

MORAL SEPARATION

By Brother Mike Sutherland

We are to be separated from this world in our minds, our fellowship, our dress and appearance, our music, our television viewing, our movie going, our internet activities, and our entertainment activities. We are not to be friends with the world. James 4:4 says: “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”. There are three different types of separation. These are moral, doctrinal, and practical. Moral separation is separating from sin and worldliness. Doctrinal separation is separating from false teaching and practices that are contrary to the Bible. Doctrinal separation is commanded in *Romans 16:16-17* and *Revelation 18:4* where God says this:

¹⁶ Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. ¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. *Romans 16:16–17*

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. *Revelation 18:4*

Practical separation is the breaking of fellowship with those brothers or sisters who are involved in open sin that they will not repent of. Practical separation is commanded in *Matthew 18:15-18* and *1 Corinthians 5:11* where the Holy Ghost says:

¹⁵ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. ¹⁸ Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. *Matthew 18:15–18*

¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. *1 Corinthians 5:11*

Moral separation is separating from sin and worldliness unto godliness. We are to be separated from this world in our minds, our fellowship, our dress and appearance, our music, our television viewing, our movie going, our internet activities.

The battle for holiness takes place in our minds. If we are Christians we have the upper hand because we have the mind of Christ. *1 Corinthians 2:16* says: “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ”. If we have the mind of Christ, then why do we not act like it. Our problem is that we let our flesh dictate to our minds who we will serve. The

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Bible says in *Romans 8:5-7*:

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. *Romans 8:5-7*

It is our carnal habit to walk in the flesh from birth. Most of the time we are so focused on earthly things that we are no heavenly good. We must make a conscious, disciplined effort to walk after the spirit in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Bible says in *Galatians 5:16-17*:

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. *Galatians 5:16-17*

The reason that we walk in the flesh rather than the spirit is that we are not willing to crucify our flesh. It is not unreasonable that God would ask us to live holy lives. Again, God says in *Romans 12:1-2*:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. *Romans 12:1-2*

Are you having trouble determining what the perfect will of God is for your life? Think on that. God says that we are to be renewed in our minds. The only way that can happen is that we first of all be permanently indwelt by the Holy Ghost through salvation. Then we must yield to the leading of the Holy Ghost. We should ask for a daily infilling of the Holy Ghost. If we will allow the Holy Ghost to renew our minds on a daily basis, then we will not walk after the vain ways of those dead in their trespasses and sins. When we walk after the flesh in our minds we lose our spiritual discernment because our understanding is darkened. The Bible says in *Ephesians 4:17-24*:

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the

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spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. *Ephesians 4:17-24*

As Christians, we will never have peace of mind if we do not turn our minds over to the Holy Spirit that He might make us holy. If we will discipline our minds to be stayed upon Christ, God will give us perfect peace. Our Bible says in *Isaiah 26:3*: “Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee”. Are you stayed upon Jehovah?

When we become Christians we should have a limited fellowship. The Bible says in *2 Corinthians 6:14-15*:

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? *2 Corinthians 6:14-15*

Therefore, there will be some old friends that we will have to part company with. That also means that we cannot marry unbelievers. That is not to say that we cannot witness to our lost loved ones, lost friends and lost acquaintances, but that the focus of our fellowship is to be brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible also says in *Ephesians 5:11*: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*”. Our salvation many times will put us at variance and/or separate us from our own family members. Christ said in *Luke 12:51-53*:

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. *Luke 12:51-53*

Christ also stated in *Matthew 10:34-36*:

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. *Matthew 10:34-36*

Your lost friends will lead you astray by putting temptation before you. You will hear some things that will offend the Spirit that dwells within you. If you do not choose Christian friends after you are saved you will vex your righteous soul with the deeds of the wicked. If you do not break fellowship with your lost friends after you are saved you will vex your righteous soul with the deeds of the wicked. The Bible says in *2 Peter 2:7-9*:

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7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 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 knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 2 *Peter 2:7-9*

You cannot choose your family, but you can choose your spouse and friends. Pick your friends and spouse with a godly desire.

What I am about to say is not very popular in “Christian” circles, but it is Godly and Biblical. Christian appearance and dress are some of the most important outward signs of an inward Holy Spirit filled salvation and holiness. It matters how God’s people dress. We are not to dress like the world. We are to look like Christians. We are not to dress in a manner that is “flashy fleshy”. We are not to dress in a manner that is sexually revealing. Neither should men and women look like they have been poured into their clothes. Men should not dress like gigolos. Women should not dress like harlots. Men are not to wear women’s clothes. Neither are women to wear men’s clothes. The world should be able to look at Christians and tell from their dress that they are Christian. Men should not have long hair. Women should not have short hair.

The Bible says in *Deuteronomy 22:5*:

5The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.
Deuteronomy 22:5

If you are a woman and you choose to wear pants then you are choosing to be an abomination unto the Lord. Ah, but you say that the pants are designed for the women. Not so. Until the unisex revolution of the 1960s, all women in all cultures, even the pagan cultures, did not wear pants. Pastor David Stone had this to say:

Until the last few years women wore robes or dresses that covered all of their legs. This was true of the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Syrians, Hebrews, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Scythians and Parthians, Grecians, Romans, Early Christians, Medieval Period, English Renaissance, and Puritans. Only in the last generation has this been changed.

For Christian women who would buck up to God over the issue of pants I have two questions. What would you say or think if someone told you that I being a man showed up for work in a dress? What would you do if I being a man showed up to teach this Sunday School class in a dress? If you are a man and you choose to wear a dress, then you are choosing to be an abomination unto the Lord. The question always comes up: “Should Christian men and women wear shorts”? The answer is no. The Bible says in *Isaiah 47:1-3*:

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Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: *there is* no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. 2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. 3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as* a man. *Isaiah 47:1-3*

We see that the uncovering of the thigh was nakedness that brought shame. Women should not wear anything that exposes any flesh above the bottom of the kneecap. For women, the wearing of split dresses and split skirts that expose the thigh is also inappropriate. The slits are designed to pull the man's eyes toward the exposed thigh. Women should be dressed modestly according to *1 Timothy 2:9-10*:

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. *1 Timothy 2:9-10*

Likewise for women the admonition of *1 Peter 3:1-5* applies where we see:

Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: *1 Peter 3:1-5*

Anything that exposes any of the breast of a man or woman should not be worn. It is nakedness.

Now, what say we about the dress of a man? The other side of the issue for men is seen in *Exodus 28:42-43*:

42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him. *Exodus 28:42-43*

Men should not wear clothing that exposes the thighs. Men should also wear shirts at all times when

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they are in public. Their nakedness should not be displayed. We know that all men who expose their chests are he-men. I will give you something else to think about. Within the family setting inside the home, if it is okay for the man to come to the dining table without a shirt, is also alright for his wife to come to the table the same way?

Finally, Christian men and women do not belong on the beaches or at public swimming pools and swimming holes where men and women are not properly dressed. Remember what the Bible says in *Psalms 101:3*: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me". The Bible also says in *1 Thessalonians 5:22*: "Abstain from all appearance of evil".

The Christian standards for hair are set forth in *1 Corinthians 11:14-15* where we read:

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. *1 Corinthians 11:14-15*

Men should have short hair. The only case in the Bible where men were allowed to have long hair was in the case of the Nazarite vow in Numbers chapter 6. At the completion of the Nazarite vow, the hair had to be shaved. There is NO New Testament example concerning hair length other than the prohibition in *1 Corinthians 11:14*. The only other mention of long hair in the Bible was Absalom. Absalom's long hair was a symbol of rebellion just as it has been in our times. The Lord Jesus Christ did not have long hair. It was Jewish custom that men's hair had to be cut every 30 days.

So, out go those pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ with long hair. Our Saviour did not have long hair. When considering pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ and movies about the Lord Jesus Christ in light of the Scriptures we ought to consider *Exodus 20:4* and *Acts 17:29* where God says:

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: *Exodus 20:4*

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. *Acts 17:29*

I realize that might offend our Catholic and Eastern Orthodox friends who are obsessed by images and icons.

Women should not have short hair according to *1 Corinthians 11:15*. Short, bobbed hair for women is a symbol of rebellion and in many cases is a mark of lesbianism. I had a friend who told me he knew a woman who had short hair and dressed like a man who had to grow her hair back out and change her clothing because she was being constantly "hit on" by numerous lesbians. That is a very telling illustration. The question always comes up as to what is to long for a man and what is to short for a woman. The answer to this question is quite simple. When looking upon a man or

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woman, there should be no question as to what their gender is because of the length of their hair. Another very important area of Biblical separation is that of music. The music that Christians listen to should not sound like the world's music. If the music sounds like it came out of a rock concert, then it did. If the music sounds like it came out of a country and western bar, then it did. Rock and music and Christian music are two mutually exclusive terms. Rap music and Christian music are two mutually exclusive terms. Heavy metal music cannot be Christian. A lot of Southern gospel music is not fit to listen to either because it sounds like it came out of a bar room. Practically all Contemporary Christian is unfit for Christians to listen to. Other than the doctrinal issues contained in the lyrics (words) of most "Christian" music produced today, there is the issue of the music (the instruments) itself. Contrary to what most folks think music is not neutral. Many times the music (instruments) present a much stronger message than the lyrics (words). You cannot take Christian lyrics and set them to any type of music and expect the message to remain the same. The music must match the message. The problem with most Christian music today is that the emphasis is on rhythm rather than melody and harmony. Rhythm speaks to the flesh. Melody and harmony speak to the soul and spirit. The Bible gives the requirements for Christian music in *Ephesians 5:19* and *Colossians 3:16* which read:

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; *Ephesians 5:19*

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. *Colossians 3:16*

Using the qualifications of melody and harmony we could throw out most of the music that is sung in the churches of apostate Christianity. Most of the music in apostate Christianity is written to work up the flesh through rhythm, the pounding of drums, and the praise of men. Drums do not belong in Christian music; especially music sung in a worship service. It is hard to play carnal rhythms and sing spiritually. All Christian music ought to honor and glorify God and uplift and exalt our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In our music, we want to play and sing the songs that the Lord Jesus wants to hear. After all, it is the Lord Jesus Christ that we are supposed to be worshipping and not man. Does the music you listen to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ?? Of the 56 times the word "sing" is used in the Psalms, 51 of them are direct references to singing unto the Lord. The Bible speaks of the mountains, rivers, hills and trees singing unto the Lord. Please note the following Scriptures from our King James Bibles:

9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. 33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. *1 Chronicles 16:9,33*

¹ Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should **prophesy** with harps, with

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psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was: ² Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which **prophesied** according to the order of the king. ³ Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who **prophesied** with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD. *1 Chronicles 25:1-3*

4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. *Psalms 30:4*

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings. 3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. *Psalms 33:2-3*

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. *Psalms 95:2*

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. *Psalms 105:2*

23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. *Isaiah 44:23*

3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and **the voice of melody**. *Isaiah 51:3*

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. *1 Corinthians 14:15*

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; *Ephesians 5:19*

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. *Colossians 3:16*

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. *James 5:13*

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12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. *Hebrews 2:12*

If you think music is neutral, ponder these Scriptures prayerfully. You will find that it is not just the message that matters, but it is also the music that matters. Many times the music has a much stronger message than the words themselves. Consider this. I can hear a song played, anticipate the next note, hum the melody and not even remember most of the words. Selah! I close by reading 14 separate passages of Scripture:

²⁰ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! *Isaiah 5:20*

¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. *Jeremiah 6:15*

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. *Hebrews 3:13*

⁵ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶ Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. *Job 42:5-6*

²⁹ Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. *1 Chronicles 16:29*

²¹ And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. *2 Chronicles 20:21*

² Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. *Psalms 29:2*

⁹ O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. *Psalms 96:9*

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. *1 Corinthians 2:14*

¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of

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God is holy, which temple ye are. *1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. *Hebrews 5:12-14*

¹ 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; ² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; *1 Timothy 4:1-2*

¹⁵ Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. ¹⁶ They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. *Titus 1:15-16*

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. ⁷ ¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. *2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1*