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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Podcast

With or Against?



Part 1/5

No Neutrality
By Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. The title of my talks this week is "No Neutrality." It will confront you with issues you may perhaps have never faced before.

Compromise has become one main characteristic of our contemporary culture. Most issues today are put to the test of expediency rather than of morality or justice. I think this is true in our personal lives, it's true in business affairs, it's true I think in legal issues and I think it's true with the course of government as a whole. If a thing generates money, practically no other endorsement for it is needed. There really are no longer any absolutes. Nothing is black and nothing is white. Nothing is really good, nothing is really evil. We only have various shades of gray. Worst of all, in many areas the church has the same attitude as the world. Flagrant evils abound all around us. Abortion takes the lives of millions of innocent little children every year. Famine stalks the earth, an estimated 10 million people die every year of malnutrition and famine—and most of them small children. Pornography defiles our nation. It is carried in the various media of the nation, it's become a billion dollar industry and yet, in the midst of all this masses of professing Christians show little or no concern. They sit as comfortably on the fence as they do on their church pews.

However, let me tell you something: when the Holy Spirit comes, He changes all this. That's why many people are afraid of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit penetrates a church, He electrifies that fence on which they're all sitting and people just have to jump off on one side or another but there's no more room for neutrality.

You see, Jesus Himself left no room for neutrality. He was totally uncompromising. His ministry brought into focus two opposing kingdoms: the kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness. Between these two there is no neutrality, no peace, no compromise. Ultimately, each of us must align ourselves with one or the other of these two kingdoms: the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. Jesus stated this issue as clearly and as emphatically as it's possible to state it in Matthew 12:30. He said:

> "He who is not with Me is against Me: and he who does not gather with Me scatters." (NAS)

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There's one important difference between these two kingdoms. In the kingdom of light we know whom we are serving. But not so in the kingdom of darkness. Multitudes, millions, billions in the kingdom of darkness are serving a wicked, cruel ruler, but they don't know whom they are serving. They're deceived. But Jesus said there can be no neutrality. We are either with Him or against Him, we're either gathering or we're scattering. If we are with Him it will be expressed in our positive action—we will gather and not scatter. And let me add that anything that is not gathering is automatically scattering.

Let me give you some areas in which this truth applies. First of all, in the matter of time. In Ephesians 5:15-16 Paul says:

> "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (NKJ)

The course of time in this world is essentially evil. Time is in the hand of evil. By strong positive action we can redeem it; that is, buy it back for God and for good. But this in contemporary culture is like swimming against the current. The current is evil. To go against the current is a struggle. It takes strength, it takes determination. But then you see, that's the difference between a live fish and a dead fish. a live fish can swim against the current. All that a dead fish can do is float with it.

Let me ask you frankly at this point, Which are you? A live fish or a dead fish? And remember if we lose time we can never get it back again. It's gone beyond recall.

If we study the ministry of Jesus in Mark's gospel, the key word is "immediately" or some equivalent word. Jesus was never rushed or too busy but He never wasted a moment. There's some words in Proverbs which really challenge us. Proverbs 6:9-11:

> "How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man." (NIV)

You just have to be lazy for a short period, you just have to indulge your carnal desires for ease, and poverty comes before you can recognize it. It comes like a bandit. It forces its way in, you can't keep it out. And let me point out that poverty is spiritual as well as material. Many, many Christians are spiritually impoverished because of laziness. You search the Bible and see if you can ever find one good word said on behalf of laziness. The Bible certainly condemns drunkenness but it condemns laziness far more severely than drunkenness.

Then let's consider our talents. Jesus told the parable of the three kinds of servants, each of whom received talents. One received five, traded with them and gained five more and was commended. Another received two, traded with them, gained two more and was commended. But the third received one and did nothing with it. And here's the climax of this story as it concerns this third one who did nothing. Matthew 25:24-30:

> "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' [And he handed the talent back.] His master replied, 'You wicked lazy servant! [Notice that to be lazy is to be wicked.] So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (NIV)

What did that man do to receive that fearful judgment? What did he do? Shall I tell you? I can answer you in one word. He did nothing, just nothing. What was his sin? Laziness. What was his condemnation? Total and final rejection. We need to be very careful what we do with the

talents that God has committed to us. We're going to have to answer to God for them one day.

And then one more thing for which we are accountable that might not immediately occur to you. That is, our physical strength. That too is something for which we have to answer to God. 1 Peter 4:10-11, Peter says this:

> "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Notice that word "steward." That's what we all are. A steward is accountable for what's committed to him. He doesn't own it. He can manage it but he has to answer for it. And then Peter continues in that vein in verse 11:

> "Whoever speaks, let him speak as it were, the utterances of God: whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies..."

Notice, the ability to serve, the ability to work, the ability to do manual labor, the ability to gain money by what we do with our physical strength—that's a talent. We're stewards of it, we're answerable for it. And then Peter goes on to speak about the motivation that should guide us and govern us:

> "...so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (NAS)

What is the motivation that prompts us? What is the motivation that should make us industrious and faithful? It's a desire for God's glory, that in everything God may be glorified. I heard someone say once if a person doesn't live for God's glory he has no right to exist. That's the only ultimate motivation and justification for living, is living for the glory of God.

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