

Shunning for Shame

July 24, 2016 ~ 2 Thessalonians 3.6-15

The Old Paths

- ❖ **III: Courtship** ~ Friend at work – reference made to “**courtship**”
 - ✧ Popular Christianity follows along in the wake of culture
 - ◇ It eventually embraces all trends regardless of how anti-biblical
- ❖ **Read Jer 6.16-19** ~ “**Thus says the Lord .. but rejected it.**”
 - ✧ We too have abandoned the “**old paths**” / They are ridiculed by all
- ❖ **Counterfeits** or substitutes steadily displace God’s design
 - ✧ Parents teaching children replaced by government schools
 - ✧ Courtship and parental involvement replaced by dating
 - ✧ Sexual abstinence until marriage replaced by training in safe sex
 - ✧ Marriage replaced by “**try before you buy**” practice of living together
- ❖ Shunning is yet another example of what’s been lost

Paul’s Increasing Concern About Thessalonica

- ❖ Timothy was dispatched to Thessalonica in **1 Thessalonians** to check on them
 - ✧ **1 Th 3.2** ~ “.. **to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith..**”
- ❖ He returned and reported to Paul
 - ✧ **1 Th 3.6** ~ “**But now Timothy has come to us from you ..**”
- ❖ The positive & uplifting message of **chs 1-3** turns to reminders in **ch 4**
 - ✧ **vss 1-2** ~ “**how you ought to walk and to please God**”
 - ✧ **vss 3-8** ~ “**abstain from sexual immorality**”
 - ✧ **vss 9-10** ~ “**brotherly love**”
 - ✧ **vs 11a** ~ “**lead a quiet life**” / “**mind your own business**”
 - ✧ **vs 11b** ~ “**work with your own hands, as we commanded you**”
 - ◇ troublemaking and laziness were noted as issues during their original visit
 - ✧ **Ch 5.12** ~ “**honor church leaders**” / **v14** ~ “**warn those who are unruly**”
 - ◇ Timothy must have seen sin that these commands addressed
- ❖ Paul writes **2 Thessalonians**
 - ✧ **Ch 2** ~ encourages them to be patient / tribulation has not yet come
 - ✧ **Ch 3** ~ warns them about troublemakers, busybodies, and exploiters

Xition: We want to focus specifically on Paul’s directions c/shunning

Paul's Direction to Shun Unrepentant Individuals

- ❖ **v6** ~ “.. we command you brethren, in the name .. withdraw from every brother”
 - ✧ Paul could not have been more forceful in what he said
 - ✧ “we command you” / “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - ✧ Paul cites his own example in **v7** as to how people should live
 - ◇ These “brothers” are not living like that
- ❖ **v10** ~ “when we were with you” / “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”
 - ✧ Paul refers back to when he was present with them / wisdom hadn't changed
- ❖ **v11** ~ The unresponsive “busybodies” are to be marginalized / ostracized
 - ✧ They've abandoned their duties / Expect to live off church largesse
- ❖ **v12** ~ “Now those who are such we command . . .”
 - ✧ **Note**: Specific names are not given / They could be / Room for grace
- ❖ **v14** ~ “If anyone does not obey .. do not keep company with him”
 - ✧ Some must have welcomed this hard-hitting direction
 - ✧ But did all? What about friends and family members of the busybodies . . .
- ❖ It's common for such direct and painful action to be resisted
 - ✧ **III**: Cops book – domestic disputes / wives turn on officers
 - ✧ Advice resisted not only by the people in question, but their friends
 - ✧ “How dare you tell me who I'm to talk to, who I'm to have in my home . . .”

Other Texts That Advocate Shunning

- ❖ **Read Romans 16.17** ~ “Now I urge you brethren .. and avoid them.”
 - ✧ We are to avoid those that cause divisions and undermine solid doctrine
- ❖ **Read Titus 3.10** ~ “Reject a divisive man after .. being self-condemned.”
 - ✧ The challenge is how to apply this consistently
 - ✧ We all vary in our tolerance of specific people's errors or sins
- ❖ **Read 1 Corinthians 5.9-13** ~ “I wrote to you .. the evil person.”
 - ✧ Paul makes an interesting clarification here and uses an interesting phrase
 - ✧ We are to have higher expectations of the behavior of professing believers
 - ◇ We're “not to keep company with” immoral self-professing Christians
 - ✧ He says, “put away from yourselves the evil person”
 - ◇ In the OT that phrase is often cited when people are executed
 - ◇ The phrase “you are dead to me” comes to mind in this instance

Xition: Thus far all of these were written by Paul . . .

Apostle John Advocated Shunning

- ❖ **Read 2 John 9-11** ~ “Whoever transgresses and does .. shares in his evil deeds.”
 - ✧ “Ought we welcome Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons into our homes?”
 - ◇ They are lost / How will they otherwise be reached? / Caution is advised

Shunning Summarized

- ❖ “What behaviors do people exhibit that warrant shunning?”
 - ✧ People claim to be Christians yet consistently behave in unchristian ways
 - ✧ “disorderly, lazy, busybodies / gossips, disobedient / rebellious, divisive, offensive, self-serving, sexually immoral, covetous, idolatrous, revilers, drunkards, extortioners, disputatious, and legalists”
- ❖ “What are specific ways shunning is employed?”
 - ✧ “admonish him as a brother, withdraw from, do not support, do not accompany, avoid, do not eat with, reject, do not receive into your home, do not greet”
- ❖ “What are the various goals stated?”
 - ✧ “do not grow weary in doing good, that he may be ashamed, unprofitable and useless, shares in his evil deeds”
- ❖ These directives to shun are incredibly serious
 - ✧ Yet.. “Why is it not done?” / “Why if it is done, are people so upset by it?”

“Enlightened” Christians Shun Shunning

- ❖ Search the web and you’ll see what people think of shunning
 - ✧ It ‘s just not the Christian thing to do / warped “cultural definition”
 - ✧ They don’t wrestle with these Scriptures that advocate shunning
 - ✧ They cite others and pretend these don’t exist
- ❖ This is the way it’s done in modern Christianity
 - ✧ You need not square your beliefs with all of Scripture
 - ✧ Just cite some that appear to confirm your beliefs and practice
 - ✧ Any that don’t can be ignored or rejected

Xition: Shunning is difficult to do consistently well . . .

Shunning is Difficult to Do Effectively

- ❖ People shun based on their own rules and in their own time – not God’s
 - ✧ Shunning is practiced by most people a lot / just in unbiblical ways
 - ✧ People are given the “**silent treatment**” or the “**cold shoulder**”
- ❖ People are fiercely independent / They don’t choose to honor church rule
 - ✧ **III: Mars Hill couple 2012** ~ young man engaged yet cheated on fiancé
 - ✧ “**How dare the elders of the church officially shun him!**”
- ❖ Poor examples of shunning are referenced to prove it ought not be done at all
- ❖ Shunning can be employed inconsistently / When “**enough is enough**” differs

The Shame in Shunning

- ❖ Those that support shunning and those that oppose it can agree shame is involved
 - ✧ Those that oppose it say those that shun should be ashamed
 - ✧ Those that support it say the person being shunned should be ashamed
- ❖ Paul clearly advocated shame as one goal of shunning
 - ✧ **v14** ~ “.. **do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.**”
 - ✧ **v15** ~ “**Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**”

People Lacking Shame Do Not Blush

- ❖ At the start we read from **Jeremiah 6** about a return to the “**old paths**”
 - ✧ Let me read the portion of text that came just before it
 - ✧ Read **Jer 6.10-15** ~ “**To whom shall I speak .. says the Lord.**”

- Let us not be like those that have forgotten how to blush**
- We must return to the “old paths” that Scripture requires we follow**
- We must shun the rebellious / those that profess belief, but reject His Word**
- We must honor God above ourselves and others**

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .