

Titus 2:11-13

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,
righteously, and godly, in this present world;
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our
Saviour Jesus Christ;

I still am unable to shake this topic of influence. Anyone that truly knows me, knows that my favorite hour of radio comes on hour two on Friday's Dennis Prager's broadcast "The Happiness Hour."

He made this comment and it really got me thinking. I am going to try the best I can to quote it correctly: "The question is not whether or not you've been damaged. The question is can you control your behavior?"

I have thought about this a great deal over the last 12 hours or so. To some extent or another, we are all damaged people. Somehow, somewhere along the journey of life, someone or something has done something to us to make us damaged people. My father was born during the depression, although he may not remember the Great Depression, it greatly influenced his behavior. When I was born, I didn't come with an instruction manual, (according to my mom, I desperately needed one) so they did the best they could with what they had. When I got married, my words damaged my wife. I have said things along the way that may have damaged my children. The point I am trying to make is that we are damaged people through no fault of our own.

The point Prager was trying to make was: we've all been damaged, still we have a moral obligation to be happy. Get over the damage and get on with your life. The point RP is trying to make is we can't allow the fact that someone may have said or done something detrimental to us to give ourselves permission to fall into a lifestyle of unrighteousness.

We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light. We can't have the attitude, "Well someone hurt me, so I'm going to listen to rap music." "I don't like the way someone looked at me or responded to me, so I'm going to watch movies." "Fill in the blank yourself . . . so I'm going to do stupid things with my phone."

The Holy Ghost not only helps us get through damaging areas of life. The Holy Ghost also helps us change our behavior. We have no excuse for ungodly behavior, we have no excuse for ungodly associations. How many times have you heard me say, **NO FELLOWSHIP IS BETTER THAN BAD FELLOWSHIP?**

The epitaph on many backsliden Apostolic youth's tombstones is: Spiritually died over **TOXIC FELLOWSHIP**; lost their prayer life over toxic fellowship; lost their dedication over toxic fellowship; lost out with God over toxic fellowship . . . You know why Jonadab was Amnon's friend? Because Amnon **WANTED** a friend who was going to sway his behavior.

All of us first generation Apostolics had to sever our ties with relationships that were toxic to our walk with God. As sure as I am sitting here this morning typing this out,

the Holy Ghost has quickened my heart to say, there are people who are allowing toxic relationships to destroy them . . .

Psa 73:24-28

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.