

Spiritual Distancing

Introduction

1. **“Social Distancing” - we have heard that way more times that we would like! Since the COVID-19 pandemic everyone has been warned to make sure we keep the proper distance from others.**
 - A. **If we do not, then we have a greater chance of catching the dreaded and often times deadly corona virus.**
2. **If we follow the established guidelines that are intended to keep us safe and healthy, then there is a lot less chance of us having to deal with this awful virus.**
3. **Hopefully all of us have been made aware of what we must do and what we should not do in order to stay in good health.**
4. **But what about “Spiritual Distancing?” Are we reading and heeding the guidelines that have been set forth from God that are designed to keep our soul without sin and in a proper relationship with Him?**
5. **In this morning’s lesson let’s examine some “Spiritual Distancing” in scripture – that which is both improper and proper.**
 - A. **I want to also say, that this lesson is not original with me. This came across to me in an email and I thought it had some very good points. I made a few modifications, but for the most part it is in tact. I hope it causes all of us to really think about what is important to God in regards to “Spiritual Distancing.”**

Improper "Spiritual Distancing" in Scripture

1. Jonah.

Jonah 1:1-3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

2. Judas.

Luke 22:3-6 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

3. Those with the "party" spirit.

1 Corinthians 11:17-19 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

Proper “Spiritual Distancing” in Scripture

1. Joseph.

Genesis 39:7-12

2. Those of Judea.

Nehemiah 10:28-30 Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding — **these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes:** We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons;

3. Jesus.

Hebrews 7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, **separate from sinners**, and has become higher than the heavens;

- **Do we PRACTICE “Spiritual Distancing?” It is one thing to know what to do as a Christian, but then do we actually do it?**

Improper "Spiritual Distancing"

1. From God.

Isaiah 30:9-11 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, **Children who will not hear the law of the LORD**; Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us."

John 15:23-24 **He who hates Me hates My Father also**. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.

2. From true brethren.

1 John 3:14-17 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. **He who does not love his brother abides in death**. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

3. From the work of God.

James 1:22-25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer**, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Proper "Spiritual Distancing"

1. From having unity with unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." Therefore **"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE,** SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU." "I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY."

2. From the rebellious.

2 John 9-11 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;** for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

3. From deceivers.

Ephesians 5:6-12

Conclusion

1. **Improper “Spiritual Distancing” separates us from God and our brethren in Christ.**

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. **But your iniquities have separated you from your God;** And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

Isaiah 30:9 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, **Children who will not hear the law of the LORD.**

2. **Proper “Spiritual Distancing” brings us closer to God and to our brethren in Christ.**

James 4:7-8 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Leviticus 20:26 And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and **have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.**

(Marks of the true Christian)

Romans 12:9-16

Invitation

Place

Date

Spiritual Distancing.wpd
Richie Thetford, June 2020 (Based on a sermon by Garren Stroud, Taylor, TX)