

introduction to separation

Mark and Avoid

Romans 16:17-18

11/20/97

Context of separation

The purpose of the church is to glorify God and fulfill His plan. The local church is also a significant part of “the ultimate adventure for man,” which is the pursuit of the knowledge of God. The purpose of man is communion and co-working with God. “The Lord loves you so, that He would have you near Him without a break, that you may have experience of His love” (Andrew Murray). The local church is God’s unique program for this dispensation through which that communion and co-working is accomplished.

Principles of separation

Sin separates from God (Is.59:2), and those who do not want to be separated from God, separate from sin (including its practice, heresies and associations). Separation has to do with the holiness of God and the sanctification of the believer. Identification with God and disassociation from anything evil and false is the great privilege of and necessity for the saved, the church, the “called out” ones. It is their privilege and necessity not only to separate from error but also to make apparent the great chasm between truth and error, light and darkness, good and evil. This is done for the exaltation of Jesus Christ, obedience to the Word, and to help and love both other saved people and the lost. (How can they be warned except they be warned?!)

Application of separation (examples)

The stated intent of Promise Keepers is to “break down barriers” (mask differences) between (the truth of) Christianity, and (the error of) Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roman Catholicism. Such differences need to be exposed for the glory of God and the love of people.

Billy Graham calls the current pope John Paul II the greatest spiritual leader of this century. John Paul II is leading people to hell as he teaches them to pray to Mary for salvation.

Charles Colson, in a cloak of light, promotes the mixing of light and darkness which God forbids (II Cor.6:14-18) when he signs a statement binding evangelicals and Catholics together; the Roman Catholic system teaches damning heresies such as baptismal regeneration and works

salvation, not salvation by faith alone. Our God most clearly states, “Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.”

WTGN mixes light with darkness when it reads verses for the day and then broadcasts speakers who are part of a Southern Baptist Convention whose seminaries retain professors who do not believe in inerrancy of the Scriptures. We must disassociate from and expose the corruption.

WTLW broadcasts Binnie Hinn and other charismatics who believe that the verbal revelation of God continues, and therefore the scriptures are incomplete.

Loyalty to Christ involves marking and avoiding those who teach doctrines contrary to Romans and other scriptures.

Separation Summary

Don't forget that the motive and end of Biblical separation is the exaltation of, obedience to, faith in, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three groups of people from which Christians should separate themselves, in addition to their personal separation in practice and identification from the world, the flesh, and the devil. These three social separations follow. (Love of God and man must motivate in all three.)

1. Christians should separate themselves from the unsaved by not being unequally yoked together with them.
 - a. II Cor.6:14-7:1; I Cor.10:16-22; I Tim.5:22; Eph.5:11-13; Pro.28:4; Gen.3:15
 - b. Christians should keep some nonentangling company with them (I Cor.5:9-11).
 - c. This means no binding agreements, no “across-the-board” agreements, no undue obligation to (Rom.13:8), no undue influence by, no identification with in anti-God religion.
 - d. Do not marry them. Do not form business partnerships with them.
2. Christians should separate themselves from the brother who walks disorderly by having no company with him, but admonishing him as a brother.
 - a. II Thes.3:6, 13-15; Rom.16:17-18; I Cor.5:9-13; Mt.18:15-17; Pro.28:4; (I Tim.6:1-5; II Jn.5-11;) Gen.49:5; Pro.22:24-25
 - b. “Walks disorderly” means that he is clearly not obeying a significant scriptural teaching which he has been taught, and he remains unrepentant after (rebuke and) church discipline; also, there is some personal (non-church) application. “Scriptural teaching” includes truth or practice contrary to the way in which he was providentially placed which is not inconsistent with scripture.
 - c. This means have no company with: do not mix, associate, or fellowship with.
3. Christians should separate themselves from false teachers and deceivers and their organizations by receiving them not and rejecting them.
 - a. I Tim.6:3-5; Titus 3:10; II Tim.3:1-5; II Jn.7-11; Rom.16:17-18; II Cor.11:13-15; Pro.28:4; I Cor.6:11-18; Gal.1:6-9; Eph.5:6-11; I Jn.2:21-16; 4:1-3
 - b. “Receive not” means not to accept or have. “Reject” means to shun, avoid, and deprecate. Christians are not to have anything to

do with unrepentant false teachers and compromised organizations except to denounce them.

- c. There are wrong interpretations of Scripture which would not classify these individuals and organizations as false teachers and compromised organizations. See page five for essentials.

Separation Miscellany

June 1, 1999

- A. motive and end: obedience and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lev. 11:44-45)
- B. pitfalls: self-exaltation, aggrandizement, hypocrisy (Mt.6:1), self-righteousness, inconsistency, wrong motivation, not understood
- C. principles:
 1. The magnification and exaltation of Christ is the end, test, essence, and motive—the all of Scriptural separation.
 2. Any teaching or practice which is inconsistent with any portion of Scripture is not of God.
 3. We are not only to be separated (a distancing from unholiness) away from evil (world, flesh, devil) but unto the Lord.
 4. Be identified with Christ in truth and love, personally and as His minister.
 5. Do not be involved in that which would blur your Christian distinctive.
 6. Nothing is more important than truth, and obedience-conformity to truth.
 7. Never compromise with error.
 8. Scriptural unity and love do not exist apart from truth.
 9. If we love Him, we should keep His commandments. Love is obeying God; otherwise, it is not love.
 10. Perceived (imagined) unity or harmony is not as important as doctrinal or moral purity.
 11. Nothing is more important than truth and identification with the Lord; unity among brethren is good.
 12. We are against division, but we need to promote positive division and learn to love positive separation.
 13. Unscriptural separation in practice or attitude is wicked (Pro.6:19; III Jn.10; I Cor.1:10).
 14. Unity between organizations is not necessary.
 15. Further meetings are not necessarily a better investment of time and virtue.
 16. A strong organization always (FRH) is diluted when joining with a weaker.
 17. Bigness is attractive and so is prestige. Neither is a sign of right.
 18. Positions often are hard to discern because of constant movement. Gauge by association and which way his feet are pointed.
 19. Nothing can be done completely without offense. Offending ≠ lack of love or proper separation.

20. Separation is the key defense (O.T. Spence p.8)
21. Doug McLachlan speaks of personal, ecclesiastical, and familial separation.
22. Godly young people begin practicing separation in their personal habits such as in dress, music, and friendships.
23. Separation is a stand(s) (within a process).

D. key Bible passages:

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Gen. – Rev. | 9. II Jn.7-11 |
| 2. II Cor.6:14 – 7:1 | 10. II Cor.11:13-15 |
| 3. Lk.12:49-53; Jms.1:27 | 11. Pro.28:4 |
| 4. II Thes.3:6, 14-15 | 12. I Cor.5:9-11 |
| 5. Rom.16:17-18 | 13. Mt.18:15-17 |
| 6. I Tim.6:3-5 | 14. I Cor.10:16-22 |
| 7. Titus 3:10 | 15. Eph.5:11-13 |
| 8. II Tim.3:1-5 | |

E. key quotes:

- Any definition of separation that does not seek as its first motive and final goal the exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ is not worthy to be called Biblical separation. O.T. Spence
- “militancy and meekness” Dale McCallister 11/21/91 (battling and building)
- All operations need to be done in a sterile field. Everything else rises or falls on separation issue. Jim Singleton
- Christianity without separation is like practicing medicine without cleanliness. FRH 5/15/94
- In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity. Richard Baxter 1615-1691
- Truth cannot be perpetuated through compromise and compromise cannot be avoided without separation. John Whitecomb
- I understand the desirability of an acquaintance with the program and ideas of our opponents, but we can never for one instant forget that they are deadly enemies with whom there can be neither truce nor compromise. Alva J. McClain

F. other:

- We are blessed when our children remain true to the “nonessentials” we’ve taught them.
- “Fundamentalist” is a compliment.
- BJ, Jr., definition of fundamentalist: 1) believes 2) proclaims 3) defends 4) obeys
- We are not to wish all men well (Ezra 9:12; II Jn.10).

- Hezekiah, II Chron.31?
- Maintaining pureness of doctrine is so important salvation is dependent on it. I Tim.3:15
- People are helped as they weed out error in their beliefs.
- The marriage ring is a picture of the positiveness of separation. The desire to love the Lord is the great motivator. 11/14/96 John Vaughn
- essentials: Apostles Creed, CBC doctrinal statement, BJ creed; heresies; the Scriptures—no continuing revelation; tongues; Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man; cults
 nonessentials:
 undiscerned: armenianism

What the Bible Says about Unbelievers and Our Fellowship with Them

Frank Hamblen

1. "Try them" (I Jn.4:1). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
2. "Mark them" (Rom.16:17). "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and "avoid them."
3. "Rebuke them" (Titus 1:13). "Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith."
4. "Have no fellowship with them" (Eph.5:11). "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather "reprove them."
5. "Withdraw thyself from them" (II Thess.3:6). "Now we command you brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition ye received of us."
6. "Receive them not" (II John 10-11). "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine...receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds."
7. "Have no company with him" (II Thess.3:14). "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him."
8. "Reject them" (Titus 3:10). "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject."
9. "Be ye separate" "Come out from among them" (II Cor.6:17). "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you."

II Jn.9-11

I Tim.4:1-2, 6

II Tim.2:20-21

Jude 3-4

Let No Man Deceive You

Foundation Publication 10-12/95

The Bible plainly tells us that the “last days” will be days of great deception. II Timothy 3:13 foretells that in the days prior to the Lord’s return, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” II Peter 2:1-3 prophesied of the “false teachers” who would arise within the church to deceive the unwary. The Apostle Paul stressed the necessity of being on guard against the wolves in sheep’s clothing who would “draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:26-31). The “latter times” for the church, the Bible tells us, will be marked by “seducing spirits,” “doctrines of devils,” and “signs and lying wonders” (I Timothy 4:1-2; II Thes.2:6-10).

God does not want His children to be deceived by any means, even when Satan and his ministers appear as angels of light and ministers of righteousness (II Cor.11:13-15). God has given us His Word, the Bible, to reveal and expose every satanic deception. He has given pastors as undershepherds of the flock to warn and protect the sheep against the wolves in sheep’s clothing. God does not want us to be ignorant of Satan’s devices (II Cor.2:11).

In spite of God’s warnings, many believers today are being deceived. In the name of unity, many are being deceived by the ecumenical movement. In the name of the Holy Spirit, many are being deceived by the Charismatic movement. In the name of evangelism and missions, many are being deceived into working with those who preach a false gospel. In the name of the Word of God, many are being deceived by false translations of the Bible. In the name of church renewal, many are being deceived into substituting psychological manipulations of the mind for the working of the Spirit of God in the heart.

In all of these deceptions, the only safe test is found in Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Sincerity is not enough; popular acceptance is not the criterion; even speaking in tongues or the performing of “miracles” is not a safe test because the devil and his angels can produce counterfeit signs (I Jn.4:1). No, the only safe test of truth is the Word of God—“the doctrine which ye have learned” (Rom.16:17). ***“Little children, let no man deceive you”*** (I Jn.3:7).

This Is Where We Stand...

Written in 1935 by M.H. Reynolds, St. (1898 – 1970)

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- **We believe** Modernists are infidels, and Christians are commanded “*to have no fellowship*” with them (II Cor.6:14-17).
- **We believe** that faithful, God-fearing Christian leaders will inform their constituency of these painful facts and do their best to lead them to obey God’s Word and “*come out*” (II Cor.6:17).
- **We believe** most denominations are under the leadership and control of Modernists, and Christians should not support them in any way (II Cor.6:16).
- **We believe** that these conditions of infidelity (Modernism) made Bible Schools, Faith Missions and independent, fundamental groups necessary, as they were forced, if obedient to the Word of God, to separate from them (II Tim.3:1-5).
- **We believe** when Christians remain in such churches, such movements, they become partakers with them of their evil deeds. They help spread infidelity (II Jn.9-11)!
- **We believe** our Bible Schools, Faith Missions, and Fundamental Churches have been weakened and compromised by their leaders remaining in their apostate denominations and continuing to support their programs. The results of such actions are, and always will be, that groups are led back into Modernism, instead of out with God (II Pet.2:1-3).
- **We believe** ministers, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, and leaders who do not separate from modernistic men and organizations, because of their evil, are disobedient to God’s Word. They become a hindrance rather than a help to separated groups and ought to be rebuked (I Jn.1:7-9).
- **We believe** individuals, as well as groups, who believe and wish to obey God’s Word should be warned against such compromisers and encouraged to refuse to help them in any way. If they prefer to remain with the Modernists, let the Modernists support them (II Tim.4:1-5).
- **We believe** schools are needed where faculties are Militant Fundamentalists, free from Modernism and its influence, where groups looking for separated leaders may send students to be trained in Militant Fundamental leadership (II Tim.2:15).
- **We believe** many of the movements like the YMCA, YWCA, Student Volunteers, Christian Endeavor, etc. once greatly used of God, are

now a menace, and that neither church nor Christian leader who would be true to God should continue to support them because of their infidel connections (Titus 3:10).

Believing the facts as set forth, we believe that those who would be true to God's Word must face the issues and obey His Word, "*Come out from among them*" (II Cor.6:17). **We are happy to say to all, this is where we stand, and why we stand there** (I Pet.3:15-16)!

Axioms of Separation (booklet)

By John E. Ashbrook

SEPARATION FROM APOSTASY

- AXIOM #1: Scripture forbids us to have fellowship with unbelief.
AXIOM #2: Scripture commands us to reprove apostasy.
AXIOM #3: Scripture teaches us that we must purge unbelief if we can.
AXIOM #4: Scripture teaches that believer and unbeliever cannot be yoked together in spiritual endeavor.

SEPARATION FROM DISOBEDIENT BRETHREN

- AXIOM #5: Scripture teaches us to separate from disobedient brethren.
AXIOM #6: God's work done in God's way produces only good results. God's work done in man's way produces good and bad results.

PRACTICING SEPARATION PRACTICALLY

- AXIOM #7: Do not affiliate your church with any church, mission, movement or evangelistic effort which does not fully believe the Word of God.
AXIOM #8: Do not affiliate your church with any church, mission, movement or evangelistic effort which does not practice biblical separation.
AXIOM #9: You cannot preserve a position without crusading for it.
AXIOM #10: When in doubt, don't join.

WHAT SEPARATION IS NOT

- AXIOM #11: Separation is not the answer to every disagreement between brethren.

THE NAMELESS PROPHET

- AXIOM #12: The Spirit of God has never led one Christian contrary to one word of the Word of God.
AXIOM #13: At any given time of church history God is most severe on those whom He is using at the moment.

What would you want CBC to be known for—love or separation? (False dichotomy)

Speaking the Truth in Love

II Pet.1:4; Eph.4:15

July 28, 1996

- I. Love is obvious in the Scriptures. Even the unsaved see it.
 - A. God is love (I Jn.4:16).
 - B. The two great commandments are (Mt.22:37-40):
 - 1. love God. (first four commandments)
 - 2. love others. (second six)
 - C. I Cor.13.
 - D. Love your Christian brother fervently (I Thes.4:9-10; I Pet.4:8).
 - E. Love all your Christian brethren (Jn.17:21).
- II. Where is separation (holiness, truth, honesty, loyalty) in the Bible? Everywhere!
 - A. Separation is in Genesis through Revelation.
 - B. Gen.1:4 marks its first appearance in the word “divided” which is the same Hebrew word which is translated “separated” in Lev.20:24 and Ezra 10:11; Ex.20:3-4, et al.
 - C. II Cor.6:14-7:1; Gal.1:8.
 - D. There are two aspects of separation:
 - 1. orthodoxy: right thinking.
 - 2. orthopraxy: right practice.
 - E. All are to develop discernment (which is the Siamese twin of separation), through practice (Heb.5:14).
- III. Which is more important—love or separation?
Current tendency: feeling sensitive vs. truth sensitive; speaking the truth comes first
 - A. Two questions: which is more important:
 - 1. another’s feelings or the truth?
 - 2. damaging someone or helping someone?
 - B. Both must be practiced simultaneously.**
 - C. It is possible to balance love and separation (these co-existing realities) only by abiding in Christ. Lo and behold, they merge into a person—Christ!

Have the Right Attitude and Actions Towards Those in Other Churches

Helps to Balance Separation within Love
(other issues involved with those who leave a church)

1. Do nothing to promote unbelief (II Chron.19:2).
 - a. If a person believes false teaching, he will be damned (Jn.14:6; Jn.3:18).
 - b. Do not lend support (your efforts, name, finances) to that which is connected with unbelief (II Cor.6:14-18).
2. Promote the unity of the body of Christ (Eph.4:1-6; Rom.12:4-5; I Cor.12; Rom.16:17-18).
 - a. Have fervent charity among the brethren (I Pet.4:8; I Thes.4:9-10).
 - b. Actively promote other God-fearing local churches (Jn.17:21).
 - c. Do not criticize those who simply do things differently (Mk.9:38; Phil.3:15-16)
3. Applaud the good goals of others, if you can encourage them toward God without violating the first point. Rejoice when others seem to be drawing nigh to God (Phil.1:18).
4. Judge righteous judgment (Jn.7:24; I Cor.2:15; Mt.23:23).
 - a. Be growing in discernment (Heb.5:14).
 - b. Become informed so you (especially elders and pastors) can accurately, lovingly help others (Titus 1:9). (“i don’t have nuthin’ to do with them-thar charismatics.”)
5. Let God judge the secret things (t.29:29; I Cor.4:3-5).
 - a. You must judge (I Cor.2:15), but do not overemphasize this responsibility.
 - b. God will separate the sheep from the goats; we don’t have to (Mt.25:32).
 - c. You do not have to point out every fault (I Pet.4:8; Pro.10:12). (not to others, certainly. Don’t listen to criticism either; it scars like pornography.) Let God address most. What a freedom! Don’t play God. Christ did not continually point out His disciples’ faults even though He knew them perfectly. Also, encourage, comfort, be patient.
6. Accept your loving separating (rebuking) responsibility (II Tim.2:24-25; Heb.5:12-14; Gal.6:1). There will be reproach!
7. Promote Christ first of all, while maintaining loyalty to local churches, truth-telling preachers, fellow believers, and all that is true (Eph.5:30; Col.1:18; I Cor.11:29).

Five Standards for Standards

Keith Hamblen

2/95

What are “high” standards? What are “low” standards? How does the local church go about setting so-called “standards”? How does the local church establish “standards” which are accepted and understood by its constituency and/or the general public? How does a new, especially a young and relatively inexperienced pastor, lead in establishing “standards” for his local congregation? What does the beleaguered board member say when an irate or troubled church member accuses his church of “legalism” or of interfering with “Christian liberty”?

It would seem wise in setting “standards” to begin by defining the word, which may not be as simple as it first seems. Just ask the church member what he means by “legalism.” Ask the school board member what he means by “standards”; in fact, ask your local pastor! Wouldn’t it be judicious also, after defining the terms, to develop an approach to “standards” using a well-formulated philosophy which may not have anything to do with what your home church practiced, or with what the Christian school across town does?

Standards may be defined in general as rules, guidelines, and expectations. Three specific categories of standards are (1) personal, (2) corporate, and (3) Bible. The first two of these are man-made, while the third is directly from God’s Word.

Personal standards are applications of Scripture in an individual’s life. A Christian’s choosing to meditate in the Scriptures for at least ten minutes daily is an example of a personal standard.

Corporate standards are expectations set by duly-constituted authorities. An illustration of a corporate standard is a church expectation which requires all Sunday School teachers to attend that church’s regular services.

Bible standards are those rules established by the direct wording of Scripture. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is a Bible standard. Certainly all personal and corporate standards should be Biblical, but there is a real and significant distinction between standards which are the application of Scripture, and those which are Scripture itself.

The following five guidelines for the understanding and formation of standards will promote both personal growth and unity among the brethren.

1. Do not add to, or take away from, the Word of God. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” God thundered from Mt. Sinai. Man is not to elevate anything above God, or even to the same level as God. He has exalted His Word even above His Name, and we must not put any man-made personal or corporate standard on the same level as a Bible standard.

The Pharisees taught “for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt.15:8), but Christ restored Bible standards to their unique, exalted level by separating the personal and corporate standards of the Pharisees from those of the Scriptures (Mt.5:21-48). The Pharisees were adding their safeguards, fences, and guidelines—their personal and corporate standards—to the Word of God in an unholy way. They were putting their standards on the same level, or even above, the Word of God. (Not allowing someone to teach Sunday School because he does not observe institutional dress standards is right, but it is blasphemous to consider that corporate standard as important as a Bible standard such as “speaking the truth.”)

2. Do not apply the standards of one person or institutional group to another. Matthew Henry wrote that “rules of practice should not become rules of judgment.” While an individual might personally apply the Scripture, “the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,” to mean that he should exercise at least three times a week for thirty minutes, he must be careful not to expect others to measure up to that personal application of Scripture. A paraphrase of Matthew 7:1 and John 7:24 might be helpful here: “Judge not [according to your personal standards], but judge righteous judgments [according to God’s standards].”

Likewise, while it is right for the leadership of an institutional group to set a dress standard for those within that group, there must be instruction that those without that group are not held accountable to the same rules. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant [i.e., employee, church member, family member, etc.]? to his own master he standeth or falleth” (Rom.14:4).

Knowing human nature and the character of this undisciplined and critical generation, this principle needs to be repeated regularly for those people who are seeking to maintain appropriate standards. “Let as many as be perfect [mature in seeing the wisdom of a higher standard] be thus minded: and if in any thing you be otherwise minded [and you keep a humble, teachable, growing attitude], God shall reveal even this unto you...” (Phil.3:15016). An important part of parental (and pastoral) instruction is to make sure that children (and flock) are careful not to apply personal or institutional standards to others.

3. Make sure that standards help accomplish the mission of the group (or individual). It is easy for people to lose sight of their mission or purpose as a group (or as individuals). When the overall mission is forgotten, imbalance and confusion result. It is important for churches, schools, businesses, other organizations, and individuals, to keep before them their missions, goals, and purposes. It is also important for institutions and individuals to make sure that lesser standards do not undermine the accomplishing of the more important objectives, the “weightier matters.” “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye [are careful to emphasize lesser standards but] have omitted the weightier matters...these [lesser standards] ought ye to have done, and not to leave the [greater standards] undone” (Mt.23:23).

One issue here is not to see how few rules or standards an institution (or individual) can have, but rather to ensure that every standard (1) contributes to accomplishing the mission of the group (or individual) and (2) does not detract from the most important objectives.

“Words are a source of misunderstanding,” it has been said. The wording of standards should be done carefully. It is important for the vision of the leadership to be captured in the wording of the standards as much as possible.

Also, standards need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that they help accomplish the mission of the group or individual. Marty Von has summarized this self-review: “Retain the best, refine the rest!”

4. Recognize the God-given authority of institutions to establish standards for their corporate bodies. God’s way is a way of orderliness and structure, not chaos. A significant part of God’s plan, both for the transforming of His children into His Son’s image and the restraining

of evil, involves authority structures. People are to obey those who have authority over them as long as these authorities do not require their constituents to disobey Bible standards. This is not a popular practice in today's culture!

Every soul is to be subject to the higher civil government powers (Rom.13:1 and II Pet.2:11-17). Children and wives are to obey fathers' and husbands' standards within the family institution (Col.3:17-21). Within the local church, the flock is to obey those who have the rule over them (Heb.13:7, 17).

Within the business realm, employees are to respect their employers' standards (I Pet.2:18-21; Eph.6:5-8). Young people in school are under governors and tutors and are expected to follow the rules and guidelines of their schools (Gal.4:1-2).

Those who become part of other "voluntary bodies" such as sports teams, Christian school associations, or computer clubs, are expected to respect organizational standards; otherwise, confusion results (I Cor. 14:40). To prevent chaos and breakdown, and to be ethical, individuals who cannot or will not abide by an organization's standards should leave that organization. Certainly, working for change within an organization according to that organization's standards for change is legitimate.

While the standards which are established by the authorities within each of these institutions are to be subordinate to what was earlier defined as Bible standards, these institutional standards are to be obeyed by those within the institutions.

5. Do not forget that standards are not the same as godliness. External standards can be deceptive in indicating spirituality. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," and not by their rhetoric or the wording of their standards. Beware of the danger of "drawing nigh" unto God in the outward show of standards while having a heart far from Him; beware of the danger of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt.15:8-9). Beware of overlooking the "weightier matters" of judgment (doing right), mercy (having compassion), and faith (trusting God), while emphasizing lesser priorities. Do not forget that "he is a Jew [that is, God's true child], which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom.2:29). Standards can be

unbalanced toward “law” (Mt.23:23); or they can be unbalanced toward “liberty” (Jude 4; Gal.5:13-14); or, they can be Scriptural. We must continually remember and preach that standards are not the same as godliness or spirituality.

Standards are good, and if understood properly, can promote both growth for the individual and unity among the brethren.