

Different From The World

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Introduction: 1. We have all heard the expression that says that we are “**in** the world, but not **of** the world.” (*John 15:18-19*). As Jesus began His ministry with the Sermon on the Mount, He began to emphasize to His disciples how different they would be if they truly committed themselves to His teaching (*Matthew 7:24-27*),

2. The theme of this lesson is *Matthew 5:19-20* – “...unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”
3. This is difficult because the temptation is to become “like everybody else” and conform to the world around us in every aspect of our lives.

I. Bible Synonyms for “Different”

- A. Sanctification – I Thess. 4:1-8
- B. Holiness – I Thess. 4:7; Hebrews 12:14
- C. Separate – 2 Cor. 6:14-18
- D. Salt of the Earth – Matthew 5:13
- E. Light of the World – Matthew 5:14-16
- F. All of the “Beatitudes”

II. What Keeps Many Of Us From Being “Different”? APATHY

- A. **Apathy** defined – “a state of not caring; not wanting to know; complacency; Indifference; to ignore; disinterested in contemplation; anesthetized to popular culture; a postmodern intellectual narcosis; compassion fatigue; too lazy; too busy; self-indulgence;...non-reflection, non-deliberation and subconscious blocking of distressing information. Apathy is less ethically excusable than ignorance...”
www.biol.tsukuba.ac.jp/~macer/biodict.htm.
- B. What’s so wrong with apathy?
 1. Helen Keller – “Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all – the apathy of human beings.”
 2. Rollo May – “Hate is not the opposite of love; apathy is.”

III. Consequences of Apathy

A. Materialism

1. Greed & Arrogance – Luke 12:15-21
2. Compromise with sin – I Tim. 6:9-10
3. Marital problems – arguments, adultery, etc.
4. Anxiety & Stress – “keeping up with the Joneses” – Matt. 6:19-21, 25-34; Proverbs 22:7
5. Lose focus on heaven – Matt. 19:16-24; Col. 3:1-2
6. **Christ’s Answer to Materialism**
 1. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” (6:19-21)
 2. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (6:33)

B. **Moral Relativism** – "...the view that ethical standards, morality, and positions of right and wrong are culturally based and therefore subject to a person's individual choice. We can all decide what is right for ourselves. You decide what's right for you, and I'll decide what's right for me. Moral relativism says, 'It's true for me, if I believe it.'" www.moral-relativism.com.

1. "Everybody's doing it" – Romans 12:1-2
2. "You want to be accepted, don't you" – I Cor. 15:33
3. "It's OK to live together and have sex before marriage" – I Cor. 6:18
4. "Homosexuality is just an alternative lifestyle" – I Cor. 6:9-10
5. "You can do whatever you please with your body" – I Cor. 6:19-20
6. **Christ's Answer to Moral Relativism** – "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it" (Matthew 7:13)

C. **Ecumenicalism** – "the doctrine of the ecumenical movement that promotes cooperation and better understanding among different religious denominations; aimed at universal Christian unity" (www.thefreedictionary.com/ecumenicalism).

1. "One church is as good as another" – Eph. 4:4
2. "It doesn't matter what you believe" – John 8:24
3. "We are saved by faith only" – James 2:24-26
4. "Baptism is not necessary for salvation" – John 3:3,5; Rom. 6:17-18
5. "The church needs to conform to the culture around us" (women preachers/elders, instrumental music, jazzercise classes, etc.) – Rom. 12:1-2; I John 4:1
6. How can we become guilty of ecumenicalism?
 1. Fear of teaching the Gospel – Matt. 5:14-15; Rom. 1:14-16; I Cor. 9:16
 2. Fear of rejection – Acts 5:29
 3. Desire to be "accepted" by the secular and religious world – James 4:4; I John 4:1
 4. Lukewarmness in worship and daily commitment – Rev. 3:15-20
7. **Christ's Answer to Ecumenicalism** – "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

Conclusion: 1. Christ wants us to strive for excellence in our service to Him and not fall into the world's trap of mediocrity, apathy, and sin. After all, we are just "sojourners and pilgrims" (I Peter 2:11) journeying toward a better place.
2. Close with the first verse of "This World Is Not My Home."

This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through;
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door;
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.