

Come out from among them?

Ok, now that we have accepted Jesus as our savior, we should look at joining a commune and cutting off all ties with the world (them) and wait for Him to come, right? Actually, a better way to approach this may be to realize that we are still “in the world” just not “of the world”.

In this case we are leaving one way of thinking for another. We have to do this because the ways of the world are in conflict with God’s ways, and we can’t have it both ways.

The Bible has some specific things to say about how we should think and act. When we act we are doing **works**. It is important to keep context in mind when getting into specifics to help avoid disconnects relative to overall meaning.

By changing our way of thinking we will change the way we act. By changing the way we act, we will influence others who may be in need of changing their lives.

Anytime we go away **from** something, by default we are going **to** something else. When we talk about following Jesus, this is referred to as sanctification. We need His help because we are not capable of bringing about this separation by ourselves.

Is this separation both mental and physical?

According to the Bible, sometimes yes and sometimes no, depending on the context of the message.

To illustrate:

Don’t be influenced by the evil in the world.

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." (Don’t continue to willfully do sinful acts)

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Replace bad thoughts with good ones)

However:

1 Corinthians 7:17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:20-22 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—

although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.

So we still need to interact with the world, we just need to change ourselves and act accordingly. When we act, we do **works**. (here is that word again)

Go to worldly non-believers and witness to them. Jesus wants us to have contact with sinners, but not to be led astray by them.

Mark 2:15-17 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to help us witness to sinners.

John 14:15-16 If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Sometimes we need to be careful how we do that.

Matthew 10:16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

After we have done all we can do we should not dwell on it, but should be ready to revisit the situation at any time. We point out, but the Holy Spirit brings about repentance.

Matthew 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.

Be prepared to work with, and witness to, other believers as well as non-believers.

2 Timothy 3:10-17 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse,

deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (Here is this works thing showing up again.)

Romans 15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Sadly, believers can fall away and when they do we should be prepared to minister to them.

James 5:19-20 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

But if we have done all we can do:

Matthew 18:15-17 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

What do people who are “in the world” but not “of the world” do?

St. Francis of Assisi once said to Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words.

Listen and Obey. Seek the revealed will of God for our lives. God has work set aside for each of us.

Matthew 11:15 He who has ears, let him hear. (Jesus says this several times when he is making a point)

Jesus promises that if we come out from among them and come to him we will find rest. To make it even better, by doing things His way we will be better equipped to carry the burden.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Thoughts by John Oliver
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