



REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Weekly Bible Study

The Observance of Fellow Christians' Behavior

Key Verses: 2 Thess 3:6-13

It is an Apostolic command: "Now we command you brethren." It is not a matter of voluntary choice. No Christian should isolate himself from other Christians. The first believers had fellowshiped one with another (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:24,25). Now, today we can fellowship with one another not just in person but via phone, mail, text messages and the internet as well.

We may all be in one big family (the family of God) but, not all members of the Body of Christ are the same (1 Cor 4:7; 12:13-27). Members vary and complement each other to accomplish Christ's purposes. We are not commanded to judge our fellow believers, but to evaluate their behavior for what we can learn and how we can help. We must not evaluate others condemningly, superficially and selfishly (John 7:24; Rom 14:10,13; 1 Cor 4:5). *Our observation of others must be as they relate to Jesus Christ and not as they differ from us.* "We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The name of the Lord refers to all that He is and does. The name of anyone is the revelation of his character and his work. We must observe others as to their relationship with the Lord. A safe rule of fellowship is always to seek those *who walk closely with the Lord*. They are easily recognizable.

Inevitably, in the fellowship of Christian believers, there are some who walk disorderly. But how We Should Behave toward Those Christians Who Walk Disorderly

Not hypocritically. We should not give them the impression that their behavior is acceptable. For example, Paul resisted Peter for his stand on Judaistic practices, especially circumcision (Gal 2:11). He considered him blamable, being inconsistent in his walk, since at certain times he fraternized with the Gentiles (v. 12) and at other times he separated himself.

Not to give the idea that two people can have different opinions and actions on a matter and both be right. Situational ethics are inconsistent with Christianity. So, the next time someone says "well, lets just agree to disagree", think about what is being said – there is no such position in Christianity. Endeavor to correct the erring brothers (Rom 14:1; 1 Cor 8:11; 9:22; 1 Thess 5:14). However if that fails, we have a duty ***through separation to protect ourselves and others from the evil such disorderly conduct of a brother may cause, otherwise:***

1: It will give a false concept of Christianity that it is a mere profession without holy conduct, (A form of Godliness, but denying or without the Power or true changes by the Holy Spirit).

2: It will lead others to believe that all that matters is to profess but that it is not necessary to have the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22,23).

Paul says that if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit ([Gal 5:25](#)). That word for "walk" is not the regular Greek word **peripatéœ**, to tread about, but **stoichéœ**, to stand or go in order in a prescribed rank, to walk orderly or in step.

The principle is: When we cannot help others, then we must protect ourselves and those who are vulnerable. That is what Paul means in 2 Thess 3:6. Never allow yourself or others to conclude that we approve of evil conduct. A believer should try to bring to order one who leaves the ranks of scripturally prescribed conduct. If he refuses, then he is to be declared as an "out-of-step" Christian.

Hate the Sin, But Beware of the Sinner

Withdraw "from every brother." Do not discriminate who it is who walks disorderly. Do not partake of his sin or be partner in it.

It may be husband, wife, brother, sister, son, daughter, or the closest friend and business partner. We must not understand this to mean that a wife or husband should disown a marital partner, or a parent-child relationship should be dissolved, but that another's position of spiritual or moral wrong is made clear.

We must be careful lest our fellowship is misunderstood as approval of evil conduct.

Do not do it if you discern that the stepping out of line is not habitual, but just an occasional transgression. There is not a single person who is not liable to miss the mark occasionally ([1 John 1:8-10](#); [2:1-6](#)). In this connection notice the tense of the verb "walketh" in 2 Thess 3:6. In Greek it is **peripatoúntos**, the present participle of **peripatéœ**, meaning habitually, constantly and voluntarily walking in a disorderly fashion.

This sinful conduct is not the result of ignorance. Such disorderly conduct is explained as a way of life which does not conform to the tradition which such a person received from Paul and other apostolic and spiritual instructors. "And not after [or according to] the tradition [**parádosis**, that which was given or handed down by apostolic authority] which he received of us" ([2 Thess 3:6](#)). Here we have a person who knows what is expected of him. He directly received instruction from Paul; therefore, he is that much more inexcusable in his conduct.

Apostolic teaching (the teaching of the Apostles found in the Scripture) constitutes the order of conduct. That order in Greek is **táxin** ([1 Cor 14:40](#); [Col 2:5](#)) and with the privative alpha (a-), without, we have the adjective **atáktous**, neglectful of duties, irregular, dissolute ([1 Thess 5:14](#)); the adverb **atáktœs**, irregularly, dissolutely (only in [2 Thess 3:6,11](#)).

No believer may set his or her own standard of Christian conduct. He must be guided by the clear teaching of Scripture. **Care should be exercised lest we set our "convenient" interpretation as Scripture itself.**