

Bad Company

What constitutes wrong fellowship?

We have written before on the need for separation from certain people in the church. The Bible requires us to separate from those who are unrepentant in gross public sin or serious doctrinal error. Indeed, not only are individuals to withdraw from such but the church, as a body, must expel those who continue in these sins in order to protect the body. That this is a very serious matter indeed is exemplified in John's second letter where he tells us not to even greet someone who denies the Biblical doctrine of Christ on pain of losing our rewards.

However, the instruction of the apostles goes further than this and shows that we must also keep ourselves from certain other types of person. The basic reasons for this are that bad company ruins our testimony and also damages our own moral position:

Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.' 1 Cor 15:33

Here Paul quotes from a line of iambic poetry by the Greek poet and playwright Menander (342-292 BC); Paul was quite happy to refer to secular wisdom when it accorded with divine instruction. 'Habits' means morals or character. The wrong fellowship damages our character as well as our outward testimony. This is not a trifling issue.

The problem for many is how to determine how to work this out in practice. Some church groups go too far and become exclusive, isolationist and cultic, while others become too open and deceived. The difficulty is twofold:

1. *What is the level of fellowship in view?* There is a difference in fellowship between greeting someone and going on vacation with them.
2. *What is the level of risk in the person in view?* How bad does a person have to be before we withdraw from them?

That we should mix with sinners (as Jesus did) is very clear:

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 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. 1 Cor 5:9-10

The gross public sins of believers are a reason for us to separate in discipline of their unrepentance, but the sins of the world are not normally reason for us to separate. If we never mixed with sinners at all there would never be any conversions; neither could we earn a living. However, mixing with a sexually immoral person in public of necessity, or to do them good or to share the Gospel is one thing, but accompanying them to a sexually immoral party is quite something else. The latter would be fellowshipping in open sin and there are many Scriptures which would condemn such behaviour (e.g. Rm 13:13; 2 Pt 2:13).

The first proposition, then, is that we must never fellowship with people who lead us into sinful situations.

[As an aside, a word is appropriate here about the focus on certain sins. Some believers make a huge fuss about certain obvious sins and centre too much attention on them. For instance, there are church groups that

fix attention on homosexuality as if that is all the sin there is. Their lives revolve around condemning this issue and thus they would never spend any time at all with a gay person. They would also condemn anything where a gay person had some kind of production role, such as in music or filmmaking. I have seen such folk condemn gay issues fervently and yet openly accept people in their church who were gossips, back-biters, slanderers, liars and cheats. This is just hypocrisy. The sin of homosexuality is just one form of fleshly evil along with many others. We would not eject a plumber from our house because he was a gossip or an adulterer; neither should we remove a homosexual person from some form of normal social contact because of his sin. 1 Cor 5:9-10 is clear on this.]

I can have a social relationship, such as going for a meal, with an unbeliever (whatever their predominant sins) if I remain objective and have in mind the witness of the Gospel. However, sharing in the sins of an unbeliever is forbidden. This is what Paul called being unequally yoked.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among *them*. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.' 2 Cor 6:14-18

The Corinthians had a tendency to over-exaggerate their liberty in Christ and rush into antinomianism (ignoring any law of Christ). In this false freedom they had unwisely fellowshiped with idolaters and gave outsiders the wrong impression, thus ruining their Christian testimony. Certain levels of fellowship were acceptable but being unequally yoked was not. This pictures the partnership of two oxen yoked together in a common purpose. It is not a casual relationship at arm's length but a committed relationship in a joint purpose. 'Unequally yoked' means simply, 'mismatched' or a wrong partnership.

This reminds us of the old covenant law,

You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. You shall not plough with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, *such as* wool and linen mixed together. Deut 22:9-11

Mixture causes damage; mixing seeds ensures the destruction of at least one, perhaps both. An ox and a donkey cannot plough together since they are of unequal height, ability and strength.

So, casual mixing with sinners is one thing but being joined in a common venture, or being united in a common commitment, is forbidden. Such a commitment would include marriage for instance, though this is not the prime reason for this warning. For a believer to enter into a covenant of marriage with an unbeliever is a yoking that is forbidden.

We can confidently assert, as a second principle then, that a partnership with an unbeliever which constitutes a 'yoking' is forbidden by Paul.

So believers are forced to make decisions about where the line is drawn regarding partnerships with unbelievers; and this requires seeking the wisdom of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But can we draw more information from the Scriptures on this?

Getting the balance between love and hate

The Bible student has to come to terms with statements in Scripture which appear to tell us to love everyone and others which appear to tell us to hate certain people. What we cannot do is ignore the Scriptures we don't like or dismiss them as less important than others. We have to work through this and come to Biblical conclusions.

The position of God

Firstly, we need to understand that God hates certain people. God has no love for the reprobate. Indeed this is plain; how could God love those whom he decrees to be destined for hell?

We must understand that the love of God is perfect, full and eternal. What God loves he has always loved and always will love; and that love is full, complete as a love of a Father to a beloved son. 'I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him' (Eccles 3:14). God only loves perfectly, and eternally, and this love never diminishes or changes or it would demonstrate that God is not God. God does not love certain people one day then hate them the next; neither does he love certain people more than others – he only acts perfectly.

Thus the reprobates (along with Satan and his demons) in hell are under God's curse and wrath, are not loved and could never have been loved. They were not loved at one time but then hated after judgment; they were always hated. Thus God's word shows that many people are hated even in time (Ps 5:5, 11:5; Rev 2:6 etc.). Indeed, only those who are in Christ are loved since God only loves his Son as the Firstborn of a new creation of men (Matt 3:17); only the church is loved, and that from all eternity (Eph 1:4).

So, as the believer is to follow God, and since God hates the reprobate, it is not at all unusual to think that the believer must hate and avoid certain people.

The position of saints under the Old Covenant

That God's people under the Old Covenant were to hate certain people is apparent. Not only is it stated in clear terms but it is evidenced in historical acts.

Israel and the nations

Israel was not to have any fellowship with the surrounding Canaanite nations for fear of corruption. Mixed marriages were forbidden, military alliances were forbidden and religious syncretism was forbidden. The history of Israel is a series of failures regarding these issues, resulting in continual denunciation by God through the prophets followed by judgment. The Northern Kingdom of Samaria, or Israel, was eventually extinguished following exile, deportations and integration with other races. The Southern Kingdom, or Judah, was also exiled but brought back in God's mercy in order to facilitate the coming of the Messiah. One of the first actions of the repentant exiles was to annul mixed marriages. The key problem with Israel was, therefore, spiritual adultery or wrong fellowship with Canaanites. This is a living demonstration of the dangers of wrong fellowship for believers today.

Ethnic cleansing

God's command to Israel on entering Canaan was genocide, nothing less. This cannot be watered down or ignored. Israel was to wipe out the Canaanite tribes for their sins which had come to fulness and required God's judgment. In the past God had brought about judgment himself when man's sins had come to fulness; thus the flood wiped out humanity (millions of people) in the pre-deluvian world, saving only eight people to start afresh.

After God commissioned Israel to be his representative on earth (prefiguring the church) he commanded that Israel's army instigate his judgment. Thus Israel initially fulfilled this imperative in the military strategy of occupying Canaan under Joshua. However, Israel failed to comply fully with God's command and suffered the consequences throughout its history.

From the nation of Israel we can see that there was not to be a universal attitude of love to all nations but one of selective love to proselytes and hate to Canaanites. The various Canaanite tribes typify different aspects of the flesh and together they represent the reprobate. Salvation was only in Israel and for Israelites (Deut 4:7-8, 14, 32-34, 7:6-8, 10:15; 2 Sam 7:22-24; Ps 147:19-20; Isa 51:2-3; Acts 14:16; Eph 2:12); heathen individuals seeking salvation had to become Jewish; and many did (Rahab, Ruth, Namaan etc.). This shows that the love of God was only set upon the elect in Israel and his hate was upon the heathen nations. The mercy of God to the Gentiles is a New Covenant blessing; the incarnation of Christ was, 'A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles' (Lk 2:32).

Since God hated the wicked in the heathen nations, so also the OT saints hated them. The driving impetus for this hatred was centred in the idolatry of the nations.

And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. Lev 20:23

Scriptures

There are many Scriptures, which exemplify this attitude of hate to the godless, for instance.

Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take *Your name* in vain. Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies. Ps 139:19-22 [These enemies were idolaters.]

I have hated those who regard useless idols; but I trust in the LORD. Ps 31:6

I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, nor will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked. Ps 26:4-5

There are also many texts which demonstrate that we must not fellowship with the wicked:

Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. Ps 1:1

My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. Prov 1:15-16

If you want to walk with God you cannot walk with idolaters.

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on. Prov 4:14-15

He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. Prov 13:20

But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I *am* the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them.' Ezek 20:18-19

There are also texts which condemn those who failed to uphold a hatred to idolaters, even in previously godly men:

Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, 'Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.' 2 Chron 19:1-2

This is important enough for us to add some comments.

Jehoshaphat had been a godly king, having removed idols from Judah and established teaching of the law, and would later know God's power in the defence of Judah. However, at this time, facing a common threat from the Syrians, Jehoshaphat makes a political alliance with Ahab the king of Israel (the Northern Kingdom, see 1 Kg c. 16-22). Now Ahab was not only a terrible idolater but was also responsible for bringing Israel into a new religion based upon Canaanite idolatry (calf-worship and Baal worship). He also brought the counsel of Jezebel, his Canaanite queen (a Zidonian), into national policy; a queen who had instigated a purge of godly people.

For this ruinous policy a former godly man is brought under God's judgment. Jehoshaphat was spared the fullness of God's wrath because of his earlier purge of idolatry and he later again knew God's blessing.

What is important for us to see is that a formal alliance with an idolater and God-rejecter is not only forbidden but brings judgment. Helping and loving those who hate the Lord is forbidden. Formal relationships (yoking) with an idolater and God-hater is disastrous.

A third proposition is that the Old Testament demonstrates that saints must have no fellowship with outright idolaters. They must not help them nor love them; i.e. they must hate and avoid them.

The position of saints under the New Covenant

There are changes in the introduction of the life in the Spirit that comes with the New Covenant. For instance, salvation has now come to the Gentiles and the church, comprising of people from all nations, has replaced the fleshly nation of Israel as the ambassador of God on the earth. Since the Spirit of Christ now indwells believers, there is a power in witnessing that was impossible under the Mosaic Law and this brought some ethical changes. Saints are now to do good to all and to even love their enemies. The Law of Christ is higher than the Law of Moses and works by the Spirit in believers, giving power to comply as they walk in the new nature.

The command to love all

So we have commandments of Christ to love universally,

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. Matt 5:44

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. Lk 6:27-28

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Lk 6:35

We also have apostolic commands to do good to all:

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal 6:10

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 1 Thess 5:15

The Mosaic Law was summed up in the propositions to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbour as yourself, but neighbours were only Jews and proselytes.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Gal 5:14

If you really fulfil *the* royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you do well. Jm 2:8

Under the New Covenant this is extended beyond those in Israel to all nations. Your neighbour is whomever you come into contact with or is within your sphere of influence, whether work colleagues, next-door-neighbours, family, friends or correspondents. We are to do good to all these, but especially to the church.

Was this possible under the Old Covenant?

Does not the Old Covenant teach that we should love our enemies? No it does not. People have in mind the following text;

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you. Prov 25:21-22

Fellowship with, or love for, idolatrous Gentiles was not commanded under the Mosaic Law; indeed the opposite was demanded. However, Jewish saints were commanded to demonstrate the mercy of God in dealing honourably with enemies. But this was not with a view to do them good, or to be in long-term fellowship, but to increase their condemnation. Old Covenant saints were to ensure there was not even a trace of sin in their behaviour and so were to treat enemies kindly (unless directly commanded otherwise). But this was not love and it was not motivated by fellowship with heathen. Remember that Saul was reprimanded by being too soft to an enemy of Israel and Samuel fulfilled righteousness by hacking Agag into pieces (1 Sam 15:8-33). Saul's sparing of Agag and the Amalekite livestock caused God to regret that he had made Saul king. From that point Saul was finished. His failure to kill all the Amalekites was regarded as rebellion.

Despite the NT command saints to love universally, there are caveats

Firstly, to love enemies does not mean that we should fellowship with them. There are many situations where doing good to an enemy or loving an enemy has no implication of partnership or even temporary association. Jesus' words are applicable here:

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matt 5:37-48

This shows us the difference between the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ, which goes much further. Under the New Covenant, believers must do good to their enemies and love those who afflict them. You may love your neighbour and possibly have a relationship with him, but you must love your enemy without any relationship at all. Thus you may give a garment to someone who demands it without reason, that is a loving and good thing to do; however, you may never even see this person again let alone have fellowship with them. Travelling a mile, or even two miles, with an isolated Roman soldier to help him pass through unfriendly territory was a loving thing, but there is no relationship in view here.

The ethical behaviour demanded by Jesus is to demonstrate that Christians are better people than non-Christians. Loving easy people is what the world does; Christians are to love difficult people, even those who persecute them. But none of this requires fellowship or a mismatched partnership.

A practical example may help here. I was once a manager in a large public organisation. At one time I was persecuted by an alcoholic senior manager solely because I was a Christian. This person did me great harm and held up my warranted promotion. Some time later (after being head hunted by HQ and externally promoted) I was able to do this man good and acted lovingly towards him, even having lunch with him. However, I had no relationship with this person at all and did not fellowship beyond a business meal. My testimony was upheld in doing an enemy good, but I did not become his friend.

The fourth proposition is that loving and doing good to a person does not imply a continuing relationship. We must do good to all and love our neighbour, but not necessarily enter into an intimate relationship.

Secondly, God commends churches for hating evil and evildoers. God endorses the Ephesian church, under judgement in Revelation, for its hatred of idolatrous false teachers.

You cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars. ... But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Rev 2:2, 6 [Rev 2:2 shows that it includes the persons who teach false doctrine as well as their teaching. Rev 2:14-15 shows that this included idolatry.]

Clearly the command to love everyone does not encompass those who bring ruin to the church through false teaching and idolatry.

The danger of idolatry is highlighted in the New Testament as being as big a problem for saints as it was for Israel under the Old Covenant.

Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Rm 12:9

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 1 Cor 10:14

Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 1 Cor 10:20-21

If we are to flee from idolatry and evil then we must obviously flee from those who teach and model it. There can be no fellowship with idolaters.

Now there must be a judgment made here since Paul has also said that must fellowship with those in the world, and that includes idolaters, in order to live our lives and evangelise the lost (1 Cor 5:9-10). This requires godly wisdom; we can fellowship with some idolaters but must flee from others. What is the yardstick?

There are two indicators regarding this.

The first is the situation regarding 'brethren' who commit gross sin and teach false doctrine. Many other Scriptures show that we must separate from these (e.g. Rm 16:17; 2 Thess 3:6; 1 Tim 6:5) So, those who were once in our fellowship as Christians but have rejected Christ and turned to idolatry or sin must be shunned. This would include supposed converts who apostatised from Christ and turned to witchcraft, false religions, or sects. A particular danger is the growing interest in Jewish Root ideas where Israel takes the place of Christ (which is idolatry, see Galatians and Hebrews) and particularly of Noahidism where Christ is absolutely rejected, along with the NT, in favour of men's ideas as found in the Talmud (which is a blasphemous document).

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. 1 Cor 5:11

The fifth proposition is that believers who commit gross sin, become idolaters, or preach cardinal errors of doctrine, and do so unrepentantly after warnings, must be avoided.

The second situation is that where an unbeliever has made a firm declaration that they have rejected Christ. Now this does not include all sinners since most agnostics, and even many atheists, have not actually come to any conclusion about Christ and are in the dark about the Gospel. But there are those who have heard the Gospel and have utterly rejected Christ. These are the people that must be avoided. Indeed the apostle John tells us not to even pray for such people:

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does not lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death. 1 Jn 5:16-17

The sin that leads to death is rejecting Christ. All other sins can be forgiven but not that of rejecting the only source of salvation. Now this sin is committed by unbelievers only; however there are some folk who, for a time, are part of the church and appear to be believers. In time they show their true colours and reveal that they are not actually

brothers but just appeared to be so. They then reject Christ and turn to idolatry or wickedness. Those who openly reject Christ should not even be prayed for.

The sixth proposition is that unbelievers who have heard the Gospel and absolutely rejected Christ, who hate God and have instead turned to idolatry, should be avoided.

Conclusion

Cementing relationships requires wisdom. There are great dangers and temptations which beset those who make the wrong relationships.

Now we can see that the New Covenant requires believers to do good to all, to love their neighbour and to reach out with the Gospel to those outside. We are not to be cultic, exclusive and retreat from the world like monks. In doing this we will do good to wicked people and preach the Gospel to sinners. However, there are relationships too far which will damage our testimony and character.

The first of these is continuing in fellowship with those who have been disciplined by the church or who are in public gross sin or teaching false doctrines denying cardinal subjects. We must particularly avoid those who were once part of the church but have rejected Christ and turned to idols.

The second case is those who are not believers, nor were ever even a professing part of the church, but who hate Christ and publicly reject him and follow idolatry.

Though we are generally to love all and do good to all we must not love and do good to those who are unrepentant God-haters and idol worshippers. If we do we will come under God's judgment. We can do good to those who hate US and we must love OUR enemies, but we must be careful not to love and do good to those who publicly express hate to God or openly reject Christ. We can also add that while we can fellowship to some degree with sinners in the course of a daily living or to share the Gospel, close fellowship (a partnership that constitutes a 'yoking') is also a fellowship too far. Such mismatched relationships will only harm us in the long-term.

Finally, any partnership that would involve association with actual sin is forbidden. The Scriptures that condemn the sin condemn any secondary association with this sin. Thus fellowship with an unbeliever that would involve open sin (e.g. going to a drunken party) is forbidden. Though one may claim that you committed no actual sin in going to a drunken party with a non-Christian friend (i.e. you did not personally get drunk) you did sin by association. In the same way Jehoshaphat was not an idolater himself but his alliance with an idolater (Ahab) is condemned by God.

Again there is a caveat to be applied here. Sometimes there are idolaters and God-haters within our own families. The command of God is that we love our family unless they hinder our determination to obey God (Lk 14:26). We must also honour our parents as part of God's law. Consequently, we must continue to love those whom God has placed us close to by blood even if they reject Christ and follow idols. The law to love our family overrides the law to hate idolaters.

I think Jesus' earthly walk is helpful here. He loved his neighbours and helped them. He loved even his enemies and did not retaliate; he even prayed for those soldiers that nailed him to a cross. However, he clearly did not love the Pharisees who intrigued against him

(he did love other Pharisees, such as Nicodemus, and ate with them). He did not act lovingly when he called them vipers fit for hell – he identified them as God rejecters who followed the ordinances of men. Jesus did not treat all men the same way; he was patient with some and loved them but others he strongly denounced and condemned them to hell; this is not love. Jesus demonstrated wise choice: some he loved, others he hated.

Avoiding bad company is merely the outworking of God's declaration in the Garden of Eden,

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. Gen 3:15

There is enmity (lit. hatred) between the Seed of Christ and the seed of Satan. Unrighteous fellowship of Christians with Satan's public followers is forbidden. The separation between God's people and the wicked is something put in place by God from the beginning and is demonstrated throughout Scripture.

Clearly the matter of association requires individual wisdom and careful choice. If it requires wisdom then the matter is not simple and simplistic universal solutions (i.e. love everyone) must be doubted.

The propositions of this paper are:

1. We must never fellowship with people who lead us into sinful situations.
2. A partnership with an unbeliever which constitutes a 'yoking' is forbidden by Paul.
3. The Old Testament demonstrates that saints must have no fellowship with outright idolaters. They must not help them nor love them; i.e. they must hate and avoid them.
4. Loving and doing good to a person does not imply a continuing relationship. We must do good to all and love our neighbour, but not necessarily enter into an intimate relationship. Clearly the command to love everyone does not encompass those who bring ruin to the church through false teaching and idolatry.
5. Believers who commit gross sin, become idolaters, or preach cardinal errors of doctrine, and do so unrepentantly after warnings, must be avoided.
6. Unbelievers who have heard the Gospel and absolutely rejected Christ, who hate God and have instead turned to idolatry, should be avoided.

Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside. Col 4:5

What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 2 Cor 6:15

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