

CLOSER TO GOD (41)

When We Compromise (1)

We have been studying the subject of fellowship with an emphasis on how it relates to both individuals and congregations. We have noted the correlation between fellowship with God and with one another. And in a congregation, or recognizing those in other congregations, we ought to factor in their fellowship with God, based upon a complete understanding of truth based on God's standard. As to error, we ought to be concerned if a church is teaching, practicing or tolerating truth. Ephesians 5:11 challenges us to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them." 2 Corinthians 6:14 challenges us, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers..." We are to come out from among them and be separate. But how can we reach a point where we are no longer in fellowship with God? The answer includes the subject of compromise.

In my lesson today, I want to begin discussing the dangers of compromise. We will discuss what compromise is, why it is a concern, and then I want to follow that up with some examples of compromise in our next lesson. In particular I want to focus on the nation of Israel. Recall Romans 15:4, *Whatever things were written before were written for our learning.*

Israel was a nation with a deep spiritual history. They were God's chosen people. But how did they fall away? Summarized, they were steeped in compromise. We will notice that.

I. What is compromise?

- a. Compromise – 1. A settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting or opposing claims, principles, etc., by reciprocal modification of demands. 2. The result of such a settlement.¹ In essence, compromise is a BLENDING of wills for the sake of peace.
- b. The word can be a noun or verb (it is the same pronunciation). Interestingly, there is another definition: To expose or make vulnerable to danger... OR to make a dishonorable or shameful concession (e.g., He compromised his integrity).
- c. As Christians and as the church we can be guilty of this by diminishing truth. Understand that to whatever degree we diminish truth we are compromising – whether in teaching, practice, or tolerance of error, INCLUDING a refusal to address it in any of these forms.
- d. The challenge with this subject is that there are times we ARE TO compromise. Compromise is a good thing in many circumstances – we need it more in politics, business affairs, dealing with difficult issues in society, etc. When it comes to matters of doctrinal indifference (i.e., liberties) or personalities, we need to be willing to compromise (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Acts 15:19-20, 28-29, Romans 14:19, etc.). BUT the question is, where do we draw the line? That is for another lesson.

II. What happens when we compromise?

- a. A level of peace is achieved. This is a good thing when you are speaking of good compromise. The Bible speaks of pursuing this peace (Romans 14:19, Matthew 5:9, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 4:3, etc.) But, what about when that compromise deals with what God has commanded us to do? You may achieve a level of peace, but at what cost? Heed James 4:4 – friendship with the world is enmity with God. Consider the following:
- b. **Commandment #1** of the ten commandments was, "*You shall have no other gods before Me.*" (Exodus 20:3) The word "before" means, "in the presence of". And if you consider the greatest commandment as Jesus answered (Matthew 22:37) it is tied to that. Compromise, as we are addressing it, means yielding to something other than God. This is at the very foundation of why it is wrong. Recall the admonition of Joshua 24:15 – choose this day who you will serve.

¹ Compromise. www.dictionary.com 2/9/2023.

- c. **We become double-minded** – James 4:4, 8.
- i. To be double-minded means to be uncertain about the truth of something, to waver. Bullinger describes the word as “two- souled” which is the literal meaning of the Greek word. Found only in James (1:8, 4:8).
 - ii. It is trying to serve 2 masters or reach a compromise that will satisfy both. The problem is in spiritual matters it will NOT work! Matthew 6:24, Romans 6:16-18, Galatians 1:10 - *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*
 - iii. Typically, the double-minded man is not satisfied. He is CONFLICTED and he knows something is not right. That is why his life is miserable, confused, uncertain and indecisive.
 - iv. It often leads to one being “pushed around” or “tossed to and fro” (Ephesians 4:14-15). You don’t know which way to go. The strong-willed will exploit that and increase your misery. And so will Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9 – he is seeking to devour you).
 - v. It is a heart issue – consider that he is not convicted. Matthew 5:8, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* There are 2 ways the purity of something can be compromised – you add something to it that corrupts it OR you dilute it. Either way, you no longer have that which is pure (consider labeling of juices – to call it “pure” it cannot be diluted, or they have to modify the term, e.g., “contains pure juice”, “juice drink”, etc.. The point: The FDA understands what “pure” means). If we serve God with a pure heart, it will be “undiluted”.
- d. **Truth is affected** -
- i. We fail to defend the truth, either partially or fully. It is often pushed aside or buried or watered down. When one compromises the truth, they usually will not be totally forthcoming. Words and specific passages – that conflict – are conveniently avoided or manipulated.
 - ii. It is often “blended” with error.
 1. What happens when you blend two things together? They become diluted - see above.
 2. Compromise will often blend truth and error together. It is a rare to find a doctrine that does not have a degree of truth associated with it. Satan, in tempting Jesus, quoted scripture (Matthew 4:5-7), but Jesus knew he was misquoting that context (cf. Psalm 91:11-12). The “traditions” of the Pharisees blended truth with their opinions (e.g., Matthew 15:1-6) and thereby corrupted the intended message.
 - iii. Understand that when we fail to FULLY defend the truth, we are NOT defending truth – e.g. Saul’s failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:22-23). He did MOST of what the Lord commanded but not completely.
 - iv. Compromising truth will spread like a cancer – 2 Timothy 2:15-18. The word “cancer” in Greek is the word is γάγγραινα (gangraina) from which we get gangrene.
 - v. Jeremiah 6:14-15 – the prophets people slightly healed saying “peace’ when there is no peace. They did not know how to blush.
- e. **We lose our militancy** – this is a problem today.
- i. As noted, there is something to be said about pursuing peace. We are certainly not to be offensive just because we can (some like to live by being offensive and confrontational). Romans 12:18 calls for us to live peaceably with all men. Hebrews 12:14, Matthew 5:9 – the peacemakers, also.
 - ii. But we cannot blend that pursuit of peace with compromising God’s word.
 - iii. When it comes to proclaiming and defending the truth, we ought to be militant.
 1. Spiritually, we are at war and we can NEVER forget that.
 2. Ephesians 6:10-18 – describes that warfare and notes tht we put on the armor of God.

3. 1 Timothy 6:12 – Paul told Timothy to fight the good fight of faith
 4. Jude 3 – contend for the faith.
 5. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 notes that it is a spiritual battle with spiritual weapons – namely, the TRUTH!. Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as a two-edged sword.
 6. Are we willing to fight for the Lord and His cause? 2 Timothy 2:3-4.
- iv. Our society has become one of tolerance of the worst sort (not graciously putting up with one another but demanding that we accept as equally valid that which is sinful and evil). And if we disagree we are not supposed to say anything that might offend someone else (even if they misconstrue what was actually meant). I am fearful that this has caused many brethren and churches to NOT speak up for the truth.
- f. ***It will lead to corruption -***
- i. Consider the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira – Revelation 2:12-29. They compromised and tolerated error. It had corrupted who they were. They were rebuked and told to repent.
 - ii. Consider Corinth with all its problems. Esp. 1 Cor. 5 and the man caught in adultery.
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 – a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Therefore PURGE OUT the old leaven that you may become a new lump.
 - iv. Jude 22-23 – some have compassion, but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire.
- g. ***Rarely does compromise stop with a concession.*** It is only a matter of time before it is pushed further. We will see this in our next lesson when we examine Israel and compromise.
- h. ***We are actually helping “the enemy” –***
- i. A favorite tactic of military conflicts is to divide or weaken their enemy. That is what “psychological warfare” is about. ANYTHING that will cause them to be less prepared, disheartened or divided will give the enemy an advantage.
 - ii. Satan loves compromise of this sort. Because truth is avoided, Christian “soldiers” are ill-prepared to defend the faith and thus vulnerable. Those standing for the truth are pitted against those that do not – hence there is division. Heed 2 Corinthians 2:11 – do not be ignorant of his devices.
 - iii. Error is not resisted and thus it is given “free reign” (like at Pergamos and Thyatira).
 - iv. It becomes easier to resist those who are standing for truth - because they are fewer in number they can be more easily dealt with (cf. 3 John 9-10 – Diotrephes refused to receive the brethren and even put out of the church those who wished to). This DOES NOT HAPPEN if a church is “sound in the faith.”
 - v. Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” AND the leaders were held accountable.
- i. ***In time, if not addressed, it WILL lead to apostasy*** – both as individuals and churches. Compromise puts you only one generation away from apostasy. Hebrews 2:1 – lest we drift away.
- j. ***When we reach this point, we are no longer in fellowship with God*** (cf. Revelation 2:5, 16, 3:2).

And thus, we are introduced to the subject of compromise and its dangers. This is not a pleasant subject to deal with, but if we are to stand firmly with God, either as Christians or as His church, we must address it. We cannot afford to compromise our faith and put our fellowship with God AND one another in jeopardy. Will you stand uncompromisingly with God and one another? Ephesians 5:11. Think about it.