

## ***What to Do if You Are Married To an Unbeliever***

Many Christians find themselves in a difficult marriage relationship with an unbeliever. Such situations often result in the Christian becoming unfaithful rather than converting the spouse. Sound Biblical principles practiced consistently throughout the marriage would help to improve this unfortunate situation. Consider these Scriptural guidelines.

### ***Always be faithful to the Lord***

This is the single, most important point: The scriptures emphasize the importance of putting the Lord first (Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 14:33). While never giving them a reason to doubt your faithfulness to them, you must live so that they clearly recognize your primary and ultimate responsibility to God.

"Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied with fear" (1 Peter 3: 1-2). Be consistent in your faithfulness, in attendance, in private Bible study and prayer, in godly living.

By your example, show them the importance of the Lord to you. This includes your children. INSIST that the children attend the services, every service, with you. DO NOT TAKE NO for an answer on this!

### ***Do not become involved in immorality***

Again, this involves your devotion to the Lord. When you engage in drinking, dancing, cursing, cheating on income taxes, going to R-rated movies and similar activities, it becomes hard to convince your spouse that those things are sinful. Despite the fact that the husband is the "head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:23), he has no right to cause her to commit immorality. Submission to a husband does not require ungodliness. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Do not think that if you "go out on the town" Saturday night that he will then "go to church" with you on Sunday morning. Make it clear what you will not do and then DON'T DO IT! When you once compromise, he will quickly lose respect for your convictions. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). This applies to your spouse, as well as others.

Also, be cautious not to become emotionally involved with a friend, even a preacher or elder who might give counsel during such a trying time. It is easy in this situation to transfer your emotional feelings to one who shows legitimate concern. Do not become immoral.

### ***Allow other Christians to help you to be strong***

Spend time with them in both spiritual and social activities. Try to include you spouse. But if this is not possible, go by yourself. This is essential to your spiritual well-being. Christians are to comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18), care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), build one another up (Romans 14:19), "for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:2).

In addition, if other Christians see your faith weakening, they can admonish, warn, exhort or rebuke you as they encourage you to do better. Do not become upset with them if they point out that you are slipping spiritually. They are trying to help, not hurt.

### ***Study I Corinthians 7:12-16 very carefully***

It contains important guidelines concerning separation, divorce and the responsibilities of the Christian in a marriage relationship with a non-believer. In summary this passage says:

- 1.) The Christian should not leave the non-Christian. In dangerous, abusive situations, it may be necessary to seek safety until the pressures of the situation ease. But you should continue an attempt to work things out.
- 2.) If the non-Christian leaves, the Christian should "let him depart." This does not mean that you have a right to remarry. "Not under bondage" (verse 15) refers to marital obligations, not to the marriage bond itself. If the unbeliever does not commit adultery, then you may not divorce or remarry.

### ***Pray without ceasing***

Pray for spiritual strength, for increased faith, for your children, and for the conversion of your spouse, no matter how impossible that may seem to you right now. Never give up on the Lord no matter what happens in your marriage. He will never let you down. Don't forsake Him.

- by Roger Hillis

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### ***If we tell our children . . .***

- If we tell them that the Bible is the only source of spiritual food, but they never see us feasting on the precious promises, what are we teaching them?
- If we tell them that the Christian must pray without ceasing, but they never see us on our knees, what are we teaching them?
- If we tell them the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, but they see us attend irregularly, and give grudgingly, what are we teaching them?
- If we tell them that our Father knows our every need and that our future is secure in Him, but they see us taking anxious thought for tomorrow, grasping for the things money can buy, what are we teaching them?

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### ***“All the Counsel of God”***

Paul's final words to the elders of the church at Ephesus included this statement: *"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"* (Acts 20:26-27). His conscience was clear. He had no regrets about his work there. If any were lost it would not be because they had not been taught, encouraged, and warned by the apostle. He had done his work well. He knew that he had not failed to teach them on every necessary subject.

Many preachers of the modern day could not make the same claim. They shy away from preaching on many essential themes, citing them as 'too controversial,' or 'too negative.' Instead, they present a steady diet of 'positive' sermons aimed at making their hearers feel good about themselves.

While we all need to hear the positive truths of God's Word that reassure us of His love, grace, and mercy, we also need to be warned of the "terror of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:11). If error is not exposed, and if sin is not rebuked, how will necessary repentance be produced? (Luke 13:3)

Those who have not been taught "all the counsel of God" will be ripe for apostasy. Young people will grow into adulthood without a firm foundation in the gospel. Even those who are older will begin to forget the needed admonitions of the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:12,13). Any slight challenge will be too much for their fragile faith, and they will 'leave the church' – oftentimes not even realizing the seriousness of their spiritual condition.

In too many congregations it has been years since lessons have been taught on instrumental music, the role of women, marriage-divorce-remarriage, etc. With little or no teaching on these essential subjects, they become ever more vulnerable to false teaching and departures from the faith.

Brethren we can not afford to soft-pedal the truth. Let us declare "all the counsel of God." Think!

- by Greg Gwin