

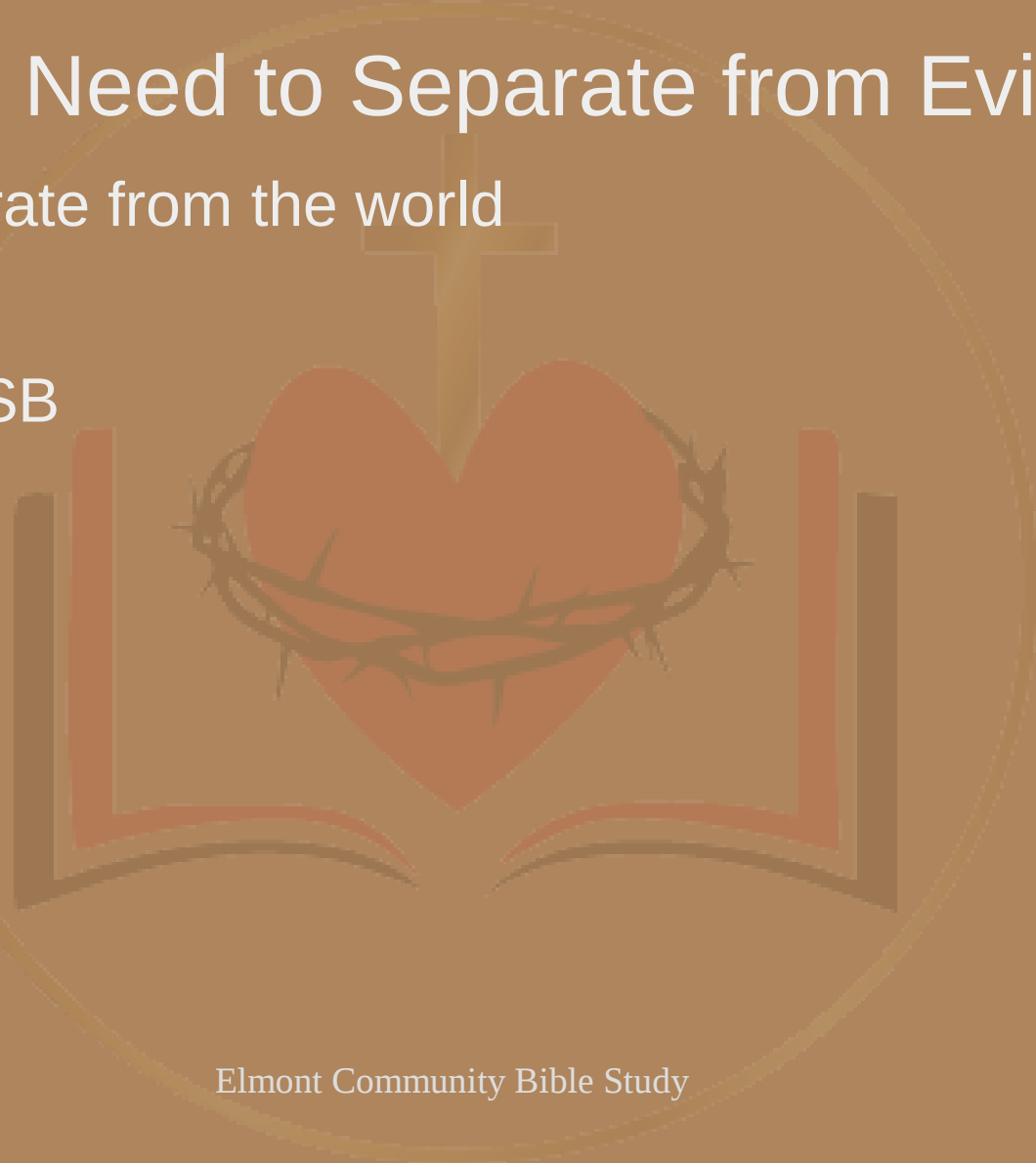
Cooperating with Evil

When Does It Become Sin?



The Need to Separate from Evil

- We must separate from the world
- I John 2:15-17
- James 4:4 NASB
- II Cor 6:14-7:1
- Rev 18:4-5
- I Peter 4:1-5
- Eph 5:1-17
- Incarnating sin



The Need to Interface with the World

- But we must also remain in it
 - John 17:14-19
 - Matt 10:16
 - Matt 5:13-16
 - Letter of Mathetes to Diognetus – ca. 90 AD
 - For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all.

The Need to Interface with the World

- How much can we “touch” or “cooperate” with evil before it is sin?
- Not as simple as it sounds
- Even God tolerates and “cooperates” with evil

God's “Cooperation” with Evil

- Is 44:28 – 45:7
- Matt 5:45
- Rom 3:25, 2:4
- Why were we made free rather than perfectly righteous robots?
- The possibility of evil is tolerated to achieve a greater good
 - Augustine: “God judged it better to bring good out of evil, than to suffer no evil to exist.”
 - Not the same as the end justifies the means
 - The former does not do the evil, the latter does

Important Side Bar – What is Evil?

- It does not come from God because it is not a created thing
- It is not a thing – it is the absence of a thing
- No source of absolute evil that is competing with God
- Evil is not a thing like cold and darkness are not things
- Tolerating evil is not compromise with the evil since evil is not a thing
- Tolerating evil is enduring a departure from good to bring it to a lesser departure from good
- There is a time to not tolerate evil – that is the question at hand

The Underlying Principles



- Some things are black and white, others are not – know the boundaries
- Love
- Honesty
- Wisdom
 - Love is always the same
 - The “how” of love can vary greatly depending on the circumstance
- Discernment
- Guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Counsel

Boundaries and Guidelines

A large, faint background graphic in shades of brown and gold. It features a central heart with a cross above it, all enclosed within a circular border. Below the heart is an open book. The entire graphic is semi-transparent and serves as a backdrop for the text.

- Formal Cooperation
 - Share the will of the sinner
 - ALWAYS sin – this is black and white
- Material Cooperation
 - Not necessarily sharing the will

Formal versus Material

Two police officers, George and Jane, are assigned to prevent prolife workers from talking with women approaching an abortion clinic. George, who has invested money in the clinic and hopes it will maximize its profits, carries out the assignment so that the women coming to the clinic will get their abortions and not be dissuaded; Jane, a prolife feminist, carries out the assignment solely because she is afraid of losing her job if she refuses. George formally cooperates in abortion; Jane cooperates only materially.

Types of Material Cooperation

- Immediate versus Mediate
 - Literal meaning of mediate and immediate
 - Mediate – something in between
 - Immediate – nothing in between
 - Immediate Material Cooperation participates in the sinful act
 - A pro-life nurse assisting in an abortion
 - Fornicating to not lose relationship
 - Always sinful except under extreme duress
 - Bank teller at gunpoint
 - Sometimes duress is not justification
 - Apostasy

Mediate Material Cooperation

A large, faint background graphic is centered on the slide. It consists of a circular frame containing a red heart. A gold cross is positioned above the heart, and a crown of thorns is wrapped around its base. The heart is flanked by two vertical gold bars, and the entire composition is set against a light brown background.

- Not a direct participation
 - Clerk issuing a gay marriage license does not participate in the sex
- Mediate material cooperation may or may not be sinful

Guidelines for Mediate Material Cooperation

- The cooperating act must not be sinful – either good or neutral
 - The act of issuing a license is not sinful
- The will to act must be good
 - Fulfill my job responsibilities; keep my job; promote dialog
- The good accomplished must outweigh the possible bad of the sinner or the bad of not acting
 - The graver the evil or the closer to the action, the greater the corresponding good must be

Guidelines for Mediate Material Cooperation

- The action must not corrupt the actor
 - Chronic exposure to lying or pornography
- The action must not lead to scandal
 - Leading others to believe that the evil is not evil – I Cor 8:4-13
- The action or inaction must consider the sinner
 - Can our opposition rather than cooperation lead them to repentance
- Does the action break down society
 - Persistent patronization of brands immorally produced

Standing Up versus Standing Down

- Christians are entitled to use the law to defend themselves
 - Acts 22:24-29
- However, as our laws become more hostile to Christianity, we may find ourselves on the losing side
- We can expect that our discipleship may cost us
 - Mark 10:29-30
 - John 7:7, 15:18-20
 - Wisdom 2:1-21
- We should not seek persecution but do not be surprised nor discouraged by it
 - Acts 5:40-42