

THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH (Dealing with Apostates)

It is hard to imagine God's people being tolerant of the level of perversion being perpetrated by the apostates as described in the letter of Jude. When this happens, the whole church is in danger of being compromised in short order. All that has to happen for apostasy to take over is for true believers to be passive. It happens so easily. After all, aren't we to be LOVING? Yes, we are to be LOVING, but we are also to be HOLY.

Ephesians 5:11 (NKJV)

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

We love the lost evangelistically, but when it comes to the body of Christ, there is a holiness standard required by the law of Christ. Love must be shared within the bounds of holiness.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NKJV)

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.11 But now I have written to you **not to keep company with anyone named a brother**, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.12 **For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside?** Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

Claiming to be a part of the fellowship of God's people brings with it accountability (a largely forgotten concept in our day). Apostates must be contended with earnestly in the context of the church because they seek to legitimize immorality and false doctrine. They seek to bring flagrant compromise into the context of the body. OUTSIDE the context of the church family, we do not hold people accountable, but INSIDE, we do! That is Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 5!

We reach out to unbelievers evangelistically with the love of Jesus. We want them to come to repentance, where they believe in Jesus as we do. But if they come into the context of the church with an agenda to seek to lead people astray, then we must earnestly contend for the faith. We must expose them and strongly stand against such error. Tolerance is the “byword” of our day, but it is the antithesis of EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH in the context of the church family. No responsible shepherd lets a wolf have free play in the fold of the sheep! Outside, the wolf can roam freely. However, in the fold, there is to be no tolerance for the wolf.

Acts 20:29-31 (NKJV)

29 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Faithful elders shepherd the flock. They watch and guard the flock. They are defenders of the faith and serve for the good of God’s people. In fact, part of what it means to be qualified to be an elder is that one must be able to defend the faith against false teachers. We must be able to keep them out (cf. Titus 1:9-11).

We love the lost evangelistically, but brotherly love requires accountability! And faithfully standing for THE FAITH demands that false doctrine and false teachers be refuted and silenced. Apostasy is like cancer – if it is not cut out it just continues to grow! Apostates must be dealt with forcefully as we CONTEND EARNESTLY for the faith!