

Is Separation Required?

One item that must first be understood in reference to this question is that God's law of pardon is equally strong for both the alien sinner and the erring child of God. The blood of Jesus washes away all the sins of the obedient alien (Acts 22:16) and those of the penitent child of God (1 John 1:7-9). As repentance is required of the erring child of God, it is also required of the alien sinner who comes to God.

In either case, repentance requires the dissolving of an adulterous relationship, if it exists. If an alien sinner who has been baptized can continue to live in an adulterous relationship that began BEFORE his baptism because the blood of Christ has washed away his sins, then why cannot the child of God continue in an adulterous relationship AFTER he has repented and prayed (Acts 8:22)? The blood of Christ washes away his sins too, so why the difference? If a man steals a car, drives it to a gospel meeting and then goes through the form of obedience of the gospel, would that act make his possession right in the sight of God?

Repentance stands squarely between godly sorrow and reformation of life and applies to all -- alien sinners and children of God. There is no double standard for one group or the other. In Ezra 10:1-19, Israelites had transgressed the law of God by marrying foreign women. Concerning this matter Ezra wrote, *"Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law"* (Ezra 10:1-3). Herod was living with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. John told him, *"It is not lawful for thee to have her"* (Matthew 14:4). It should be obvious to all that the same would have to happen as with the Israelites. The sinful relationship would have to be dissolved.

When learning the truth, sincere people who are earnestly trying to go to heaven will dissolve any unscriptural relationship in which they find themselves. We acknowledge that it is not easy to do. Heartache and sorrow

are sure to follow, but by doing the will of the Lord, precious souls will be insured of a home with God forever.

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