

Eating with Egyptians

by Tricia Berg

*I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone **who bears the name of brother** [fellow believer] **if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one**. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you." 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (Also see 1Cor. 15:33-34, Phil. 3:17-19)*

I noticed something interesting the other day. In Genesis 43:32, the Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews, because that was an abomination to them. In Galatians 2:11-14, Peter (Cephas) didn't want to eat with Gentiles (as was the custom of the Jews to refrain from doing - Acts 10:28). Jews were to keep separate from Gentiles to guard against adopting their vile customs. (Lev. 18:24-30) They also took pains not to touch anything unclean, which would make them unclean themselves. (Isa. 52:11) Peter was reprimanded by Paul, since believing Jews and Gentiles are now being made into one new man. (Acts 10:15, Eph. 2:11-22)

Notice a couple of things in the passage at the top about avoiding the company of certain persons—it applies to those who profess to be believers ("bears the name of brother"). There are several sins listed: sexual immorality (any physical intimacy outside of marriage between a man and woman), greed (loving money, coveting), idolatry (worshiping idols, which includes giving the honor due to God to anyone or anything other than Him, reviling (speaking ill of others, using corrupt language, etc.), drunkenness and swindling (cheating others). These same sins are listed by Paul in the very next chapter (but there were no chapters in the original epistle/letter) as behaviors that will cause someone to be barred from inheriting the kingdom of God (if made a practice of rather than repenting and refraining from them).

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were

sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

As verse 11 indicates, JESUS washes us clean (and He is the ONLY way to be freed from the “stains” and penalty for our sins). The reason that word is in past tense is that Paul is addressing BELIEVERS—they WERE washed upon coming to faith, and they are meant to STAY clean (which includes confessing to Jesus and receiving forgiveness and cleansing upon slipping - 1John 5:9-10 - John’s letter is also addressed to believers, as are those found in Rev. 3:4-6, Jude 1:23, Jam. 1:27). Intentionally soiling our pristine white garment of salvation is unthinkable! It cost Jesus untold suffering unto death to clothe us with it! (Heb. 10:26-39, 12:14-29, Rev. 2:21-23, 3:19, Isa. 52:13-53:12, John 10:14-18)

Think about it—if unbelievers were being addressed, then that would suggest that if they refrain from these sins then they can save themselves. No, these prohibitions are for the children of God. (John 1:12-13, 1John 3:1-10, 2:1-6) Paul doesn’t mean that if they believe, then they are no longer “considered” people who commit those sins anymore even though they still DO. He means they have been set free from the corrupt desires of the flesh that enslaved them and made them obey sin rather than God’s will and empowered by the indwelling Spirit to bear good fruit. (John 8:31-36, Rom. 6:12-23, 2Pet. 2:18-22, Matt. 7:17-27, John 15:16, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:10)

We can also find these sins among those listed by Paul in Galatians when he contrasts the fruits of the Spirit with those of the flesh, again warning us that they are not the behaviors of those who will inherit the kingdom of God. (Heb. 6:9-12) We who have been redeemed are to bear fruit for God now. The fruit of the Spirit is GOOD, and visibly so. (Luke 6:43-49, John 15:1-10, Matt. 13:23, 2Cor. 5:14-15, Col. 3:23-25) We can’t see the Spirit, but we can see the effects He has on people. (John 3:8)

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: **sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.** I warn you, as **I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.** Galatians 5:19-25 (Also see 2Pet. 1:5-12.)*

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For **while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death**. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which **held us captive**, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. Romans 7:4-6

When Paul says "live by the Spirit" in v. 25 below, that refers to those who have been BORN AGAIN—washed and regenerated in their spirits by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-8, Titus 3:3-8) Those who show by their behavior that they are still enslaved to sin are missing the point about being set free. We were not set free TO sin, but FROM it. (Phil. 2:12-16, Titus 2:11-15, 2Tim. 2:19-26) In v. 6:5 below, Paul refers to the future resurrection of the dead. However, in v. 8:11 he is talking about "mortal" bodies—not the incorruptible, resurrected bodies (1Cor. 15:50-58), but the bodies we live in NOW. We can walk in the newness of life because of the Holy Spirit living IN us. He talks more about that in Titus 2:11-15 - the grace of God (through the power of the Spirit) "training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age..."

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might **walk in newness of life**. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would **no longer be enslaved to sin**. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**. Romans 6:1-11

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 **If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the**

dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For **if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:9-14 (Also Rom. 13:14, Gal. 5:24)

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But **sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.** Let there be **no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place,** but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that **everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. Ephesians 5:1-12

So believers have received instructions as to how to please God in the matter of keeping leaven out of the pure Body of Christ (1Cor. 5:6-13), but there often seems to be a disconnect in carrying them out. Because of how it involves eating, it reminds me of the way that some *perhaps* well-meaning (?) believers do not understand that the food restrictions do not apply to the Church. (Mark 7:14-23, Acts 15:20, 29, Acts 21:25, Rom. 14:14-23, 1Tim. 4:1-5, Titus 1:15 - *as opposed to sexual immorality, which was repeatedly reaffirmed to be unacceptable* for believers - 1Cor. 5, Rom. 13:13, 1Cor. 6:12-18, 1Cor. 7:2, 1Cor. 10:8, 2Cor. 12:21, Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:13, Col. 3:5, 1Thess. 4:3-8, 1Tim. 1:8-11, Heb. 12:14-17, Heb. 13:4, Jude 1:7, Rev. 2:14-16, Rev. 2:20-23, Rev. 9:21, Rev. 21:8, Rev. 22:15). The reason that particular sin (sexual immorality, in its varied and numerous forms) is so rampant is that Satan knows very well how important it is to God that His people remain pure—our bodies are His temple! (1Cor. 3:16-17, 1Cor. 6:19-20, 2Cor. 6:16. Eph. 2:19-22)

I don't know about you, but I have sometimes found myself in a position of associating with and eating with people who fit Paul's criteria to avoid. It's common these days for someone to claim to believe, but live with someone as

though married even though they are not. It's a tough spot to be in (once you know what the Bible says) because they are often beloved family members. Usually they "plan to get married," which factors into their failure to understand what's wrong with it in these permissive times in which we live. This world believes there is nothing wrong with "eating the wedding cake" before the wedding—just like the modern Church thinks that you can "have your cake" (the kingdom of God) "and eat it, too" (love the world). But that's not true.

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but **whoever does the will of God abides forever.** 1 John 2:15-17*

*You adulterous people! Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "**God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**" **Submit yourselves therefore to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:4-10*

For the most part, I've noticed that those living in worldly sin do not actually have a close relationship with God. Maybe they used to attend worship services, but don't now—perhaps because their consciences trouble them (but not enough to change their behavior). Or worse, they may be slipping in their faith—choosing to indulge the flesh rather than be close to God. (Gal. 5:13, 16, 24, Rom. 13:14) You can't do both. Sin hardens the heart against God. (Heb. 3:12-14) So I tend to think they are probably not true believers (or perhaps very immature ones) if they don't know better than to deliberately practice sin as though God doesn't see or care what they do as His children. That is not what a person who knows Him very well would do, is it? For Jesus to die so that we can continue sinning intentionally, that would make no sense at all, would it? (Rom. 6, John 8:34-36, Titus 3:3, 2Pet. 2:18-22)

As for me, I'm finding this to be an awkward dividing point. Family doesn't want to talk about "religion and politics" at gatherings (or maybe not at all, ever). It's considered rude—and the two are closely related because we [should] vote

according to our [biblical] values. We Christians can't separate our faith from any part of our life, since believers ARE the church, the Body of Christ, 24/7/365.25. I definitely don't think we should argue with one another or be deliberately offensive, but that doesn't mean refraining from speaking at all. Like most things, the place to be is in the middle rather than the extremes—no yelling or name-calling, but not completely quiet, either. God's enemies would be VERY pleased if all opposing voices were silenced, but we're to speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15-32) What better place to begin than with close family and friends?

Regardless of their response, we need to remember that our true family consists of our brothers and sisters in Christ, according to the Bible. (Matt. 12:46-50, 1John 4:5-6) When addressing sin in families (in particular, of professed believers), we have to be prepared to live with the consequences of standing up for our faith. Even though our true motive is love, we may lose their fellowship (hopefully not permanently)—but that is actually preferable to losing fellowship with Christ. (1John 1:3-7) Paul said in 1Cor. 5:5 that it's better for an unrepentant sinner to be out of fellowship temporarily than to lose their soul (by thinking our including them indicates they need not repent). (1John 2:28-29, 2Cor. 12:21) If our being around them, minding our own business and keeping our opinions to ourselves, has not made any difference, then we shouldn't tell ourselves that we HAVE to continue doing so, or "they'll never come around." They don't need reassurance they are "fine" with God—they need a wake-up call! (1Cor. 15:33-34, Rom. 13:11-14, 1Thess. 5:5-7, Eph. 5:15-17, Rev. 3:2-3)

We don't change their hearts—God does, and He is able. We pray and trust Him. We calmly stand firm. We choose our words carefully so as not to cast any stumbling blocks, but if we can't please both, we choose to please God over men (even mature adult family members—except Paul said in 1Cor. 7:12-16 that an unbelieving spouse may be positively influenced by observing the faith of a believing spouse, it's different because of how the "two become one" when married). (Gal. 1:10) I would NEVER suggest that we should HATE anyone, but the truth is that we ARE told to "hate" anyone, even family, who tries to lead us away from Christ or take His place in our hearts—the same as we would "hate" someone who were intentionally trying to kill us or someone we love (Luke 14:26, Deut. 13:6-11, NOTE: We can be thankful that we're NOT told to kill anyone due to their lack of faith under the New Covenant). This physical life is short, but the spiritual condition of our soul at the end of our earthly life determines where we spend eternity. (Mark 8:36-38)

The separation in BOTH the Old and New Testaments of God's people from the rest of the world has the purpose of protection of the body of called-out believers. What does the temple of God have to do with idols? (2Cor. 6:14-7:1) Bad company corrupts good morals. (1Cor. 15:33-34) A little leaven leavens the whole lump. (1Cor. 5:6-8 - Bear in mind that causing another to sin, whether by force or by influencing them through encouragement and approval of it, is included in evil and "malice"/intent to harm another. 1Thess. 4:1-8, Matt. 18:7-10, Matt. 5:19, Rom. 13:8-14 - don't stop reading at v. 10.) The point is not that we WANT to "kick out" anyone, but that they should recognize that our bodies are temples of the Lord and we must REPENT from defiling His pure Body. (1Cor. 3:16-17, 6:18-20, 1Thess. 4:7-8, 1John 3:24, 5:18-21) We WANT people to be restored to fellowship. (2Cor. 2:6-9, 7:8-10, 1Tim. 1:5-11)

We're supposed to love the world so that they can hear the message and be SAVED, not love the ways of the world. Compromising on the truth is deadly, the same as adding only a "little poison" to our food or drink may still be lethal. We need to hold fast to receive what was promised—put on the whole armor of God to remain standing until the end. (Heb. 6:11-12, 10:36, Eph. 6:10-20) Run the good race, fight the good fight. (1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Tim. 6:11-12, Heb. 12:1-4) Remember, the five foolish virgins who were not ready when the bridegroom came for them did NOT enter in. (Matt. 25:1-13, Psa. 119:105, 111:10)

As predicted in 2Tim. 4:1-5 and 3:12-17, Peter in 2Pet. 3:1-3 and Jude, we have reached times of difficulty in these end times. The Church is leavened. (Matt. 13:33)

*Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the **ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction**, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace*

and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:11-18

But many people say, “only God saves, and so we should just ‘love’ everybody.” That is TRUE of salvation, but we are called to love in BOTH deed and truth (1John 3:18), making disciples of those who accept the message. (Matt. 28:19-20) Being loving requires both living out and telling the truth, even if it’s inconvenient or uncomfortable. (Eph. 4:15-32) People who are deceived by lies being told inside the Church are pretty slow to seek the truth, because they trust that they already have it. The Holy Spirit doesn’t convict sinners when they hear reassurances that there is no such thing as sin. (Jude 1:4, Rom. 16:17-19) He does so when people hear the FULL counsel of God. (Acts 20:26-35, Rom. 6:17-18) He convicts them when they hear the truth and examine their own lives in its light. (2Cor. 13:5, 1Tim. 6:3-16, 2Tim. 4:1-5) The answer to not being a hypocrite is not to embrace sin, but to deal with our own first before we speak out against it. (Matt. 7:3-5) Paul said that God will judge the world. It’s our job to judge those inside, for the health of the Body of Christ, with restoration of the sinner to fellowship upon repentance as the goal. (2Cor. 2:4-9, 1Tim. 1:5-11)

Thankfully for us, there is a difference in the way we deal with sinning believers between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. In Exodus 32:25-29, the Levites had to kill even their family members who worshiped the golden calf. Again, we can be glad there is NO such requirement made of us today (nor would it please God if we did so), but we ARE to break fellowship with believers who refuse to repent. Jesus Himself even taught this to His disciples in Matthew 8:15-17. IF our brother or sister in the Lord later repents, we are to GLADLY restore fellowship with them, rejoicing! (Matt. 18:12-17, Luke 15:3-10, Rom. 16:19, 1Cor. 13:6, 2Cor. 7:9, 13:11, Col. 2:5-7, 2John 1:4, 3John 1:3-4)

Some commentators say that the main point of the passage at the top of this article is only to prohibit believers from observing the Lord’s Supper with unrepentant sinners. However, it says BOTH not to “eat with,” and also not to “associate with.” The Greek word for “eat with” is from the same root as the word used when the Pharisees criticized Jesus for eating with sinners. (Luke 5:29-32) At first glance, it seems contradictory for us to be told not to do something that Jesus did, but Jesus replied that He came to call sinners to repentance (and how could He do that if He didn’t have any contact with them?) Jesus was eating with people who needed to repent and receive salvation, not those who already had. (Luke 5:32, 19:1-10) So it’s the same with us—we CAN eat with unbelievers who need us to shine the light of the gospel on them. (1Cor. 5:9-10, 2Cor. 4:1-6, Matt. 5:13-16, Phil. 2:15-16) We just need to be

sure not to deceive ourselves into thinking we're being the "salt of the earth" if we think of truth as optional or perhaps even as "hate." (Col. 4:5-6, Eph. 5:7-17, 4:15-17, Mark 9:50, Luke 14:34-35, 1Cor. 15:33-34)

God knows that we live in this sin-fallen world—the very one He sent His Son to save. If we never associate with them, how will they hear the Good News? But Jesus came to SAVE the souls of sinners, not to merely "befriend" them and still have the end be that they perish. When I first updated this message in August, there were ads on television for a new TV show about being "friended" by God on social media. We can assume (correctly) that the Gospel, which includes both acknowledgment of sin and repentance from it, is not being presented in this show. That wouldn't make for good ratings. People only want to hear about a "feel-good" kind of God these days, but that has been the case for many years now. The show "Touched by an Angel," which ran from 1994-2003, also portrayed a loving God who only wants people to change so that their lives will be happier, not because their sins grieve Him, not in order to please Him. A more recent movie, "The Shack" had their version of "Jesus" say we were not meant to imitate Him. (?) (Matt. 10:38, John 13:15-17, 1John 2:6, 1Pet. 2:21)

People love to hear that God wants them to do whatever they want in order to be happy, but true freedom BEGINS when a person receives the free gift of saving faith. Only then does the Holy Spirit start His work of transforming each believer into the image of Christ. (Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 4:17-24, Col. 3:5-10) Only then does someone have His power within themselves to resist temptation and desire to know and do His will rather than their own. (Phil. 2:12-16, Titus 2:11-15) It's a process.

Gentleness is crucial in these matters. The Bible says to restore the believer who has been caught up in sin with gentleness, but not to be tempted ourselves. (Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20) We are not to be overly argumentative, lose our tempers or get distracted with senseless, pointless discussions. (2Tim. 2:22-26) The fruits of the Spirit are love, gentleness, self-control, patience, kindness, goodness, peace, faithfulness and joy. (Gal. 5:22-25) Maybe it would help bring straying sinners back to close relationship with Jesus (bearing fruit and abiding in Him - John 15:1-10) if we had a private, heart-to-heart talk with them and admitted they are putting us in a tough spot. However, if they respond negatively (and perhaps others as well, in their "defense"), the Bible tells us to expect it. (2Tim. 3:12-17) We may have to make a choice—love our family more than God (which is idolatry) or pay for our allegiance to Him by being treated like a "hater." (Matt. 10:37-39, 5:10-12, 1Pet. 4:1-5) Whatever

happens, we need to resist any urge to defend ourselves or “get even”—that is God’s place. (Rom. 12:14-21, 1Pet. 3:8-17)

I have to say, I have struggled and failed on this issue. I know that I’m by no means perfect myself, and I was afraid to do more harm than good by making an issue of it. I didn’t want to hurt feelings of the people I love and cause a family rift. I also took into consideration (right or wrong) that in these times, people are DECEIVED into thinking that believers are “free” to behave in ways that grieve God. The culture is one of permissiveness, and young believers are being led away from God through public education, where God is pretty much banned. “Tolerance” is offered to everyone EXCEPT Christians—it’s okay to JUDGE them for “judging.” The “freedoms” and “rights” that people insist upon these days are not the same as those offered by Jesus. Humility and obedience are considered weaknesses in this age. We were warned in advance:

*But understand this, that **in the last days there will come times of difficulty**. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5*

It may help to remember that treating someone “like a tax collector” does not mean hating them. (Matt. 18:15-17 - Tax collectors in those days collected more than they had to in order to line their own pockets, so they were very unpopular. Luke 13:12-13, Luke 19:1-10) Paul said in 2Thess. 3:15 that believers who walked in idleness were to be warned as brothers and not associated with them until they repent, but not to be treated as an enemy. And we love even our enemies. (Matt. 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-36, Rom. 12:20, Exo. 23:4-5) But that love does not include giving people permission to disregard and even despise the ways of God and yet continue calling themselves by His name. (2Tim. 2:19, Titus 2:11-15, 1Tim. 5:20, Titus 3:8, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Jude 1:3-4, Ezek. 36:16-36, Psa. 50:16-24) God STILL doesn’t want His holy name profaned by His children practicing evil. (Matt. 12:33-37, 13:47-49, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 16:19, 1Cor. 14:20, 2Cor. 5:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21, Col. 1:21-23, Col. 3:5-10, 1Thess. 5:19-22, Heb. 5:14, Jam. 1:12-16, 1Pet. 2:16, 1John 2:1-6, 1John 3:6-10, 3John 1:11, Rev. 22:11) We obey out of love, gratitude and respect. If we don’t obey Jesus, we don’t love Him. (John 14:15-24, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 1John 5:3) If we don’t obey Him, He’s not our Lord and Savior. (Rom. 10:8-10) There is no such thing as Him being ONLY our Savior, but not our Lord as well. (Acts 2:36, 1Cor. 16:22)

Personally, I think I will continue assessing each situation as it comes up and try to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, praying continually that my thoughts, words and actions will honor God and shine HIS light on everyone with whom I come into contact. 🌹

*Let love be genuine. **Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good**. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." **To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:9-21*

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us **cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.** Romans 13:8-14*

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth**. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In***

*these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have **put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:1-17*

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, **Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.**" Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a **pure heart.** Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And **the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.** 2 Timothy 2:19-26*

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