

Right And Wrong Reasons For Separation

The subject of Christian separation is like a two edged sword, which if rightly used is beneficial but when wrongly used, it significantly damages the user. It falls into the category of **"...things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"** (2 Peter 3:16). The Bible clearly teaches separation from unequal yoke, as a condition of divine acceptance – **".... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"** (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

The late A. W. Tozer succinctly pointed out that there are times when wise separation may be essential for the preservation of purity, spiritual protection or progress. While ministering at Ephesus, Paul deemed it necessary to separate the disciples from the hardened unbelievers so that he can effectively groom them for God and establish them in faith in Christ (Acts 19:8-10).

However, not every separation is scriptural or necessary. Jesus recognised the fact that He had other sheep **"...which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd"** (John 10:16). This was manifested in his response to the disciple who forbade the person who cast out devils in His name but was not one of their followers -

"...Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:38-40).

Such erroneous attitude of the disciples is still common in some churches today who see themselves as the only true / holy church, and other preachers / churches outside of their denomination as not genuine, and therefore must be suspiciously avoided by their members lest they miss heaven. Like the Jewish religious leaders and their followers at the time of Christ who saw themselves as the only custodians of divine truths, and ended up killing Jesus Christ, the son of the very God they claimed to be worshipping; so also do such churches in condemning and separating from those whom God does not.

Generally, people who are very sure of themselves are often the farthest from the real truth and need more spiritual help than some of those they despise. They are like the people described in Isaiah 65:3-5 **"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou...."** Please note how they saw themselves as **"holier than thou"** even when they were spiritually filthy and more in need of help than those they despised. This confirms these scriptures:

1. **"Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is**

perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?" (Isaiah 42:19)

2. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Such people separate themselves for a variety of wrong reasons including:

1. Spiritual bigotry, religious pride, ego satisfaction, selfish aggrandisement, financial gain, lust for power and domination.
2. Lack of Christ-like humility, Love and transparency.
3. Being "sore horses that cannot be bear to be combed" or "ostriches burying their heads in the sand".
4. Desire to maintain cultural, musical, religious and traditional styles or agenda that they are comfortable with but which are not core elements of Christianity nor strictly demanded of God in His word.
5. Retaining members' loyalty (by keeping them ignorant of what is happening elsewhere) so as to build an empire with the canopy of religion on the foundations of ego, self glory and ignorance of followers. This is similar to the "divide and rule" principle (i.e. ruling over those they have divided from others). Some of such separatees are often like the half baked cakes described in Hosea 7:6-9 where one side is burnt but the other not cooked.
6. Fear of their injustices, prejudices, wrong scriptural interpretations, etc being found out; which could result in losing those members liberated by the truth gained from other churches through association.

7. Propagating under the medium of religion, human (usually the spiritual leader or founder's) ideological, philosophical, sectarian or denominational principles that are not necessarily scripturally sound.

People who separate themselves are characterised by:

1. Closing their hearts, ears and eyes to anything that is different from their view points "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15).
2. Manifesting indifference and aloofness – "They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept" (Luke 7:32).

This message is a timely warning from God for all to examine whether their reasons for separation are based on the scriptural truth or on fallacious fantasies.

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Your spiritual welfare is our concern. For further help, please contact:

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