

“How to Associate with the World” *...Insights from Peter & Paul*

1Corinthians 5:9-13

March 31, 2019

1 **Cor 5:9-13** I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Did You Know the Bible Speaks to Our Routine Relationships and 'Associations'?

'associate' (Gk.) = to mix together with, to mingle, to keep company with

...What forms the boundaries and guidelines that influence the people you spend time with and the WAY you spend time with them?

- There are different principles and expectations for these sets of people and for how we relate to them:
 - ***There are different moral expectations and different actions concerning judging and avoiding people.***
 - ***There is judgement in one category that is appropriate, but that same judgment is not appropriate in the other category***

“...verses 9-13 has profound implications for the church’s role in society. Its first responsibility is always to model God’s countercultural standards before a watching world rather than trying to impose those standards on society as a whole. In the Roman empire, Christians had little opportunity to influence the laws of the land. In democracies, believers have both the right and the responsibility as citizens to promote their ideological and ethical convictions

through legal processes. But they have no unique mandate as the church to try to "Christianize" nations," Craig Blomberg, "1Corinthians", NIV App. Comm.

We Are to Be SENT Not SHOCKED—Insights from Paul

Remember the setting of Corinth

*When YAHWEH (the Creator, the God of Abraham, the God who is Father, Son, & Holy Spirit) is **DISPLACED** and some other Personality or Ideas become the **Source of Defining Human Existence** —then there will be **Diverse and Diverging Lifestyles on the Stage of Human Experience!***

- ***In our passage—Paul is NOT SHOCKED by the lifestyle and behavior of the people of Corinth!**—He's shocked that Christians aren't More Transformed by God's Power!*
- *When the meaning and joy and pleasure that come from knowing God by the power of the Holy Spirit who births in us the experiences of 'love, joy, peace, patience...'—when that is Not Present, people will pursue something to fill up that need!! ...NEED!*

We live in a culture, where YAHWEH is Displaced! —Be prepared to encounter and relate to people who Don't Share Your Worldview AND they are Actively Rejecting the Boundaries of Judeo-Christian Morals! ...Our tendency is to AVOID such people as these, but it is THESE To Whom We Are SENT!!

Acts 26:16-18 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

v. 17... "I am sending you to a people..." *What do you think those people are going to be doing, believing, and practicing in their lives, when you arrive?*

...They're going to be living a life that got constructed by Displacing YAHWEH the Creator!

2 Cor 4:3-6 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.



Eph 4:17-20 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

Eph 2:1-9 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the

immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

"Paul's words caution strongly against those forms of separatism that leave the church unable to function as "salt" and "light" in the surrounding world." Craig Blomberg, "1Corinthians", NIV App. Comm.

"We promote all kinds of separatism via Christian alternatives to secular institutions and activities. Thus we can comfortably spend most all of our lives in Christian schools, church meetings, Christian sporting leagues, church-based aerobics; in short, in fellowship groups for virtually any significant human activity, so that we need not interact in any intimate way at all with non-Christians! Indeed, most American adults who convert to Christianity are so overwhelmed with new acquaintances and activities that within a few years they know virtually no non-Christians well enough to engage in any meaningful kind of friendship evangelism." Craig Blomberg, "1Corinthians", NIV App Comm

...We aren't to be SHOCKED into withdrawal to a Safe-Distant Existence—We are SENT to people who have DISPLACED YAHWEH and we know what that's going to produce!

We Are to be SENT not SEDUCED—Insights from Peter

...But let's face it, Not every Christian Can Manage Life Among the Lost—without Harming the Testimony of Christ!... Remember, we are called to explain our hope driven lifestyles!

1 Peter 3:15 in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you

**...The Same Bible that calls us to Associate with Those in Darkness
...also calls us to NOT be Corrupted by those we keep company with—**

1 **Cor 15:33-34** Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”³⁴ Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

1 **Peter 4:3-4** The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you.

“Peter has already identified the Christians as “elect exiles” (1 Peter 1:1), whom he urges “as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11). The entire Christian life is “the time of your exile” (1 Peter 1:17). In other words, we are “strangers [xenoi] and exiles on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13).

The implication of this foreign status of Christians among the cultures of the world is that the new birth (1 Peter 1:3, 23) has given us new desires (1 Peter 1:14; 2:2) that no longer match “what the Gentiles want to do” (1 Peter 4:3). The result is a disruption of whom we literally “run with” (1 Peter 4:4). And this disruption causes our associates to be surprised. That is, they think it strange that we are not running with them into the same “sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry” (1 Peter 4:3).” John Piper, “Winsome Weirdos”

1 **Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

What makes this so relevant today is that American culture is increasingly out of step with the way of life which the Bible calls “how you ought to walk and to please God” (1 Thessalonians 4:1). Proposals about how Christians should respond to this situation include (as a recent [symposium in Christianity Today](#) illustrates) the Benedict Option (Rod

Dreher), the Wilberforce Option (Peter Wehrner and Michael Gerson) and the Dr. King Option (Gabriel Salguero).

It seems to me that all of these options embody aspects of the response to culture that are needed in our day: ongoing engagement, creating alternative communities, readiness to surrender dominance.

What the apostle Peter contributes to this debate, among other things, is this: Baby Boomers (like me) who grew up with an assumed overlap between Christian morality and cultural expectations, and Millennials, who desperately want to be hip and cool, must both joyfully embrace the calling to be weirdos. It is not our culture. And we are not cool.

*And, with just as much resolve and joy, we must set our faces to be winsome. Not by cowering before the slander, or desperately trying to avoid being maligned, but by getting up every morning dreaming of what new good deeds can be done today. What fresh way can I bless my enemies ([1 Peter 3:9](#)) or anyone in need? This may be as simple as a genuine conversation with the woman panhandling at the corner of 11th Avenue and 17th Street. Or it may be creating a ministry as huge as World Vision or Samaritan's Purse or Food for the Hungry." **John Piper**, "Winsome Weirdos"*

Dying on the Hill of Holiness AND the Hill of Evangelism

*"...the two-edged principle of purity within the church and open-ended mixing with outsiders... contains the key to effective Christian witness. Salt and light, the two metaphors used by Jesus to describe the distinctiveness of the church, both assume involvement in corruption and darkness. The example of Jesus also points in the same direction: he was entirely without sin, and yet he was accused of being 'a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' ...the basic reason for so much ineffective evangelization—is that the Christian community is both remote from believers and lax with fellow-believers who persist in sin of one kind or another. In a word, there is no distinctiveness." **David Prior**, "The Message of 1Corinthians", p. 82, TBST*

...Are you convinced of the 7 Hills to Die On?—If so, then you have a tension to manage between the Hill of Holiness and the Hill of Evangelism! ...Each and every one of our lives AND Each and Every Church is

called to BOTH!—We Must figure out ways to Engage the Culture in Ways that Promote Evangelism AND to Disengage from the Culture in Ways that Promote Holiness!

2 Questions for This Life of Tension:

- What will you do when your life of 'isolation' compromises or eliminates your calling to evangelism?
- What will you do when your life of association compromises or destroys your life of holiness/fellowship/discipleship?—when you no longer keep your behavior excellent among the gentiles?