

SERIES: RELATIONSHIPS

SERMON: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD Part 2

3-26-23

OPENER:

Jesus' prayer.....

John 17:14:18 I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

**JESUS SAYS THAT WE DON'T BELONG TO THE WORLD.
HE EVEN SAYS, THE WORLD HATES US.
YET, HE SENDS US INTO THE WORLD.**

SO, WE ARE IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT.

WE ARE TO GO INTO THE WORLD, BUT GUARD AGAINST THE WORLD.

- > We are physically present in the world, but we are not to be like the world.**
- > We are not to be part of its values.**
- > We are to be different and set apart from the world**
- > We are not to engage in the sinful activities of the world.**
- > We are not to have the same corrupt thinking that the world has.**
- > We don't buy into the devil's agenda for the world.**

ILLUSTRATION:

A woman wore a white dress on a tour to a coal mine. As the group prepared for the tour, the tour guide told her, "You can't wear a white dress into the mine." She replied, "Yes I can." He said, "You may wear a white dress into the mine but you will not wear a white dress out of the mine." So it is with the Christian and the world.

ILLUSTRATION:

Pollution in LA. There is a contamination that is in the world that gets on us and we have to wash it off before our soul is infected by it.

Ephesians 5:25-27 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault

We wash off the contamination with the Word of God - We guard against the contaminated thinking, the contaminated values, the contaminated motives.

2nd OPENER:

Interacting with non-Christian friends and family members has always been a balancing act. We long to share Jesus with them, but we don't want to push them away. We work to maintain a good relationship AND tell them about the eternal life God offers. It's always been difficult. But recently, our fast-changing culture has dramatically intensified the challenge.

I believe, as Christians, we can maintain healthy relationships with those we love without compromising our faith. And, we can also take advantage of the opportunities God gives to share Jesus with them.

SO HOW DO WE BALANCE LOVE AND CONVICTION WITH NON-CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FAMILY?

7 BIBLICLE DO'S AND DON'TS:

1. DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF FROM THEM

John 17:18 Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

Christians often strike the wrong balance with the world. We tend to either isolate ourselves from non-Christians in an attempt to spiritually protect ourselves or we compromise our Christian values and become more like them. But we must stay connected to our non-Christian friends and family members or there will be no opportunity for us to influence them for Christ.

REMEMBER THEY ARE NOT THE ENEMY - THE DEVIL IS!

Jesus told the disciples.....

Mark 16:15 Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.

Jesus has given you a specific assignment to reach every person in every group where you have influence. Your world is where you work, where you attend school, where you shop, your world is in your business. Your world is every place where you have some level of personal influence.

Open your eyes and look around you! Jesus told the disciples that the fields of people all around them were "white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

YOU HAVE THE CONNECTIONS YOU HAVE WITH PEOPLE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING THEM FOR CHRIST.

2. DO INSULATE YOURSELF FROM THE WORLD

DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF FROM THOSE THAT HAVE DIFFERENT VALUES THAN YOU - BUT INSULATE YOURSELF SO YOU DON'T COMPROMISE YOUR CONVICTIONS.

Jesus calls us to two opposite things: To go out into the world, but not become like the world.

**AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WE ARE CALLED TO ASSOCIATE WITH EVERYONE, BUT ONLY MAKE AN ALLIANCE WITH A FEW.
THERE IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN
"REACHING OUT" AND "HANGING OUT"!**

JESUS DIDN'T "HANG OUT" WITH SINNERS HE "REACHED OUT" TO SINNERS. HE "HUNG OUT" WITH HIS DISCIPLES, THOSE HE WAS POURING HIS LIFE INTO.

**JESUS WAS ALWAYS ON A MISSION WHEN HE WAS
AROUND THE CROWD.
HE WAS RELAXED AROUND HIS INNER CIRCLE.**

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 (NLT) Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

Note:

The phrase in the KJV "unequally yoked" comes from a wooden bar that joins two oxen to each other and to the burden they pull. An "unequally yoked" team has one stronger ox and one weaker, or one taller and one shorter. The weaker or shorter ox would walk more slowly than the taller, stronger one, causing the load to go around in circles. When oxen are unequally yoked, they cannot perform the task set before them. Instead of working together, they are at odds with one another.

How are we unequally yoked? What type of alliances are we not to be make with an non-believer?

A. Attempting to live a Christian life with a non-Christian for our close friend and ally will only cause us to go around in circles.

ILLUSTRATION:

Too many people get caught in the mix of other people's quicksand. We need to reach out to rescue those to those that are in the quicksand, but we cannot jump in or we too will sink.

WE NEED TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HANGING OUT AND REACHING OUT - ASSOCIATING AND ALIGNING.

We have heard the phrase “that the people who you hang out with is who you will become like.” Those who we spend our time with will determine the quality of our life. You may have heard the phrase, “Show my your friends and I’ll show you your future.” This phrase couldn’t be more spot on. It is of the utmost importance that we are careful about who we spend our time with. Our friends can make us or break us.

True Friends are the people who will speak into our lives the truth of God’s Word. Friends are honest with us about the things in our life. They stick with us in the good and the bad times. They help us to keep us moving forward in our walk with God. They help guard and protect us from falling into the trap of sin. Make sure you have some great friends that are there for you as you are there for them.

B. The “unequal yoke” is often applied to business relationships. For a Christian to enter into a partnership with an unbeliever is to be set up for disaster. Unbelievers have opposite worldviews and morals, and business decisions made daily will reflect the worldview of one partner or the other. For the relationship to work, one or the other must abandon his moral center and move toward that of the other. More often than not, it is the believer who finds himself pressured to leave his Christian principles behind for the sake of profit and the growth of the business.

C. Of course, the closest alliance one person can have with another is found in marriage. God’s plan is for a man and a woman to become “one flesh”, a relationship so intimate that one literally and figuratively becomes part of the other. Uniting a believer with an unbeliever is essentially uniting opposites, which makes for a very difficult marriage relationship.

3.. DON’T ARGUE OVER RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL ISSUES

ILLUSTATION:

Trying to work out and the same guy coming to me about women ministering.

2 Timothy 2:23-26 Again I say, don’t get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. ²⁴ A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. ²⁵ Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. ²⁶ Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

No one wins this kind of argument. Even if we get in a bunch of truth zingers, we won't change their mind. In fact, our biblical mindset seems silly and foolish to them because they don't have the spiritual capacity to understand the truth on which it's founded. Only the Holy Spirit can give them that understanding. We'll only manage to build a wall between us and them. Instead, work to keep the peace. The possibility of influencing them for Christ is much higher if we maintain a relationship with them.

4. DO LISTEN MORE THAN YOU TALK

James 1:19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Arguments build walls. Listening breaks them down. If they initiate a conversation on a certain issue that can't be avoided, ask them why they feel that way. Then listen. Eventually, respectful listening will open their ears. When they realize we genuinely care about them, they will open up to you to hear what you have to say. Or they just may ask what we think and why.

Colossians 4:5-6 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

Romans 12:18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

5. DON'T SUPPORT OR ENCOURAGE UNGODLY BEHAVIOR

Ephesians 5:6-11 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. ⁷ Don't participate in the things these people do. ⁸ For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! ⁹ For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

¹⁰ Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them

Sometimes Christians condone and show support for sinful behavior in a misguided attempt to appear non judgmental and build relationships. But we can be gracious and loving without compromising biblical values.

ILLUSTRATION:

For instance, we can foster a loving relationship with an LGBT niece without carrying a banner in a pride parade. Or wearing a t-shirt that she gave us.

6. DO MODEL A GODLY LIFESTYLE

Richard Manning, author of "The Ragamuffin Gospel," said: "The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle."

**HYPOCRISY MAY BE THE BIGGEST DETERRENT IN
PEOPLE COMING TO JESUS.
BUT THE OPPOSITE IS ALSO TRUE,
WHEN CHRISTIANS REFUSE TO CONFORM TO THE WORLD, THE WORLD
NOTICES.**

**A CHRIST-LIKE LIFE POINTS PEOPLE TO JESUS AND
CAUSES THEM TO GLORIFY GOD.
SO LET'S LIVE WHAT WE PREACH.**

1 Peter 2:11-12 Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. ¹² Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world

WE ARE IN THE WORLD, BUT WE ARE NOT TO ACT LIKE THE WORLD.

7. DON'T BE JUDGEMENTAL TOWARD THE WORLD BUT DO JUDGE THE SIN OF YOUR BROTHER

1 Corinthians 5:12-13. ¹² It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. ¹³ God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, “You must remove the evil person from among you.”

**THIS MAY SOUND CONTRADICTIONARY, HERE
IS THE CLARIFICATION -
NO COMPROMISE FOR THE CHRISTIAN - NO JUDGMENT FOR THE NON
CHRISTIAN.**

**GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO HOLINESS AND HE CALLS THE WORLD TO JESUS.
IT IS NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO JUDGE THE BEHAVIOR
OF THE WORLD. GOD WILL JUDGE THEM.**

ILLUSTRATION:

Demonic oppressed girl that came to Worship and Prayer night.

HOW DO WE JUDGE SIN IN THE HOUSE OF GOD?

Galatians 6:1-3 Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ² Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³ If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

CLOSING:

No matter how well we navigate these do's and don'ts, there will still be some relationship explosions. The more people hate or resist Jesus, the more they will hate or resist us.

But, we are only responsible for our words and actions, not the reaction of the other person. Let's ground our lives on the Word of God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Then leave the rest up to Him.