



Message Two: Separation vs Isolation *Pastor Mike Chapman*

The Pharisees were convinced that the key to maintaining purity was to live in isolation from those whom they saw as being far from God. In fact, the word *Pharisee* means "separated ones." Although their initial desire was to honor God, soon, their pursuit of the separated life led them to the "isolated life."

Being "in the world but not of the world" is the tension every Christian feels. Jesus prayed that his followers would successfully navigate this challenge (John 17:15-16).

CONFUSION ABOUT SEPARATION

There is a **biblical** call to a separated life.

Leviticus 19:2, Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. (NIV)

Ezra 6:21, the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate the Passover, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the LORD, the God of Israel. (NIV)

2 Corinthians 6:14-17, Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness...How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? God has said,

'Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. (NLT)

So how do you interpret this when...

God called Israel not to withdraw from the world but to be a light to the nations. (Isaiah 49:6)

In the Great Commission, we are commanded not to withdraw but to "go into the world." (Mark 16:15)

Obviously, the Pharisees understood that separation meant to insulate and isolate yourself from **sinners**.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Matthew 9:10-13, Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with such scum?' When Jesus heard this, he said, 'Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.' Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.' (NLT)

Question: How did the holiest person to ever walk the planet manage to attract the notoriously imperfect?

1. He took the **initiative**.
2. He interacted with them on their **turf**.
3. He wasn't repulsed by **sin** or **sinners**.

4. He genuinely **liked** them.
5. He was always completely **himself**.
6. His **motive** was pure.

Jesus was fully engaged "in the world" but he wasn't "of the world."

EMBRACE SEPARATION...SHUN ISOLATION

1 John 2:15-16, *Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. (NLT)*

Being "of the world" means we live for the "**here and now**."

Pleasure ... Possessions ... Pride

Jesus prayed for you.

John 17:14-18, *I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*