

Separate But Together

Segregation is a word we don't use in the church very often. But it is an important word when considering our exposure to a sinful world. Christians have been "sanctified" or set apart from others by the blood of Christ, (*1 Thess. 5:23*) and are not to be conformed to the world (*Rom. 12:1-2*). However, being sanctified doesn't mean that we lock ourselves away and never have contact with the spiritually lost. As a matter of fact, we're told in the bible that we must live "in" the world (*Col. 2:20*) and must be in contact with those outside of the body of Christ in order to teach them the Gospel. The bible says, "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality." (*James 2:1*)

As we deal with folks both in and out of the church, we must always practice impartiality. This is difficult because we all have favorite types of people we like to associate with. But the Gospel is for all types of people (*Titus 2:11*) and we must never avoid sharing Jesus with someone because they aren't exactly our "kind" of people. James goes on to say that if we keep the royal law, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (*Mark 12:31*) you do well. But if we practice partiality, we commit sin and need to repent (change our ways). Just because someone might have a bad reputation in the community doesn't mean that they don't need the Gospel. James warns us to get off our "high horse" and go to those who are in need and seeking a better way of life. He also said that God has chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith. Peter learned a valuable lesson from the vision he saw while resting on the roof top and said, "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (*Acts 10:28*). Let's examine ourselves to see that we are never guilty of being a "respector of persons" because our Heavenly Father certainly is not.

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