

“Should a Christian Marry an Unbeliever?”

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

The question is often asked: “Is it “OK” for a Christian to marry someone who is not a Christian?”

a. Actually, that is the wrong question! The correct question is: “Who or what occupies the place of supreme importance in my life? What is—bottom line—the most important thing in my life?” The answer to that question determines the answer to multitudes of others!

b. Wrong answers: “the most important thing is
-My personal happiness.
-Being popular.
-Success; achieving my goals.
-To be admired, envied, etc., by my friends.”

Of course, we would *probably not admit* that these are the most important things—we might even find some spiritual way to phrase it—but the truth is, they are the most important things to most people.

c. Here, according to the Bible, is the correct answer: **Deuteronomy 6:5 “Love the LORD your God with *all your heart* and with *all your soul* and with *all your strength.*”**

d. The #1 priority in my life should be to love and serve the Lord, my God, with a passionate and lifelong commitment! In the New Testament, it is said like this: ***Matthew 6:33*** “***Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***” This speaks of an all-out commitment to the One who loves us most and has an amazing plan for our life!

e. On the other hand, what is Satan’s “plan” for your life? ***John 10:10*** ***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy!***

f. Some might argue: “So my future spouse and I look at God and faith from a different perspective; we have so much else in common!”

g. But we must remember that we “live our life” in light of who is on the throne of our life! If God—through our Lord Jesus Christ—is on the throne of our life, we will live, speak, act, do business, work, etc. in the light of God’s values. If Satan—no matter how it is expressed—is on the throne of our life, we will live our life, speak, act, do business, work, etc. in the darkness of his lack of values! The two views are opposites!

Murray J. Harris writes—interpreting our verses in 2 Cor. 6: “Do not form any relationship, whether temporary or permanent, with unbelievers that would lead to a compromise of Christian standards or jeopardize consistency of Christian witness. And why such separation? Because the unbeliever does not share the Christian’s standards, sympathies or goals!”

II. There are huge differences between a Christian and a non-believer!

a. The Christian is a new creation, a citizen of Heaven, created in Christ Jesus to do specific actions, accomplish specific things for God, is indwelled and

guided by the Spirit of God, cares deeply about other people, and much more!

b. The unbeliever is spiritually dead, does not understand the things of God, values what the world-system values, and worships other gods (materialism, popularity, success, whatever!)

c. The Christian's marriage—as set forth in the Bible—is to be a lifelong, passionate commitment to God and to each other. Marriage is to Strengthen our faith and family, Result in Christ-honoring Children, and Witness to those around them of the power and the Glory of Christ!

d. How different is a divided marriage:

-Differing “world-views”

-Confusion of values in the children

-Continual underlying stress into the marriage.

There are enough stress-points in a home without adding the stress of competing value-systems.

III. Therefore, God instructs us to keep this part of our life “simple and easy to understand:”

a. Come out from among the unbelievers, be separate, do not touch the unclean thing!

Compare James 4:4 “You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”

and

1 John 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

b. The Bible teaches “separation” from the world-system in all areas of life: language, lifestyle, ethics, morals, values, and well as choice of marriage partner.

IV. What about when one spouse converts to the other’s religion?

a. The Christian should always be seeking to lead his or her friends, family, and acquaintances to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

b. But too many “convert” to the other spouse’s religion just to “keep the peace.” Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Mormons have traditionally insisted on this, but as you and I know, you might “convert” to another’s religion and still be a lost sinner on your way to hell, in which case you would still have the “unbeliever” factor in your home! Such conversions do not last and are not real.

c. The Christian—man or woman—should actively seek out a mate who is a believer and is already serving the Lord.

V. What if I am a Christian already married to a non-Christian?

1 Corinthians 7:12-13 If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife,

whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

- a. Here one partner has become a Christian after the marriage.
- b. The instructions are clear, but the better choice is not to marry an unbeliever. Then at least this area is not one with which you have to struggle!