



“Should you help the ungodly, and love them that hate Yahweh? Therefore wrath is upon you from before Yahweh.” – 2 Chron. 19:2

“FRIENDS OF THE WORLD”

ASSOCIATIONS

33. *Be not deceived: bad associations corrupt good character.*
34. *Sober up to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.*
1 Cor. 15:33
6. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not according to the tradition which you received of us.*
2 Thess. 3:6
16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and pure (unadulterated) as doves.*
17. *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;*
Mtt 10:16-17
17. *Wherefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and cling not to the unclean; and I will receive you.*
2 Cor 6:17

“UNCLEAN” - “UNGODLY”

Clearly Scripture teaches us to avoid personal associations with the unclean/ungodly. This is a stated prerequisite to being “received” into God’s fold. If godliness (being received by God) puts us in tune with God’s creation (reality), then one might say avoiding ungodly associations is necessary to spiritual health and a sound mind.

4. *You adulteresses, know you not that friendship of the*

world is hostility toward God? whoever therefore chooses to be a friend of the world (man’s system) is made an enemy of God.

James 4:4

Friends of the world are “enemies of God”? Surely this isn’t talking about us or our friends, is it? Whoever these unfavorable wretches might be, they must stand out like sore thumbs. Right? Something about them must be noticeably repugnant to us. We could never feel comfortable with these types could we?

Well, seeing the black hats (God’s enemies) is made more difficult if one’s vision is impaired. In modern vernacular this is called being “desensitized” (i.e., losing ability to detect things due to over exposure to them). Scripture sometimes calls this having your heart “*hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*”

For example, it is a recognized fact that large numbers of psychopaths and sociopaths live among us without being detected. No Christian wants to associate with psychopaths and sociopaths. Yet, most people are probably personally acquainted with a number of psychopaths or sociopaths ... and odds are they would have a hard time identifying them. Psychopaths tend to appear normal to most people.

Scripture tells us to “test the spirits” (the motives) of people (1 Jn 4:1) to see if they are “of God.” Loss of this skill leads to inability to spot psychopaths.

But, hey ... questioning the spirit (motives) of acquaintances today is not socially acceptable. If you practice or exercise what these scriptures instruct you, people will think you are unfriendly. Don’t want that, do you?

Nonetheless, “friends of the world” who are “enemies of God” are out there. How will you deal with them? Can you in good conscience think of them as your friends knowing they are “enemies of God”?

This problem is big for us since we reside inside a Babylonish society with Babylonians all around us. These Babylonians are obviously “friends of the world” which makes them, by definition, “enemies of God.”

So you may be wondering, "Is Ben Williams trying to tell me that my friends are not really my friends? Is he saying they are my enemies?"

Well, here's a fact. What I say means little. What Scripture says means a lot. Therefore, let us stick to what Scripture says.

Here's some insight into James' statement. He was addressing Israelites (see Jms 1:1). Then in Jms 4:4 he calls them "adulteresses." Why does he do that? Do you think he was addressing wives who were cheating on their husbands? (The KJV added the word "adulterers." But the earlier and best Greek texts don't have it because it wasn't in the original. It is a scribal insertion).

James was addressing Israelites who were "adulteresses." The insinuation had a singular purpose. The folks he was addressing (both male and female) were, by virtue of the New Covenant, officially married to Jesus. They were part of the body of people designated "the bride of Christ." Now, if they were cozying up to the philosophies of "friends of the world" it meant they were flirting with other husbands and being unfaithful to their real Husband (Jesus). Jesus, like his Father, is a jealous husband ... as any husband who loves his wife should be.

10. For the land is full of committing adultery ...

14. I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

Jer 23:10 & 14

This judgment from God, as expressed through Jeremiah, was against people claiming Yahweh as their Husband while learning the ways of other lords (i.e., other "husbands"). In Biblical terms, they were committing adultery.

This was precisely what James was accusing the Israelites in his day of doing. They were dishonoring Christ (their claimed Husband) by becoming friendly with other "husbands" (i.e., other systems/lords). James admonishes them to "*Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded*" (Jms 4:8). It is double mindedness to think you can buddy-up to Christ's enemies but still remain loyal to Christ.

From the beginning, God expected those whom He called to Himself to remain "holy" (i.e., separate) ... not join and lust after the philosophies of the heathen. God has used the term "marriage" to describe the covenantal relationship between Him and his people. No husband wants a wife who is more friendly with other husbands than with her own.

James pulls no punches. He says it straight out.

THE GREATEST DECEPTION

The serpentine deception that turned Adam against God is described in Gen. 3:1 as "most subtle" (i.e., clever, enticing, compelling). This underestimated doctrine is the

most basic, most insidious doctrine of all anti-God philosophies. It deserves great consideration for the very reason that it is indeed "subtle" and therefore generally overlooked. It is precisely this: that man is equal to God (Gen 3:1-7). It is the one idea, above all others, that appeals to man's sin nature to turn him to become a "friend of the world" and thus "an enemy of God."

This subtle doctrine is taught in hundreds of ways in the schools and propaganda sources all around us every day of our lives.

The "serpent" in Genesis was described as traveling on his belly. This symbolized the nature of man's natural tendency to follow his "belly" ... meaning to follow his own lusts of the flesh. Thus Adam was sold on the idea that his "belly" (i.e., his lusts and wants) were more viable than God's commands. Understand ... Adam's sin was the rejection of God ... not merely the choosing of a wrong fruit.

Thus, we now understand the accusation made by James. He was accusing certain Israelites of his day of following their own bellies and disrespecting Christ.

"Friends of the world" are those who adopt this doctrine and become comfortable with it. By associating with "friends of the world" one is repeating Adam's sin. Learning to accept and become comfortable with the ways of the world amounts to treason against Christ who tells us to be SEPARATE from the world.

Jude warns of this too, pointing out that worldly thinking can slip in among us unnoticed:

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, ... ungodly men, changing the grace of our God into insolence, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. For these blaspheme things which they have not seen: moreover, they corrupt themselves in that which they know by nature, as conscienceless animals.

17. But, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18. How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts (i.e., their bellies).

These are the "friends of the world" who don't take God seriously. People like this abuse the liberty God grants them. Because God gives us freedom to choose to love Him or to love the world, foolish people perceive this as lack of concern on God's part. They tell themselves that God is not at odds with the Beast System. Since God doesn't send lightning bolts upon them, they assume He is distant or uncaring. So they opt to "do their own thing." This is precisely the thing that got Adam into trouble and turned him into a friend of the world.

Peter addresses this subtle doctrine comparing it with the infection of Sodom and Gomorrah:

7. And (God) delivered just Lot, who was vexed with the immoral conduct of the unrestrained:

8. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)
9. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to keep the unjust into a day of judgment being punished:
10. And especially them that walk after the flesh (bellies) in the lust of defilement and scorning lordship (Jesus as Lord). Presumptuous are they, selfwilled; they are not afraid of blaspheming honorable ones.
12. But these, as conscienceless natural animals...
13. Receiving punishment (like Adam) as the wage of injustice, taking pleasure in indulgence in the day time...
19. While they promise liberty (the serpent's lie), they themselves are slaves of corruption...
22. To them has happened the true proverb, A dog returning to his own vomit; and a sow washing then returning to her wallowing in mire.

2 Pet 2:7-22

The depravation of Sodom and Gomorrah began with the serpent's teaching that God is unconcerned. It then grows to greater deception and finally normalized depravity.

"Evil is a horrible thing seen too often face to face. First it is hated, then pitied, and then embraced."

God insists we must not become friends of the world. He commands that false prophets be put to death.

5. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he has spoken to turn you away from Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to draw you out from the way which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk in. So shall you put the evil away from the midst of you.

Deut 13:5

But how do people today react to false prophets? They see them as entertainment. Fun to listen to. Possibly inspiring. They are not punished nor even reviled. They are held up as evidence of America's greatness. False prophets are welcomed in America. They flourish by merchandizing the friends of the world out there.

This is a spiritual infection. It spreads like a virus from person to person. The growing refusal to abhor evil, and to not be offended when people belittle God, is an attitude that is devastating American culture. Our young are growing up bathed in lies and believing in nothing. They have no anchor; no moral compass. They have no way to know truth because their belief in God is gone.

They are tolerant of serpents ... because college professors have convinced them that serpents are harmless. This thinking has become conventional. I'm OK, you're OK

is the title of a popular book published a few years ago. It teaches that it is wrong to judge or discriminate.

Standards are seen as flexible and should not be taken seriously ... with one exception. Namely the standard of acquiring of wealth. Wealth equals righteousness. The rightness of acquiring wealth is the one unchangeable ethic that endures throughout time. Getting wealth is equated with "right." Losing wealth is equated with "evil." Aside from that, all standards are subject to change.

Scripture calls it "greed" and "avarice." It means worshipping riches. It is the inability to be thankful. People with this character flaw do not value the gifts of God. They are dogs and swine whose god is their bellies. Jesus tells us these are the people who will stab us in the back:

6. Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Mtt 7:6

18. ... they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19. Whose resultant condition is ruination, whose God is their belly, and their glory is in their shameful deeds, minding earthly things.

Php 3:18-19

Dogs and swine have no appreciation for "pearls" (heavenly values). This mind set has no appreciation for God's gifts. These are the "ungodly" and "corrupt."

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE

So ... a huge problem exists here. It is a spiritual infection turning people into "dogs and swine" so that they are blind to spiritual values, and do not abhor evil. When people lose their respect (fear) of God, He cuts them loose. When people quit honoring their Husband (Jesus), He lets them go. That means they are on their own, which is a death sentence (spiritually speaking). Jesus explains:

5. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.

6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered...

Jn 15:5-6

1. The transgression of the wicked says: Within my heart there is no fear of God's judgment.

2. For he exalts himself in his own eyes, that he has discovered the wrong and rejects it.

4. He devises mischief upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he abhors not evil.

Ps. 36:1-4

Here we see the description of the "wicked" whose god

is their belly. They convince themselves that they need nothing from God. A former acquaintance of mine, of about 40 years ago, once arrogantly told me *"God and I have an agreement. I leave him alone and he leaves me alone."* I can hardly imagine a more stupid statement. Wanting God to leave you alone is like saying you don't need air to breathe. Separation from God equals spiritual death.

These are they who "fear not God" and "abhor not evil." One reason they don't abhor evil is because they've lost the ability to recognize evil. Nor can they see righteousness.

My impression is that most people today do not abhor evil. They live with it and become adjusted to it and desensitized to it. The lack of the fear of God has sickened and blinded them so they have become one of the crowd. Yet, they do not consider themselves ungodly. Self-deception is their defense mechanism.

17. *Now I exhort you, brethren, make note of them who cause divisions and entrapments (enticements to draw you) contrary to the teaching which you have learned; and avoid them.*

18. *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly (lusts/urges); and by good words and flattery deceive the hearts of the innocent.*

19. *... I would have you wise to that which is good, and pure (unadulterated) concerning evil.*

Rom 16:17-19

1. *Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.*

4. *The ungodly are ... like the chaff which the wind drives away.*

Ps 1:1& 4

Living in Babylon is one thing. Getting comfortable and friendly with Babylon is quite another thing.

ABRAHAM AND JESUS

8. *By faith Abraham, being called to go out ... obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.*

9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

10. *For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (New Jerusalem).*

Heb 11:8-10

23. *And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

Jms 2:23

Abraham was a "friend of God" and believed in God with all his heart. He understood the benefits of God's "pearls" even though he lived as a stranger dwelling in foreign lands ... lands controlled by enemies of God (friends of the world).

In this, we today are in a similar situation as was Abraham. Jesus, too, fully obeyed his Father as He dwelt in lands that were controlled by God's enemies, and among people who were friends of the world. Thus, using Abraham and Jesus as models, we can reason how we ought to think and how we ought to live among the friends of the world.

Like Abraham and Jesus we are strangers in enemy territories. Neither Abraham nor Jesus opted to participate in affairs of the state or politics or religions. They didn't try to befriend or convert God's enemies. They kept aloof from them and tended to their own affairs. But when forced to deal with God's enemies – as when Jesus was brought before Jewish and Roman courts – they spoke very little and expected no justice there.

Jesus communicated freely with his disciples. But He usually remained quiet in public, leaving them to think whatever they wanted. He did this, not because He wished them to remain ignorant, but because He knew they would reject his help. He said they had hardened their hearts and would not be converted and healed (Mtt 13:15). He sent out his apostles to call his sheep, not his enemies. They were sent to speak to those who were listening for God. He told his disciples that when people refused to hear, they should shake the dust of that city from their shoes and move on to find those who would listen (Mtt 10:14). They weren't converting goats into sheep. They were finding lost sheep.

Befriending the world causes people to become blind to God. I can imagine a Roman citizen walking past where Jesus was being murdered, and saying, *"Too bad some people insist on being so difficult and radical that they end up this way. It isn't necessary. Why can't they just learn to get along with everyone?"* I hear this kind of response from church people today who misquote Romans 13:1-2. They've picked their side. It's the wrong side, but it's the only side they can see. They are blind toward God, because they are friends of the world. Those who follow Abraham and Jesus are at enmity with the world but accepted by God.

A FINAL CLARIFICATION

We are a people separated from others whether or not we try to be. So, what is it that makes us separate? Why are we different from general society ... including churchgoers? Clearly it isn't performance. Everyone errs. It isn't intelligence, secret knowledge, or genetics (as some claim). So what is it? What enables us to perceive the world around us differently than others see it?

The answer is simple, and I've been alluding to it throughout this article. We are different (separate) due to the fact that, like Abraham, we believe God rather than man. We have no faith in any system other than Christ's.

"For here (in the Jewish and Roman system) we hold to no continuing city, but we seek the one beginning (New Jerusalem)." (Heb. 13:14)

Ben Williams