Unequally Yoked

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Today I would like to begin by reading a passage of Scripture from 2nd Corinthians 6. These are verses 14-18: *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'

Wherefore, 'come out from among them, and be ye separate,' saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Let me read this to you again, in another translation, the Holman Christian StandardBible: *"Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said:*

‘I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord;

do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.’”

These are very wise words from Scripture, and the concept of being “unequally yoked” with unbelievers applies to ALL the relationships we have in our lives. We should avoid being unequally yoked in business, with friends, with the companies and stores we shop at, with the people we may hire to do home repairs or car maintenance – always seek to work and interact with brothers and sisters in Christ. But all of these examples pale in comparison to the poor soul that is unequally yoked in MARRIAGE to an unbeliever.

In my work with *Wisconsin Christian News*, and at our Ministry Center here, I do a lot of counseling with people who have many different, but very troubling issues they are dealing with. I also get a great many prayer requests and pray with all who ask. And one of the most frequent problems we deal with are people who are unequally yoked in marriage. They are married to an unbeliever and I have seen firsthand, many times, the devastation this brings to not only marriages, but FAMILIES. The children suffer as well, and often the horrendous results can linger and multiply for generations.

I’ve had both women AND men come to me for prayer, in DESPERATION, not knowing what to do, because their spouse is an unbeliever – and in many cases, a HATER of God. This causes severe tension and strife in the relationship. The relationship often becomes abusive and traumatizing. And it’s not just the husband and wife relationship. As I mentioned, their children are ALSO scarred for life in situations like these. And don’t forget about the parents of the couple who are unequally yoked. The Grandmas and Grandpas who love their

grandchildren dearly, but are powerless to speak into their lives the Word of God – or offer good, Godly counsel and a lifetime of acquired wisdom and knowledge – because the unbelieving parent forbids it. Yes, the Grandparents ALSO suffer tremendous heartbreak and loss.

Oftentimes, young people of differing backgrounds get married without even considering the things of God. They may have their wedding in a church, and they may have a "form" of Godliness in front of the Pastor, but their hearts are far from God. It's sad to say that I'm seeing this more and more often today – in fact, it's become the norm in our society now. Young adults growing up without any knowledge of the Lord… their parents did not bother to train them up or raise them in a Christian home, knowing God. So they don't think about Him at all. In other cases, one of the spouses DOES know the Lord but is lukewarm at the time of the wedding. They don't think it's really any big deal that their fiance' is an unbeliever…all they know – or I SHOULD say, all they THINK they know – is that they are "in love," and nothing else matters at the time. And in the back of their minds they may think, *"when the time comes, we will get right with God together…. he (or she) will come around in time."*

But friends, it doesn't work that way. God gave us His Word for a reason. Second Timothy 3:16, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* God doesn't speak just to hear Himself talk. His Word is for OUR benefit.

Young people, if you are at the point in your life where you are "courting," with intentions of marriage, you may not feel that Christianity or God is all that important to you right now, and it MAY NOT BE. But if YOU know the Lord and your "intended" does NOT – or worse yet, is HOSTILE to the things of God – you are headed for certain disaster. Not just in your own lives, but the ripple effect will be devastating to

many others as well.

Even people with STRONG faith – but DIFFERING faiths – need to beware. Consider marriages between Christians and Jewish people. All the young couple knows or cares about at the time is that they are "in love." But they have not considered what will happen down the road, when children come into the picture. How will the children be raised? Christian or Jewish? What about Catholic people who marry Protestants? How will THOSE children be raised? What about the young man, raised in a Christian home but who has become lukewarm and apathetic about his faith, and marries a pagan "earth worshiper?" How will THEIR children be raised?

And consider the effects on this young man's parents – the GRANDPARENTS of these children. They are STRONG believers in Christ. They have the Holy Spirit within them and they love the Lord with all their hearts. They have prayed with their children and FOR their children all their lives. But now, their son has decided to marry a pagan. And maybe even worse than that – a young woman who is hostile and HATES the one true God of Creation. Those grandparents will end up absolutely devastated and broken hearted when the pagan wife refuses to allow the Christian grandparents to speak into their grandkids' lives the things of God, or share their many years of wisdom, or show them the REAL LOVE of Christ. I guarantee you, you have no idea the level of devastation this will cause the loving Grandma and Grandpa to know their grandkids are living in a godless, pagan home.

Yes, this is serious business. One man I counseled with, has been married for many years, to a wife who seriously HATES even the mention of the name "Jesus." She cannot tolerate it and gets extremely and unreasonably angry when her husband simply reads his Bible, alone in a corner of the room. Suffice to say, they are NEVER able to pray together or attend a church together, or share the same friends. And this faithful Christian man's home is FILLED with the demons –

invited in by the pagan wife, and so there is an ongoing battle between darkness and light, in the relationship and in the entire ATMOSPHERE of the home. This is NO PLACE and NO WAY to raise children.

When I was a young man, looking for a wife, I courted several young ladies. None of them took their Christian faith seriously. And yes, I even dated a young woman who was NOT a Christian and had ZERO interest in God. But I, in my ignorance, thought it might be possible to convert her, to win her to Christ. Suffice to say, that never happened. I spent a lot of time in my early twenties searching for the wife the Lord had created for me. And then I found her, and we have been happily married now for 29 years. I thank the Lord God Almighty EVERY DAY that I was not stupid enough to marry any of those other young women – it would have ended in sheer disaster.

But I kept on praying for a real, GODLY wife. One who took her faith as seriously as I did. One who wanted the things of God as much as I did. One who was seeking a Christian husband as fervently as I was seeking a Christian wife. Yes, I grew impatient and even began to doubt such a woman existed anymore… But then one day, when I LEAST expected it, by God's grace, and by what can only be described as a true MIRACLE, God brought us together – in HIS TIMING.

I understand how badly people need love. But we must also consider God in that equation because God IS love. Meanwhile, the Bible tells us that our hearts are deceitful above all things. Nothing can be more deceptive and deceitful than what we perceive to be "love." How many young women have given their bodies and their virginity away to men who told them they "loved" them – only to discover a short time later, they were only being used for sexual gratification? Listen, people of God: you MUST take EVERY word of Scripture seriously. You MUST take EVERY thought captive to the obedience of Christ. To do otherwise, to FORGET God, is to invite certain calamity,

which will have repercussions on your family and your lineage for generations to come. For what fellowship can there be between righteousness and unrighteousness? Darkness and light cannot coexist peacefully.

Marriage is not to be entered into lightly. When a couple is joined together in Holy Matrimony, God is essentially creating a new FAMILY unit where there wasn't one before. If you do this the right way, with GOD at the CENTER of your marriage, you and your spouse will be a TEAM, with God on your side. A cord of three strands is not easily broken. You will then have a GODLY marriage, be able to pray WITH and FOR one another, and be of the same mindset when it comes to raising up God-honoring children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. A family of THIS sort will reap eternal rewards and the "ripple effect" of a marriage like this will be pure blessing and love. Yes, there will still be difficult times in the marriage, as there are in all of life. But you will have the Lord Jesus Christ there among you, the Holy Spirit within you, and God the Father as the Designer and Author of your family; and no matter what happens, you cannot fail.

But if you're a young person <u>who currently has knowledge and faith in God even the size of a mustard seed, KNOW THIS</u>: He who began a good work in you WILL SEE it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus! There WILL come a day, perhaps when you begin having children, that all this is going to be a LOT more important to you than it is today. And if you are then married to an unbelieving – or worse yet – a God-hating spouse, then instead of pulling together as a TEAM, you will be pulling in opposite directions, and eventually, pulling your family apart at the seams.

So what now? What if you have MADE the mistake of becoming unequally yoked with a non-believer? No, I do not advocate for divorce or separation, unless there is infidelity in the marriage or unless you or your children are in danger. If you're a Bible-believing Christ-follower, then no matter how

hopeless the situation may SEEM, there is always hope. First, I would suggest that you humbly repent before the Lord for your youthful rebeillion, and ask for His guidance, along with forgiveness, for going your own way, rather than what you KNEW was right. You had hoped you could change your spouse after the wedding, or when it became important to you, and now you see you were mistaken. Repent of that, and seek the Lord. Continue in constant, fervent prayer for your unbelieving spouse as well.

First Peter 3 also suggests that unbelieving spouses MAY come to know the Lord by observing the example of the Christian spouse's life. So as you live each day of your marriage, MODEL TRUE CHRISTIANITY for them. Let them see Jesus IN YOU. This, coupled with fervent prayer, and seeking the Lord in your OWN life will help you. Make sure the Holy Spirit resides in YOU, and do not resist the Holy Spirit, but rather, take counsel from Him. He is your Comforter and the Bible tells us the Spirit will lead us into all truth.

And if you're the husband in the marriage, know that YOU are to be the spiritual leader, the PRIEST of your home. DO YOUR JOB WELL! If you're married to an unbelieving wife, surrounding herself with false gods and idols, you have the authority to get rid of them, cast them out, along with all the demons that are attached to them. Cleanse your home of all the devils your wife has allowed in, and then, continue to pray and model Christian love.

Friends, it's NOT easy. I know, I counsel MANY people in these situations and it is heartbreaking. As Christians, we are to be a peculiar people, set apart for service to the Lord. We are here for God's glory. There is nothing more beautiful than two believers united in Holy Matrimony, with Christ at the center, raising up a quiver FULL of Godly children. But there is also nothing more heart-wrenching than two people pulling in opposite directions in the most intimate of relationships there is…marriage. Light simply cannot

coexist with darkness; righteousness cannot be in harmony with sin; and God's children will not "play well" with the devil's kids. If you are unequally yoked today, I urge you to repent of your rebellion, seek the Lord, pray hard and model Christ for your lost spouse. And it is MY prayer that God will answer those prayers and bring you together, in one accord, to worship and glorify Him – 'til death do you part in this life, and forever in eternity. Amen.

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066 or email: Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com. Ask for message number 249.

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