

# Separation

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Date: 05 October 2008

[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 1 verse 1 Psalm 1 verse 1 Psalm 1 verse 1

Psalm 1 verse 1 It's a Bible doctrine that is good for us to be conversant with and to take in and apply in our lives.

Separation is holiness. They're really the same truth. Separation comes from God's nature. In Isaiah 6 verse 3 the seraphim cried out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

You could say separated, separated, separated is the Lord of hosts. He's separated, he's holy, he's set apart. He is pure. He is apart from earthly, from evil, from error.

He is holy, holy, holy. Our God is holy. And holiness separation comes from his nature. God is separated from sin.

[ 2 : 50 ] And it says of him in Habakkuk 1 verse 13, the first part, That he is separated from sin and anything that would defile. It says of our Lord there, Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity.

This is the holy God, our holy Lord and Saviour that we love. The Holy One, as is one of the names of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus too. God's people, friends tonight, God's people, we, you and I are called to be separated.

There's something special about being set apart. Being special. I know Julie sets apart. You know, we've got some beautiful crockery in our home that is set apart.

It's locked away in this cabinet and it's set apart for a special occasion. Julie only brings it out when somebody special comes. So if you get invited and she puts the special crockery, you know you're really special.

She's got that set apart crockery. You know, I think it was this morning. I opened up the cupboard and I broke one of my bowls and, you know, Oh, sorry love, I just broke a bowl.

[ 4 : 01 ] But thankfully it wasn't one of the set apart ones. It wasn't one of the separated ones. They were in a special careful spot. But, friends, set apart, separated, it's something special, it's something beautiful.

And it's our relationship with the Lord, with our God. It starts with seeing how utterly sinful and unworthy and far from Him that we are.

And the light of His beautiful, glorious holiness. And in the light of that we repent. We ask Him to forgive us. We turn to Christ in repentance and salvation. And we can experience that wonderful joy, that enjoyment of His holiness.

It's a beautiful thing. It says of His holiness in Psalm 29, verse 2. Psalm 29, verse 2, it says, Give unto the Lord the glory due His name.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Holiness is something beautiful. I know in our world sometimes people paint churches that make a stand for truth as being dowdy or removed and isolationist and, you know, a bit strange, a bit weird.

[ 5 : 13 ] You know, you see how the media reports. I know you could caricature sometimes churches. I know some would look at, for example, the Amish. The Amish people who drive around in horse and buggies, they're not saying we have to do that.

But the media paints them as a bit weird, a bit strange, a bit odd. And yet, I'm sure amongst them as godly people that it's their stand. It's their standing for their faith and their desire to honour God.

And, you know, of course we don't go to that extreme. I don't drive a horse and buggy at the moment. But we know that for many, people would think they're a bit weird, they're a bit strange. But really, we should be strange.

We should be strangers, strangers, foreigners in this world. And we should be separated. And it's a beautiful thing. It's not something that's going to make us miserable and, you know, sour and bitter and warped.

It's something that's going to make us closer to our Saviour. It's something that comes from that inward joy of knowing Him, of obeying Him, of honouring Him. And it comes and it's evident in practical terms too.

[ 6 : 18 ] And so we're going to look at separation. What's it all about? Some of the aspects of it. What it means for you and me today in 2008. And firstly, look at separate from worldliness.

Separation from worldliness. You might like to turn and follow me to 1 John. I know it's a beautiful scripture here. 1 John chapter 2. One that we've looked at before.

But it's one that we can take again and again. Try to take it in. 1 John chapter 2. It says there from verse 15.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It goes on in verse 17.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Separation from worldliness. From the world, the things of the world.

[ 7 : 19 ] Of course, it talks there about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. Those things are of the world and the world's way. And we should be separate from worldliness, number one.

And we should want to uphold a pure testimony. A pure testimony to the world around us. And then it can be said of us, as it says in Psalm 90 verse 17. May the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

It's a beautiful thing. You know, when you see a pure and godly woman. When you see a pure and godly young man. They've made a commitment. They've made a stand.

They've made a decision. They've made a choice to serve, to live, to walk in God's truth. And to be as that godly man.

To meditate. Day and night. To be like a tree planted. That's the picture. It's a beautiful picture. It's a beautiful person who makes that commitment. And 1 Corinthians 15.33 it says, Be not deceived.

[ 8 : 22 ] Evil communications corrupt good manners. There's a separation that's going to protect you. That's going to keep you from corruption. We know if you start mixing with people that they're swearing every second or third word.

Or listening to that kind of music. You're going to be corrupted. Evil communications corrupt good manners. It's going to corrupt you. Kids, if you're listening to that. It's going to corrupt you.

Without you even knowing it. Without you even realising it. I know when I was at school, kids were swearing around me all the time. I picked up the same language. I had the same lingo.

I had to. And yet when I was converted, I asked the Lord and he helped me to give up that talk. But likewise, when you're mixed with people that talk the wrong way, that curse Christ, that don't care about the things of God, it's going to corrupt the good manners.

1 Corinthians 15.33. So it's a good thing to separate from such things. Separate from the world's ways, worldly pleasures, from that corrupting, contaminating influence.

[ 9 : 24 ] Turn away from that influence. The influence, the fashion, the philosophies, the music of the world. It says in 1 John 5.21. Keep yourselves from idols.

I know I touched on it this morning. There's idols in the West. We've got probably more, I reckon. The idols of the Western world and of materialism, of godless thinking that contaminates the world around us.

1 Thessalonians 5.22. It's a familiar passage. It says, abstain, or steer right away from, don't have a bar of, all appearance of evil.

Don't have a bar of it. So separate from worldliness. And number two, we're called to be separate from error. To be separate from error. Now the New Testament, not only does it call for us to be his witnesses, to be witnessing to the faith, but also to be contending for the faith.

There's a sense where we have got a commission to take the gospel to our world, to take the good news, the salvation message to our neighbours and people about us, but also to contend earnestly for the faith, to fight for it, to stand up and be counted for the faith, like it says in Jude 1 verses 3 to 4.

[ 10 : 41 ] As believers, we're called to fight for the New Testament faith. This is a faith worth fighting for, worth dying for, even more so worth living for.

And Jude 1, it says, God calls you and I to be soldiers in this earnest combat, this earnest struggle, this hand-to-hand combat, to get out there on the front line and to oppose and put to silence the

voices that are in discord with the Word of God.

We need to stand and be counted to declare the truth while we can. And separation in this regard, in terms of error, is vital. It's important for protection for the sheep from error.

Now, as the shepherd, I need to guard the flock. And as each one of us are responsible for each other, really, to exhort one another. It's not just one guy's job. But there's a sense where we need to protect people from error.

It's dangerous. And we need to have separation. It's important for the purity of the church. The purity of the church and for sound Bible teaching. In Ephesians 5.11 it says, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

[12:04] And don't toy with it. Don't toy with the unfruitful works of darkness. Try to establish in yourself, and to a degree there's a personal decision, what might be right in your, what might be, your stand might be different from mine.

But seek prayerfully and spiritually to set the boundaries for yourself as to what you see as God's truth, as you see, as you faithfully take it and read it.

And heed it, what God is saying to you to do. And be obedient unto it. And it says, reprove those things, the unfruitful works of darkness. So there's a sense where it's vital for every one of us here this evening, for every one of you as God's people, as brothers and sisters in Christ, want to exhort you that we cannot join in religious or spiritual things with those who reject Bible truth.

Those who disobey and compromise clear Bible teachings and will not repent. We can't fellowship with ministries who reject God's infallible and final revelation.

Now, of course, there's many godly Christian people in all manner of churches. And yet, there's a sense where you need to draw the line, where someone is veering off into error.

[13:22] You don't want to be standing alongside them, because in a way you're supporting what they believe. And that's a dangerous thing. There's churches in our world today, there's well-meaning preachers and teachers and Christians, they don't believe this is God's final revelation.

They don't believe this is the infallible Word of God. They don't believe in salvation through faith by God's grace. They don't believe in a real hell to shun and a heaven to gain.

They don't believe in the immortality of the soul. There's all kinds of weird and wacky doctrines out there, as well as all kinds of newfound ideas that are really latter-day heresies, as the Bible says in the latter days.

There's modern-day beliefs, like from about the 1900s, some wacky teachings that are really latter-day delusions. We need to get back to the foundation, brothers and sisters, and avoid that, be careful of that.

And be separate from error, it's needful, it's important. In 2 Corinthians 6.14, it talks about how the believers should not be unequally yoked together, or in other words, not fellowship or associate or identify with unbelievers, but instead to come out from among them and be separate.

[14:39] Amos asks in chapter 3, verse 3, Can two walk together except they be agreed? Of course not. You can't walk with someone unless you're agreed with them. When God's truth is the standard, it needs to be held fast too.

And so God demands there's times when you, as a Christian man, as a Christian woman, you're going to be faced with this. It's going to face you. And God demands that we stay away from those who teach the wrong thing.

There's many strong words used in this regard. For example, the word avoid. Romans 16.17. 2 Timothy 2.16, shun. Titus 3.10, reject.

2 Timothy 3.5, turn away from. 2 Corinthians 6.14, have no fellowship with. You know, there's times when you might be met by some well-meaning Christians from all kinds of ideas, all kinds of ways of thinking.

I'm sure that there may be some Christians who are in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for example. But yet, that church teaches some abhorrent false doctrine.

[15:48] Absolutely diabolical false doctrine. And friends, we can't stand shoulder to shoulder with those people. We cannot. We cannot give people the impression that we support the false teachings of that movement.

There's many others we could talk about. But Romans 16 verse 17, it commands us, Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.

We are to mark. That's quite strong language. Mark them, identify them, label them. They are false teachers. False teachers, false groups. And friends, tonight Christendom is saturated with false doctrine and apostasy.

We are to rebuke false teachers, to stand against them, to recognise them for who they are, to mark them. And friends, tonight I want to be very plain with you. I've touched on it briefly this morning. The South Australian Council of Churches Incorporated. Look them up on the internet. The South Australian Council of Churches Incorporated. They include the Anglican Church of Australia, the Churches of Christ in Australia, the Greek and Romanian Orthodox, the Lutheran Church in Australia, the Quakers, the Salvation Army, the Uniting Church in Australia, and the Catholic Church in Australia.

[ 17 : 06 ] They're all together in one little hodgepodge kind of mishmash, one kind of artificial kind of unity. Now, friends, we cannot abide that.

I can't figure. I know there's many wonderful Christians in the Uniting Church and in the Churches of Christ. Yet, how can they, in effect, excuse that plain error of Romanism, of the Roman Catholic institution that says that this man, the Pope, can speak as God infallibly?

That the Roman Catholic Pope has got this power to declare doctrines and traditions that are in equal standing with the Word of God, with the Bible.

And he encourages people to bow down and worship idols, images, to pray to Mary, to pray to dead saints, to do all manner of abominable things, and to believe that they can be saved by the sacraments, by their good works, not through faith, by God's grace alone.

And, you know, where is the, by Scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone, where is the old-time truth that the men and women of God stood up for?

[ 18 : 32 ] I know I touched on it briefly this morning, like the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, was a godly man. He loved the Lord, he loved the Gospel, and he was a faithful preacher of it.

And yet, his movement today, the Salvation Army, is far, far away from what it was. Far, far away. And it's very sad. And so, I'll just use that as one example.

That's just one movement today that is in the world today. And on the National Council of Churches in Australia website, you can read how they're engaging in, not just ecumenical, they're talking about inter-faith dialogue.

Inter-faith dialogue. So, you've got the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians all talking together, seeing what they might be able to give and take, so that everybody can be one big happy family. You know, maybe the Christians didn't believe in the Trinity, they might be able to get on with the Muslims or the Jews. There's all kinds of weird stuff going on.

[ 19 : 29 ] It's weird. It's wacky. It's horrendous. Inter-faith dialogue. We've got nothing to talk about with them. This is the only thing. This can't be changed. It's God's ultimate.

God hasn't got a revised version of it that He takes big chunks of it away and replaces it with other things. And on this website too, this National Council of Churches in Australia, there's an address from the so-called His Holiness, the Pope.

An address by him on this church website. Friends, we don't need to hear what this man says. I mean, he might be a very well-meaning chap, but by what he's professing, he's not saved.

He's not a Bible-believing Christian with faith in Christ as his Saviour and Lord. He's believing something else. And so, this is what is about us today.

It's real. It's happening. It's everywhere. And it's more so, more and more the case. I know I've touched on it also this morning how Darlene Cech and Guy Sebastian, they were up there entertaining the masses for the mass of the Pope at his recent visit.

[ 20 : 43 ] How can people who profess to be Christians be partakers of that? To be partakers of the mass. The mass is a horrendous, vile, evil thing.

It's a terrible, ugly substitute for the real thing in the Word of God. And Bible believers who bled and died, the martyrs of old who have been burnt at the stake for the truth of salvation by faith and for a love for the Word of God, they have denied that as a godless thing.

And yet, today, we're seeing everybody just, oh, let's all be one big happy family. Friends, we've got to be separate from error. It's vital. It's essential. Because the fact is, there is a supernatural power behind all of this false teaching.

In 1 Timothy 4 verse 1, Satan is behind it. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Christians are warned. There's lots of warnings. The Bible's filled with warnings about take heed to yourself, not to join in false doctrine. Lack of separation is a hurtful thing to the body of Christ.

[ 21 : 54 ] Now some people would say, oh, you're being too divisive. You're being too divisive. You're being too narrow-minded. You're blinking. Oh, that's too narrow. That's too harsh.

But the hurtful thing is lack of separation. It's when there's a mishmash. It's when there's a conglomeration of all kinds of ideas and saying that truth doesn't matter anymore.

That's more hurtful to the true body of Christ, the true church of God. Men appreciate it when the surgeon gets in there with that sharp cutting edge of the scalpel and separates the deadly cancer from the body.

And yet today, men and women can't understand why false doctrine must be dealt with severely and speedily. It talks of it in 2 Timothy 2.16.

We are to shun it. To shun it means to get right away from it. Just don't even mess with it. For they will increase more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker.

[ 22 : 53 ] So there's a sense where ungodliness, ungodly teaching, is compared to being like a cancer. That's what the Bible compares it to. So friends tonight, don't attend a church that preaches false doctrine.

Don't mess with it. Don't, please, I urge you. I know I could probably be a lot straighter with people. I know there's loved ones of mine who are part of the Church of Christ in our city of Elizabeth.

I know what they stand for. I know what that church is all about. It's not good. It's not good at all.

The Bible warns of the danger of a little evil.

A little evil. Just a little bit of leaven can cause a massive mess. A little false teaching, a little unrepentant sin, it becomes a leaven that will permeate the whole.

The leaven of error or sin can spread and bring ruin as evident in history. We know that when plagues come to a city, you know, bam, the whole city's got it.

[ 24 : 00 ] It's all widespread. It just infects the whole populace. And likewise too, leaven has got an invidious, it's got a spreading effect.

It just spreads like wildfire. And so you've got to hold it back. You've got to sever from it. You've got to cut off from false doctrine and sin before it does damage.

So friends tonight, I want to urge you. I know I'm pressing the point somewhat. It's wise to avoid error. It's vital. It's essential. It's good for you to be discerning by the Word of God to test everything.

Only a fool boards a ship that is sailing towards destruction, even if the ship itself is seaworthy.

Don't step in the ship. It's going the wrong way. Don't join in fellowship with those that are going the wrong way.

Men would never tolerate poison knowingly, sold over the counter of a chemist shop. But what about the poisonous doctrines that are being fed out to the multitudes?

[ 24 : 58 ] We need to obey God's Word, fight apostasy, error and compromise. Someone said, the closer I get to God, the further away I get from what is contrary to his character.

You know, as we get closer and closer to the Lord, as we get closer to the cross, those things are not going to hold us anymore. They're not going to attract us anymore. Any religious system that is aside from the cross, that would try to detract from the gospel, that would try to make the cross of non-effect, we don't want it.

It doesn't compare anymore. In 2 Timothy 4, we're told about preaching the Word. Now, I read a quote about the head of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

The head of the Assemblies of God in Australia, what's his name, Brian Houston? Brian Houston.

And he said, people are saying, what are you all about?

And why is your church so successful? And he says, we scratch where people itch. We scratch where people itch. We give them what they want, basically.

[ 26 : 04 ] And 2 Timothy 4 talks a bit about itching and scratching. It says in 2 Timothy 4, Yes, he's itching ears, alright.

He's scratching where they itch. Friends, this is dangerous stuff. He's doing exactly what the Bible says that he would do. Such churches as that. A Bible believer must not join in a common cause, a ministry, or worship with heretics.

Heresy means a willful choosing of false doctrine and man-made opinion. Titus 3, 10 says a man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject. We give them warning, and the second time we reject them.

It's not because we want to be hurtful, or nasty, or vindictive. The Bible talks about how we want to restore people. The ultimate aim of church discipline is that people will be restored.

They'll come to see their error. They'll come to see their fault. They'll repent. And they'll be restored to the fellowship. It's not like we want to be holier than thou, or putting others down.

[ 27 : 28 ] There's a needful thing, though, to stand for the truth, to declare it, to be solid and strong for it. Those who name the name of Christ must separate from those who turn away from the truth.

And our fellowship is with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. God wants our undivided loyalty to be that strong, consistent testimony.

Friends, tonight, I want to urge you, it's vital, it's essential, it's an important Bible doctrine, a Bible truth that we vitally need. That pureness of doctrine, that pureness of life, our loyalty, our testimony, it's important that we have that separation.

And just think of it for a moment, this separation that we've talked about, we've talked about the separation from worldliness. The separation from error. But more than that, separation is twofold. Separation is not just a separation from sin, but a separation unto God. A separation unto God. In 2 Corinthians 6, it talks about, come out from, among them separate, touch not the unclean thing.

[ 28 : 34 ] And then he goes on, sorry, in Leviticus 20, verse 26. And ye shall be wholly set apart, separated unto me. For I, the Lord, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine.

So there's a sense where not only are we separated from error, from worldliness, we're separated unto the Lord. As it says in Romans 1, Paul talked about how he was called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.

As a Christian, you're not just taken out of things, and it's just not all negative, that we leave sin and worldliness and falsehood. There's a sense where you're separated unto God's truth.

You're separated unto your saviour. You're separated unto the gospel. You're separated unto the Lord and his word. It's something that's positive and precious. We're separated unto righteousness and truth.

Unto the person of our saviour. Just to picture it briefly, the separation from and the separation unto. Just some Bible verses that have got both of them in them.

[ 29 : 43 ] Colossians 1.13. Separation from, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness. Separation unto, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Separation unto. Separation from, 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 7. For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. We're separated unto holiness.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate. Touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you. And I will be a father unto you.

And ye shall be my sons and daughters, save the Lord Almighty. Leviticus 20.26. For I, the Lord, am holy, and have severed you from other people. That ye should be mine.

Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. 2 Corinthians 7.1. Perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 1 Thessalonians 1.9. You turn from idols to serve the living and true God.

[ 30 : 46 ] John 5.24. But he's passed from death unto life. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Likewise reckon yourselves also dead unto sin, but alive unto God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Be not conformed, not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

There's so many more we could say. Can you see the truth of it? It's twofold. You're separated from, separated unto. God loves you. You're very precious. You that believe, he counts you as the apple of his eye.

He counts you as very, very precious. Very, very important. So valuable that his very son shed his precious blood for you. He wants you to be separated unto him.

It's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful, glorious thing. You know, there's so many contrasts. Death, life. Darkness, light. Night, day. Lost, found.

[ 31 : 47 ] Unrighteous, righteous. Infidel, unbeliever. Condemnation, no condemnation. Perish, eternal life. Children of the devil.

Children of God. Isn't that wonderful? To think he's taken us out of that darkness, that estrangement, that separation from God. And he's separated us unto God.

He's set us apart unto his Father. Set us apart to be his. To belong to him. To be specially his. His creation. His possession. And friends, today, as a Christian, you are in the world, but not of it.

So you've got a vital role to play. Believe us tonight. Believe us today. Linda, you're called to be his witness. He doesn't want you to be removed from this world such that you can't be in outreach to the world.

Don't be called to be an ambassador. That means you've got to work to do with the world. We are separated from the world and its ways, but yet we're wanting to reach the world for Christ.

[ 32 : 58 ] Because, Pablo preached the gospel. It says to you, shine us light, Ian. Do good. Walk in wisdom. Pray for all men.

I know Ian makes a habit of that. Live peaceably with all men. Let your moderation be known to all men. Honour all men. Have a good report. A good testimony. It's wonderful, isn't it?

To think that you've got a duty to fulfil to the world. We're not going to walk around as some kind of holier-than-thou and not have contact with the world.

Not be influencing our world. We're called to be salt, to be an influence, to be out there touching lives. And the separation that we're talking about is not some kind of, as some, you know, you could say the Pharisees are the ultimate separatists.

But that was an isolationist thing. It was an exclusivist thing. That's not what we're talking about here. As a Christian, we're separated from the world and its ways. We're separated unto God so that we can have an impact, a wonderful impact on the people about us.

[ 34 : 08 ] Just to quickly close with one thought, as it talks about our Saviour in Luke 2.52. It talks about four dimensions in which our Saviour grew.

In Luke 2.52, Jesus increased. It says he increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and man. Four things. Okay?

Wisdom, the mental side. In stature, the physical side. In favour with God, the spiritual side. And in favour with man, the social side.

So think about your separation in these four contexts. Just to close quickly here. Number one, your mental life. Your mental life, so your thoughts, your attitudes. As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. It says, Proverbs 23.7. The Christian must be set apart from wrong thinking, wrong attitudes, and wrong attitudes. It says in Ephesians 4.

[ 35 : 04 ] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

That's your mental life. It means that your mind is stayed upon him. It means your mind, your thought life is in his control. It means you're separated. You want those thoughts, those things that come to your mind to be things that would be pleasing to him.

To cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against God. Let your mind dwell. Think on these things, those things that are lovely and pure and so on. That kind of mental life, the mental side of ye.

Secondly, the physical life, the physical side of ye. For example, in dress. In like manner also that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel. Our dress. And of course it applies to guys too. To dress as, show good taste. Not to conform to the world's sensuous standards. As believers, we're not to conform to the world. So our physical life, our dress, our entertainment.

[ 36 : 09 ] Think about your entertainment, the recreation, your leisure time. Use discernment in that regard. Be separate from worldly amusements. And unclean habits to defile the mind and body.

Someone put it like this. They said, anything that dims my vision of Christ. Or takes away my taste for Bible study. Or cramps my prayer life. Or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me.

And as a Christian, I must turn from it. So, your physical life, your entertainment, your speech. Your day by day. Let no corrupt communication proceed. We know, watch the words that you use.

Let there be words that edify. Avoid vulgarity. Use your speech positively to bless people. So we've seen the mental life. The mental side of you. We've seen the physical life.

How you dress. How you behave. How you relate. Your social life. He grew in favor with God and men. His social life with men.

[ 37 : 08 ] So your fellowships. So how you relate. As believers, choose your companions wisely. Psalm 119 verse 63. It says, I am a companion of all them that fear thee.

And of them that keep thy precepts. Find companions amongst those who love the Saviour. Make those who love the Saviour your companions. Your friends. Those that you want to spend time with. Those that you want to get to know. Those that you want to be about and amongst. Friendships are very important. Solomon said, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise. But a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Proverbs 13.20 And we've already touched on 1 Corinthians 15. Now the evil companionships. Evil communications are going to corrupt. Good morals.

Good manners. A man put it like this. He said, All things being equal. Bad apples make good apples go rotten.

[ 38 : 07 ] And the good apples do not make the rotten ones any better. So think about it. Those that you're trying to influence.

Beware. Be careful that they're not influencing you. We know that as Christians. There's influences all about us. I know we talked to a degree this morning about the flesh.

The world. The flesh. The devil. Everything is against you believer tonight. Everything is against you except he is for you. If he is for us, Who can be against us?

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. If he is for you, And the Bible says he is for you, Then it doesn't matter if it's just you against the world. Amen. Be separated.

Be steadfast. Steadfast. Courtship is another area. We know as young people looking to marry, It's certainly not God's will for a Christian, A child of God, To marry an unbeliever.

[ 39 : 06 ] It's plain in the word of God. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. So young men, young women, Find a Christian partner for life That you can marry and grow in God together with each other.

And in our social life too, Our career, Everything. Let it all be laid on the altar. Let your whole life be laid upon the altar. All of the aspects of your life.

When we talk about separation, We talk about separation from worldliness, Separation from error. Think about your mental life, Your thought life. Think about your physical life, Your choice of entertainment, Of how you speak and react and relate.

Your social life, Your friendships, Of courtship, Of career. Of every choice of life that you make. And lastly, of course, The ultimate, Your spiritual life. He grew in favour with God and man.

The Lord Jesus, A great example. In all those four dimensions, He grew himself in his spiritual life, In favour with God. How is your personal devotional life? How is your walk with God?

[ 40 : 08 ] In the day to day, The everyday, In your prayer, In your closet, In your study, In your witness. Are you growing? Are you growing? Are you a growing Christian?

I urge you. I urge you tonight. Don't be a stagnant Christian. We can all be subject to slackness. I don't know about you, But apathy, You know, It's endemic in Australia, I think.

It's Aussie culture, I think, By and large. I think it's human culture, That people, We're apathetic, We're slat, We're carnal, By nature. And friends, We need to ask the Lord, Crucify the flesh, With the affections and lust, Ask the Lord, To make you more devoted, In your personal spiritual life, In your witness, In your fellowship, With other Christians.

Friends, We can all grow closer, As it says, To be like that man, That walketh not, Walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, But his delight, His delight, His joy, What brings his enjoyment, His, The ultimate buzz of his life, Is that, He will delight, His delight, Is in the law of the Lord, And in his law, Does he meditate day and night, And he shall be like a tree, Planted, Firm, Steadfast, Strong, Vital, Vibrant, Growing, Alive, Planted by the rivers of water, That bringeth forth his fruit, You're going to be a fruitful man, A fruitful believer, A fruitful woman, Of God, For his glory, In season his leaf, Also shall not wither, And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper, God's going to bless, He's going to lift you, He's going to move you, He's going to grow you, And you're going to go forward, Now that's not to say,

Tough times aren't going to come, It's all the more that you've got to stick in there, That you've got to be firmly planted, As a firmly planted tree, The wind can blow all it likes, But you're planted by the rivers of water, Amen, Let us pray, Heavenly Father, We thank you for your precious word, That we can put ourselves deep down, And grow from that, That we can be planted in it, That it can be planted within us, Lord, That we might find that life-changing truth, That if there's any present, That

haven't taken that step of trusting you, That if there's any present, Lord, That don't know what it is to have peace with God, Their lives are torn and twisted, They're turning here and there, And finding no help, No hope, There's no life in them, Lord, That they might turn from their wicked ways, That they might repent, That they might be saved tonight, They might see their utter need of you, Lord, Their utter Christless, Hopeless estate, That they might cry out for salvation, Even now, Lord, Even though they may not fully understand it, That they see their great lack, That their hopelessness, [ 42 : 58 ] Lord, That they're bound for a devil's hell, Without your grace, Lord, That they might cry out for mercy, Before it's too late, Lord, That they might sweat, And perspire, That they might be convicted, That they might tremble, At their hopeless estate, Their great lack, Their great danger, That they might be fearful tonight, And find the life, The joy, The wonder of knowing you, Salvation by faith, Through your grace, Lord, That they might know what it is, To lean their whole heart's trust, Upon you, To find that rest, For their soul, That only you can grant, Lord, The only one who can give peace, Eternal, Life eternal, Lord, We thank you that, Help us, Lord, Each one, As we talk tonight, About the separation, It's sometimes a hard truth, To grasp, Lord, That how you can take us, From this miry clay, And plant our feet on the rock, How you can take us, From darkness to light, From being lost, To being found, Lord, That we can be separated, From the world, And its ways, And ungodliness, And ungodly teaching,

And systems, Lord, That we might find, Our hearts trust in you, And your word, And in salvation by faith, Lord, And walk in that truth, To be separated unto you, By your grace and mercy, Thank you, In Jesus name, Amen.

Thank you.