

DATING: INTRODUCTION, part 3, 2 pgs

The chain of logic goes like this: If you are a Christian then you are serious about living a life that is pleasing to God, yes? And you have committed yourself to be a witness to the reality and holiness of the Living God whom you serve by bearing his cross and carrying the Gospel wherever you go. You have chosen a path that requires you to exercise discipline in resisting temptation, self-control, and restraint to maintain a pure heart toward God, a good conscience toward men, **and to remain undefiled from your contact with the world**. As long as you do, God can use you in a mighty way. His name will be glorified on earth because of you as long as you qualify to serve him and remain pure, and settled on your goal of sowing the word of redemption among the people you encounter.

You will also need wisdom to anticipate attacks by the enemy that would destroy you're testimony. For instance, you are surrounded by an entire culture that is ignorant about Jesus and thinks completely differently, naturalistically, even antagonistically toward you're Christian understanding. Their philosophy is a stronghold that exalts itself against God and to achieve your mission **you must tear it down** and release those who have been imprisoned in it, **2 Cor.10:3-5**. You will need a map to guide you through the country of temptations and a strong commitment to God to stay focused on the path marked out for you. So you must not date non-Christians, but seek to lead them to Christ instead which is much more beneficial to them as well as for you. As long as you stay focused on the mission **Mt.28:16-20** [see my essay, Mission] and remain unstained from the world **Jas.1:27**, you will be a beacon of righteousness.

The other side of this obedience and steadfastness is deliberate disobedience. In that case, you have no business thinking that you will escape the consequences of your actions. **Disrespecting God is presumptive upon his grace**. *God is not mocked for whatever a person sows he will also reap*. What you bring into the world always has an effect as it ripples through. We really have no business expecting that resisting temptation would be easy in the first place.

In this series I chose to deal with **the intimacy problem** that arises from close physical contact and emotional bonding during dating prior to entering the solemn bond of marriage. Now with this introduction we have a proper context for the series in terms of managing and maintaining control over our own desires in the face of the highly charged atmosphere of premature sexual stimulation. **Such romantic involvement has been normalized everywhere**, even among Christians. Christ calls the visible church, his bride, to stand out from the world in purity and singular devotion to him.

Why aren't our kids being taught this way? In general, I think it is because we their parents are interested in stable families consisting of non-disruptive obedient children [**personal peace**]. We live in a non-threatening bubble as **nominal believers**. The last thing we want is to stir up trouble with the Bible and confrontation. We are not on-mission ourselves, but have carved out a quiet niche in which to remain anonymous and affluent. But the NT is filled with martyrs. The book of Revelation is replete with those *who loved not their lives*. The battle is ugly, scary, and dangerous. We who call ourselves Christians are soldiers and this is what we neglect to teach our children. We fail to incorporate this mentality of the cross each of us is to bear in our mission focus.

Some of our children pick up this mission focus in special youth meetings. But few seem to come out of families and churches with this kind of direction and commitment. Though the emphasis of the

Biblical mission is spreading the Gospel [see [Great Commission](#); [Mission](#)], there are plenty of other activities necessary to support it: showing kindness, forgiving those who attack us, doing good to those who seek to harm us, showing hospitality to the needy, helping the poor and downtrodden, visiting the sick, working to correct the ills of society, gathering food for the needy, and on and on. These support activities are vital to the central mission of spreading the truth of the Gospel wherever we go. **Beware of the temptation to shift your focus from the main mission with it's dangers to concentrate on certain less provocative support activities.**

One of the greatest ministries we have is to speak truth into one another's lives ... to recalibrate and refocus one another on the mission goal. Joining a church upon confession of faith in Jesus is a declaration that you intend to continue following Jesus. The church becomes your new family with attendant rights, duties, and privileges to rebuke, correct, and otherwise speak truth to you concerning what you are doing and going through. This is how we love one another for love cannot be separated from truth, 1 Cor.13:6. We set our feet firmly on what we know to be right and will not be moved from it come hell or high water. **We are all tremendously blessed to be part of such a tenacious community.**

*⁵ A truly good friend will openly correct you. ⁶ **You can trust a friend who corrects you, but kisses from an enemy are nothing but lies, Prov.27:***

In what has become known as **the high priestly prayer of Jesus**, he describes the separation of his people from the world as a function of adhering to God's word which he refers to as "truth". *⁶ I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word [embraced it as truth and live by it as doers and not hearers only, meaning to believe it is to do it, Jas.1:22] . ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me , and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me ... ¹⁴ I have given them your word , and the world has hated them because they are not of the world , just as I am not of the world ... ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth ... ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth .*

Jesus stood alone in his weariness and physical weakness and resisted Satan saying **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God, Mt.4:4; Dt.8:3; Job 23:12**

He said **my mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice, Lk.8:21**

³ ... you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing ... ¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial , for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him, Jas. 1: Resisting the pressure to waffle in what we know to be true and right is loving the Lord ... the opposite is not. Though we have stepped from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son, we are still surrounded by a culture controlled by Satan ... It is just plain stupid of a Christian not to expect spiritual warfare while he lives in enemy territory, Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History, by Francis Schaeffer, p.80 .