

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

The Grass Seems Greener

Scenario:

Within the congregation most are facing troubling times and difficult circumstances. Many are looking to find peace in this world. There is one family that appears to be doing better than everyone else. They seem to have found “the best of both worlds” (so to speak). The man has a very well paying job that doesn’t seem to affect him negatively spiritually. The wife seems to be very happy. The children appear well fed and taken care of. They have an abundance of material things they find joy in. They have an amazing house. Many in the congregation look to them and desire what they have. There are a few that recognize this and see it as a problem. Among them are men that choose to try and teach about setting your affections on things above rather than on the earth.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

There is a lesson delivered during the worship assembly on the first day of the week. The person teaching said: “No one who is right in the sight of God is going to find peace in this world. The fact is, in the world you shall have tribulation.”

A Later Statement Is Made:

After the service several go out to lunch. In talking about the lesson, this is stated: “I don’t agree that we cannot find peace in this world. Look at the _____ family. They are doing better than everyone else in the congregation. They are at peace. He moves every few years with his job, and he is able to find a congregation where he goes to worship with. Maybe we should be more like them. I am not happy. He is. The difference in us is that he has everything I want. It’s time for a change.”

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- The idea of “greener grass” comes from a choice Lot made (**Genesis 13:1-13**). That did not work out too well for his family and himself (**Genesis 14:1-24, Genesis 18:20-19:38, and II Peter 2:6-8**).
- It should be of no surprise that faithful saints are facing troubling times and difficult situations (**John 15:18-21, John 17:14, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:17, II Corinthians 4:8-18, and I Peter 5:8-9**).
- As the statement in this scenario points out, peace cannot be found within this world in a carnal sense (**John 16:33**). For a Christian to look for such shows ignorance on his/her part.
- Our peace is spiritual and mental. That peace comes from being spiritually minded (**Romans 8:6**).
- Such peace is found for the faithful through our relationship with our Lord and our brethren (**Proverbs 3:1-2, Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27, Romans 5:1-11, I Corinthians 14:33, Galatians 5:22-24, Philippians 4:6-8, and Colossians 3:14-15**).

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- Things are not always as they seem to appear (**Matthew 23:27-28** and **John 7:24**).
- The phrase concerning a Christian that can “find the best of both worlds” is scary to me for various Scriptural reasons (**Matthew 6:19-24**, **John 7:7**, **Galatians 1:3-4**, **James 4:4**, **I John 2:15-17**, and **I John 5:19**)?
- Apparently, the “best of both worlds” means healthy, wealthy, well fed, and having an immaculate dwelling place. It is possible to “do well” carnally and spiritually at the same time (**I Timothy 6:17-19**). However, it is highly unlikely (**Luke 18:18-25**).
- Those that are looking at others and desiring what they have IS a big problem. The word translated “covet” in **Romans 13:9** means: “To set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise): — covet, desire, would fain, lust (after). To turn upon a thing; to have a desire for, long for, to desire; to lust after, covet; of those who seek things forbidden” (Strong’s # 1937). Moses stated: “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's*” (**Exodus 20:17**).
- The word of God is abundantly clear concerning the sins of envy and covetousness (**Deuteronomy 5:21**, **Psalms 10:3**, **Proverbs 14:30**, **Mark 7:21-23**, **Luke 12:13-21**, **Romans 1:28-32**, **Romans 13:8-14**, **I Corinthians 3:1-3**, **I Corinthians 5:11**, **Galatians 5:19-26**, **Ephesians 5:3**, **I Timothy 6:3-10**, **Hebrews 13:5-6**, and **James 3:13-18**).
- It is good that these problems are seen and that there is teaching about it (**Colossians 3:1-5**).
- The question is; will those hearing it examine themselves honestly to see it is their problem (**II Corinthians 13:5**)?

Regarding the Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

- As noted above, this is from **John 16:33**. It is the truth.
- If a faithful child of God lives as God expects, even in the most “peaceful of times”, godly living eventually brings adversity (**Psalms 119:20-21**, **Proverbs 29:27**, **II Timothy 3:12**, and **I John 3:13**).
- Seeing things and people the way they are also brings about problems for us (**Ecclesiastes 1:18**; i.e. **Romans 9:1-3** and **I John 3:8-10**).

Regarding the Later Statement That Is Made From Our Scenario:

- If one disagrees, why wasn’t that person vocal at the time of the assembly? If the message was wrong, that should’ve been addressed in some manner (**Acts 18:24-28**, **Galatians 2:1-5**, **II Timothy 3:8-9**, etc.). Yet, the message was right. Therefore, this is clearly a disagreement with the doctrine of Christ (**II John 1:9-11**).
- God is clear about those who offend the doctrine of our Lord (**Romans 16:17-18**).
- Paul feared that when he came to Corinth he would find whisperers and backbitings (**II Corinthians 12:20**). This is going on here.
- Looking at that family as a pattern is wrong (see Scriptural points above concerning envy, covetousness, and the appearances of others).

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- The family that is moving about is actually in error regardless of how peaceful they appear to the ignorant. As Christians, with few exceptions, we need to become part of a congregation rather than being long-term visitors. Think about the following Scriptures: **Romans 12:4-5**, **I Corinthians 12:14-27**, and **Ephesians 4:16**. Consider, in light of the Scriptures you just read, that once a person decides to remove himself or herself from the local body they are essentially practicing spiritual amputation.
- Furthermore, with the times waxing worse and worse (**II Timothy 3:13**) and few being saved (**Matthew 7:13-14**), there is no way someone can keep moving and actually find a truly sound local church. It is very ignorant of anyone to think that is possible.
- It is time for a change. Happiness cannot be obtained through material things (**Proverbs 23:5**, **Proverbs 27:24**, **Proverbs 27:20**, **Ecclesiastes 2:10-11**, **Ecclesiastes 5:10-16**, and **Revelation 3:14-22**).
- As noted above, godliness with contentment is the key (**I Timothy 6:6-10**). See also: **Philippians 4:9-13**
- This person, and any like he or she, needs to find happiness in the Lord (**Psalms 144:15**).
- Consider this outline regarding being content with eternal life: [Is Eternal Life Enough For You?](#)
- It is time for a change (**Luke 13:1-5**, **Acts 26:20**, and **Revelation 2:5**).