

## 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

rev 1-9-13

### Introduction

1. A very difficult Bible passage is 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

2CO 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2CO 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial [the evil one], or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

2CO 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

2CO 6:17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.

a. "Belial" means "worthlessness, wickedness."

b. The Greek text has "belial" [beh lee **ahl**] or "beliar" [beh lee **ahr**] translated into English as "Belial."

c. The term is used in the New Testament to apply to Satan who is the personification of all that is bad.

2. This passage seems to forbid us from having associations with unbelievers, but before we draw that conclusion we need to ask some questions.

### Some Questions

1. **Is This Avoidance Of Unbelievers Absolute?**

a. Christians are commanded to preach the gospel to all. (Matt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 10:34, 35).

MAT 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,	MAR 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." LUK 24:47 "...unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."  Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."	ACT 10:34 And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, ACT 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.
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b. Jesus had contact with unbelievers. (Matt. 9:9-13).

MAT 9:9 And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him.

MAT 9:10 And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

MAT 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?"

MAT 9:12 But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

MAT 9:13 "But go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

c. Christians are required to do good to all men as they have opportunity. (Gal. 6:10).

GAL 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

1) "All men" includes both believers and unbelievers.

2) "Household of the faith" refers to believers.

d. Paul affirmed we would have to leave world to avoid all contact with unbelievers. (1 Cor 5:9, 10).

1CO 5:9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;

1CO 5:10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.

e. Christians married to unbelievers were instructed to remain with unbelieving mates. (1 Cor. 7:10-14).

1CO 7:10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

1CO 7:11 (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away.

1CO 7:12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away.

1CO 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.

1CO 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

f. Peter instructed Christian women to remain with their unbelieving husbands and to seek to win them to the Lord by their godly examples. (1 Pet. 3:1,2).

1PE 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

1PE 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

## 2. Some Hard Questions

a. Can we work for an unbeliever? Can we work with unbelievers?

b. What if a Christian has an unbelieving master? Is it sinful for him to be in that position? (Eph. 6:5-9).

EPH 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

EPH 6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

EPH 6:7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

EPH 6:8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

EPH 6:9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

c. Are we to honor parents if they are unbelievers? (Rom. 1:30; Eph. 6:1,2).

ROM 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

EPH 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

EPH 6:2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

d. What if one's children are unbelievers? Is the Christian parent to abandon or ignore them?

e. Can a Christian doctor or nurse minister to unbelievers?

f. What if one's grandparents are unbelievers?

g. Can a Christian businessman buy from or sell to unbelievers?

h. Can a Christian provide services of any kind for unbelievers?

i. Can a Christian who completely isolates himself be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world"? (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15).

## 2. The Passage Is A Warning

a. This passage is not an absolute prohibition against all associations with unbelievers.

b. It must be interpreted in light of other revelation we have on this subject.

c. It originally referred to a man mismatching or yoking a larger animal to a smaller animal. (Deut. 22:10).

DEU 22:10 "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

1) Being unequally yoked was injurious or deadly to the smaller animal.

2) Paul uses this language to refer to a Christian's relationship to unbelievers.

3) So many Christians have been spiritually injured or destroyed by being unequally yoked.

d. 2 Cor. 6:14 - "heterozugeo" [heh the rah zoo **geh** oh] is translated "do not be bound together" here and means "to be unevenly yoked, mismatched."

e. He was cautioning the Christian about his relationships with unbelievers in business, friendships, marriage, and in every other relationship.

f. It is a warning that should not go unheeded.

g. It is very dangerous to have close associations with unbelievers. (Psa. 1:1; Prov. 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:33).

PSA 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

PRO 4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

1CO 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

“hethos” [haya thahs] - “custom, habit.”  
NIV has “Bad company corrupts good character.”

- 1) It is interesting that “bad company” does not exclusively have reference to those who have low moral values though what we believe most often can affect our morals.
- 2) In 1 Corinthians 15:33 it has reference to those who denied the resurrection of Christ. Most often those who deny the resurrection and afterlife live for pleasure as Paul advised. They usually believe we are not accountable for our actions. This nearly always translates into a lowering of moral standards.
- 3) Denial of the resurrection meant that Christianity was a worthless religion (1 Cor. 15:12-19), and one might as well live a life of pleasure for this life only. (1 Cor. 15:32).

1CO 15:32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

- 4) Christians must be especially cautious in their association with those who deny the Deity of Christ, the essentially of the church, the resurrection, heaven, hell. etc.

### 3. Applications

#### a. Marriage

- 1) Marriage to an unbeliever is dangerous and one can find himself/herself mismatched and injured or destroyed by the relationship.
- 2) It is dangerous, but not an absolute prohibition. (1 Cor. 7:12-15; 1 Pet. 3:1,2).

1CO 7:12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away.

1CO 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.

1CO 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

1CO 7:15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

1PE 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

1PE 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

- 3) The conversion rate of unbelieving mates is not very high, but there are some success stories.
- 4) The majority of Christian who marry unbelievers are weakened or destroyed. In the assembly we most often have contact with believers who have been successful in their mixed marriages to a small or great extent.
- 5) One who finds himself married to an unbeliever, especially one who is weak in his/her spiritually, should seek to associate with strong Christians as much as possible. (Acts 2:46; Heb. 3:13; 10:24, 25).

ACT 2:46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

HEB 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

HEB 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

HEB 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

#### **b. Business**

- 1) Partnerships with unbelievers often lead to compromise and other evils.
- 2) It can lead to lying, distortion, and a host of other sins.
- 3) Christians must always be on guard in the business world.

#### **c. Associations**

- 1) Our peers have a powerful influence over us.
- 2) We often conform to the standards of our associates.
- 3) This is most often a gradual change, but a deadly change. It is sometimes difficult to get off of a slippery slope especially if one does not recognize he is on it.
- 4) We must transform, but not conform. (Rom. 12:2).

ROM 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- 5) We can do this through Christ. (Phi. 4:13).

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