

# Faith Pulpit

## A Biblical Separatism

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? 1 Corinthians 6:14*

*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. 1 John 2:15*

So why shouldn't a Christian drink beer? What's wrong with playing bingo or getting tattooed? What verse says you can't listen to rock music?

We get into odd situations. I know of a Christian school that will expel a pupil for smoking the product that its controlling deacons grow. We all might name believers who are adamant against alcohol but who are incapable of forgiving. And what of platform cooperation? What guide can we point to as that common to almost all fundamentalists? Not easy, is it?

What makes it tougher is the shift in values lately. The world has moved beyond what it would tolerate a generation ago, and now we stand where the world once did. Our old taboos were so handy that we hardly had to think about what we would or would not allow. Now the taboos are crumbling like old plaster, and we can break up any irksome remains by calling them legalism. Part of the problem was that in the moral fervency of past decades we accepted standards that seemed to go with godliness, but without asking very closely what the scripture verses were for those standards. Some of the taboos we preserved for the poorest reasons. We avoided the show because others would disapprove, or because paying admission supported a dirty industry. We avoided tobacco because it would make the preacher mad at us. We did not have many spiritual reasons, nor were we very reflective. So what guides do we have left?

### 1. Explicit Sins

On some matters, the Bible leaves us no options. The shoplifter has to quit: Let him that stole steal no more. The foul mouth has no excuse: Let not corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Some Christian leaders find it convenient to lie about things, but Lie not one to another. Slander has its delights, but the Word of God forbids it. Unfortunately, we tend to be selective about the sins we condemn, taking a stronger view of wine than of resentment; but this does not negate the Biblical principle. Anything that the Bible condemns is wrong.

## **2. Biblical Inference**

A second principle we have acted on, and I think rightly, deals with those delights that live next door to explicit sins. The Word of God forbids lechery. Do we need a separate command to rule out the dancing that invites a person to lechery? What Greek word could Paul use to rule out the bikini? When the Bible commands us to work, do we need a specific command not to gamble?

Another Biblical inference bears on our positional separation. Not many passages specifically forbid us to work with professed believers who link themselves to false prophets. Jehu the prophet spoke to such a one, “Shouldst thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?” (2 Chronicles 19:2) So we rebuke those who walk disorderly, and we refuse to make common cause with them.

## **3. Love for the Lord**

A widely neglected guide to conduct is our love for the Lord. How much do we love Him? We do have ways to measure this love. We can about measure it in the amount of undivided attention we give Him. If we love Him will have no thought of getting the in-crowd to admit us. We may cultivate some unsaved friends in the hope of winning them to Christ, but this is along way from loving the world as against loving the Father. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, 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. (James 4:4).

If we love Him there are a whole bag of delights that we will reject. We will reject them, not necessarily because they are sin, but because they jam out the still small voice in our devotions. If we have a few bad attempts to feed on the heavenly manna after reading the morning paper, we learn to have our Bible study first. It's not that there is anything so wrong about the paper. Other distractions may be more serious: if the activities of last night hurt this morning's precious moment, we face a choice – which do we love? Our Lord or our pleasures? But note that we reject the pleasure, not because it is a taboo, but because it hinders communion with the One we love. Or worse, because it grieves Him.

At least one leader has said that we are now in a time of great revival. If this is true, it must be the most worldly, the most materialistic revival on record. If the message of the cross is to make any impact

through us, it will probably be as we reexamine our whole doctrine of separation. A surgically sterile set of taboos is unlikely to impress the lost and hell-bound. But then, if we love the world, the lost will have a hard time reading the message of the cross in us. The real issue becomes our love for our blessed Lord.

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*Dr. Robert Delnay (Th.D., Grace Theological Seminary) was a distinguished theologian, educator, and author whose ministry spanned over seven decades. A graduate of Wheaton College, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Grace Theological Seminary, Dr. Delnay served in numerous leadership and teaching roles, including at Faith Baptist Bible College, where he was a beloved professor known for his commitment to expository preaching and biblical scholarship.*

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