THE DANGER OF EVIL ASSOCIATIONS

Memory Verse: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Introduction
"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (Proverbs 1:10-15).

The spirit of the world is enmity against God and we cannot feel at home among sinners unless we have some of their spirit. God has never and will never tolerate sin in any manner, shape or form. His judgment is going to fall upon this world of sin and iniquity as surely as God's Word is true. That is why there is this strong warning: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Proverbs 4:14, 15).

Moving with bad company is very dangerous to a Christian's spiritual stand. It will gradually lead him back into sin. There are three stages to his downward course. First he walks along with the ungodly – a class of people who are not necessarily deep in outbroken sin, but simply without God. They might be the people he meets at his work who invite him to go for pleasure seeking on Sunday when he should be in church. Next we find him standing in the way of sinners. Here he stops his walking and loiters with those who commit outbroken sins. Finally, he feels a little more at home, and soon finds himself taking on their ways until he eventually sits in the seat of the scornful mocking all that is righteous and holy, and hating the teaching that the Bible sets forth. "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Item 1: What should be a Christian’s attitude to the world around him?
(a) He should not associate with sinners in their sinful habits. 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; Exodus 23:2; Psalm 1:1; Ephesians 5:7, 11.
(b) He should destroy all the works of sin and Satan. Ephesians 5:11; Colossians 3:1-6; Deuteronomy 7:2, 5, 16.
(c) He should not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 6:24; James 4:4; John 17:16.

Item 2: Can a Christian have alliances with unbeliever such as:
(a) Matrimonial alliances? 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Genesis 6:1-6; 24:3, 4; Joshua 23:12, 13.
(b) Business alliances? 2 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 10:21; Amos 3:3; Revelation 18:4; 2 Chronicles 18:1-3, 28-31; 20:35-37; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.
(c) Social alliances? Exodus 23:2; Isaiah 29:15; 30:1, 2; 28:15-18; Job 31:24-28; 1 Samuel 28:7-20.

Item 3: What are the dangers of evil associations? Evil associations will
(a) create snares for a Christian. Deuteronomy 7:4; Joshua 23:12, 13; 1 Kings 11:4-11; Judges 16:4, 5, 18, 19.
(b) make him lose his son-ship with God. James 4:4; Judges 16:20, 21; 1 John 3:7, 8.
(c) bring God's wrath and disfavour upon him. Proverbs 1:24-32; Revelation 18:4; 2 Chronicles 33:10, 11.

**Item 4: What does God expect a Christian to be in the society?** He is to
(a) portray the holiness of God. Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:5, 9.
(b) be an example of good works, conversation and conduct. 1 Timothy 4:12; Colossians 1:10; Titus 2:7; Philippians 2:15; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Peter 2:12.
(c) be a light and salt of the earth. Matthew 5:13-16; Colossians 4:6.
(d) be a companion of those that love God. Psalm 119:63; 1:1-6; Malachi 3:16-18.

**Item 5: How can a Christian maintain this high standard of living?** He can, by
(a) abiding in Christ. John 15:4-7; Colossians 3:16; Psalm 119:9-11; 1 John 1:7; Psalm 27:4, 5; Philippians 4:13.
(b) prayer and consecration. Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 3:7, 8; Luke 21:36; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 9:27.

**Conclusion**
A Christian must carefully choose his companions and company. He lives in the world of sin, does business with its inhabitants, and, to a certain extent lives among those who are ungodly. But a Christian must realize the danger of close association with any member of a "mixed multitude," lest he take on himself the sins of that group or be found unnecessarily in their company more than in the company of God's children. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

What are the consequences of not obeying this direction of coming out from among unholy men? No immediate effects may be apparent. Possibly it will not lead to immediate outbroken sin. Just as surely as one persists in it, though, it will sap the foundations of his spiritual strength. It will imperceptibly cool that fervency of spirit which attended his first love.

Almost invariably the man of the world will, by some manner or means, endeavour to bring over his acquaintance to his own opinion or party. As all good men desire and endeavour to make others good like themselves, so all bad men desire and endeavour to make their companions as bad as themselves. Even if they do not, still it is dangerous to be allied with them. Sin is a contagious plague that will be communicated to the man who persists in being too near it.

If conversing too frequently and too freely with worldly-minded acquaintances has no other ill effect upon a man, it will surely make him less heavenly-minded. It will put a bias on his mind that will continually draw him to the earth. Instead of being wholly transformed in the renewing of his mind, he will be again conformed to this world with its vain conversation.

Thus it is that all those who fear and love God should come out from among all those who do not fear Him. In a plain scriptural sense you must be separate from them; that is, from all unnecessary associations with them. The promise is expressly to all who renounce the company of ungodly men. God here promises all the blessings He has prepared for His children, both in time and eternity: "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

**Challenge: Are you a companion of them that fear God?**