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BIBLICAL SEPARATION

The General Mandate from God

God instructs believers to "try the Spirits" (1 John 4:1-6). To try the spirits" is a matter of seeking to determine those who are in truth from those who are in error. The warning is to be on the lookout for false prophets.

Do not give false teacher hospitality (2 John 9-11). Of course they are angels...but fallen angels, so close your gate for them. Watch or be on guard for false teachers and regularly warn the congregation of them. (Act 20:26-32) Mark and avoid false teachers. (Rom. 16:17-19) The Lord Jesus warned us against embracing false teachers. (Matt. 7:13-23)

What then is the purpose of seeking to determine if someone is in doctrinal error or not? John does not say in the verses what to do, but points out clearly that those who deny the deity of Jesus Christ are anti-Christ. It is assumed that any child of God would not have fellowship or support those who God says are against Christ.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.” Do not give false teacher hospitality. (2 John 9-11)

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11)

In these verses John tells us what to do with these who are identified as antichrists. John say in verse 11, to be separate from them and not even let them in your house, neither bid them God speed. He instructs us that those who wish these false teachers

well are partakers of his evil deeds. The identity of these antichrists is clearly shown as being those who do not “abideth in the doctrine of Christ.” The doctrine of Christ is His word....and He is the Word as John 1:1,14 plainly states. God’s assemblies are to preach the whole or all the counsel of the word of God. (Acts 20:27) The word "partaker" means having "fellowship" with and further to share in their error and become a partner to their sin.

Watch or be on guard for false teachers and regularly warn the congregation of them. (Act 20:26-32)

“Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

Paul's calls these false teachers “grievous wolves” who do not spare the flock. The illustration presents false teachers in churches as ravenous wolves who destroy the lives of those in the churches. He said the wolves would come from outside and within the congregation (Verses 29-30) Paul says he for three years warned the church at Ephesus about this matter. Paul thought it important enough to regularly speak on the matter for three years. Jesus commended the Ephesians in Revelation 2:2, saying “I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” Clearly Jesus thought it was commendable for the Church as Ephesus to “not bear them which are evil. . .who found them to be liars.” This is talking those who were in these churches who professed to be serving the Lord and who false claimed they were apostles of the Lord. It is loving to embrace those who by their unbiblical teaching show themselves to be wolves bent on destroying God’s people?

Mark and avoid false teachers. (Rom. 16:17-19)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”

Paul uses the strong word "beseech" in commanding the congregation at Rome to mark and avoid false teachers. What was the basis of his instruction to separate from these

false teachers? It was because they caused division and offenses contrary to doctrine. God does not say what specific doctrine, but by the way the sentence is structured it means doctrine in general. Note that in verse 18, He says these false teachers deceive by good works and fair speech and deceive the simple. The word "simple" means "naive" or innocent simplicity. Paul commends them for separating from these false teachers and says, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning that which is evil" which means that believers should not mix with this evil.

The Lord Jesus warned us against embracing false teachers. (Matt. 7:13-23)

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:13-23).

Jesus soundly warned us about accepting a professing Christian or church just because they claimed to speak in Christ's name. Note who these people are that Jesus said were "workers of iniquity" whom He never knew. They were unsaved men who were professing to be Christians who called Jesus Lord, preached in Jesus' name, they cast out demons and did miracles. Yet our Lord and Savior exposed these false teachers and said they were ravening wolves. He gave us further instructions to identify them saying that they would be disguised in sheep's clothing. That means they would be presenting themselves as brothers....as fellow sheep...when the truth was they were wolves.

Is it an act of love to put our arms around wolves posing as sheep and let them into our churches and among the true sheep giving them the opportunity to ravage them? It is sound to promote false teachers and thereby expose our churches to their error? Does such a policy help the cause of Christ or hinder it? A true shepherd and pastor of the Lord Jesus Christ would teach his congregation all God's truth and be ever vigilant in watching for the false teacher. No, no it is not an act of love of the sheep and to care for them by condoning lies presented as God's truth.

Let false teachers be accursed. (Gal. 1:6-11)

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

In the strongest words possible Paul twice says let false teachers be accursed. These men who “troubled” the Galatian church were not pagans or idol worshipers outside the assembly, but teachers who had entered into and have been received by the congregation. The word “accursed” means “anathema” or dedicated or given over to be destroyed. The same word “anathema” was used in pagan temples of the virgin who was to be sacrificed to the idol. She was considered “anathema” or dedicated to be destroyed. He says these false teachers preach a “another gospel, which is not another.” This statement should clarify the matter for all that mix and pollute teach lies that is not “the” Gospel. In verse 10, Paul boldly proclaims in the face of obvious criticism that he will not compromise God’s word to please men, but rather message is clear, he will preach the truth and please God.

Here lies the heart of the matter. Those who criticize and preach ecumenicalism do so using worldly wisdom. They think it is loving and caring to overlook doctrinal error and sin and to not embarrass those who practice these things. They take great pride from their supposed superior position saying they preach love instead of hate. It is well said we are to love the sinner and hate his sin. But is it really an act of love to put the stamp of approval on doctrinal error and sin which will destroy the one who practicing it?

Peter under the inspiration of God addressed the matter pointedly saying:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Peter 2:1-3).

Note that Peter calls the teaching of these false prophets “damnable heresies.” Further he warns that many will follow them. This is the reason for the mandate of biblical separation, to keep these heretics out of God’s churches and to protect the flock from their damnable ways. The motive of these false teachers is also revealed in that they do so they can make merchandise of God’s children. They do it for personal gain.

Sadly, most of these “preachers” in who condone false teachings often gravitate to the pulpit seeking an audience and to be seen of men. Like Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence among the brethren these “hirelings” too love the praise of men. To maintain their position they are “man pleasers” (Gal. 1:10). Paul foretold of their coming saying, “ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

And yes, the other motive is money the “root of all evil.” (1 Tim. 6:10) These compromisers and false teachers receive ill gotten gain from their sorted work of making merchandise of God’s people. It is an act of love and pleasing to God to condone these false brethren?

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 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. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

The principle of separation here is illustrated by comparing it to unequally yoked oxen. The analogy is very apparent. Unbelievers and believers are not equal and cannot work together. In other words truth and lies do not go together. A false teacher is surely an unbeliever and is referred to in this verse as being unrighteous and in darkness. Verse 15, says they are of "Belial" which is a name for Satan and calls them infidels. In verse 17, Paul here too uses strong language to say, "come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing..." The last phrase of the passages says “be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” This means you cannot be in fellowship with the Lord and not be separated from sin.

Yet, those who criticize those who believe God and follow His instructions and practice biblical separation ignore this verse completely or seek to mislead through false interpretation. Who then is pleasing the Lord? The compromiser who embraces false teachers and false churches or the one who obeys God and makes a distinction between false doctrine and God’s truth, between error and lies?

Abstain from every appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22)

This verse too is dealing with biblical separation from evil and sin in any form. It is the broadest of all the verses and plainly states to “abstain” from all appearance of evil. To “abstain” means to “hold one’s self off from” or to “refrain from.” It not false doctrine evil. God clearly throughout His word over and over again condemns sin and false and idolatrous teachers. Is standing beside them, and working with those in doctrinal error “refraining” evil? The answer is obviously no.

Obey not their word and have no company with them. (2 Thess. 3:13-15)

“But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:13-15)

It is no fun to be criticized for obeying the Lord and seeking to please Him. Yet, the biblical separation often finds him the object of disdain from the ecumenical who with open arms accepts all who profess to be Christians with no effort to “try the spirits” or “examine their fruit.” But God says to separate from false teachers and sin. Verse 15 explains an important truth that the biblical separationist understands....the goal and purpose of biblical separation is not to treat a brother as an enemy but rather to rebuke his sin and error and turn him to the truth. As the Lord says in James, “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

False doctrine is not God’s word and thereby cannot save a soul nor give sound instruction to the believer. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” We are to worship God in “spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) Only the word of God can save and mature a believer in Christ.

Thus the biblical separationist is seek biblical restoration with an erring brother and a position of receiving the benefits of believing and living by God’s truth. There is no pride in true biblical separation, only true “agape” love for one’s brother. As Paul stated in Galatians 4:16 “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”

Withdraw from those who will not follow Paul's teaching. (2 Thess. 3:6)

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you” (2 Thess. 3:6).

The New Testament very matter of facts commands, not suggests or recommends, but commands Christians to withdraw from the brother who walks disorderly. The word “disorderly” refers to one who is out of ranks or deviates from the teachings of the Apostle Paul (traditions). This would include personal sin and Paul’s doctrine. The Bible

does not support the idea that we are to embrace everyone regardless of his sin or doctrinal error. Once again God says we are to stand for His word and to be separate.

How these religious people treat and look at them who hold the truth. (2 Tim. 3:10-14)

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”

(2 Timothy 3:10-14)

Paul warned us that evil men and seduces would wax worse and worse. Note that these evil men are called “seducers.” It is plain their prey is Christians and their goal is to deceive for what ever their motives may be. The answer is not to condone false doctrine or compromise God’s truth with mixing it with error. As the passage points out the answer is in preaching God’s truth because it and it alone can make the “man of God...perfect and throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Conclusion (Eph. 5:11-18)

If you are one of those who have compromised God word and criticized the biblical separations not understanding the biblical doctrine of separation this was written for you. If you truly do love the brethren, do you not see that the Lord would be pleased by you obeying him and abandoning your ecumenical ideas and practices of condoning error and sin and coming to God’s truth. Let God’s word speak to your heart and direct your path. He says to you:

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:11-18).

Yes, we are to love the brethren even as God has loved us and we are to:

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity” (1 Cor. 16:13-14)

The basis of separation is found in the very nature and character of God Himself.

The seraphim Isaiah saw in his vision were overawed by one attribute of the Lord: **“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is the LORD of hosts”** (Isaiah 6:3). The Hebrew word for “holy” (**Kadesh**) and the Greek word for “holy” (**Hagios**) both have the same basic, root meaning--namely, “set apart, separated.” The word “sanctify” is a translation of these same Hebrew and Greek words and carries the same root idea. Literally the angels said, **“SEPARATED, SEPARATED, SEPARATED, is the LORD OF HOSTS.”**

God is absolutely separate from all that is earthly or created. This is a Holiness of **Divine Majesty**. **Study** Psalm 99:1-3 and Isaiah 57:15. Compare Isaiah 6:1-2.

God is absolutely separate from all that is morally unclean. This is a Holiness of **Moral Purity**. **Study** Psalm 99:4-9 and Psalm 24:3-4. Compare Isaiah 6:5.

Thus in studying the doctrine of separation we must begin with GOD Himself and we must ever keep before our minds the fact of His awesome holiness and His separateness: **“Be ye holy: for I AM HOLY”** (1 Peter 1:16).

All believers are separated positionally

Each and every believer is a “saint,” a person set apart and separated unto the living God. **Study:** Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Jude 1; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 3:1; 10:10,14,29; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:9.

Each and every believer, having been positionally separated unto God in Christ, is responsible to walk and conduct himself in a manner worthy of and consistent with such a position and standing. **Study:** 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:21; Romans 6:19; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:3.

Biblical separation is twofold: 1) Separation From; 2) Separation Unto.

Separation From	Scripture Passage	Separation Unto
Who hath delivered us FROM the power of darkness	Colossians 1:13	and hath translated us INTO the kingdom of His dear Son
For God hath not called us unto uncleanness	1 Thessalonians 4:7	but UNTO holiness

Wherefore, come out FROM among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing	2 Corinthians 6:17-18	and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty
For I the LORD am holy, and have severed you FROM other people	Leviticus 20:26	that ye should be Mine
Let us cleanse ourselves FROM all filthiness of the flesh and spirit	2 Corinthians 7:1	perfecting holiness in the fear of God
Ye turned to God FROM idols	1 Thessalonians 1:9	to serve the living and true God
But is passed FROM death	John 5:24	UNTO life
He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness	John 8:12	but shall have the light of life
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin	Romans 6:11	but alive UNTO God through Jesus Christ our Lord
And be not conformed to this world	Romans 12:2	but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind
Even when we were dead in sins	Ephesians 2:5	hath made us alive together with Christ
But now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off	Ephesians 2:13	are made near by the blood of Christ
And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works	Colossians 1:21-22	yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight.
That we, being dead to sins	1 Peter 2:24	should live UNTO righteousness
Unto Him that loved us, and washed us FROM our sins in His own blood	Revelation 1:5-6	and hath made us a kings and priests UNTO God and His Father

God has put a difference between the saved and the unsaved and God demands that this DIFFERENCE be evident and well defined—hence the need for separation.

The Word of God delineates this difference as follows:

Unsaved	Scripture Passage	Saved
death	John 5:24	life
darkness	John 8:12	light
night	1 Thessalonians 5:5	day
lost	Luke 15:24	found
unrighteousness	2 Corinthians 6:14	righteousness
infidel	2 Corinthians 6:15	believer
condemnation	John 3:18	no condemnation
perish	John 3:16	eternal life
perish	1 Corinthians 1:18	saved
death unto death	2 Corinthians 2:16	life unto life
children of the devil	1 John 3:10	children of God

There is **no middle ground** between the saved and the unsaved: “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed” (Luke 16:26).

God, in His Word, demands that this distinction between saved and unsaved be maintained.

Study: Leviticus 10:10; 11:44,47; 20:24-26; Deuteronomy 7:6; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:10-11; Ephesians 4:17-20; 5:6-7,8,11; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; 5:4-8; Titus 3:2-4; 1 Peter 1:14; 4:2-4; Jude 19-20.

The believer is to be separated, not isolated

Study: John 17:11,14-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; Acts 1:8; Philippians 2:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20.

The believer is **in** the world but not **of** the world. The monastic philosophy which declares “to be holy you must live in a hole!” finds no basis in the Scriptures. Believers are pilgrims and strangers (1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13) and citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20; John 14:1-3) who have the privilege of representing Christ on the earth (2 Corinthians 5:20; Isaiah 43:10-12) as He represents us in heaven (1 John 2:1-

2). As we represent Christ **in the world** we are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27) because we are not **of the world!** The Lord Jesus was our perfect example of a man “separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). Yet He strongly condemned pharisaical isolationism (Luke 5:27-32; 7:29-34; 7:36-50; 15:1-32; 18:9-14; 19:1-10). The believer in Christ has explicit responsibilities towards all men as he represents Christ in the world.

- He is to be a witness before all men (Acts 1:8).
- He is to be Christ’s ambassador to all men (2 Corinthians 5:20).
- He is to preach the gospel to all men (Mark 16:15).
- He is to shine as a light before all men (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15).
- He is to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:15).
- He is to walk in wisdom towards all men (Colossians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 10:32)
- He is to pray for all men (1 Timothy 2:1).
- He is to provide things honest in the sight of all men (Romans 12:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:12).
- He is to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14).
- He is to let his moderation be known unto all men (Philippians 4:5).
- He is to honor all men (1 Peter 2:17).
- He is to have a good report (testimony) before all men (1 Timothy 3:7; 2 John 12).

Separation from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. Study: 1 John 2:15-17; James 1:27; 4:4; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 2:11; Titus 2:11-12; Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:16; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

In the area of questionable practices and associations the believer is bound by the law of love (1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14). That is, in deciding whether or not something should be done, it is not enough for the believer to act according to knowledge (1 Corinthians 8). It is not enough for the believer to ask such questions as these: “Is it right?” “Is it lawful?” “Is it permissible?” Rather he must make his decisions on the basis of the law of love which will result in the consideration of such questions as these: “Is it profitable?” “Is it useful?” “Will it edify?” “Will it glorify God?” “Will it hinder my growth or the growth of others?” “Will it present a clear testimony before the lost?” The Scriptural basis for this latter group of questions can be seen by studying such verses as 1 Corinthians 8:9; 10:23; 10:31-32; Romans 14:21.

Separation from an immoral Christian brother is commanded of God. Study: 1 Corinthians chapter 5. In seeking to obey God in these matters such passages as Galatians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26 should also be kept in mind.

Separation from all religious apostasy is commanded of God. Study: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (compare Deuteronomy 22:9-11, God hates mixture!); Revelation 18:4.

When an ox and a donkey are yoked up together they are involved with the same work. They are “on the same team,” laboring together for common goals and objectives. Believers are not to work together in co-operation with unbelievers. See the example in Ezra 4:1-5. The Lord Jesus never enlisted unbelievers to carry out the work of God. The football player would never think of giving the ball to a member of the opposite team!

Other passages which demand separation from false teachers and from religious apostasy are as follows:

1. AVOID THEM (Romans 16:17).
2. REJECT (Titus 3:10).
3. RECEIVE HIM NOT (2 John 10).
4. FROM SUCH TURN AWAY (2 Timothy 3:5).[Compare 2 Timothy 3:5 with Romans 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 1:24. It involves a denial of the gospel.]
5. LET HIM BE ACCURSED (Gal. 1:8-9)

The obedient believer must separate from every Christian brother who is consistently and willfully disobedient to the Word of God. This would include separation from the believer who is disobedient to the commands as listed under PROPOSITION 9. **Study carefully:** 2 Thessalonians 2:15; **3:6,14-15**. Note carefully the five commands: 1) **Note** that man; 2) **withdraw** yourselves; 3) **have no company**; 4) **count him not** as an enemy; 5) **admonish** him as a brother.

Who are the disorderly? Carefully read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and make a note of every time you read the word “disorderly” (it is the same word found in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, “unruly”). The Greek word means “not keeping order, out of line, out of place.” It was a military term used of soldiers who would march out of order (not keeping rank, breaking rank). It is used of a person who neglects his duty and evades his obligations. The word means the opposite of SUBMISSION (Eph. 5:21). Thus the word describes a person who is not willing to bow before authority. He refuses to bow before God’s Word and before God Himself. He refuses to bow before the authority of those that are “over him” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14).

Disorderliness can manifest itself in many different ways. In 2 Thessalonians 3:11 some of the Thessalonians refused to fulfill their God-given responsibility to work with their hands and earn a living. Paul had made them aware of their responsibility (see 1 Thessalonians 4:11).

When Paul was with them he commanded them to work (see the last part of 1 Thess. 4:11).	They did not obey and Paul had to tell them the same thing in his first letter (see the first part of 1 Thess. 4:11).	They still did not obey and Paul had to write a second letter to deal with this same problem (2 Thess. chapter 3).
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We see then that these disorderly ones were guilty of disobeying a clear command, both by word and by letter.

Consider 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and compare this verse with 2 Thessalonians 2:15. These disorderly ones were also guilty of not holding fast to the tradition that was handed down to them. Usually when we think of “traditions” we think of some erroneous teachings of men that have been handed down to us. In this case, however, “traditions” refers to the teaching and the letters (epistles) which had been handed down by the apostles (2 Thessalonians 2:15—apostolic tradition, and compare Acts 2:42—“continue steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles”). If a person does not hold fast to the apostolic traditions he is in trouble because these traditions have come directly to the apostles FROM GOD!

The Thessalonian letters deal with a specific problem of believers not working, but the term “disorderly” should not be limited to only those believers who fail to work. The term would fit any believer who is persistently disobedient to the traditions handed down to us from the apostles, which we now possess in written form in the New Testament books. It could involve any kind of persistent disobedience to the clear commands of God given through the apostles.

The action taken by the believers in the local assembly, as severe as these actions are (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14), are intended to restore such a person back to the place of submissive obedience. It is to help him, not to harm him. May the Spirit of God give each of us wisdom to carry out God’s commands in God’s way for God’s glory, being careful not to be a stumbling block to the Jews, to the Gentiles nor to the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32).