

September 14th – Unequally Yoked

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?...Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:14, 17)

What does it mean to be “unequally yoked?” A yoke is a wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull. It keeps the two animals in close proximity so that they can work together to accomplish a task. So then, Paul was saying that believers should not enter into a close relationship with unbelievers. In particular, Christians should not date or marry unbelievers, nor should they develop close friendships with unbelievers.

Why would God command such a thing? Is it because Christians are better than unbelievers? Of course not! The Bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Furthermore, while everyone may not believe in God & His Son Jesus, everyone has been made in His image (Gen. 1:26). God did not give His people this command so that they could exalt themselves above those who reject Jesus. Rather, the purpose of this command is to keep us in close relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Drawing close to unbelievers can and has drawn many believers away from God. Paul said, “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33).

While Christ-followers should not develop close relationships with unbelievers, believers should not stop associating themselves with the lost altogether. Remember that Jesus was criticized as “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matt. 11:19). That’s because He was willing to go to those whom society had cast aside. He loved them and pointed them to His heavenly Father. In other words, Christ associated with the lost in the hope that they would be saved. We should do the same thing, but we must beware that our association doesn’t turn into a relationship that would distract us from serving God.