

# **Responsibility - Negative “Walks” of the Believer**

a study for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church  
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## **Introduction**

There are times in scripture where the Holy Spirit tells the believer not to arrange his life in some way. These situations teach some interesting and significant doctrine for the believer to understand. In the early church, Paul was advised to keep the law to appease some Jews in transition. I believe this was an error in his early ministry. Paul later advises the Ephesians not to order their lives according to the vanity of their mind, but by faith. Paul also advised the Philippians that there are individuals that will creep into the church. These individuals are governed by their appetites and should not be followed. Paul then warns the Thessalonians to separate from those that walk disorderly. There were some not keeping in step with the Spirit and it affected their lives. Others were warned not to follow them but the example Paul set for them.

## **Don't walk in the Vanity of your Mind**

Unbelievers follow the reasonings of their mind. They do what feels right, or what “works” for them. Believers are to order their lives by the leading of the Spirit, not the flesh. Eph 4:17 The unbeliever has been Satanically blinded, and cannot see the truth. The believer has access to the mind of God when he is led by the Spirit, and should not operate by the feelings which come out from his soul. He should filter his reasonings through the regenerated Spirit, found in the renewed mind.

## **The Enemy's Walk**

In the context of Phil 3, Paul had just told the church there to leave behind past successes and failures and press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling. He reminds them that those that will be mature will have this mindset (3:15). He does tell them that it is important not to leave behind what was “attained”. This is significant. Forget past successes and failures, but retain the lessons learned. But there are individuals who walk minding earthly things. Their end is destruction and their god is their belly. The believer has a citizenship (politics) in heaven, not of this earth. The believer should not walk like this individual walks.

The believer can be distracted by the things that possess the unbeliever's vision. How many times has the believer allowed a vocation, financial concerns, personality conflicts, and other surface issues to dictate how he orders his life. With a citizenship in heaven, the believer orders his life by faith, trusting God to give wisdom on choices fitting in with His desirous will.

## **Walking Disorderly**

In Thessalonica, Paul spent a relatively short time with the church there. During that time, he gave them revelation on how to live a grace-filled life. However there were a group of believers that were not keeping in step with the Spirit (2 Thess 3:6). The rest of the church were to withdraw themselves from these. Separation from these individuals was meant not to punish but to restore. The individuals who found themselves isolated would be ashamed of their behavior and would respond with repentance.

Too often believers practice a form of separation meant to elevate the accuser, alienate the offender, and achieve no good whatsoever. True Biblical separation is meant to restore and heal. The saints were

leeching off the other saints, not working, expecting the return of Christ to be soon. Paul wanted this behavior corrected and was instructing the rest of the believers to separate from the offenders.

### **Those that Walk after the Flesh**

Peter is teaching the believers that God is capable of taking individuals and reserving them for judgment. A major descriptive characteristic of one of these groups is that they order their lives by the flesh. They are also described as ones who despise governments (the authority in their lives) and follow after the lust of uncleanness. Self Willed, presumptuous, and not afraid to speak evil of those who God has given authority to. The believer should not have any of these characteristics in his life.

Jude quotes Peter and refers to these individuals in his epistle (Jude 18). They are referred to as mockers, having not the Spirit, and sensual. These descriptive terms are not complimentary. Verses 20-22 give the contrast of the believer's filled with the Holy Ghost, loving others, and showing compassion.

### **Conclusion**

Noting how the NT writers use the negative, the believer can avoid bad decisions. Understanding the importance of yielding to the Spirit, and seeking God's will for his life is of vital importance. The believer can learn important information on how not to order their lives as well.