

Sexual Harassment-A Biblical Approach
Lesson Two
The Appearance of Evil

There is a principle found in the Bible that if followed will help lessen a person being in an environment where sexual harassment or sexual abuse can occur, will lessen the potential of being accused of sexual harassment, and will stop behavior that is sexual harassment or sexual abuse in nature.

The principle we are talking about is the concept of *avoiding all appearance of evil*. It is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 (KJV)

²¹ *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

²² *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 (NASB)

²¹ *But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;*

²² *abstain from every form of evil.*

We need to acknowledge that a person can do all that they can to prevent themselves from being a victim of harassment or sexual abuse, but that does not guarantee they do not become a victim. But if a person holds fast that which is good and abstains from all appearance of evil, they certainly will refuse to be in compromising situations that can provoke sexual harassment.

It should also be clear that if a Christian holds fast to that which is good and abstains from all appearance of evil they will not be making sexual innuendo comments, and not have behavior that gives the appearance of sexual harassment.

Before we explore this verse in Scriptural context and in detail, we should mention that because of the legalistic application of this passage by some Christians, many Christians try to make this passage not say what it says-to lessen the 'directness' of this passage. It never is beneficial or helpful to counter legalism with *sloppy agape*, *greasy grace*, to insinuate a Bible verse is not saying what it clearly is saying to justify certain sinful behavior. Scripture is given to us for our benefit, not harm.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

¹⁷ *so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Let's take a look at the words of this passage.

Examine Carefully-Read in context it means to take a look at what we are doing, where we are at.

Hold Fast-To hold fast means to stick it out, be in it for the long haul, don't give up. To hold fast that which is good means to do what is right all the time. It means to live beyond reproach.

Titus 2:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ *Likewise urge the young men (we can add ALL CHRISTIANS) to be sensible;*

⁷ *in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,*
⁸ *sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.*

Abstain-to hold oneself from, to keep oneself from, to not participate in. In other words a Christian to not participate in anything that appears evil.

All appearance-This would mean anything that appears evil.

It should be clear from this passage that as Christians we should do all that we can to live our life in such a way as to not give the appearance of evil, to not be a stumbling block for others, to be a cause for Christians or non-Christians to question our relationship with Christ.

To get even a deeper understanding of this passage, let's look at the context in a deeper manner.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 (NASB)

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

As Christians we in a loving manner bring correction to those who living outside the will of God. It is hard to do that if we are not abstaining from the appearance of evil in our own life.

We can't help the weak if we have a form of the appearance of evil. Our behavior will only cause the weak to stumble.

So if we are around individuals who are manifesting behavior that can be seen as sexual harassment we should confront it. We should help individuals who manifest such behavior. We lose our 'authority' if we are walking in an appearance of evil.

¹⁵ *See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.*

If we are seeking what is good for others, we need to be walking in the good, thus holding fast to that which is good and abstaining from the appearance of evil.

¹⁶ *Rejoice always;*

¹⁷ *pray without ceasing;*

If we are rejoicing in God and praying without ceasing we will examine everything that we do, will hold fast, and abstain from the appearance of evil.

¹⁸ *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Thank God that He will show you if you are at the wrong place at the wrong time, if you are doing something that is inappropriate. Giving thanks keeps you focused on God.

¹⁹ *Do not quench the Spirit;*

When we walk in the appearance of evil we quench the Spirit of God.

²⁰ *do not despise prophetic utterances.*

When someone brings correction in our life, points out the appearance of evil in our life, we should not get offended, we should not reject their counsel, and we should be willing

to correct the situation.

²¹ *But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;*

Be open to see where we could be doing something that is wrong, be determined to do what is right.

²² *abstain from every form of evil.*

We do what the verse says to the best of our ability.

²³ *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If we apply this passage in our life, we will have peace in our life, we will be set apart for God, and we will be living a life beyond reproach.

It should be clear that if we apply the principles in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 we are less likely to be sexually harassed and be a perpetrator of sexual harassment.