**Attitudes and Responsibilities Toward the Apostate**

**Introduction**

1. **Hebrews 3:12-15** – We are to exhort one another daily lest any depart from God.
2. **What about when one departs anyway? What is our attitude supposed to be toward the apostate? What about our responsibilities toward them?**
   1. Not a consideration of one overtaken in a trespass (**cf. Galatians 6:1-2)**, or one who has sinned against you initially (**cf. Matthew 18:15**).
   2. Consideration – Our attitudes and responsibilities toward those who have been disciplined, or have left on their own accord. **I.e. apostates – those who have departed from God – not in fellowship with God, nor His children.**
   3. **Church discipline – both preventative (churches sake) and corrective (individual being disciplined).** *(This lesson is to consider the sake of the individual, and our part in correcting them to save their soul.)*
3. God has given us guidelines to follow in such situations. Are we acting accordingly?
4. Attitudes Toward the Apostate
5. “Admonish him as a brother”
   1. **2 Thessalonians 3:14-15** – Even though one is withdrawn from, we still consider them as brethren, because they are. (**NOTE: *“admonish him”* – There is still a problem which calls for this action. All is not well.**)
      1. This we must remember, not because we should ignore their sin because they are brethren, but because we have responsibilities toward them.
      2. ***“Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9*** – Cain. Yes! We are!)
   2. **1 Corinthians 5:9-11** – anyone named a brother.
   3. *What should our attitude be toward our brethren? 🡪*
6. Love
   1. When considering this topic, some mistake these actions to be products of something other than love. This is due to ignorance about the topic.
   2. **Our attitude toward the brethren should always be that of love:** 
      1. **1 John 4:7-11** – We love each other because God loved us.
      2. **(vv. 20-21)** – At NO point in time is it acceptable to hate our brethren. (**NOTE: God would not command us to do something which contradicts this principle.**)
      3. **Those who suggest practiced discipline expresses hatred, not love, toward a brother are sorely mistaken, and should examine themselves to find whether they are truly loving the apostatized brother.**
   3. **What constitutes such love?**
      1. **1 John 4:9; 3:16** – Sacrificial for the benefit of the object of love.
         1. It did not benefit God to send Jesus, and it did not benefit Jesus to come – **it was a SACRIFICE**.
         2. The reason such was done was for OUR BENEFIT – the object of the Father and the Son’s love.
         3. **Philippians 2:3-4** – Esteem them better – Manifest when THEIR NEEDS/INTERESTS are considered greater, more important than our own. (Spiritual interests/needs – apostate is in great need!)
         4. **What do they need? Love, but what ultimately constitutes such love? 🡪**
      2. **Matthew 22:36-40** – Love God, love your neighbor – why two greatest commandments?
         1. **(v. 40)** – All that God commands is wrapped up in these two.
         2. **Application in specific study:** *To love the apostate, whatever God commands to be done about them and to them MUST BE DONE!*
      3. **Do you think you know how to love your brother a better way than that which God commands?** – **cf. Isaiah 55:8-9** (God’s ways are higher); **1 Corinthians 3:18-20** (Become a fool to become wise – God’s wisdom).
      4. **So, what responsibilities do we have toward the apostate? 🡪**
7. Responsibilities Toward the Apostate
8. “Deliver such a one to Satan”
   1. **1 Corinthians 5:4-5** – Of the sexually immoral man. (*to save his spirit*)
   2. **1 Timothy 1:18-20** – Of Hymenaeus and Alexander – rejected the faith/suffered shipwreck. (*that they learn not to blaspheme*)
   3. **2 Thessalonians 3:6** – Of the disorderly brother – Does not use the exact phrase, but it is the same concept. (*same reasons*)
   4. **Deliver to Satan?**
      1. This is done as a positive action toward those who are still assembling with the saints (*deliver – something you do – they have not completely left*) – **cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1-2** – It is among you! How? The man guilty of it is still among you!
      2. **What is the state of an impenitent person in sin?**
         1. **Cf. Romans 16:17-18** – ***“do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ”***
         2. *Who do they serve in their sin?* – **Ephesians 2:2-3** – They have reverted to their old ways – the have become a slave of sin **(cf. Romans 6:16)**.
            1. ***“prince of the power of the air”*** – Satan.
            2. Submitting to Satan, not God.
         3. **Cf. Colossians 1:13** – When obedient to the gospel – taken out of Satan’s abode, and placed into kingdom of God.
            1. One who is living in sin, and will not repent is back in ***“the power of darkness.”***
            2. **Their assembling with the congregation does not change that truth.**
      3. **Delivering to Satan is an outward display toward them, and before the congregation that they NO LONGER HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.**
         1. *NOTE: No amount of social involvement can change that truth.*
         2. **To carry on as if they were not in sin, and allow them among the brethren is to DECEIVE ONESELF, AND THEM.**
   5. **Application of such?**
      1. **1 Corinthians 5:9-13** – not to keep company!
      2. ***“not even to eat with such a person”*** – is it the congregation that is NO LONGER eating with him? Not according to **chapter 11** – no eating and drinking.
      3. **This is on an individual basis as well – when away from the assembly, each member must practice this – IT IS IMPERITIVE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE DISCIPLINE.**
      4. ***What about one who has left on their own accord?***
         1. They no longer wanted to be with the Lord and the brethren, and departed themselves to be with the world. (Not withdrawn from, but withdrew themselves.)
         2. **What is the state of their soul?**
            1. Fellowship with God? – NO.
            2. Serving sin and Satan? – YES.
            3. **Can we have fellowship with them? – NO.**
      5. **What happens when you socialize with the apostate contrary to the commands of Christ?**
         1. **You communicate to them (with your actions) the lie that their soul is safe. IT IS NOT – they have no fellowship with God. *(“you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned”)***
         2. **2 John 9-11** – You share in their evil, thus, sever your own fellowship with God.
9. Reprove/Rebuke
   1. **2 Thessalonians 3:13-15** – Do not keep company with him, but admonish him?
      1. There are times when one may still see the apostate. What then? (EX: Work, school, time and chance.)
      2. **Admonish him – to caution or reprove; warn.**
      3. **Any communication should be based on this principle – admonish him.**
      4. **NOTE: Communication should still be present, but it is to the end of CORRECTING THE FALLEN BROTHER, not social.**
   2. **EX: Peter to Simon the sorcerer – He had not been withdrawn from, but was in sin – take the same approach.**
      1. **Acts 8:18-24** – Peter did not beat around the bush. He was bold, and straightforward.
         1. **(v. 20)** – The heinous nature of the sin.
         2. **(v. 21, 23)** – The result of the sin. *(In what matter? – Ministry of the Spirit – not simply being able to impart the Spirit, but the whole purpose of such.*)
         3. **(v. 22)** – The solution to the sin problem.
         4. **(v. 24)** – The desired reaction to such admonition.
      2. THEY NEED TO KNOW – we need to tell them.
10. Pray – ***“for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved”***
    1. It is right, and efficacious to pray for the apostate. But pray for what?
       1. **1 John 5:14-17** – Not for their forgiveness in their current state.
          1. **(vv. 14-15)** – God hears our prayers.
          2. **(vv. 16-17)** – Sin NOT to death should be prayed about, and will be forgiven, but not sin TO death.
          3. **Sin NOT to death?** – Sin that is repented of. **(cf. 1 John 1:9** – confess – repentance implied.)
       2. *Apostate – one who has not repented of their sins – how do we pray for them? (That their hearts would be softened, but what about the fact that they have rejected God’s word? What can we pray for then?) 🡪*
    2. **1 Corinthians 5:5** – Consider the reason given by Paul for delivering such a one to Satan.
       1. ***“for the destruction of the flesh”*** – not of the fleshly lusts:
          1. Always will be a struggle – **cf. Galatians 5:16-17; Romans 8:12-13** – The struggle may wane as the Christian matures, but there will always be temptation, and that must be denied.
          2. **What does *“for the destruction of the flesh”* mean?** – **cf. Romans 1:24-27** – God gave them up to vile passions.
             1. Idea – God gave them over to their lusts, to fulfill them.
             2. Key – **vv. 24, 27b** – dishonor their bodies, penalty of their error 🡪
       2. **Proverbs 13:15** – The way of the unfaithful is hard…
          1. A sinful life is a hard life.
          2. **Cf. Proverbs 1:10-11, 18-19** – They lie in wait for their own blood…
       3. ***“that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:5).***
       4. *When one is delivered over to his proper abode as they serve Satan, not God, he is made to realize how hard that life is! – Perhaps they will turn back to God. 🡪*
       5. **Parable of Prodigal Son** – **Luke 15:11-24** – He suffered, and came to himself.
          1. **(v. 13)** – Prodigal living.
          2. **(vv. 14-16)** – A hard life – what did his sinfulness **(v. 18** – sinful) bring him? (**NOTE: Despite this, his heart was not softened to return until verse 17** 🡪)
          3. **(v. 17)** – came to himself – realization of the nature of his living, and its consequences.
          4. **(vv. 18-24)** – Repented – when? – Whenever he realized the type of life he was living, and how terrible it was.
          5. **NOTE: 1)** Son’s heart was already in the ***“far country,”*** and the father let him go, **2)** the father did not seek the son out, to spare him from his destructive decisions, **3)** the son came to himself after discovering the destruction of his decision, **4)** the father regained his son.
    3. **If this is part of God’s design in withdrawing from the disorderly (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5), is it not right that we pray for such to happen?**
       1. **James 5:16-20** – Elijah prayed that it would not rain!
          1. **(v. 16, 19-20)** – This is in the context of spiritual restoration.
             1. Confession for strength and guidance through prayer.
             2. Also, **cf. 1 John 5:16-17** – Prayer that God forgives the penitent. (**Does not negate the need to pray yourself…)**
          2. **(vv. 17-18)** – Elijah given as an example of the power and efficacy of prayer.
             1. **Nature like ours** – indicating that we have the same ability through prayer that he did.
             2. **But what did he pray for? THAT IT WOULD NOT RAIN! – WHY WOULD HE PRAY FOR THAT? 🡪**
          3. **Ahab Reigns in Israel:**
             1. **1 Kings 16:29-17:1** – Ahab did evil, and no doubt influenced the rest of Israel.

As judgment for the sins of Ahab and Israel, God caused a drought for 3 years and 6 months.

**NOT OUT OF SPITE, but as a corrective measure 🡪**

* + - * 1. **1 Kings 18:17-19** – Elijah came to Ahab, and told him that it was HIS fault this had happened.

Look at what sin did to him, and everyone else!

It was meant to turn him back to God!

* + - 1. *Consider: The cycle of the judges* – **cf. Judges 3:7-12** – The cycle continues… (When times were bad because of their unfaithfulness, they would come to themselves!)
  1. We must pray for them, and perhaps this is one of the best things we can pray about!
  2. **NOTE: It may be hard to let such harsh things happen to one we love, but if it will get them to come to themselves, and turn back to God, WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO ALLOW IT TO HAPPEN!**

**Conclusion**

1. When one departs from God, we must continue to love them. However, we must know how that is accomplished!
2. God has given us guidelines and principles to follow and implement in our relationships.
3. **We must acknowledge the need the lost soul has, and do everything in our power according to God’s word that we can to save them.**