you use to ‘catch’em’ will need to be consistent in order to keep them. It seems to be general logic; a person’s evangelism can go no further than their own view of salvation, their view of salvation can go no further than how close they will come to God and how close they come to God, will depend ultimately on how far removed from the world they are willing to become. It is important that evangelists learn this principle.

Come out from among them, can a person be saved without obedience to this command? What is it being spoken of that we are to leave behind? How can we be in the world but not *of* the world?

To address these questions let us look to the top of this chapter of II Corinthians.

“We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”-II Corinthians 6:1

The fifth chapter spoke of being ambassadors of [Christ](#)², and this is the theme being spoken of here in this first verse. If you were to visit the embassy of any country, you would find things pertaining to the country represented. Furthermore, the laws of that land apply within the embassy and not those of the country they are stationed in. *Workers together with him*, Paul is reminding the believers in Corinth how he witnessed to them, he is exhorting them to do likewise. He strongly urges them to make certain their own calling and election, bringing a charge that they should not receive the grace of God in vain. If this were not a possibility why would Paul have said it? Paul reminded them of all the many things he suffered so that they may be taught the truth of God.

“By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,
By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right

¹ Rm. 8:6-7

² II Co. 5: 20-21

hand and on the left,

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;”

-II Corinthians 6:6-8

This list is very similar to the list given in Galatians 5, the fruits of the [Spirit](#)³. *Pureness*— that is having a genuine desire to make the Lord known to all. *Knowledge*— obviously, anyone who would do this, must have some knowledge of God. *Longsuffering*— the evangelist must be ready to be abused and rejected, for so was Jesus and all the Apostles. *Kindness*— David said let the righteous smite me it will be a [kindness](#)⁴, so rebuke is not out of the question. *By the Holy Ghost*— without God we can do [nothing](#)⁵. *Love unfeigned*— it takes genuine love to win souls, and sadly most professors do not possess this. When preaching the Gospel, it will often cause an uproar. The veil is uncovered, and people see the confusion they are living in, when faced with *the word of truth*. We must have our Gospel armor on as those who have been exposed will attempt to shame the preacher. God will turn the reports (both good and evil) towards his glory, if we will but yield to Him and obey the Gospel.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

-II Corinthians 6:14

So here we have not only the answer to ‘who’ we are to come out from among, but also the ‘how’. What’s more, the first verse tells us clearly why it is important, so as not to receive the grace of God in vain. We should have no unfruitful dealings with unbelievers. We are told not to fellowship with them, but rather we are told to expose their [deeds](#)⁶. We ought to separate with idolaters and call them to worship the true and living God. The same goes for fornicators, thieves and [drunkards](#)⁷, but this chapter is dealing specifically with idolaters.

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”-II Corinthians 6:16

Idols stir the jealousy of [God](#)⁸. As image bearers of God, when we are seen worshipping idols, it is a subtle assassination attempt on the perceived character of God Himself. God has called us as image bearers (and especially we that profess faith in the [Gospel](#)⁹) to holiness, that is separation from this world. So, does this mean we should leave the world entirely to join a monastery or nunnery and live in seclusion? By no means! We are to proclaim the Gospel to the lost and dying world. While doing this we must be separate. The answer is inside of the verse, *touch not the unclean thing*. We are to remain in the world being a light, that is exposing darkness. Remember it is not until we have done this that we

³ [Ga. 5:22-23](#)

⁴ [Ps. 141:5](#)

⁵ [Jn. 14:16-18](#)

⁶ [Ep. 5:11](#)

⁷ [I Co. 6:9-10](#)

⁸ [Ex. 34:14](#)

⁹ [II Ti. 2:19](#)

are received by God. It is God's desire to be as a Father to us, to correct and guide us in the truth. Can God fail? Of course not! Knowing this: isn't it time we turn to Him?

How do we know *what* is an idol?

Considering that very few people these days bow before 'graven images' to worship them, this is a good question. The answer has been touched upon already and so can be given in a nutshell: through preaching and evangelism. As we preach against sin and call people to righteousness the Holy Ghost comes alive in us. He will lead us to all truth, as that is His purpose here on earth. The word 'worship' could be written, worth-ship, as it is a matter of attributing worth to something. What do you find your worth in? If it is in anything other than God Himself you have an idol.

Another consideration when considering idols is the tendency of people to follow what they see others do: monkey see, monkey do. If we understand this to be true ought we not seek to be seen doing good and magnifying God above all other things? We could look at the different idols that people have, the holidays (holy days) that they observe and could likely write a whole volume on this subject by itself. Still it is the writer's intent here to wrap this up shortly and thoroughly in this single concept: let God be magnified! I must decrease that He may increase. Let all things be done for the glory of God!

"Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty."-Psalm 104:1

God is "clothed with honor and majesty". Still it is up to us to make that seen in this wicked world. Evangelism should first of all magnify this fact. When we attempt to make compromise with people in order to "win their soul", we do a grave disservice to the majesty of God. *Come out from among them, touch not the unclean thing.* There is no human being or earthly experience which can surpass that majesty, it is this quality of God which inspires awe. If we get our worth from anything beyond what God has ascribed to us through the cross we do so in vain. If we would spend each day, each moment attempting to show others this majesty this "manner of love that the Father hath bestowed upon [us](#)¹⁰..." our lives would abound in His glory! If we would focus on the mission that He has called us to, this great commission, we will surely be found (as Paul noted of the church in [Thessalonica](#)¹¹) as people who had turned from idols toward the true and living God!

The truth is, the question of 'what is an idol?' can be vague and perhaps this is by design. What we must do is examine our own hearts using God's holy Word to light our [path](#)¹². God clearly promises to show us the way. If we just take steps towards righteousness, He will respond. Idols are like unnecessary band-aids which inhibit a wound from healing. So, when someone pushes a button, and it stirs up contention within you, consider then, could this (whatever it is) be an idol?

Friend, aside from the obvious clear Scriptural idolatry (ancestor [worship](#)¹³, child [sacrifice](#)¹⁴, and [covetousness](#)¹⁵) these things must be worked out by earnest prayer. If there remains any question, is it

¹⁰ [I Jn. 3:1](#)

¹¹ [I Th.1:5-10](#)

¹² [Ps.119:130](#)

¹³ [Ps. 106:28](#)

¹⁴ [Ps. 106:34-40](#)

¹⁵ [Co. 3:5](#)

not wisdom to err on the side of caution? Let your abstinence be a sacrifice unto the Lord! This should be our joy to spend time with Him, as He desires to be our rest. Be encouraged and walk in His light!

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”-I John 1:7

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”-I John 5:21



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