

Making Distinctions

By Kimberly Sowell

Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. (Romans 12:16a NKJV)

Imagine you have just moved into your community, and you're attending a service at your church for the first time. In your mind's eye, see the people who attend your church as they make their way down the aisles and select their seats. Study each person's features, examine their outfits, and take note of the way they talk and how they act. If you were this newcomer in the crowd, to whom would you gravitate? Who would you want to be friends with, and why?

Every commercial you see on TV and every ad in popular magazines emphasizes that who you are is determined by what you wear and what you own. Don't like yourself? The world teaches you to buy a new image. You hear these false messages so often that you may start to believe the lies yourself.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul teaches not to set your mind on high things—bowing to status symbols or making life a popularity contest—but to associate with the humble. Paul is not dictating that you befriend only the people who don't own expensive things, but he is calling attention to the criterion you use to select your associations. Just as God offers His love to each person freely and equally, no matter whom she is or what she owns, God is calling you to look beyond a person's physical appearance and possessions to connect with the person inside.

Now imagine you are walking down a crowded street, overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of an unfamiliar city. People are mingling in their crowds of distinction – the wealthy socialites, the clean-cut business crowd, the trendy coffee-drinkers, and the weary homeless. God urges your heart to share Christ with a stranger. Whom will you choose? Will you shy away from those wealthier than you, fearing their status? Will you avoid the homeless, fearing their neediness? The human eye sees individuals who are different on the surface, but the spiritual eye sees no differences among these souls, all equally lost, equally in need of the good news of a Savior, who died for all.