

What Ought to Be the Believer's Attitude toward Unbelievers (Part Two) (Romans 14:1-12)?

During the last article, we discussed the fact that a small group of people exist in the world that explicitly hold to the Bible as their foundation of faith and practice. This group could be called Bible-believers. We also discussed the facts that God gives every person on Earth a free will and allows them to make their own decisions concerning His existence, their worship of Him, etc. However, we also found that God will judge every person, based upon their belief in Him and obedience to His Word (**Romans 14:5-12; I Corinthians 3:12-15; Revelation 20:11-15**).

B. God's Expectations of His Children (John 17:11-17)

In the Bible, we see the reality that every person is given a free will to believe what they want about God, but what then is to be our attitude toward those that do not believe? Are we to befriend the world? Are we to be part of it? Thankfully, the scriptures tell us these things as well.

We must realize that **believers in Jesus Christ are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:11-14)**. This means that, when a person believes in Christ as their Savior, their citizenship instantly changes from the world to Heaven. Though our citizenship changes, our place of residence does not; therefore every believer must learn how to live with the unsaved in as much harmony as possible (**Romans 12:18**).

This passage also reveals that every believer ought to stop being part of the world's system of sinful living and begin to be part of God's system of holy living, through His Word (**John 17:15-17**). Many believers make the mistake of thinking that, because the world is their residence, they need to conform to its message, methods, attitude, etc. Scripture tells us plainly to not be conformed to the world, but to allow the Spirit to transform us, by renewing our mind, proving to the world that God can take a carnal, sinful person and make them holy and righteous through His Son (**Romans 12:2**)!

Scripture also tells us to not love the world or the things in it (**I John 2:15**). This sort of love means *to lust after and covet*. God has saved us to be more like Jesus, instead of the lost. He does not want us to fall back into sinful, fleshly practices and relationships, but wants to replace them with godly ones.

What then? Should we isolate ourselves from the world? No, we cannot do this, because it is impossible (**I Corinthians 5:9-10**) and ultimately detrimental to a world that needs the Gospel message. However, we should separate ourselves from the world, while drawing closer to the Lord. Some ask, "How far should we separate?" For that, we need to discernment that come from our God and His Word.

The Lord Jesus further tells His disciples that **they ought to expect the persecution of the world**, but are not to fear or even retaliate against it (**Matthew 5:38-39**). This world is Satan's battleground, for the present time, and he fights passionately against God's people. However, as much as Satan will fight, God also fights through the faithful prayers and preaching of His people (**Ephesians 6**)! In addition, He takes up the cause of His people and reminds us that the world can only do us so much harm, but it cannot send us to Hell (**Matthew 10:17-39**)!

So then, what ought to be the believer's attitude toward unbelievers? Should we persecute, judge, and rail on them for their unbelief? No! God tells us that we ought to be thankful that He has given every person the ability to make up their own mind about Him. Instead, we ought to trust that He will judge

both the wicked and righteous in the end, and be focused on getting the Gospel to the lost while showing them the love, Truth, and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will the world persecute, reject, and scorn the believer that does these things? Sometimes, but the rejection of the world is one clear indicator of Satan's displeasure at a church family that is working to pull people from the gates of Hell. If the world rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, why should we expect it to welcome us with open arms when we preach His message (**Matthew 10:24-25**)? Instead of retaliating or retreating, we must humbly and lovingly continue forward by faith; watching our Father take up the cause for us by fulfilling His many promises!

How about you, dear friend? How is your walk with Christ? Is God separating you from worldly things? Do you delight in having fellowship with godly believers or do you avoid them? Are you willing to take up your cross and follow Christ, in a world that despises Him? There is great blessing and reward for following after Jesus Christ.

If you have questions about these things, please drop by our house or place of meeting, or give us a call or write an email, and we will be happy to help encourage you through the scriptures.

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