

Compartmentalizing

Ponder: “Spiritual” and “Secular”

Scripture: “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17 NKJV).

To compartmentalize means “to separate something into sections or categories” (Merriam Webster online dictionary). A business might put one group of employees in the sales department while others work in shipping and receiving. That makes good sense.

Compartmentalizing one’s life is appropriate to some degree. I would prefer that my surgeon distinguish between operating on my appendix while on the job and playing with his or her children that evening. The two really don’t mix well!

Politicians, sports heroes, movie stars, and other celebrities are especially notorious for compartmentalizing their lives in a negative way. “Why should you care if I cheat on my spouse, use illicit drugs, etc.? That’s my private life. As long as it doesn’t affect my job performance, you should support me!” Seldom do such people acknowledge the power of their example or the effect their ungodliness has on society in general and children in particular.

Christians sometimes try to compartmentalize. “I go to church on Sunday – maybe even on Wednesday night. I dress modestly and use clean language while there. I use no tobacco or alcohol – not even a few puffs in the parking lot. But at home or on the job, things are different. That’s my secular life. My spiritual life is at the building.”

Alfred Edersheim observed, “To the secular, nothing is spiritual; and to the spiritual, nothing is secular.” He was right! If you are a Christian, you don’t have a secular life. Paul wrote, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23). Whether you are digging a ditch, teaching school, or preaching a sermon, you are living and working for Christ. What you are doing is spiritual, not secular! Everything you do affects your relationship with Him and your influence on other people.

Don’t compartmentalize your life. You cannot serve God and Mammon!