

*“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).*

# Light from the Word

## The Faithful Church: Separated from the World - Part 2



Writings based on God's Word

The Faithful Church: Separated from the World-Part 1 focused on what constitutes worldliness (carnality, ungodliness, being spotted by the world), the misuse of wealth, and the abuse of technology. This article will focus on modesty and relationships. Modesty will include attitudes of the heart (pride/humility), lifestyles/entertainment and appearance.

Modesty is motivated by a love for Christ. It includes good moral behavior, wholesome appearance, appreciation of values, such as: submission, humility, kindness, and a lack of sensuality or desire for power. Modesty is sometimes called “sweet reasonableness”. Modesty and moderation go hand in hand.

We may struggle to put the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) in proper perspective with modesty. However, Jesus had no problem with that. He went to the core of the matter: the attitude of the heart.

*“And he said, that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” Mark 7:20-23*

Jesus didn't distinguish which of those sins were the most serious. Throughout His ministry He seemed to stress the importance of the heart (attitude) of man. We must be careful that we do not take lightly some inappropriate behavior while condemning others. All of them are evil.

Although pride in and of itself may not be worse than the other issues, pride seems to lay the foundation that other heart issues build upon. What is in the heart will be revealed by our actions. Jesus recognized this and helped us understand that if our heart is not separated from the world (pure), our actions cannot be separated from the world. Pride is a feeling of the heart that causes us to be deceived and to think more highly of ourselves than we should. There are many scriptural warnings against pride and many examples where pride caused the downfall of the proud person.

*“The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devises that they have imagined” Ps. 10:2. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” Prov.16:18. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world” 1 John 2:16.*

Among the many examples of those who were overcome by pride are Haman (Esther 6:6) and the Pharisee who was so “thankful” for how good he was (Luke 18:11-12).

Humility is very different from pride and draws us closer to God. Humility demonstrates meekness of spirit and helps us to think neither more nor less of ourselves than God would have us to do. We are God's creation and should not think of ourselves as having no value. (Matt. 16:26). Neither should we lift ourselves above others and think ourselves to be more than we are. Many scriptural references encourage us to strive for humility. *“Better is it to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” Prov. 16:19. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” Matt. 18:4.*

Although there are many examples of humble men in the Bible (David, 1 Samuel 7:18; John the Baptist, Matt. 3:14; the Centurion, Matt. 8:8), there is no greater example of humility than Jesus Christ. He did not strive for physical beauty (Is. 53:2), for popularity (Matt. 8:20), for rank (Matt. 13:55) or for worldly possessions (Matt. 8:20).

The attitude of the heart, whether proud or humble, will impact our life style and how we use our time. It has been said that our checkbook and our personal “calendar” reveal much about our attitude toward God. It is not evil to allow some entertainment in our lives, but we must avoid those things which increase the likelihood that we will fall into activities that Christ said would defile us.

We also need to be careful that we do not fill our schedules to the point where we do not have enough time to devote to God. We should think about how our choice of activities is looked upon by Jesus Christ.

How uncomfortable would we be if Jesus saw how we use our time and resources? We were reminded at the Rockville conference that there are activities that for many years, we have been cautioned to avoid. We were also reminded that these warnings are based on the scripture and we cannot change the scripture. Therefore, we should pay attention to these kind admonitions. When we are tempted to do something that we are advised to avoid, perhaps it would be helpful to ask ourselves if we would do them if Jesus planned to be with us for the day.

If Jesus came to our home for a short stay, what impact would it have on our lifestyle or those things that would occupy our time? Would we take Him where we planned to go or would it be necessary to adjust our schedule? Of course, we realize that He is indeed with us at every moment and sees not only our actions, but also our thoughts (1 Chr. 28:9).

Our outward appearance is often a reflection of what is on the inside. We do not ask our brothers and our sisters to make themselves unattractive or undesirable to be with. We simply need to avoid being sensual or trying to attract inappropriate attention to ourselves. A humble appearance is one of the ways we can separate ourselves from the world and bring glory to God (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

“Relationships” relate to how we interact or are interconnected with other people, and more importantly, with God. With whom do we chose to spend our time? Do we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul and mind? Are we able to keep the commandment that we love our neighbor as our self? (Matt. 22:37-38).

Do we seek relationships with those who encourage us to live more godly lives, or do we choose those who draw us to more worldly behavior? Most of us spend some time with those who may have a faith different from ours. In these circumstances, we must maintain a close walk with God and not be drawn toward the world. (Eph.4:14).

If we are truly successful in separating ourselves from the world, we will be drawn closer to God.