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2 Corinthians 6 – 7

“It’s No Yoke”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Some things just don’t go together, including oil and water, sandals and socks, a pierced tongue and dentures, rats and restaurants, hairpieces and high winds, and brussels sprouts and anything! It’s just a fact that some things don’t go together.

In **2 Corinthians 6**, God says, for believers, that there are a few things that don’t go together. God says in **2 Corinthians 6:14**: *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?”* Notice that the Scripture doesn’t say anything about associating with unbelievers or speaking to unbelievers or working with unbelievers or befriending unbelievers. If that were the case we’d have to check out of this world if it meant that we were to avoid all contact with unbelievers. And if we avoided contact with unbelievers, how would they ever hear about Christ or see the Lord in our lives? No, it’s simply stated that we’re not to be yoked together with unbelievers.

This farming term (picture harnessed animals plowing a field) is used metaphorically to speak of a partnership, a union or a bond between people. In this context to be “yoked” together describes two people who are aiming for the same objectives in life having the same fundamental convictions about life. Paul doesn’t give a caution against this, but is inspired by the Holy Spirit to command believers not to be yoked with unbelievers or enter into partnerships or unions or bonds with people who do not share the same convictions, and more specifically faith in Jesus Christ, who is the foundation for a Christian’s convictions.

That’s why God calls Christians to be “separate.” (**2 Corinthians 6:17**) It’s important to note that separateness doesn’t mean superiority or exclusivity. It means protecting and cherishing what should matter most – a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. Why? Because of the potential that such a partnership or bond has to compromise believers, and because of the sheer misery of being inextricably linked to someone whose value system and whose world-view are vastly different.

Don't Be Yoked Together – Because Of The Potential To Compromise You

1. **2 Corinthians 7:1** says that we should avoid being contaminated.
2. There is a temptation to think that we're stronger than we really are, which leads many Christians into the dangerous place of dating non-Christians, because they think he or she is everything they want and need!
 - a. **Galatians 6:3** – *“If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”*
3. Today, we might say that Paul is writing against the commonly called practice of “Missionary Dating.”
4. **Deuteronomy 22:10** gives instruction about animals that couldn't be yoked together.
 - a. An ox was considered a “clean” animal because it has a split hoof and chews its cud, and a donkey was considered “unclean” because it doesn't have a split hood, nor does it chew its cud.
 - i. The spiritual principle here is that you should never harness that which is clean to that which is unclean.
 - b. So, remember this the next time you consider dating or marrying someone who is not a Christian.
 - c. KJV – *“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”*
 - d. One final consideration regarding oxen and donkeys: the ox pulls forward by nature and the donkey naturally pulls back! The concept is clear and easily understood when considered in the context of unequal relationships – Christians and non-Christians will always pull in opposite directions.

Don't Be Yoked Together – Because Of The Sheer Misery Of Being Linked Together

5. There is an incompatibility that is naturally present between a Christian and a non-Christian that is fine for acquaintances and limited friendships, but makes for difficult, and oftentimes miserable, partnerships or unions.
6. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul's writing because God wants to spare us the heartache and frustration.
7. The potential exists not only in relationships and marriage, but for business relationships, too.
 - a. It might be okay to work for non-believers and hire non-believers, but if as a Christian you want to be in partnership or co-owners of a business with someone else who is not a Christian, the Bible warns that it's incompatible.

Don't Be Yoked Together – Incompatible Fellowship/Harmony/Commonality/Agreement

8. **2 Corinthians 6:14b–16** says, *“For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what **fellowship** can light have with darkness? What **harmony** is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in **common** with an unbeliever? What **agreement** is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’”* (Emphasis added)
9. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which means to have communion and intimacy.
 - a. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which means to have communion and intimacy.
 - b. Where a believer and an unbeliever have formed some kind of union, it will always lack, on some level, closeness and intimacy.
10. The Greek word for harmony is *sumphonesis*, which is where we get the word symphony.
 - a. A concert where all of the instruments are playing in a different key is a place of utter chaos.
 - b. Unbelievers and believers are not playing from the same sheet of music and there is bound to be disharmony in the home, in the business or in the relationship.
11. There will be a lack of common vision, ideals, morals, convictions and beliefs.
 - a. This will be inevitable because the Christian’s reference point is God and the Bible, which the unbeliever may respect, but not follow.
 - b. The unbeliever’s reference point is an amalgam culture, music, media, their education, the books they read or Oprah!
12. The Greek word for agreement means joint approval, in the sense of voting together for something.
 - a. The only time in the New Testament that this Greek word is used is in the chapter.
 - b. There’s no chance that a believer and an unbeliever won’t have disagreement on financial investments, ethical issues, lines of morality, company policy, or hiring and firing.
 - c. There’s no chance in dating or marriage that there won’t be differences regarding lines of morality, managing money, parenting children, family priorities, attending church, tithing, etc., because the world-view is completely different.
13. **Matthew 11:29–30** says, *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*
 - a. The Lord wants Christians to walk with him and to be separate from this world.

Final Words Of Challenge And Instruction

14. If you’re single – don’t date or marry an unbeliever.
15. If you’re already married to an unbeliever – stay committed to the marriage and be a witness to your spouse.

16. If you're considering a business venture with an unbeliever – make sure you have a controlling interest or don't get involved.
17. If you're already a business partner with an unbeliever – make the best of it and be a witness or buy them out or sell your interest in the business.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about examples of dating relationships or marriages that experienced the difficulties of being unequally yoked.
 - a. Did you or did someone you know practice “missionary dating”?
 - b. What was the outcome?
 - c. Do you know Christians who married an unbeliever and find themselves in a difficult relationship?
4. Read and discuss [Deuteronomy 22:10](#), focusing on the fact that God didn't want clean animals to be paired with unclean animals.
 - a. Read and discuss #4d above regarding the natural tendencies of oxen and donkeys to pull in opposite directions.
5. Spend time talking about the Lord's desire to spare us from the pain and heartache of severed relationships with unbelievers.
 - a. Why is it that some people just can't seem to take God at his word on this one?
6. Allow the people in your group to share examples of business or job related experiences regarding being unequally yoked.
7. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 6:14b–16](#), focusing on fellowship (#9), harmony (#10), having things in common (#11), and being in complete agreement (#12).
8. Read and discuss each of Pastor Gary's four final words of instruction and challenge. (#14 – #17)
9. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: read and apply the Scripture to their lives in such a way that there won't be any hesitation about ending a dating or business relationship that falls outside the guidelines of God's Word; ask the Holy Spirit to prepare and encourage them to speak truth when the Lord brings the opportunity to stand up for Biblical principles.