

Scriptural “Red Flags” – No. 2

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When we read, *Be not deceived*, in Scripture, a special “red flag” of warning is being given. In 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 Paul raised one of these “red flags”:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

We do not know for sure what prompted this warning, but the warning itself is crystal clear. Note some observations on this passage:

1. Purity of life is a fundamental requirement of God in His children. The ten acts of “unrighteousness” listed by Paul are but examples of the kinds of things that are reprehensible to God and to all His faithful people. He delights in those who are “pure in heart” (Mat. 5:8). Keeping oneself “unspotted from the world” is part of “pure and undefiled religion” (Jam. 1:27). None shall enter heaven having lived impenitently in fleshly defilements on earth (Rev. 21:27). Let us live pure lives.
2. While modern sociologists and psychologists call the items on Paul’s list “sicknesses,” the Bible calls them “sins” – soul-damning sins. How sad and revolting it is to see fornication treated as a laughing matter and homosexuality as merely an “alternate lifestyle” by our society. God’s attitude toward such abominations has not changed, even as His Word clearly teaches and as the Judgment shall finally settle. We must both avoid and expose such sins.
3. Paul believed in Heaven (here styled “the Kingdom of God”). We live in a world in which men (even many who claim to believe in God) have decided there is no Hell. With the disbelief in Hell it was predictable (and logically necessary) to likewise discard Heaven. We feel sorry for those who neither hope for Heaven nor fear Hell. Paul was not among such infidels, nor are we.
4. This passage (if there were no other) is decisive against the Calvinistic error of perseverance of the saints (i.e., “once saved, always saved”). Paul was writing to people who had been washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11), thus saved. Yet, if they lived in those sins of verses 9 and 10, although God’s children, they would be “disinherited,” even as the brother described in chapter 5 would be, if he did not repent.

Let us not be deceived about the damning effects of impurity.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, June 14, 2009, of which I was editor.]

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