

Avoiding Occasions For Reproach

- A. reproach: A source or cause of disgrace or shame (to a person, etc.); a fact, matter, feature or quality bringing disgrace or discredit upon one.
- B. A primary goal of us as Christians is to convert men to repent and follow Christ with us as members of His church in this world. **1TH 1:5-6.**
1. We do this by sound reasoning from Scripture. **ACT 17:2.**
 2. We do this by showing sinners a better way and hope. **1PE 3:15.**
 3. We do this by mirroring Christ in our conversation. **EPH 4:13; COL 1:27-28.**
 - a. We can impair this directive by ungodliness, indiscretion, unfettered passion, etc.
 - b. “Reflections cannot be seen in boiling water, nor can Christ be seen in a turbulent man.” (Unknown)
 - c. We ought not to be the unreasonable characters from whom we pray to be delivered. **2TH 3:2.**
 - d. What do those who are without conclude from your manner of life and speech?
 - (1) Do they see you as no different from the unbelievers you decry, lacking holiness or hope, lashing out in frustration against the forces you deem to be the enemies of good?
 - (2) Or do they see you as one that values holy living in faith and hope which transcends the troubles of this life?
 - (3) Faith or fear; hope or hell. What message are you telegraphing?
- C. We are to conduct ourselves so as not to give the adversary occasion to speak reproachfully of Christ or His church. **1TI 5:14; 2SAM 12:14; TIT 2:8; 1CO 10:32-33.**
1. Mind that the purest and most perfect life still generated reproach from sinners, unjustly. **ROM 15:3.**
 2. If we are reproached for good faith, life and speech, this is cause for happiness. **1PE 3:14.**
 3. Being reproached for rank sin is a different story. **1PE 4:14-16.**
 4. This pertains even to everyday things like labor and service. **1TI 6:1; COL 3:22-24.**
- D. The church of Jesus Christ is a nation of higher values than the secular nations of this world.
1. It certainly ought not to hold company with sinners so scandalous that even an unbelieving world rejects them. **1CO 5:1.**
 2. We should also be concerned about behavior that the world permits in itself but not in us. **1CO 6:9-10.**
 3. We should even be concerned about ridiculous or inconsistent conduct which detracts from our witness. **1CO 11:22; 14:23.**
 4. One can go overboard with such concerns and end up condemning Christ. **JOH 2:13-17.**
- E. Saints, especially ministers, should have a good report of men in general. **1TI 3:7; 3JO 1:12.**
1. There is nothing wrong with being approved by good men. **ROM 14:17-18.**
 2. What we don’t want is the approval of all men indiscriminately. **LUK 6:22, 26.**
- F. Godly leaders should be especially sensitive to this issue.
1. Peter discredited the cause of Christ by his inconsistency. **GAL 2:11-14.**
 2. Paul was much concerned that he should not defame Christ. **1CO 9:27; 2CO 6:3.**
 3. The wise will cut off occasion. **NEH 6:13; 2CO 11:12.**
 4. All should be cautious to avoid the appearance of evil. **1TH 5:22.**
- G. Is this culture driving you to extremes? Beware!
1. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world (**JOH 18:36; MAT 12:19**) and this world is not our home. **HEB 11:13.**
 2. We have a duty to shine as lights IN THE MIDST OF A CROOKED AND PERVERSE NATION. **PHIL 2:15-16.**

3. Instead of cursing darkness, try being a candle that benefits others. **MAT 5:15-16.**
 4. Do not let this crazy world drive you crazy, make you fret and so defile yourself or destroy your testimony. **PSA 37:7-9.**
- H. Our tongues often betray us, discredit our Savior, and generate unwanted reproach. **JAM 3:9-10.**
1. Are there people out there walking in darkness, going the way of all flesh, ruining society, etc.? Be careful how you speak.
 2. Without Christ, we be them. **TIT 3:1-3.**
 3. Christ had every reason to revile men but He didn't. **1PE 2:21-23.**
 4. Inappropriate and intemperate speech takes wings and spreads where you wouldn't want it to go. **ECC 10:20.**
 5. An ungoverned tongue can do great damage. **JAM 3:5-6.**
- I. The best of efforts to live for Christ may not sway the minds of implacable men (**MAT 11:16-17**) but be good for goodness sake. A lost world is watching.
- J. Living by faith and doing well patiently, reasonably is enough to stir the ire of ungodly people (**PRO 29:27**). Don't give them extra ammunition.