

I Just Follow The Good Examples Here

Scenario:

The congregation is sound from the standpoint of teaching and the work going on there. The congregation is at peace. Everyone seems to be of the same mind and judgment on spiritual matters and even when it comes to liberties. The atmosphere when brethren are assembled is joyful and comfortable. There are several members who serve as good examples in various ways (i.e. Titus 2:1-8). The congregation appears to be growing in knowledge. Then an uncomfortable discussion takes place.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

After a class discussion several members are talking about how good it is to be at peace. One of those in the discussion says: "I just feel like we can take it easy. My family spends a lot of time around brethren. The world is not a problem for us. My only friends are the brethren here. We just observe and follow the good examples we have here. It makes me feel safe."

A Later Statement Is Made:

After some time, one in that discussion thinks some things need to be set straight and says: "We shouldn't feel comfortable. We should always be alert. It is great to be with brethren, but to think the world is not a problem for any of us is a naive thought. When it comes to our brethren being good examples, I know that sounds good. However, we have to use the Scriptures as our pattern and be cautious not to become followers of men. Being too comfortable may lead us down that road. Also, someone else's decisions may be right for them, but maybe not for you. Stay alert."

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- The concept of being "sound" can be found in various Scriptures (**Psalms 119:80, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1-2, and Titus 2:8**).
- If you take the word "sound" as it is translated from the Greek word "ὑγιαίνω" in **Titus 1:13**, it means: "To have sound health, that is, be well (in body); figuratively to be uncorrupt (true in doctrine): - be in health, (be safe and) sound, (be) whole (-some)" (Strong's # 5198).
- By sound in teaching, one would conclude that this congregation stands for and sees to the truth be taught. In other words, no other doctrine is taught amongst those saints than the truth (**I Timothy 1:3-7**).
- By the work of the congregation being sound, that should indicate what they do collectively is without corruption. When you observe their collective worship (**Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 11:23-33, I Corinthians 14:15-16, I Corinthians 14:40, Ephesians 4:15-16, Colossians 3:16-17, etc.**) and their works done as a local congregation (**Romans 15:25-27, I Corinthians 4:17, I Corinthians 16:1-4, II**

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

Corinthians 8:1-9:13, I Thessalonians 1:7-8, II Thessalonians 3:6-15, I Timothy 5:3-16, etc.); all is fitting.

- A congregation at peace can be good or it can be bad. There is a true peace that is good (**I Thessalonians 5:13** and **II Timothy 2:22**). There is also a false peace (**Jeremiah 6:13-16**).
- Brethren are commanded to be of the same mind and judgment as this congregation appears to be (**Romans 12:16, I Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2, Philippians 3:16, and Philippians 4:1-2**). That includes following instructions of God regarding authorized liberties (**Romans 14:1-15:9, I Corinthians 7:1-10:33, and I Timothy 4:1-9**). At the same time, agreement can be had on the wrong conclusion (**John 9:22**). We have to be careful to be sure we are in agreement with the truth first and then with one another based upon the truth (**II John 1:9**).
- An assembly where joy, peace, and comfort is great. It can also be dangerous though. It can lead to complacency. That is dangerous (**Amos 6:1-8**). Brethren have to stay alert (**Mark 13:37, I Corinthians 16:13, and I Thessalonians 5:6**).
- Comfort sometimes leads to the lay back mentality. While the context and lesson are about covetousness, consider that taking ease can lead to being unprepared (**Luke 12:13-21**).
- We want to always abound in the work of our Lord (**I Corinthians 15:58**) and always be ready for His return (**Matthew 24:35-25:46**).
- A congregation full of good examples is a great thing. We should take note of the perfect man (**Psalms 37:37 and Philippians 3:17**; cf. **III John 1:12**). We should follow good examples (**I Corinthians 4:16-17, Hebrews 6:12, and Hebrews 13:7**) if that person is following Christ (**I Corinthians 11:1**).
- The word “appears” is tricky (**I Timothy 5:24-25**).
- We do well not to judge based on appearances (**John 7:24**).
- Furthermore, while growing in knowledge if true is good (**II Peter 3:18**). Application matters the most (**Luke 6:46, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 11:28, Romans 2:13, James 1:21-27, and Revelation 22:14**).
- It is sad that discussions have to be “uncomfortable.” One would hope that having “love as brethren” would prevail (**I Peter 3:8**).

Regarding the Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

- Again, being at peace is good (**Ephesians 4:3 and Colossians 3:15**) under words of caution to continue to be aware (**Colossians 2:8, I Peter 5:8, and II Peter 3:9-17**).
- When it comes to our brethren, remember that we read in the first century that there were some among the saints that were false and they had “*crept in unawares*” (**Jude 1:3-4**).
- Spending a lot of time around brethren is great for many reasons (**Romans 12:9-16, Romans 14:19, I Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13, I Peter 4:9-11, etc.**).
- We have to be around each other to see how one another are really doing (**Acts 15:36 and I Thessalonians 2:17-3:8**). If I am not around my brethren how can I

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

see needs, etc. (cf. **I John 3:17**)? How can I restore a brother if I don't see him fall (**Galatians 6:1-2** and **James 5:19-20**)?

- It is very ignorant and naive to think and state that the world is not a problem for anyone. The world is wicked (**I John 5:19**). While we are not of the world, we have to be in the world (**John 17:14-23**). The only way to escape such would be to leave the world (**I Corinthians 5:9-13**). We all need to take heed lest we fall (**I Corinthians 10:1-12**). We are deceived if we think the world cannot influence us (**I Corinthians 15:33**).
- As much as I hate to write this, DON'T FEEL SAFE following the examples of brethren. Think about what Peter did Barnabas (**Galatians 2:11-17**). Think about what Hymenaeus and Alexander did to brethren (**I Timothy 1:19-20**).
- We are instructed by God not to trust in men (**Psalms 118:8-9**, **Jeremiah 17:5-7**, **Philippians 3:2**, and **Colossians 2:8**).
- There does have to be a balance though. We do know our brethren by their fruit (**Matthew 7:15-20**). We just have to maintain a reasonable level of guard at all times (**II Peter 3:17**).
- Think about these words: *“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape”* (**I Thessalonians 5:2-3**).

Regarding the Later Statement That Is Made From Our Scenario:

- Amen on this later statement! I have already made some of the points in the later statement above with Scriptures, rightly divided (**II Timothy 2:14-18**), to support them.
- “After some time” indicates the person who speaks up here took some time to think before speaking. That is great (**Proverbs 15:28** and **James 1:19**)!
- The Scriptures **MUST** always be a first and foremost standard (**II Timothy 1:13**).
- We cannot be followers of men in a comfortable, blind manner (**Psalms 146:3-4** and **Matthew 15:1-14**).
- What one person does or does not do may not be what is right for you. Paul pointed that our regarding the liberty of marriage (**I Corinthians 7:1-40**).
- Furthermore, you may not know all of the reasoning that goes into someone else's decision making process. So, be cautious to know **ALL** the details of someone's process before you consider it yourself. Remember, hear the whole matter (**Proverbs 18:13**).
- Yes, **STAY ALERT** (**I Peter 1:13**)!