

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

The Drug Dealing Prostitute

Scenario:

An evangelist is eating a meal with a man he is studying with. They are discussing the Scriptures over dinner. As they are eating, a drug dealing prostitute approaches them. She sees they have open Bibles and begins to break down in tears about how she wishes her life could be different. The evangelist engages and tries to teach her.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

As the evangelist is trying to teach her, the man says: "If you were really a faithful teacher of the word of God you would know not to talk to this woman. The Bible teaches that friendship with the world makes one an enemy of God. She is a fornicator and I have seen her out selling drugs! People like that don't change."

A Later Statement Is Made:

"This evangelist accepts sinners and entertains them."

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- This scenario is an easy one to answer. There is not much that needs said. We can look at how Jesus responded in a like situation (**Luke 7:36-50**).
- What is the Lord's mindset (**Ezekiel 18:1-32**, **Micah 6:6-8**, **Matthew 18:1-14**, **Luke 15:1-32**, and **Luke 19:1-10**)?
- What about those whom are so judgmental while they themselves aren't right (**John 8:1-11** and **James 2:13**; cf. **Matthew 7:1-5** and **Romans 2:1-29**)?
- Scripturally speaking, a harlot shouldn't be looked upon as a hopeless soul (**Matthew 21:28-32**, **Hebrews 11:31**, and **James 2:25** [**Joshua 2:1-24**; **6:22-25**]).
- The fact is, God looks at sins His people commit as spiritual harlotry (**Jeremiah 3:1-25**, **Ezekiel 16:1-63**, **Ezekiel 23:1-49**, **Hosea 4:15**, and **James 4:1-4**).
- What does it say of a person that looks upon a lost, seeking individual, with such contempt (**Luke 18:9-14**)?
- There should not be a prejudice about certain sins (**John 8:31-59**, **I Corinthians 6:9-11**, **Ephesians 2:1-10**, **James 2:10-13**, and **I John 5:17**).
- Some people look at contexts such as **Proverbs 6:16-19** and they start making unnecessary inferences. If you take **Proverbs 6:16-19** and use **Psalms 5:4-5**, **Psalms 7:11-12**, **Psalms 10:3**, **Psalms 11:5**, **Hosea 9:15-17**, **Hebrews 1:8-9**, **Revelation 2:14-16** as a commentary you'll not miss the point.
- This man's reference to **James 4:4** is a twist of the Scriptures (**II Peter 3:15-18**). Teaching someone the Gospel doesn't make you a friend of that person. Jesus said that His friends are those whom do His will (**John 15:14**). That is who He is close with. Those are His brethren (**Matthew 12:46-50**). That should be how we form our close relationships as well (**I John 1:3-7**). Jesus was in this very situation multiple times, yet He never sinned (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). One violating

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

James 4:4 is one whose closest friendships (with qualifiers - BE CAREFUL) are with sinners.

- To some qualifiers (notice I said SOME - meaning this is not exhaustive). Since **James 4:4** is brought up here, it is important to cover some things. For one, there is a certain amount of liberty [freedom] when it comes to a saint being in the social company of a person of the world (**I Corinthians 5:9-13** and **I Corinthians 10:23-33**). A question is, does this person of the world see the differences between you and them (**I Peter 4:1-5**)? There has to be a cautious **balance**. This is where each individual must measure himself or herself and their situations properly (**II Corinthians 13:5**). There are no “good people” in sin. Whether a drug dealing harlot, child molestor, atheist, liar, or very nice person who chooses not to obey Christ; they are all equally children of the devil (**I John 3:1-10**). As such, while you should desire God’s will that they be saved (**I Timothy 2:1-6** and **II Peter 3:9**), you should also have a certain disgust for those people (**Psalms 26:4-5, Psalms 97:10, Psalms 101:3, Psalms 119:104, Psalms 119:115, Psalms 139:21-22, Proverbs 12:11, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 12:9, Ephesians 5:1-11, and I John 2:15-17**). Additionally, if you’re living aright you should find that most people of the world won’t want to be around you more than they have to be (**Proverbs 29:27, John 3:19-21, and John 7:7**). You should be careful about who is influencing you (**Proverb 4:14-16, Proverbs 13:20, and I Corinthians 15:33**). Yet, there are situations wherein circumstances allow for even the closet carnal relationships, however unwise it is or may be, between saints and sinners (i.e. **I Corinthians 7:1-15** and **I Peter 3:1-4**). Remember, the wisest man on earth prior to Christ was taken away from the Lord by his marriages to ungodly women even though he knew better (**I Kings 11:1-13**). Properly applying **James 4:4** comes down to individual circumstances and situations. Where someone is in their physical growth (**II Timothy 2:22**) and spiritual maturity of growth in Christ (**I Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 5:12-6:2, and II Peter 1:3-11**) often plays a part in all of this. It makes teaching this very hard. When the congregation here at Sunrise was made up of older members, whom needed little interaction with the world; this lesson applied differently collectively than it does now with our youthful congregation. One thing is unchanging, I will never understand why people take the difficulty of being saved (**I Peter 4:17-19**) and make it even harder by putting themselves in unnecessary social situations. Think about Jesus’ wisdom (**Matthew 26:41**). There is more that could be said, but these items should suffice and point honest ones in the right direction for each individual to study it further.
- Back to the remainder of this scenario... If people don’t change. If sinners don’t change. What does that mean for anyone? The preaching of repentance is evidence that God knows people change and we should expect for sinners to change (**Luke 24:47, Acts 3:19, Romans 2:1-11, and II Timothy 2:24-26**).
- If you don’t see repentance today around you, that doesn’t mean it is impossible (**Acts 2:35-42, Acts 19:1-20, Acts 26:1-23, I Timothy 1:12-16, etc.**).
- In the later statement, who did this person just speak against (**Luke 5:27-32**)?