

# The Separation of God's People

The Lord is pure, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn.1:5). His righteousness only highlights man's sinfulness. Our Savior's love outshines man's sins by washing them all away through the blood of His precious sacrifice (Rom.3:23-26). Each person accesses the forgiveness of their sins through the special faith God provides.

By David Hartsell

One that obeys, it doesn't just talk (Jas.2:19-24). This purity of heart makes people God's children (Matt.5:8). He wants saints to remain His own special possession. One way The Lord keeps His disciples close to Him is by separating them from the impure influences surrounding them.

Obviously Noah would be one of the first to be separate from evil influences of the world. He lived during a time when every thought of men's "heart was only on evil continually" (Gen.6:5-6). God isolates Noah and his family on an ark that floated above a titanic flood which destroyed that wicked world.

The same Lord commands Abraham to leave his idolatrous father, Terah, and move to a land that would one day belong to his descendants, Israel (Gen.12:1-5 and Jos.24:2). Obedient Abraham became the "father of the faithful." When Joseph brought Jacob, his father, and his family into Egypt he understood they could not be immersed into the Egyptian culture because of the spiritual dangers that involved. Joseph, second in authority only to Pharaoh, instructs his family to state clearly to Pharaoh

their lifelong occupation, shepherds. The Egyptians saw shepherds as unclean to them and separate Joseph's family into the Land of Goshen (Gen.46:31-34). The Lord knows that when His people openly reveal their staunch faith in Him evil people will often avoid them. They will separate godly people from themselves. Sadly throughout Israel's history they spent much of their time compromising their convictions and losing their relationship with God.

It's not surprising God's message for Christians is the same in relation to having close fellowship with evil people. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Cor.6:14) Some things are clearly wrong, like the Corinthian brother who was living with his father's wife. The apostle Paul commands the church to withdraw their fellowship from him that he might be ashamed and turn away from this sin (1 Cor.5:1-13). Christians also work to keep themselves out of compromising circumstances which might involve a wide variety of good things: marriage, work, dress, entertainment, and other similar practices. Saints' real home is in heaven and they reflect this by the way they live their lives on earth (Heb.11:13-16). Are you separate from the world?



Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Terri Moore (Joey's aunt)	Artina Hunt (Esther's friend's sister)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother)

**July Birthdays**  
 2-Josh Gooch  
 8-David DeFoor  
 11-Chase Winslett  
 11-Madi White  
 11-Clay Morris  
 11-Kelsey Gallahar  
 12-Tyler Tucker  
 14-Laurel Jerkins  
 14-Megan Ryan  
 15-Bradley Seymore  
 15-Winston Atnip  
 16-Katie Martin  
 19-Ben Holcomb  
 19-Jay Borden  
 21-Tori Luther  
 22-Kate Fortenberry  
 24-Haley Gay  
 25-Betty Bradford  
 25-Yvette Rouse  
 26-Brandon Hester  
 27-Tiffany Green  
 28-Jacob Bradshaw  
 29-Hayden Phillips

**News and Notes**

- ☒ - The ladies' class this week is Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at Denise Davis' house. We will be studying Timothy.
- ☒ - Please pray for Buddy Scalf, Ada Owens uncle who lives in West Virginia. He has been diagnosed with incurable cancer and his home has been flooded. Please also include his wife Priscilla.
- ☒ - Prattmont church of Christ has a meeting Sun-Fri, July 17-22 with Phil Arnold preaching.
- ☒ - Congratulations to Hector and Cristina Chavez who were married recently!
- ☒ - Please remember James Luther, a relative of Toni Herd.
- ☒ - Remember Lisa Carter, Luke's mom, as she has her next scan on Monday.
- ☒ - Please pray for Beth Lingerfelt's grandfather, Nelson Thayer, who has complications from an injured back.
- ☒ - Jessica and Kevin Anderson request the prayers of the congregation as they will be adopting a child in November. Please pray for the birth mother, Sonia and the baby.

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# The Auburn Beacon

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)



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## Behold, The Lamb and the Lion

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.



### Thoughts to Ponder

"Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." (Rev 5:5)

**Elders**  
 Walker Davis  
 (334) 703-0050  
 Larry Rouse  
 (334) 734-2133

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**  
**Sunday**  
 Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
 Worship .....10:20 AM  
 Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM  
**Wednesday**  
 Bible Classes.....7:00 PM  
**E-Mail:**  
 larryrouse@aubeacon.com

**Larry Rouse**  
 Evangelist and Editor

"Behold, the Lamb of God!" (Jn. 1:36)

"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . ." (Rev. 5:5).

Preachers and other teachers constantly urge us to be more Christ-like. "The spirit of Christ," "the mind of Christ," "Christ-like," and "Christ-like spirit" are terms used to express the same idea.

We can find no fault with these expressions, but rather applaud them, when taken at face value. A Christian should be able to sing "more like Jesus would I be" and mean it.

However, when one hears these terms, he would do well to stay turned for the details. The speaker's Jesus may not be the biblical Jesus. His Jesus may be of the modern imagination a passive, ever-smiling, back-patting, soft-spoken, all-embracing Jesus who would never be critical of people much less become upset enough with them to raise his voice to them.

This is the Jesus that we are urged to become like by a few

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brethren who are specializing in freeing the church of the pharisaic spirit and restoring "the spirit of Christ." This is a noble work, if this is what they are really doing. Again, one needs to stay turned for the details. If one listens carefully he may sense that these students of the pharisaic spirit have caught the disease through the back door. They thank God that they are not as other brethren are: proud, boastful, negative and condemning but are humble, sweet, positive and up-lifting as they represent their brand of the "spirit of Christ" in the world.

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Their distorted portrayal of Jesus, not only weakens the gospel and the church, it undermines the efforts and undercuts the moral support of good brethren who are trying their best to obey the divine charge to "preach the word! ... convince (reprove KJV), rebuke and exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (**2 Tim. 4:2**). They despise those who "rebuke with all authority" (**Tit. 2:15**), especially those who "rebuke them sharply" (**Tit. 1:13**). They often suggest to audiences that such preaching may well be the main obstacle hindering our taking the world for Christ. Oh, yes, they can occasionally be stirred to break out of their version of the spirit of Jesus long enough to rebuke sharply those who rebuke sharply.

Jesus was both "the Lamb of God" and "the Lion . . . of Judah." One can hardly reflect the spirit of the real Jesus without beholding him in both capacities. Emphasizing either at the expense of the other gives one a warped picture of the real image of Jesus.

Jesus could look at some people and be moved with compassion (**Mk. 6:34**) and look upon others with anger (**Mk. 3:5**).

He would weep at the prospects of the destruction of his beloved Jerusalem (**Lk. 19:41; cf. Matt. 23:37**) after calling its religious leaders "Serpents, brood of vipers!" and rhetorically asking them, "How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"

He could be both tender and tough. He could lay his hands on little children and pray for them and then, just two chapters later, use the same hands to overturn the tables of the moneychangers and drive them from the temple (**Matt. 21:12-13; cf. Jn. 2:15**).

He could answer the cries of the blind men for mercy by compassionately touching their eyes (**Matt. 20:29-34**) and a little later, say to

the Pharisees "Woe to you, blind guides, ... Fools and blind" (**Matt. 23:16,17**).

He could even sometimes cry out as he taught some who opposed him (**Jn. 7:28**). Now, such crying out is a definite "no, no" to many who have restructured the "Christ-like spirit" for us.

Stephen is correctly held up as one who possessed the "spirit of Christ" as his dying words were, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (**Acts 7:60**) just as Jesus' had been, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (**Lk. 23:34**). Such a forgiving spirit is indeed indicative of the true spirit of Jesus and is direly needed in the church today. What spirit was Stephen imitating when he, just moments before, concluded his speech to the Jews with, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it" (**Acts 7:51-55**)? Did not these words also reflect Stephen's Christ-likeness? All of this was uttered by one "full of the Holy Spirit" (**v. 55**).

What a pity it would be if we could only see the toughness of Jesus without his tenderness, his boldness without his benevolence, or his strictness without his sensitivity. We would have a warped picture of what we ought to be like. Conversely, it would be tragic to see only his tenderness without his toughness, his benevolence without his boldness, or his sensitivity without his strictness.

Let us both behold the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah as we sing "more like Jesus would I be."

**Guardian of Truth - May 5, 1994**



## Dealing With Others

By Donnie V. Rader

Dealing with others is not always easy. What should I say? How much should I believe of what I hear? Is there another side to the story I've been told? Am I being fair in my dealings with others? These and other questions must be answered.

When we deal with others there is always the potential for differences to arise. When those differences come it is easy to forget to use some common sense rules in our conflict. We are not always as fair in dealing with those we disagree with as we are in defending ourselves or those with whom agree.

For some time I have been thinking about how brethren treat one another. I have thought about how many problems are simple misunderstandings. It seems to me that we are not always as careful as we ought to be. As I have thought and talked with others, some basic rules come to mind that we ought to follow.

**1. Pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5).** If there is any time we need wisdom it is when we deal with those with whom we disagree. Let us pray that we may have the wisdom to know: (a) how to approach others, (b) what we should say and what we should not reveal, (c) what I should believe and what I should reject of what I hear, (d) the good that is in other people, and (e) how slow or fast I need to be in my conclusions.

**2. Be careful what you say.** Any of us could easily get carried away and say things that we would later wish had not been said. The proverb writer said, "He who restrains his lips is wise" (**Prov. 10:19**). We must be careful what we say to and about others. It may be information that others have told us in confidence. It may be that the one to whom we give the information may not honor our request to keep it confidential. Let us be "slow to speak" (**Jas. 1:19**) knowing that "a tale bearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (**Prov. 11:13**). We don't have to tell all we know. "A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back" (**Prov. 29:11**).

We must be careful how we choose our words. Let's make sure we are conveying the right idea. If we are not cautious, our words can be like the "piercing of a sword" (**Prov. 12:18**). We must watch what we say and how we say it. Remember, "A soft answer turns

away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Prov. 15:1**).

Let us also be careful lest we say something detrimental to others. "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor" (**Prov. 11:9; cf. v. 13; 20:19**). It is possible that I could be telling things about others when I don't have all the facts. What I say could destroy the name and reputation of others.

**3. There are two sides to the story.** In some situations there is some fault on both sides. Thus, both of the parties at odds have some legitimate points. However, there are some situations where the two sides are the right side and the wrong side. Still, there are two sides.

The questions I must ask myself are: Am I listening to and believing the wrong side? Am I taking the wrong side? Have I considered the other side of the story? There may be more that I need to know before I draw my conclusions and state them. The proverb writer said, "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him" (**Prov. 18:17**). Whoever tells his side first makes it sound good.

**4. Don't jump to conclusions.** Too often we take a little information and fill in more gaps than are there. We can easily assume motives that we have no way of knowing. I wonder how often our talk and criticism about others would change if we deleted everything but the real facts that we know.

The proverb writer warned, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (**Prov. 18:13**). Let us not be hasty in our words (**Prov. 29:20**).

**5. Give others the benefit the of the doubt. Love "believes all things" (1 Cor. 13).** It gives a person the benefit of the doubt. That means when a questionable situation arises where you could put more than one construction on it, believe the best. When a problem arises and you can put either a good or bad motive on it believe the best. After all, don't you want others to do that with you (**Matt. 7:12**)?

Yes, these rules are simple. But, with a little application we can avoid a lot of friction and misunderstanding.

