HALLOWEEN: SHOULD BELEIVERS CELEBRATE OR PARTICIPATE?



Introduction.

- Should Christians celebrate or participate in Halloween?
- What are the origins of Halloween?
- What does the Bible say about Halloween?
- Is letting our kids dress up and ask for candy just harmless fun?
- Should we as Christians "redeem" (take back) Halloween for ourselves in order to be more relevant and welcoming to our community?
- Should Halloween be substituted or avoided altogether?

As Christians, what stance should we take on this annual holiday? What would Jesus do? In this study we're going to explore all of these questions through Scripture and history. Let's dive in.



OUR EXPERIENCE.

Many of us have friends and family members who are gearing up for the celebration of Halloween this year. Before I begin, I would like everyone listening right now to know that before I discuss the topic of Halloween and if Christians should participate, once upon a time, my children my wife and myself used to celebrate Halloween too. This was before we seriously started seeking God, His written word, His guidance and His blessing for our lives.

Like most people who begin to seriously read and study the word of God, and seek to be in right relationship with Him, <u>we discovered that there were many ways of thinking and living that were not consistent with God's word.</u>

My wife and I made the often-difficult choice to leave behind many of the thought and life patterns we had grown accustomed to when we realized they were in direct opposition to God. At the end of the day, it came down to whether we wanted to be right with God, or whether we cared more about what others thought of the decisions we made.

So, if you're Christian and you're struggling with whether or not you should participate in this holiday, understand, we know what you're going through. But I can promise you this: when you choose obedience, God will honor you, bless you, and reveal greater things than anything this world can offer, if we are willing to listen to His word and His loving guidance for our lives.



HALLOWEEN FOR CHRISTIANS?

So, is Halloween for Christians? In all humility and sincerity brothers and sisters, **the short answer is, no.** And someone needs to lovingly say that. As followers of Jesus, our participation in celebrating, giving out Halloween candy, dressing up, or hosting Halloween-themed events, especially on church grounds should be avoided. Halloween is pagan in origin and is rooted in evil and darkness period.

If you're tempted to stop listening right now, I want to ask you to prayerfully listen and consider what we are going to share, because we'll discuss not just the dark origins of Halloween and what to avoid, but also what we *can* do as believers during this time to truly be a light in the darkness. What we're going to share doesn't come from a place of pride, self-righteousness or harsh judgment, but out of sincere love for you as our fellow brothers and sisters in the faith.

Now, even though Scripture is clear that we are called to be set apart from the world and its practices, (we will address that later in this study) there's a growing trend today where sadly many Christians, Pastors and even entire congregations, are relaxing their stance on what God's Word says about celebrating Halloween in full, or in part.



Despite what God's Word reveals, many believers still respond by saying:

"Come on, there's nothing wrong with Halloween. The ghouls and ghosts and devils aren't what
Halloween means to me! It's just fun for the kids! Just don't celebrate the scary or evil side and
it's perfectly fine.

Some also say:

"Well, we can redeem Halloween! We can Christianize it! We can take it back."

Others say:

 "No, don't celebrate it. Just reach out to the lost with fall festivals at the church and give out candy. Give Jesus to families and their kids on this day!"

Many believers also sincerely ask:

• "Is it really wrong to participate in Halloween if my intentions are pure?"

On top of this, many Christians are also socially pressured by friends and family into celebrating this holiday because they argue that our kids will be robbed of fun and memories.



LET'S LOOK DEEPER.

Now, at first glance, these statements sound reasonable. After all, our intentions may be pure, and all most of us want to do is to reach people with the love of God right? But the question we have to ask is: **Do our good intentions make something God says is UNHOLY, now become HOLY? No.**

Isaiah said, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness." (Isaiah 5:20)

Now most of us grew up with memories of candy, costumes, and fun. And for years, many of us thought the same way.

We didn't participate in the "evil side" of Halloween; we just let our kids dress up as other characters and do fun things at church. But over time, the Lord began showing us that **teaching children rightly about Halloween isn't about personal preference, it's about fulfilling our calling as godly parents.** Our role to our children and grandchildren, if we have them, is to teach them how to know the difference between light and darkness, good and evil, and to honor God above all.

- **Proverbs 22:6** tells us to train up a child in the way he or she should go, and even they are old they will not depart from it.
- The Apostle Paul tells us to bring up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Sadly, for many, Halloween often becomes a moment of compromise. Many believers also feel pressured by fellow believers to include their children in Halloween, or trick-or-treating, so they don't feel left out. But that's a lie, a subtle one. Because when we knowingly join in practices that contradict Scripture, even "innocently," we teach our children that compromise is acceptable when it's convenient. And that's not the foundation we want to pass down as parents or grandparents.

Walking faithfully with the Lord means there will be times when our choices seem strange or unpopular. But those are the very moments that strengthen conviction and courage in our children. If we want them to have a true relationship with the Lord as well. When they see us standing for what's biblically right, even when others don't, they learn to do the same. We must also communicate that with them as well. Give them answers to their questions if they have them.

My wife and I have walked through that process ourselves, as have countless other families. We've explained to our children that we once participated in worldly things, but that the Lord showed us a better way, one that is in line with His Word and reflects His holiness. By doing this we're not teaching perfection, or setting an impossible standard, but teaching *obedience*. We're showing them that true faith sometimes means standing apart as those who claim to place their faith in Jesus and are obedient to His Word.

Every year, Halloween truly becomes a test of conviction. Again, it's not about being prideful or judgmental, it's about holiness (representing God's righteous character) and faithfulness. And yes, we may be misunderstood for it. We are guaranteed as true followers of Jesus that we will face the tension of what it means to be in the world and not be part of it.

Jesus said Himself in John 15:18 to expect to be hated by the world, because it hated Him first.

Now, some might say, as I used to, "But we just want to give others Jesus on this day, to be a light!" Listen, yes that's a beautiful desire, but every day is an opportunity to reflect the love of Christ. It doesn't mean we have to do what the world does to make Jesus known.

For years, in the past, our congregation also tried to "redeem" Halloween, passing out gospel tracts with candy or doing "Christian alternatives." But through much prayer and conviction, the Lord showed us that

blending the message of Jesus and the gospel with traditions rooted in darkness sends a confusing message, especially to our children.

When we try to *add Jesus* to something He would never approve of, we blur the lines between what's holy and what's unholy. It's not that we stop loving people, or stop shining the light of Jesus, we simply love them in ways that honor God completely.

If we truly want to give others Jesus on during the Halloween season, we can, in ways that are pure, powerful, and don't compromise our witness. For example, we can:

- Host a family or community night, if possible, completely centered on prayer, worship, teaching about
 Jesus as the true Light of the World and invite others to learn about what Halloween is truly about,
 without using Halloween candy, decorations, costumes or anything resembling darkness. Just as we
 are tonight.
- We can spend time praying for families in your neighborhood that their eyes would be opened to the deception of this holiday and that they would come to a relationship with Jesus.
- If you've had past experiences with the occult or dark things in your life, you can publicly share your
 own personal testimonies of how Jesus brought you out of darkness into light. Testimonies are
 powerful.
- Encourage your children to shine. Teach them that they don't need to celebrate darkness to reach others. They can pray for their classmates, speak life, and live boldly as examples of what it means to follow Jesus in truth.
- Use social media wisely. When this time comes, lovingly and graciously post Scriptures, short messages, or even your own story about why you choose not to celebrate Halloween. Many scrolling through their feeds that night may need to see a message of hope and truth.
- If entire congregations are willing, they too can be a visible light in our communities without compromising convictions. They can safely and wisely open their doors for a **night of worship**, **prayer**, **or teaching** without any Halloween themed presentations for those who are seeking to encounter the truth about Jesus rather than the darkness of the world. But let's be honest. This obviously isn't going to pack the church or be popular, but hey, if even one person shows up for prayer or learning, it's a success in God's eyes.

Now, these are all beautiful, Spirit-led ways to shine without compromise. Our goal as believers isn't to appear "better" than others, but to walk faithfully and set a biblical example for others to follow.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:14-16**, "You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Brothers and sisters, we say all of this deep love and respect. We know your heart is for the Lord, as is ours. But when we fully separate from what's dark, our witness becomes even brighter. The love of God shines most clearly when it stands apart from the world, not when it blends with it.

A CALL FOR DISCERNMENT.

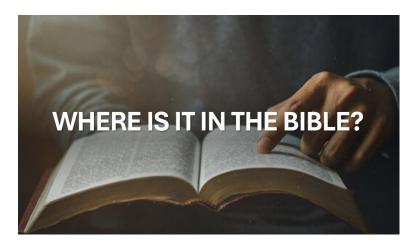
Now, it's an obvious reality that many modern Christians do not know when or where Halloween began, nor do they understand its origins. Many do not realize why they shouldn't celebrate it, or the enormous responsibility they have as parents to educate their children, both historically (what history reveals about this holiday) and biblically (what Scripture teaches). As parents, it's vital to understand the pagan roots of Halloween and the rituals that were, and still are involved.

Too often, many Christians underestimate the reality that the devil and the demonic realm are real. Just because we don't always see it, or sometimes dismiss it, doesn't mean it isn't real. You may not know it but it's a fact that there are people who actively observe pagan practices tied to Halloween, some who prepare all year to do evil, and others who engage in dark rituals, worshiping the devil, casting spells, speaking incantations, and even performing sacrifices. It may happen on a small or more extreme scale all around the world, but make no mistake: it is happening.

Even though this is true, we **don't have to be afraid.** God has not called us to fear, but to be alert, wise, and discerning. Recognizing the darkness doesn't mean we hide or panic, it means we stand firm in God's Word and equip the next generation to do the same.

I've seen for myself online how some witches and occult practitioners laugh and even gloat when Christians celebrate Halloween. They say they love it because Christians are unknowingly helping THEM spread the gospel of Halloween. They don't have to do much work. This is why it's so important to understand the spiritual impact of what we do, and the messages we send, whether we mean to or not.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be wise and protect our families from influences that can lead them away from God. That means knowing the history and practices behind holidays like Halloween, and making choices that honor our faith and values.

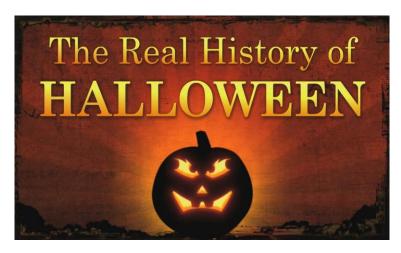


WHERE IS HALLOWEEN IN THE BIBLE?

So where is Halloween in the Bible? The short answer: it's not there. There is also not one bible verse that gives Christians permission to celebrate Halloween.

The Bible does, however, have a lot to say about things like **pagan** practices ("pagan", refers to people or people groups who worship other gods or nature) witchcraft, sorcery, and mixing God's ways with other

beliefs, this is what the Bible calls "syncretism." The bible has a lot to say about compromise, lukewarmness, God's holiness and instruction on holiness. Furthermore, God's Word also instructs us to expose evil practices. Before we discuss what the Bible has to say about pagan holidays or practices, let's first discuss the ancient origins of Halloween.



THE ANCIENT ORIGINS OF HALLOWEEN.

Holidays are important to all cultures around the world. Holidays are created to remember and celebrate an event or tradition that is important culturally or religiously. The celebration of Halloween that most of us are familiar with today didn't just appear out of thin air. It originated somewhere before it made its way to the United States and became the modern celebration we're familiar with today.



THE CELTS.

Halloween originally comes from a group of people in Europe called the **Celts**. The Celts were a collection of tribes who lived around 2,000 years ago (around 750 B.C.). The holiday's roots trace back to an ancient religious Celtic festival called **Samhain** (pronounced "Sow-win"), which marked the Celtic new year on **November 1st**.

This day signaled the end of the harvest and the start of the dark, cold winter, a time associated with death because things are seemingly dying, wilting or going dormant during this time. The Celts believed that on the night before the new year, **the boundary between the living and the dead became blurred**. On October 31st, they celebrated Samhain, when the ghosts of the dead were thought to return to earth.



HOW WAS SAMHAIN (SOW-WIN) CELEBRATED?

To honor this occasion, Celtic religious leaders, or priests, called the **Druids**, built **large sacred bonfires** where people burned crops and animals **as sacrifices to their gods**. The Celts also wore costumes, usually made from **animal heads and skins**.



WHY DID THEY DRESS UP?

The Celts believed that during **Samhain** ("sow-win"), the spirits of the dead and other spiritual beings could cross into the living world. People dressed as animals or monsters to **protect themselves** from being harmed or kidnapped by these spirits. They also left **offerings outside** to appease fairies and other creatures.



FIRST CENTURY: SAMHAIN IS ADOPTED.

As we move forward in history to the first century, the next group of people to adopt this foreign celebration were the Romans. During the days of Jesus, the Roman Empire was one of the most powerful in the world. As they expanded their territory and conquered much of the land that once was inhabited by the Celtic people, the Romans began blending their own festivals with those of the Celts, merging pagan customs and traditions together.



600 - 1000 A.D.: SAMHAIN GETS REPACKAGED.

As time went on, around 600 A.D., Catholic leaders established a celebration called "All Martyrs' Day" to honor those who had been martyred for their faith. The date of that observance was later moved to **November 1st**, which, if you remember, was the same day the Celts celebrated **Samhain (Sow-Win)**, their New Year.

Around 300 years or so later, by the 9th century, the influence of Catholicism/Christianity eventually spread into Celtic lands, gradually blending with and replacing older Celtic rituals and celebrations.

In 1000 A.D., the Roman Catholic Church established **All Souls' Day** on November 2nd, a day to honor the dead. **All Souls' Day** was celebrated in ways that resembled **Samhain** ("sow-win"), including large bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels, and devils. **All Saints' Day** was also

called **All-Hallows**, and the night before, (which was traditionally Samhain night) came to be known as **All-Hallows Eve**, which eventually became **Halloween**.



HALLOWEEN COMES TO AMERICA.

So how did Halloween travel from Europe to America, and how did it evolve from a pagan ritual into the party night we know today?

We'll, American colonists, primarily Irish, Scottish, and English immigrants brought the celebration of Halloween to the United States in the 1800s. As the customs and beliefs of different European groups merged, an American version of Halloween began to take shape. Traditions like dressing in costumes, asking neighbors for treats, late-night celebrations, and pulling pranks evolved over time into the modern fun-focused Halloween celebration and trick-or-treating traditions we recognize today.

LET'S BRING THIS ALL TOGETHER.

So to sum this up:

- The celebration of Halloween began with a people known as the Celts.
- It was originally a pagan festival with dark spiritual origins called Samhain ("sow-win").
- Then the Romans adopted it and blended Celtic traditions with some of their own festivals.
- Later, the **Roman Catholic Church merged these customs with Christian observances**, creating all Saints' Day.
- All Saint's Day then became All-Hallows Eve, which eventually became known as Halloween.
- The holiday was later brought to the United States in the 1800s by European immigrants.
- And over the years it eventually evolved into the modern celebration we know today, with costumes, trick-or-treating, and parties.



BIBLE ANALYSIS.

Now that we've discussed the historical and pagan origins of Halloween, let's return to what the Bible has to say about all this. What does the Bible say about adopting other nations' cultural holidays and practices? What does the Bible say about mixing light with darkness? What does the Bible say about us walking in holiness, being in the world but not of it? Let's find out.

DO NOT DO WHAT THE NATIONS DO.

- Jeremiah 10:2 "Do not learn the way of the nations..."
- Ephesians 4:17–24 "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you (believers) should no longer walk as the rest of the nations walk... you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and been taught by Him, as the truth is in Christ: that you put off the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."
- **Romans 12:2** "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (1 Peter 4:3–5)



PAGANISM.

What does the Bible say about believers mingling with paganism, witchcraft, and idolatry, the worship of other gods?

As believers, when explaining why we should not participate in Halloween, we must go to **God's standard of righteousness, His Law**, which reveals what is right and wrong in His sight.

If we truly believe in the God of the Bible, we must be confronted with His Law, His loving instruction His way of life commanded for us that leads to life and blessing

• **Exodus 20:1–5** – "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You shall have no other gods before Me...



AVOID EVIL CUSTOMS.

- **Deuteronomy 18:9–14** "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations... There shall not be found among you anyone who practices witchcraft, soothsaying, interpreting omens, sorcery, conjuring spells, or calling up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD..."
- Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication... idolatry, sorcery... murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things (have a pattern of life) will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Here Paul clearly states that those who continually live in sin (like practicing things that are against God, especially dark celebrations like Halloween rooted in paganism and sorcery) choosing the ways of the flesh over the ways of the Spirit show they are not truly walking in right relationship with God. Believers can't claim to follow Jesus while still holding on to the very things He died to set us free from. Those who do, will not receive all of the blessings and promises that are for those who remain faithful.



DO NOT MIX THE THINGS OF GOD WITH THE THINGS OF DARKNESS.

- Isaiah 5:20 "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." Believers have no place calling a celebration that is dark in origin and practice like Halloween, good or harmless. It can never be.
- **2 Corinthians 6:14–15** "... What fellowship has light with darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial (Satan)?"
- **Ephesians 5:8–11** "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light... Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, **but rather expose them."**

That's what we're doing here, with conviction and love, not pride, no matter how unpopular it may seem.



EVIL AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

Now again, you might say, "I understand all this but I'm not celebrating the "evil side" of Halloween, just the fun side!" I hear you, but the reality is brothers and sisters, no matter how we frame it, the fact is that we still open doors to spiritual darkness by inviting these celebrations into our homes or by participating in

them. When we ignore God's loving instructions, we make room for evil to intrude, influence, and harm us, unless we repent and, by His power, close those doors.

- **Ephesians 6:12** "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."
- 1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

The Bible is clear: the spiritual realm is real, and evil forces are actively at war against God's people.



THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

There's a reason God instructs His people to stay away from practices rooted in darkness, it's because of His holiness. God's holiness means He is completely separate from evil. There is no trace of darkness in Him.

Psalm 5:4 (ESV) – "For You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with You."

If we are called to reflect God's nature and character, then we must do what He would do, and avoid what He would avoid.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT KNOWING THE TRUTH BUT NOT OBEYING IT?

- **Deuteronomy 4:2** "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it."
- Luke 6:46 "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"
- Matthew 7:21–23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he (or she) who does the will of My Father in heaven..."
- 1 John 1:5–7 "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all... if we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin."

CONCLUSION.

Brothers and sisters, in our day, it's a sad reality that many pastors and teachers have watered down or ignored God's Word because it's not "popular" or "comfortable." But God knows what brings blessing and what curses us, what leads to life and what leads to death. He's already revealed this in His Word **so we would can be protected, not restricted.** Every negative consequence that we face when we disobey God and His commandments is what the Bible calls sin, and practicing sin is not for God's people. (1 John 3:4)

We cannot truly love God His way or live rightly His way unless we return to His instruction. His Word is our standard for righteousness (<u>Deuteronomy 30:19; Psalm 119</u>). If Jesus were to walk into many churches and congregations today, it's a reality that He might flip tables, not out of anger, **but out of love for truth and holiness.** Many of us who claim His name and claim to follow Jesus have knowingly or unknowingly blended light with darkness, especially around this time of year.

Modern pagans, witches, and Satanists view Halloween as a high holy day, and they openly mock Christians who participate, those unaware of what they're actually celebrating.

What if Jesus were to send a letter to our congregations today, just as He did to the seven congregations in Revelation? What would He say about how we live, what we tolerate, and how easily we've embraced compromise, especially in matters like Halloween? His message might sound much like His words to the church in Pergamum, a congregation that loved Him, but allowed compromise to creep in. They mixed truth with pagan practices, and the Lord warned them to repent before that mixture destroyed their witness (Revelation 2:13–16) and before He would come Himself to righteously judge them. Yes, that's same Jesus we say we worship.

And that's where much of the confusion comes in for believers today. Most believers who celebrate Halloween aren't trying to be rebellious, many simply don't know its roots or understand the spiritual dangers behind it. What's worse is when Pastors and leaders are not teaching the flock the truth but instead leading them to sin against the Lord.

Like the believers in Pergamum, many are being taught that blending in with the world is harmless, that our good intentions are what matter most. But brothers and sisters, Jesus' call is the same now as it was then: "Come out from among the world and be separate." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) Will we be set apart for God today, or blend in with the world He called us out of?



TEACHING OUR CHILDREN ABOUT HALLOWEEN.

But what about our kids? How do we speak to them about this? As parents and believers, we're called to raise our children in truth, not fear, and not compromise. That means taking the time to lovingly explain *why* we don't participate in Halloween, not just saying "because it's bad," but helping them understand that it goes against who God is and what He calls us to be.

We can teach our children that:

- God calls us as His people to be **set apart**, not to blend in with darkness. We should be able to explain what is dark about this holiday.
 - Something like, "God is a God of life, goodness and light, right? So when you think of Halloween, what first comes into your mind? Fear, blood, gore, death and horror right? So does that reflect who God is? Do you think God want us to be part of or celebrate those things? No. This is why we stay away from them. They are not good for us. They don't bring light, peace, or joy into our hearts. So instead, this is why we choose to celebrate the things that honor God and reflect His goodness and stay away from things that don't."
- Next, we can teach our children that we don't have to join the world's traditions to have joy, **God gives** us **His own holy days** that bring life and meaning.
- And lastly, we can teach our children that we can still show love and be a light to others during this time, without celebrating something that dishonors God.

Use the opportunity every year to show your kids that **holiness is not about restriction, it's about blessing and reflection. Reflecting who God is through what we choose to do and not do.** It might be the thing one day that leads someone trapped in darkness to Jesus one day.



TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS ABOUT WHY YOU DON'T CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN.

What about talking to family and friends about why we may not celebrate Halloween? Here are a few practical, loving ways to let your friends and family know you're not celebrating Halloween, while also being a witness of the Lord:

1. Lead with love, not judgment. When conversations come up, you can simply say something like: "I've been learning more about the history behind Halloween, and I feel more comfortable not celebrating it anymore. My family and I really to honor God in all we do, so we're choosing to do something different this year." This type of answer is humble and keeps the focus on you rediscovering truth and seeking to grow, rather than sounding prideful and rudely condemning toward others.

- **2. You can share what you're doing instead**. People sometimes are more open when you tell them *what you're choosing*, not just what you're avoiding. Something like: "We're planning a family night of worship and prayer at my local congregation instead. It's a great way to keep the focus on Jesus, to pray for and bless our community and still enjoy the evening together." Something like this shows joy and purpose, not fear or restriction.
- **3.** Always be ready to explain, gently and humbly. If someone asks *why*, you can say something like: "We believe the Bible calls us to stay away from things that focus on, or glorify darkness. The Bible tells us that God is a God of life and light, and we want our family to reflect that." A response like this is short, clear, and respectful without getting dragged into a debate often times.
- **4. Model what you believe with peace and confidence.** Sometimes the most powerful witness isn't what we *say* but how we *live*, even when not everyone understands. When others see your peace, joy, and conviction, it can stir curiosity and respect. Remember, people are drawn to light, not pride or poking arguments.
- **5. Lastly, try to keep the door open.** If someone disagrees, share the truth without being harsh or cruel. Just say something like: "I totally understand, but we just want to follow what we feel God has shown us." That gentle humility leaves room for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts later. Remember, we don't save anyone, God does. We don't open eyes or unstop ears spiritually, only God can through His Spirit.

Let's continue to ask the Lord for discernment and courage to stand for what is right this season, even when it's unpopular. Let's ask the Lord to help us to walk as children of light, to love what He loves, and to turn away from what is evil. May we lead our homes and our children in God ways, with wisdom, grace, and conviction, so that the Holy Spirit will continue to fill our hearts and homes with holiness and peace. Amen.