

Prayer List

Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Judy
Rose
Ken

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What book states, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Locusts - Exodus 10:19

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Different by Design

by Dee Bowman

Peter, inspired by the Spirit, tells us that Christians are "a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). When I was just a little fellow, I remember hearing sermons about Christians being "peculiar" people, and how they were to be different from other folks around—even if it meant being odd or irregular. I have since learned that the word peculiar means more than being different or odd – though we may seem to be that. This peculiarity has to do with our being "a people for God's own possession." In fact, our word peculiar has its source in Latin and is a close translation of the Greek word. The Latin word is peculium and means "private property." Even before that it meant a person's "personal cattle."

However, there is still a connotation in the word that expresses a setting apart, being different or distinctive. The Christian is a saint and the word "saint" means "called out", or separated, and speaks to that same peculiarity or separation, as well. Even the Greek word translated "church," in the New Testament, ekklesia, had reference to an assembly of called out people, again describing a people separated from the

world, who have been made the property of the Heavenly Father.

As a matter of fact, no person can be a follower of Christ who is not willing to suffer the badge of being different. He must be willing even to suffer an amount of abuse for having become so. It takes considerable courage, wisdom, patience, and dedication to be different. As my favorite frog Kermit says, "It's not easy being green." But different we are. Different by design.

You can tell a Christian by where he goes. A good Christian will not deliberately frequent certain places—places where he knows ungodly things are taking place. He will not be found in dance halls, bars, or in gambling houses because he knows that what's going on in those places is not in his best spiritual interests. He will not accept invitations to gatherings where he knows the crowd will be comprised of those who are not concerned for moral values – places where he knows his spiritual influences might be blunted. The Christian feels out of place in such gatherings.

You can tell a Christian by who he's with. He knows his associations say something about his character, his moral values, as well as his interests in life. True, he has to live in the world—around people who don't share his code of morality and who are not interested in God, but he does not choose deliberately to surround himself with people of low morality. He may not be very popular because of having separated himself from such people, but he is disposed to courageously define his choice of friends even in the face of such rejections. Paul says, "Be not deceived; evil companions corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). I don't know how many times people have come to me to straighten out their lives and when asked how they got so far off course, they remarked: "Well, I just got in with the wrong crowd."

You can tell a Christian by how he talks. It's amazing to me how rapidly this country's language has plummeted into a filthy bog of putridity. Words that once were used only in gutter

conversations just a few years ago are now being used in general conversations – and without a blush of embarrassment. Words men would not say in the presence of women just a few years ago are now used by the women themselves—in a pitiful and painful desecration of femininity.

The Christian will be noticeably different in this area. You will not hear him cursing, using the name of the Lord flippantly or otherwise using language disrespectful of his Father. You will not hear him telling smutty stories or relaying filthy gossip. Conversely, his speech will be "seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6), designed to enhance the conversation and promote a righteous life. He will speak words of encouragement and edification, in an effort to encourage those to whom he speaks, words build confidence in God. Sometimes he will be conscientiously constrained to speak out against ungodliness and evil, but even then, he will do it with concern for those to whom he must address those corrections, and will do so "in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). And you will notice by his speech the things that are of interest to him: things like Christ and His church, salvation, heaven – different things like that. You can tell a Christian by what he is. Building character is what Christianity is all about. God gives ample information as to how he can mold the kind of character that is fit for His approval. As this is being done, he becomes more and more distinctive, sometimes even seemingly odd. It becomes apparent to people that he is more interested in the hereafter than in the here, that his affections are on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2), that the time spent here however long it may be—is merely a probationary period while he equips himself for the home his Lord has prepared for him (Col. 3:20-21). He is a pilgrim, a sojourner. He has taken, as best as he can, complete control of his life and given himself entirely to God. In short, he's just different about things.