

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

If They Have Been Baptized

Scenario:

A brother in Christ makes the following statement to an assumed brother in Christ: "It came to light that one of my brethren had been keeping company with erring brethren (so-called) that he should have withdrawn himself from years ago (Romans 16:17-18, I Corinthians 5:1-13, II Thessalonians 3:6, and II Thessalonians 3:14-15). I have had to study this out with him. He has confessed his errors and is in the process of repenting of them. This was a trying situation. The right things have been done. The good news is that my brother has confessed and is beginning to repent. It was bad to deal with, but a situation to have joy in for now (Luke 15:1-32)."

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

The assumed brother responded: "I have myself struggled with many spiritual and physical things over the years and am quite certain that I will continue to have struggles, make mistakes, have sin, and errors to correct. Also, I am certain that because of prayers from brethren I have been blessed with a greater spiritual understanding, soberness, wisdom, knowledge, and hope. I also believe the Lord is patient and merciful with many of our honest truth seeking brethren whom, because of the teaching and preaching that has been done throughout this country in the last 100-150 years, do not know the truth as you and I do. Both of us have come a long way from where we started in our search. The Lord has been patient with us because we were honest, diligent, and true in our seeking of His will for us. Anyone who has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for the remission of their sins to live faithfully (not perfect) unto death deserves my utmost patience and duty to teach him the correct way. Sometimes that way of truth is a journey that takes a long time. How long? As long as they make the honest attempt to study and pray for guidance."

A Later Statement Is Made:

The assumed brother states: "Mercy is great unto those who truly seek it and I cannot determine that as a creature of the Creator. If they have been baptized into Christ, who am I to judge? They may not come to the knowledge you and I have, but I am not prepared to say whether they are lost or not. God is the judge."

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?