

Partnerships

7-12-26

2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

We need to understand what God is saying and what HE is not saying. HE is talking about partnerships and being unequally yoked. A yoke physically joins two oxen to pull a burden together; an unequally yoked team has mismatched animals, preventing the oxen from accomplishing their task. Here unequally yoked represents believers associated with unbelievers that lead them away from Christ. A believer should never be allied with a nonbeliever so closely that it negatively affects their life. A believer and unbeliever yoked together creates tension pulling in opposite directions. The principle might be expressed: “Do not form any relationship, whether temporary or permanent, with unbelievers that would lead to a compromise of Christian standards. This is a general principle that needs specific application under the Spirit’s guidance. Biblical Picture of a yoke.



This is literally what God is talking about. Now a Biblical picture of being yoked together.



We say we are just friends; they do not have any influence on me. Look at the picture. God is talking about being yoked; a strong association that influences your behavior. HE is clearly not warning against all association with unbelievers.

1 Corinthians 5:9-10 (ESV)

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

God gives us an example having unbelieving associations:

1 Corinthians 10:27 (ESV)

If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

God is not trying to introduce some isolationist theology or promote harsh relational separations.

God is concerned about ungodly influence that will lead us away from Christ. Paul encourages the Christian partner with an unbeliever in marriage to maintain the relationship.

1 Corinthians 7:12–13 (ESV)

¹² To the rest I say that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³ If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

God is asking us to be honest, “are our friends leading us away from Christ?” Why concerned?

2 Corinthians 6:15–16 (ESV) NO/OH

¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Satan? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

God is telling us to separate from people who draw us away from Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)

Therefore, go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord.
and touch no unclean thing.

From 2Cor.6:16-18 are quotes of OT promises showing the blessings when people separated themselves from unbelieving associations that hinder their relationship with God. We separate ourselves from bad influences that hinder us because we have promises from God. Thus:

2 Corinthians 7:1 (ESV)

Since we have “these” promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

*As recipients of these promises of fellowship with God, all Christians should avoid **any interference** that would hinder those promises. We should fear every possible hinderance that would impact our walk with God. We fear any influence that would interfere with us hearing from God or drawing us away from HIM. We want to hear clearly from the ONE who gave everything for us.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.