

BE CAREFUL OF COMPROMISE

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I have spoken recently about the topic of complacency. We should be much more concerned about seeking to be fruitful.

Most of us are fairly normal people ... living fairly ordinary lives. Not great achievers on the world scene ... not famous ... not celebrities.

Whatever our fruits are (what we say and do) ... they are unlikely to be reported in mainstream media.

Most of the world barely even notice us! Wouldn't miss us. Fine! 😊

When we consider ourselves ... how doing in our walk with God ... perhaps we can't expect to see dramatic gifts or attributes?

But one import characteristic we all ought to possess ... even if we're not otherwise too impressive is THE QUALITY OF INTEGRITY.

One person defines integrity as: "The practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values".

C S LEWIS: "Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching".

Whether wealthy ... or dirt poor ... it is a quality we should all have!

Psalms 15:1-5

1 Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?

Who may dwell in Your holy hill? (*what does He look for?*)

2 He who walks uprightly,

And works righteousness,

And speaks the truth in his heart;

3 He who does not backbite with his tongue,

Nor does evil to his neighbor,

Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, (*not going to hang around and “enjoy” vile people*)

But **he honours those who fear the Lord;**

He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

5 He who does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things shall never be moved.

Walks uprightly (NASB: with integrity). Swears to his own hurt.

To walk with integrity is to be “true to the Truth”. No pretence or hypocrisy.

Psalms 26:1-5, 11

1 **Vindicate me, O Lord,**

For I have walked in my integrity.

I have also trusted in the Lord;

I shall not slip.

2 **Examine me, O Lord, and prove me;**

Try my mind and my heart.

3 For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,

And **I have walked in Your truth.**

4 I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, (*“idolatrous mortals” — deceitful men*)

Nor will I go in with hypocrites.

5 **I have hated the assembly of evildoers,**

And will not sit with the wicked.

11 But as for me, **I will walk in my integrity;**

Redeem me and be merciful to me.

Walked in integrity. “Check me out”! 😊

People often wonder why George Mueller had so many prayers answered — when he didn’t know “as much” as a Church of God member? Why did God answer his prayers? I suspect it was his upmost integrity!

I believe God values integrity. Even if we’re a little “off” doctrinally ... and otherwise very ordinary.

But today I want to talk more about one of the biggest risks to our integrity — **THE DANGER OF COMPROMISE.**

Are you or I prone to compromise? In the sense of compromising with Truth — values of God?

I'm not talking about little compromises we have to make with family or friends to “get along” with others. Often they are just matters of personal taste!

- Go to McDonalds ... or Wendy's?
- Watch TV ... or go for a walk?
- Holiday in Italy ... or France?

Compromise is always necessary. We can't always expect to get 100% our own way! As in marriage. The art of compromising is valuable!

But ... to **compromise spiritually is dangerous.**

We live in societies where people are encouraged to be tolerant ... inclusive ... diverse ... accept almost all lifestyles and values as valid (apart from the Christian way??). But we can't be that way!

Proverbs 8:13

13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.

HATE EVIL! Not “toy” with it. Not compromise.

We don't necessarily have to stand up publicly and proclaim the evil ... but we need to be alert to guard our own minds.

We can't just say “well ... everyone's doing it ... may as well just accept it. It's only a little bit of evil”.

2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 **And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**

16 **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.”

17 Therefore

**“Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.**

Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”

18 “I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty.”

Chapter 7

1 **Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

We are to be HOLY. Separate. Separate from the ways of this world. Come out!

We can't completely avoid the world — live as an hermit! Nor should we.

But be careful of the attitudes around us. We're unlikely to outright reject God's values. The danger is making small concessions (compromise) to maintain the peace? That's not fine if we are talking about the attitudes that God has.

We need to be patient with people ... kind to people ... but being careful not to drift their way.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34

33 **Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”** (*You might think you can get away with hanging around with bad company ... without it affecting you?*)

34 **Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God.** I speak this to your shame.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NASB)

33 ... **“Bad company corrupts good morals.”**

WARNING! There is a real possibility that people we're around may affect our values.

It may not be our intention. But if we have to compromise to maintain those relationships we're in danger.

“When you have to start compromising yourself or your morals for the people around you .. it's probably time to change the people around you”.

Romans 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world (*age*), **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Not conformed to the “spirit of the age”.

Don't get cosy and comfortable.

People “living together” ... babies born out of wedlock ... divorce and re-marriage ... same-sex relationships ... etc.

We probably all know where the spirit of compromise can take us? There is an end result ... let's look at some of those verses.

Revelation 3:14-16

14 **“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,**
These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.**

16 **So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.** (*The description of a compromiser*)

The final of the 7 churches in the Book of Revelation — Laodicea. Lukewarm. Nothing is black and white — just shades of grey.

It is too easy to compromise ... take on the “temperature” of the society around you. Like the frog in the water.

We need to check ourselves. With clear eyesight. Our focus ON US.

Revelation 3:17-18

17 Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked —

18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Compromising ... being overly casual ... can occur in different situations.

I mentioned before: The Feast of Tabernacles. People turning up late regularly ... mobile phones ringing during services ... brethren popping out for coffees ... inappropriately dressed for services.

Not every aspect is categorically wrong (?) — but what is the direction of travel?

Does it affect our prayer life? Do we start to “let down”?

Our conversation? Do we use “mild” swear words ... even though we are a believer?

What about watching x-rated movies (“50 Shades of Grey”?). Utterly alien to God and Jesus.

“The road to hell slopes gently downwards”. Not overly obvious.

If we give satan an inch ... he’ll take a mile.

Apart from compromising our behaviour and conduct ... we also need to watch out for compromising with the Truth.

Some will depart from the Truth (and have). It probably started with a little seed of compromise — “has God really said ...”?

2 Timothy 3:12 - 4:5

12 **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 **But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,**

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, **which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**

17 that the man of God may be complete (mature), thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Chapter 4

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 **Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.**

3 For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,** but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and **they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (Is that possible? Yes!)**

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

People will not endure sound doctrine. They will turn away from the Truth.

Quite frightening? These are (were) believers! Turning to fables.

Unlikely to be outright sudden rejection? Some seeds of compromise sown?

(Don't confuse compromise with Truth and compromising with tradition).

It happened in Galatia. Paul was writing to the brethren.

Galatians 5:1-2, 4, 7-9

1 **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free**, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

2 Indeed **I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.**

4 **You have become estranged (severed) from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

8 **This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.**

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

They listened to Judaizers (other religious teachers) — like leaven. It was deadly!

Galatians 1:6-9

6 **I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ("I marvel" — I am astonished!)**

7 **which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

8 But **even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.**

9 As we have said before, so now I say again, **if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**

Hundreds of believers left the Truth — cut off/estranged from Jesus Christ. It probably started by compromising with what is right.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **we ask you,**

2 **not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.**

3 **Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first**, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

SERIOUS DECEPTION. Verse 3: “falling away” = Apostasy — a rebellion against the Truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish,
because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The Love of the Truth. Do we love the Truth? Do we value it? Or — is it “easy come ... easy go”?

Quick to compromise? Yield? Are we willing to die for the Truth? (Jesus is The Way ... The Truth).

2 Thessalonians 2:15

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

STAND FAST!

A love of the Truth — even if painful — is a great antidote to deception. A refusal to compromise with the Truth likewise.

Yet ... watch out for human traditions that sneak in as Truth. “Test the spirits”.

Psalms 1:1-3

1 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;

**2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.**

3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

Bad company corrupts good morals. 😞

Watch out for compromise ... the progression of walking — then standing — then sitting (relaxed) ... among the scornful sinners.

Rather — delight in the Truth ... it will prosper us.

We might like the idea of lots of company — okay on one level — but brings with it dangers we should be alert to.

Matthew 7:13-14

13 **“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. (the popular way with a lot of company)**

14 **Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

The narrow way if we don't compromise. Not as much company as we might like?

James 4:13-17

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; *(not building God into his/her plans)*

14 **whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

15 Instead you ought to say, **“If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”**

16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

17 **Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

If we know to do good — and don't ... we've probably compromised. Sin!

Perhaps not convenient ... or — what would others think of me? Or ... just selfish?

And just going along with others isn't a good answer!

“Right is right even if no one is doing it: wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it”.

At times ... being a person of integrity may be a lonely path. But it comes good in the end.

God values integrity. A person who will not compromise with His eternal values. THAT PERSON SHOULD BE US!