

1Tim 24-03-27b

We're going to pick up our study now looking at the nature of those who are outside and how we can figure out what we're supposed to do. The knee-jerk reaction is either to, especially when they're in the circle of our family or close friends or whatever, and we say, but I can't just not pay attention to them. And so what is scriptural guidance? We want to live our lives to please the Lord, but we also don't want to be harsh when we don't have to be harsh or separate when we don't have to separate.

So what are the standards? How can we know what it is we're supposed to do so that we can represent the Lord Jesus as his body and at the same time be a witness to the truth and a beacon of light so that those who are looking for light can find it and not be caused to stumble because we misunderstood our role and function. And this can be done in two ways. We can love when we should not love, and we can separate when we should not separate.

So either extreme instead of the moderation to which we are called is a hazard. So knowing the word of God helps a lot. Picking up in 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 9 through 12, this is a wonderful piece of additional guidance in terms of what the Bible specifically says we should do with respect to those who are outside.

We started it before the break. Brotherly love, you didn't need anyone to write to you. You already know about that.

You have been taught by God to love one another, and you're showing this love to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. We urge you brothers to increase, excel more and more. You all are doing a great job.

You can do even better. This is the focus. This is the concentration.

If we start spinning out because we hit a slick spot with regard to those who are outside, and we end up spending too much concentration and too much time worrying, we can end up neglecting one another love, which is the primary focus. We should excel more and more. The second highest priority in our lives is loving one another.

This supersedes and surpasses the second great commandment of the Old Testament. Israel, without the Holy Spirit, was to love the Lord their God and love their neighbor. We are to love the Lord our God and love one another as Christ has loved us.

Short of our personal relationship with God itself, this is our focus. This is where we spend our time. This is where we focus our energy and attention prayerfully, wisely, redeeming that time.

1 Thessalonians 4, and beyond one another love, to aspire to live quietly. Oh my goodness. We are not to rabble-rouse.

We are not to organize and demonstrate. We are not to try to change society from within or without. We should not.

I will say this with some knowledge of past events, but people who picket, people who demonstrate, if believers had paid attention to this, you wouldn't still be hearing about January 6, three and a half years later. Aspiring to lead a quiet life means we don't get into social activism. We can be socially sensitive.

We can be socially aware. We can even be personally involved in trying to better the conditions for people who are poor or oppressed, but leading a quiet life is the command. And if we can't do that and lead a quiet life, if we're going to have a vocal and conflict-ridden and confrontational and oppositional form of life, it violates this command.

We aspire to live quietly, to attend to your own matters and to work with your own hands. Our focus is not on society's matters, on the plight of those who are hither and yon and in conflict and in dire straits with other people. And you say, well, but is that un-Christian? Evidently not, because this is what scripture tells Christians to do.

Love one another first and foremost and excel in it more and more. Concentrate on one another. If you want to express charity and take care of those who are bearing a heavy burden, look in the one another realm.

There is plenty of opportunity with the brothers, plenty of opportunity. And aspire to live quietly, to attend to your own matters. Make sure we are walking with integrity, that we owe no man anything, that we are above reproach to those who are outside.

Live quietly, attend to your own matters and to work with your own hands as much as it is possible. With whatever ability God has given us or whatever remains as we get older, we work with our own hands. We do for ourselves.

We provide for ourselves. Looking to the Lord who has cattle on a thousand hills, my God shall supply all your needs. I've never seen the righteous go hungry or his seed begging bread.

And one of the reasons is the righteous works with his hands, leads a quiet life and tends to his own matters. And to the extent that we do not redeem the time and we spend time getting involved in the unfruitful works in contact with darkness, we can't fulfill this command. If you want a verse to frame and put a magnet on the back and stick on the fridge or tape it to the mirror in the morning and look at it again at night, this is it.

We urge you brothers to excel more and more in loving one another and three things, live quietly, tend to your own matters, work with your own hands. As we instructed you, this is review from Paul. This was their instruction when they were present in Thessalonica.

Then verse 12, you will behave properly toward outsiders. Isn't it interesting? Proper behavior toward those who are outside is to tend to your own matters and lead a quiet life, not to meddle, not to proselytize, not to feel like you're a missionary and you've got to cut them down like sheaves and bring them in, bring the wandering ones to Jesus. That's not a song we've ever sung at Grace and Truth.

Bring them in, bring them in, bring the wandering ones to Jesus. We have a hard enough time not being wandering ones ourselves. God's light and God's spirit will bring them in and we should be ready if someone asks us a reason for our hope, we can speak the truth in love, but we don't go bring them in because to bring them in you've got to cut them down, bringing in the sheaves.

What happens to the sheaves before you bring them in? You've got to chop them down, chop them down to size, get out that sickle, swing the shining sickle, cut the ripened grain, gather in the corn ears gleaming everywhere, et cetera. If you want to behave properly toward those who are outside, read the preceding verses. This is the key.

You need look no further than 1 Thessalonians 4, 9 through 11, then you will behave properly toward outsiders and you will not be dependent on anyone. One of the reasons we get entangled and get tripped up and are ensnared and defiled and corrupted is we have a dependency on a relationship. We can't do without it.

We feel that we need that contact. And this is not just dependency in terms of finances, working your job so that you can pay your bills and buy your groceries and not be dependent. We depend on the Lord and we depend on one another.

We do not depend on those who are outside. If we are dependent on outsiders, we need to get out of that situation. It's straight from the word of God.

No ifs, ands, buts, no conditions, no exceptions. Live quietly, tend to your own matters, work with your own hands, behave properly toward outsiders without being dependent on anyone. We look to the Lord to supply our needs for guidance, for comfort, for fellowship, for those relationships that are edifying and building up for the exercise of our spiritual gift and the receiving of blessings from other people's spiritual gift.

That doesn't mean in the neighborhood and it doesn't happen in the outside. It happens in the brotherhood. And this will result in 1 Timothy 3.7 having a good report of those who are outside.

If we tend to our own knitting, if we mind our own business, work with our hands, we're not dependent. We're not asking society for a handout, not asking for a tax exemption, not asking for special treatment, not asking for anything. I personally don't think that it is right for there to be exemptions from taxation for Christian ministries, Christian organizations from the government.

I may be getting a frown or two on that, but what does the word of God say? Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Jesus looked for extraordinary provision to pay the tax for himself and Simon Peter. And you start getting entangled with the church versus the state when the state grants.

If they're going to give a tax exemption to Christian organizations, well, are you going to tax exempt the Muslims, the Buddhists, the Confucianists, the Satan worshipers, anybody that has a faith system, maybe of their own invention. You remember Seals and Crofts was a group that sang songs back in the 70s and they invented their own religion. Well, you're going to grant a tax exemption.

How are you going to vet what is and is not a religion? I think the government ought to be blind. If somebody's got a church property, then they ought to pay tax on it. If anything that functions as a corporation of some kind and they are incorporated, they ought to pay taxes like everybody else.

And there's a lot of hard feeling at tax exemptions for churches and Christian ministries that obfuscates the gospel and interferes with the light shining. And well, are you in it for the money? You're a good person so you get a tax exemption because you've got a church or you go to a church. I see no warrant for demanding or accepting from the government special treatment because you're a church.

That's my personal opinion. That's my understanding from scripture. You should have a good report from those who are outside.

Should we not pay as much income tax because we're Christians? What's the difference in an individual exemption and a corporate exemption? I think it leads to confusion and distraction. We've seen those who are outside and those who are inside, mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5, 12 and 13. And it begins really 1 Corinthians 5, 11.

I am writing to you not to associate. Now I have this printed out with highlighting in my notes. 1 Corinthians 5, 11.

With whom should we not associate? I'm not going to eat, not going to greet, not going to meet as we saw in 2 John. Who qualifies for this really tight enforcement of no contact that we separate outright? Who is in this category? It's not just anybody who's an outsider, nor is it not ever applied to a brother or a neighbor. Who is it from whom we are commanded to separate entirely and completely? Well, look no further than 1 Corinthians 5, 11.

Paul says, I am writing to you. You remember 1 Corinthians, there were divisions and dissensions in the church. I am of Paul, I'm of Apollos.

I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother, claims to be a one another, claims to be in the innermost circle of intimate fellowship, but is, and

here's a list. Number one, sexually immoral. One another's are not one another's if they are practicing sexual immorality.

What is sexual immorality? Living with someone and sleeping with someone to whom you are not married. Fornication, adultery, go down your list. Sexual immorality is a deal breaker with this condition, claiming to be a brother, claims to be a brother.

Now, what about somebody who's in the family or extended family and they'd have no standards. They got no spiritual life. We don't even know they're saved or not.

They're shackled up with somebody. Notice the specific conditions. This is why you've got to look at God's promises and note the conditions.

Conditions matter. Conditions make a difference. I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother.

I've got extended family. They're in all kinds of strange situations, but they don't claim to be a brother. They make no pretense that this is okay in the eyes of the Lord, and this should be tolerated and encouraged and smiled upon by fellow believers.

They don't make that claim. They don't claim to be a brother. They make no pretense that this is a part of a healthy Christian life.

Do you see the difference? This is a threat to the definition of faithful Christianity, faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ, when someone has sexual immorality as a practice in their lives, but they claim to be a God-fearing, Bible-thumping, narrow road-walking believer. So pay attention here. Verse 11, 1 Corinthians 5, don't associate with anyone who claims to be a brother but is sexually immoral.

Number one. Number two, greedy, grasping after money. You got some people on TV that are greedy and are using Christianity to Hoover money out of people's pockets and into their bank accounts and into their lifestyles.

I would not give the time of day. I would never sit down at a meal. I wouldn't say hi.

I wouldn't attend an event. I wouldn't buy a book. I wouldn't tolerate a recording of any of these people in my home.

They are persona non grata, get thee behind me, Satan people, because they are greedy and they claim to be a brother, claim to represent Christianity. They are part of the public face of Jesus Christ to the world and they're greedy and or sexually immoral. No countenancing of that whatsoever.

Don't greet, don't meet, don't eat, have nothing to do with. Those are unfruitful works of darkness coming from someone who claims to be right in the middle of faithful Christianity. That's the condition.

Number three, an idolater. They came to claim to be a brother, but they are compromised because they are also worshiping something else. And this doesn't have to be one of the Greek or Roman gods or goddesses.

Covetousness is idolatry. There's all kinds of things you can covet. You can covet material possessions.

You can covet power. You can covet influence. You can covet impact.

I want to be impactful. I want to impact others. I want to be known for making a difference.

I want to be seen as a mentor or a figure of note as somebody who made a difference in someone else's life. Once again, what are you doing? You're stopping attention and glory short at oneself instead of passing it through to God. God is the agent of change.

It's God's power. It's God's spirit. It's God's word that releases you from addiction, that sets you free, that gives light and peace and comfort in your life.

Not me. Don't talk about me. You can talk about what the Lord has done in your life.

Don't talk about what Sam has done in your life or fill in your name here. Right? An idolater or a verbal abuser. What about people that claim to be a brother but they are excessively political and they are lambasting one side and glorifying another or they are verbally abusive to people in the church.

They're gossiping. They're maligning. They're judging.

They are talking behind people's back. You know, loose lips sink ships. The tongue is a fire and it's set on fire by hell itself, according to James.

If you can bridle your tongue, you get your whole body in subjection. Somebody who's got an untamed tongue, claiming to be a brother, no fellowship, no contact, cut them off, kick them out, no tolerance, zero tolerance. A drunkard indulging in alcohol or chemicals of any kind to excess.

It's one thing to have a medication that fixes something that's wrong. It is something else to depend on something as one does with wine. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

A drunkard is alcohol to excess or any other palliative. Doesn't even have to be a substance. You can find a palliative if you're a news junkie or if you're an entertainment junkie or you're a I've got to be with people junkie or I've got to indulge this hobby.

I am so indulged in fishing or in growing petunias or fill in the blank here. It just consumes me and defines me. When somebody is a drunkard, what's the first thought

when somebody thinks of them? Oh, a drunk.

She's a drunk. He's a drunk. It's the first thing you think of, right? If the first thing somebody thinks of when they think of a believer is not their belief and the Lord Jesus and how much he is central in their life.

If it's something else, oh, he's a biker. He's a this or a that. She's a this or she's a that.

Now there's people that can take the Marine Corps to an extreme and just, you know, if it wasn't for the Marine Corps, they would have no identity at all. I love the Marine Corps, especially the one that I was in and the one my dad was in. When my brother was in, I don't know much about the one that exists now.

It seems to have changed, but I love many things about the Marine Corps, but I am not defined by it. I can leave the house without a Marine Corps cap or a Marine Corps shirt, or, you know, I can identify as a Marine, but it does not define me. It's not without that.

I am nothing. That's a drunkard or a swindler using the close contact and the intimate knowledge and the inside track to cause harm, to debase, to defraud, to delude, to deceive those who worm their way into households and lead astray women who aren't paying attention, as Paul talks about Timothy. Remember that? We'll get to there eventually in our Timothy study.

A swindler, a cheat, someone who uses their access in a unholy, unhappy, and unhealthy manner. With such men, do not even eat. Don't sit down to table with them.

Don't meet him for coffee. Don't give him the time of day. Claiming to be a brother.

This leads with and is conditioned on claiming to be a brother. People can have all kinds of things in their past and in their present, and we don't have to leave the world. We don't have to be holier than thou.

And ooh, I heard that there's some sin in your life or some pattern. So sorry, I can't talk to you. This is not that at all.

This is not personal defense here. This is fellowship defense. Because if you tolerate this, you inevitably introduce it into the fellowship where others, especially weaker believers can be harmed.

This is fellowship defense. Claiming to be a brother. Don't let them in.

Don't be the guard that lets the enemy through the gate because you were wrongheaded. Everybody rotates on guard duty. And don't be the guard that lets somebody in that shouldn't be in because everybody gets hurt.

You see the difference. Claims to be a brother. Circle it.

Underline it. Highlight it. This is the criteria for this kind of separation.

With such, don't even eat. Flip back over to 2 John. We looked at that a couple weeks ago.

We love one another. Verse 5. It's not a new commandment. We've had it from the beginning.

The beginning of the church. The beginning of the new way in Jesus Christ. Love one another.

This is love that we walk according to his commandments. When we saw that, we went to Jesus himself saying, the one who guards my words and keeps them. He's the one that loves me.

I and my father will come and make our home. We walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment that you've heard from the beginning that you should walk in it.

The walk is to love one another. Paul says the very same thing. Look at verse 7. Many deceivers have gone out in the world who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.

Their understanding of the Lord Jesus, their understanding of his first incarnation and his incarnation in us is not correct. We are now Jesus in the flesh. That's our job.

To the extent that we can recover that image of God that he is. Remember the difference between the first and last Adam. Adam was created in the image and after the likeness.

In and after. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation.

And he dwells in us and we are renewed in the image of the creator to the extent that we have and keep his commands. That's image. That's sonship.

They do not confess Jesus coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Not properly representing Jesus Christ.

Look to yourselves that we or you, you can take it either way, do not lose those things we worked for, but that we receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. And I would say that includes image of God.

If you do not abide in the doctrine, in the truth, in the instruction, in the teaching, if you do not have Christ's words and keep them, you do not love him. And you do not have God in any practical sense. Some abstraction that we're sentient as God is sentient, or

we can make decisions the way God does, or even we can exercise dominion as God does is meaningless in terms of application.

Well, you know, these entirely evil gangbanger, evil perpetrators, gun runners, fentanyl dealers, human slavery traffickers down at the border, each one of those guys has the image of God. And so I should try to do something good for them. It's just nonsense.

It's nowhere in the word of God that said that because there's some abstraction called the image of God, we should treat people differently. Scripture is explicit. We look at people not as that everybody's got the image, but are they one another? Are they a neighbor? Are they outside? Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.

He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. This is a direct reflection of what John learned in the Upper Room from Jesus Christ Himself. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, they come to you and they don't bring this doctrine.

When it says they come to you, they're trying to enter the inner circle fellowship. They are claiming to be a brother. Do not receive him into your house.

Do not greet him. He who greets him shares in his evil deeds. This is corruption of the fellowship.

This is destruction of that security of that reciprocal love and common understanding. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. They are violating that.

They are intruding. They are getting past the immune system and infecting the body. And it's our fault.

Can't do it. So don't receive, don't greet. Paul says, don't eat.

John says, don't greet, don't receive. Don't let them into that inner circle. Claiming to be a brother is clearly in this context.

God will judge those who are outside. Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 5, 13, expel the wicked man from among you, among you, the fellowship, the one another circle, the protected reciprocal love domain, expel the wicked man. We talked about the principle of purging evil from among you as it was expressed in Deuteronomy.

And I just gave you quick Deuteronomy references. I'm going to quickly cover the conditions that are in each of those passages. I gave you Deuteronomy 13, 5, purge the evil from among you.

This is a prophet or dreamer who must be put to death in the context because he has

advocated rebellion against the Lord, your God. He's not just saying, I think the climate is going to change. He's not just prophesying some random thing.

He is advocating rebellion against God. He has tried to turn you from the way in which the Lord, your God, has commanded you to walk. Sound like 2 John? Trying to preach a different Christ, a different doctrine? Doesn't bring the solid doctrine, the words of Christ, the teaching of Jesus Christ, perverting it, adding to it? It's like the end of Revelation.

You can pervert it by taking away from it or from adding to it. He's tried to turn you from the way in which the Lord, your God, has commanded you to walk. You must purge that evil from your midst.

Deuteronomy 17, 7 is one I gave you. If you go back up to verse 2 of that chapter, 17, 2, man or woman among you in one of the towns the Lord, your God, gives you is found doing evil in the sight of the Lord, your God, by transgressing His covenant and going to worship other gods. Worship other gods.

What is this? What is the worship of other gods? It doesn't have to be Ashdod or Baal or Molech. Other gods, this can be in the service of political ends, it can be in the service of social justice, it can be in the service of personal goals. Having no other gods before me as God commands in the very first commandment is any priority that guides our life and alters our goals and values and priorities away from what they should be in the light of scripture.

Worshipping other gods, bowing down to them, could be the sun, the moon, any of the hosts of heaven, which I have forbidden. If it is reported and you hear about it, you must investigate it thoroughly. This is where you get the whole testimony of two or three witnesses idea.

If the report is true and such an abomination has happened in Israel, notice this is in Israel, this is in the circle of belief. Abomination happened in Israel, you must bring out to your gates the man or woman who has done this evil thing and you must stone that person to death. On the testimony of two or three witnesses, a man shall be put to death.

He shall not be executed on the testimony of a lone witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first in putting him to death. They have to take some responsibility for bringing this witness.

They've got to cast the first stone. Remember the pericope of the woman caught in adultery. It's hard to know if it's inspired or not, but Jesus says, let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

The law said an eyewitness casts the first stone for an idolater, worshiping other gods. The hands of the witnesses are first. After that, the hands of all the people, you must

purge the evil from among you, corrupting the faith.

Do you see it? Idolatry, worship of other gods, corrupting faith in the God of Israel. Deuteronomy 17.12 is one I gave you. You go back up to verse eight.

If a case is too difficult for you to judge, there's a controversy in your gates regarding bloodshed, lawsuits, assaults. Go to the place of the Lord, your God that he will choose. Go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who presides at that time.

Inquire of them and they will give you a verdict in the case. Doesn't say good priest, bad priest, good judge, bad judge. You take it to the judge that presides in the place that God has appointed.

You must abide by the verdict they give you at the place the Lord will choose. You must abide by the verdict. You can't appeal it.

You can't say, but he's a bad priest. He's an evil judge. If you take the case to the priest or judge and they render a verdict, you are required to abide by it.

No ifs, ands, or buts. Why is that? Remember dominion. Remember the ordained authorities.

Obey those who have the rule over you. Fear God, honor the King, render to Caesar and so on. That is God's ordained system and you obey not because the person is good, but because God has ordained the structure and has appointed those authorities and they rule at God's behest.

If it's a bad verdict, you got to look to the Lord for redress. You can't appeal this verdict. You can't contest it.

You must abide by it. Be careful to do everything they instruct you according to the terms of law they give and the verdict they proclaim. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left from the decision they declare to you.

It could not be more emphatic. The man who acts presumptuously, refusing to listen to the priest who stands there to serve the Lord your God or to the judge, if he refuses to listen and acts presumptuously, he must be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel.

Then all the people will hear and be afraid and will no longer behave arrogantly. Submission to divinely appointed authority upon pain of death in Israel. As goes Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the individual believer in the New.

Deuteronomy 21.21 I gave you. Go back up to verse 18. If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother, does not listen to them when disciplined, father and mother lay hold of him, bring him to the elders of the city, the

gate of the hometown, say to the elders, this son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, does not obey, he's a glutton and a drunkard.

Once again, rebellion against divinely constituted parental authority in this case, rather than priestly and judge authority. This parental authority. Bring him before the men of the city and they will stone him to death.

You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear and be afraid. Modern society has done studies and says they don't think that capital punishment has a preventative influence, that it doesn't, what's the word I'm looking for? Not suppress, but yeah, deterrent.

That there's no deterrent effect in capital punishment. The Bible says there is. Repeatedly.

Deterrent effect. Thank you. I needed that word.

All Israel will hear and be afraid. By the way, Deuteronomy 22 five, for those who want to be tolerant and indulgent and try to love everybody and not hurt anyone's feelings. A woman must not wear men's clothing and a man must not wear women's clothing for whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord your God.

It doesn't go to motive or, well, I thought I was trapped in a body. I was born different. A woman that wears men's clothing or a man who wears women's clothing is detestable in the sight of the Lord.

That doesn't change with Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit. A woman who practices promiscuity in her father's house in Deuteronomy 22, 21, shall be brought to the door of her father's house and the men of her city will stone her to death. You must purge the evil from among you.

Immorality under her father's roof, promiscuity, engaging in relations with someone to whom she is not married. There is no covenant. There is no transfer of responsibility.

She's trying to have her cake and eat it too. She wants to have fun with a guy, but she wants her father's provision is the initial principle there. Promiscuous in her father's house, purge the evil from among you.

It is a death penalty offense. You can look at Judges 19 and 20, the Gibeonites and the man who had his wife slash concubine came to Gibeon to spend the night. The men of Gibeon rose up and surrounded the house, tried to kill the man, abused the concubine.

She died. He takes her and cuts her in 12 pieces centered throughout the land of Israel's inheritance because they had, here's my emphasis, committed a lewd and disgraceful act in Israel, lewd and disgraceful in Israel. And you go down to verse 13, that's verses

four through six.

And verse 13 says, hand over the wicked men of Gibeon so we can put them to death and purge Israel of this evil. Of course, the Benjamites refuse. So there are clear pieces of guidance with conditions, conditions.

And there are reasons that are inherent in this complete and total separation from immorality and idolatry. And the other things that Paul mentions is for protection of the fellowship and the reputation of the fellowship toward those who are outside. We are to be shining a positive light and reflecting God's standards and God's righteousness within and without.

Good reputation with those who are outside and purity within. And when it threatens the fellowship, it's a problem. There are other scriptural criteria for how we deal with those who are outside.

And we'll continue that study a week from today, next Wednesday. This Sunday, we're going to have the second part of our two-part Resurrection Sunday special. And you won't want to miss it.

I learned things I did not know. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we're grateful for your fatherly care for us, the guidance and instruction that you give us just as the father in Proverbs gives instruction and elements of wisdom to his son.

We pray that as your children, we can be responsive, that we will thrive under the discipline we receive and the guidance that we are given and that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in his name. Amen.