

# Compromise

The Deadly Matador Plant (see [discussion](#))

**COMPROMISE:** Webster says **compromise** means the expedient acceptance of standards that are lower than is desirable. God says that the preeminent prohibition for a follower of Christ is to "have no other gods before Me." (Ex 20:3) Stated another way, we are to have no idols, nothing that compromises our covenant communion with Jehovah.

In the early 1900's, an American ship was wrecked off the coast of England. The sea had been calm and the weather clear, but the vessel was caught in a treacherous current that slowly lured it off its course. Before the captain and the crew realized what had happened, the ship had crashed into the rocks. Every believer needs to be aware of those powerful "**currents of compromise**" which can suddenly catch our soul and carry us to "shipwreck." (1Ti 1:18-19+) Spiritual drifting is usually slow and imperceptible, but you know it has occurred when you have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth you once knew!

**H W Robinson** reminds us that the best defense against drifting is "the compass of God's Word (which) will keep us from spiritual shipwreck." Are you examining "**the compass**" daily to make sure you stay on course?

**Jesus** gave us the perfect example to follow when caught in a spiritual struggle, as He was confronted by the temptations of the devil and resisted Him enabled by the Spirit (Mt 4:1+, Lk 4:1+, Acts 10:37, 38+ cf Paul's command to us in Eph 5:18+) and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17+), declaring

It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT **ONEVERY WORD** THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Matthew 4:4+)

**Moses** instructed the second generation of Israelites who were preparing to enter the Promised Land where they would experience intense warfare...

"**Take** (command, not suggestion) to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today (cf [Memorizing](#)), which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. "For **IT** (GOD'S WORD) is not an idle **word** for you; indeed **IT** (GOD'S WORD) is your life. And by this **word** you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut 32:46-47+)

Finally the **writer of Psalm 119** (which many think was David) asked

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; (HIS PRAYER) Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.(Psalm 119:9-11+)

**S. Coley** commenting on the danger of **COMPROMISE** wrote

In Brazil there grows a common plant which forest-dwellers call the [matador](#) or "**murderer**." Its slender stem creeps along the ground, but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than it sends out an entangling tentacle, which cleaves and climbs up the tree, at intervals sending out arm-like tendrils that further entangle the tree. As the "murderer" ascends, these ligatures grow larger and their clasp becomes tighter. Up and up the rogue vine climbs until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and there from the dead tree's crown, scatters its seed to begin its entangling work again.

In a similar way everyday affairs can **subtly entangle** soldiers of Christ, in effect neutralizing their effectiveness in the ongoing spiritual war with the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Knowing the subtle dangers and sensual enticements of this fallen world, Paul like a good military general commanded his disciple Timothy (applicable to every disciple of Jesus!)...

**Suffer hardship with me** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles ([empleko](#) - present tense, passive voice - external force, [world](#), continually being intertwined to point of immobility) himself in the affairs ([pragmateia](#) - "civilian pursuits" - ESV) of everyday life, so that ([hina](#) - purpose or result) he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.(2 Timothy 2:3-4+)

**John Piper** says when a Christian soldier's "evenings and days off (begin to be) filled up with harmless, enjoyable diversions... the whole feel changes. The radical urgency fades. The **wartime mentality** shifts to a **peacetime mentality**. The lifestyle starts to get cushy. The all-consuming singleness of vision evaporates." (Quote from [The Pastor as Theologian - Life and Ministry of Jonathan Edwards](#)) I would add that an entangled soldier is no longer maintaining [An Undivided Heart!](#) And the Captain of our souls, the Lord

Jesus taught that "(Absolutely) No one can serve two masters (DIVIDED HEART), for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt 6:24<sup>±</sup>) Since we are ALL prone to wander (we are sheep after all! Isa 53:6+) let me encourage you to periodically (as a physician my prescription would be "once per day" if you sense a straying heart) pray Psalm 86:11NIV

***Teach me Your way, O LORD, and I will walk in Your truth;  
Give me an undivided heart*** (note), ***that I may fear Your name.***

**Spurgeon** adds that "Many of God's children are in this condition -- entangled, surrounded, captive, held fast!" Are their any "matador vines" in your life that need to be eradicated?

Daniel was a **man of integrity** (morally sound, honest, free from corrupting influences or motives) and a man of **"no compromise"** from beginning to end! What an example of perseverance! In Daniel 1:8<sup>±</sup> we read that as a teen

"Daniel made up his mind (KJV = purposed in his heart) that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine...So he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself."

Daniel continued to be a **man of integrity** to the end, Scripture recording that Daniel, by now in his 80's, refused to compromise with the king's "*no-prayer edict*" and "continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously." (Da 6:10<sup>±</sup>)

Daniel refused to compromise and God elevated him to a position of prominence all the days of his life. When we imitate Daniel's attitude (cf Heb 6:12<sup>±</sup>) and accept whatever our sovereign God has for us, we can be sure of success, no matter what form it takes. The next time you are tempted to compromise your principles, don't give in. Dare to be a Daniel! Daniel did not compromise because Daniel had convictions.

Daniel's three companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were also mighty men of faith, men of **"no compromise,"** declaring (in face of King Nebuchadnezzar's threat to kill them if they did not worship his idolatrous image)

"If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Da 3:17-18<sup>±</sup>)

Joseph was a man of **"no compromise"** for even when Potiphar's wife tried to entice Joseph whispering softly "Lie with me," Joseph steadfastly refused, declaring

"Behold...my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" (Ge 39:7-9)

The longest Psalm in the Bible begins with a description of men and women of **integrity** and **"no compromise"** –

"Happy (blessed) are people of integrity, who follow the law of the LORD....They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths." (Ps 119:1,3NLT+)

In the NT, Paul addressed the problem of compromise in the saints at Corinth quoting God Himself Who called for them to

**"COME OUT"** (verbs in red = commands, not suggestions!) from their midst and **BE SEPARATE,**" says the Lord. "and **DO NOT TOUCH** what is unclean and I will welcome you." (2 Corinthians 6:17+ [Read pithy sermon by J C Ryle](#))

Paul said it this way

**"Don't let** the world around you **squeeze you into its own mold** (Note this is a command, [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), but let God remold your minds from within (also a command), so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands & moves towards the goal of true maturity." (Ro 12:2<sup>±</sup> J B Phillips Paraphrase)

Paul capped off his warning to the Corinthians regarding **compromise** with an exhortation

**"Therefore,** having these promises (What promises? See 2Cor 6:16, 17, 18+), beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 7:1<sup>±</sup>)

The apostle Peter instructs us

"As obedient children, [do not be conformed](#) to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One Who called you, [BE HOLY](#) (command we can obey only in dependence on the Holy Spirit Who enables us to make choices that set us apart from the world and unto God) yourselves also in **all** (Greek means 100% of) your behavior. (1Pe 1:14-15+)

James warns us that

"friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4+)

**So what's the take home message?** For the follower of Christ, the sad results of **compromise with the world** are a lot like the dread "matador" vine which chokes the life out of the host tree! Indeed, compromise with the world will "strangle" the "spiritual life" of believers (and churches).

As John Blanchard put it

"If you are holding something back from God, then God is holding something back from you!...We must never settle for HARMONY at the expense of HOLINESS, nor for PEACE at the expense of PRINCIPLE."

*Those who follow the crowd are quickly lost in it.*

Van der Puy adds that "

Anything that takes God's PLACE is OUT OF PLACE!"

Or as the pastor of pithy precepts, Vance Havner, put it "

The middle of the road is a poor place to walk. It is a poor place to drive. It is a poor place to live!...Look out for a compromising spirit. They had that in [Pergamos](#) and [Thyatira](#), with the result that [Balaam](#) and [Jezebel](#) took advantage of a false tolerance and corrupted the life of the church. Sometimes we mistake compromise for charity and PUT UP WITH what we should PUT OUT!"

Francis Schaeffer warned

"Accommodation leads to accommodation—which leads to accomodation!"

Spurgeon was right when he said

"If you yield today, you will have to yield tomorrow."

And finally as Malcolm Watts said "We can tell when we have been influenced by the world. It is when we find ourselves neither hot nor cold, just compromised." (cf Rev 3:15, 16+)

We need to imitate the example of [Jonathan Edwards](#) (cf Heb 6:12+):

**Resolved:** To follow God with all my heart.

**Resolved:** Whether others do or do not, I will.

Take a moment to listen to this powerful, convicting song from Keith Green entitled "[No Compromise](#)" and consider making it your prayer today. Here are the words...

Make my life a prayer to you  
I wanna do what you want me to  
No empty words and no white lies  
No token prayers, no compromise  
I wanna shine the light you gave  
Through Your Son You sent to save us  
From ourselves and our despair  
It comforts me to know You're really there.  
I wanna thank You now for being patient with me  
Oh, it's so hard to see when my eyes are on me  
I guess I'll have to trust and just believe what You say  
Oh, You're coming again, coming to take me away  
I wanna die and let You give Your life to me  
So I might live and share the hope You gave to me

The love that set me free  
I wanna tell the world out there,  
You're not some fable or fairy tale  
That I've made up inside my head  
You're God the Son, You've risen from the dead

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#### **Related Resources:**

- [The Danger and Deceitfulness of a Hardened Heart](#)
  - [Backsliding](#)
  - [Are You Entangled?](#)
  - [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)
  - [Daniel-Man of Integrity](#)
  - [Proverbs 4:23 Commentary](#) - Watch over your HEART with all diligence
  - [Matthew 5:8 Commentary](#) - Blessed are the pure in HEART.
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#### **PURE HEART**

by Craig Smith

Over and over I hear it again  
That the Father desires pure hearts.  
Not to seek earthly treasure or the favor of men,  
But to be found with pureness of heart.

Pure heart is what the Father desires,  
Holy heart, purified by God's holy fire,  
Broken hearts, proven to be faithful and true,  
Fashion in me a heart that's thirsting for You.

Search every chamber, expose them to me  
Create motives of honor and simplicity  
May You find faithfulness, integrity,  
In a heart that is worthy for Your eyes to see.

My only ambition is to stand before You  
And find I was pleasing in Your sight  
An obedient child of God, faithful and true,  
Found with pureness of heart.