

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“A first century church in the 21st century”

Bible Reading Plan

Week 6

- Exodus 16-18; *Eph 4*
- Exodus 19-21; *Eph 5*
- Ex 22-24; Ps 103; *Eph 6*
- Ex 25-27; *Philippians 1*
- Exodus 28-31; *Php 2*

Leading Services

Announcements: Ron V.

Morning:

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: Larry L.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Brock G.

Evening: No Services

Song Leader:

Opening Prayer:

Closing Prayer:

Scripture Reading:
(Zephaniah 3.8-13)

Sermons:

AM: Understanding Human
Imperfections



Unequally Yoked

The Bible states: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14). Some have applied this passage through the years to marriage, saying that a believer is prohibited here from marrying an unbeliever. Does Paul include marriage in this text?

Let us notice that “be ye not” is a translation of *me ginesthe* which forbids an action already in progress. The above Greek word, *ginesthe*, is second person plural present imperative of *ginomai*. Arndt-Gingrich tells us when *me* (translated “not” in v. 14) is used with a present imperative, it means to bring to an end a condition now existing. Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon* says in reference to *me* with a present imperative, “generally where one is bidden to cease from something already begun, or separated, or continued”.

Paraphrasing 2 Corinthians 6:14, if it applies to believers married to unbelievers, “Cease you’ve already begun marriage to unbelievers.” This would necessitate divorce.

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Is Marriage To An Unbeliever An Unequal Yoke?

I suppose there would be no marriage made in heaven in this kind of marriage, hence, both would be free to marry somebody else: The believer to a believer and the unbeliever to an unbeliever.

It is maintained that such a marriage is not to be dissolved by the unbeliever, but rather he is to repent and remain in the relationship. This is strange repentance! There is no change, but simply an acknowledgment to God that I should not have gotten into this kind of situation in the first place. But the Lord says, “Do not be married to an unbeliever,” and “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (v. 17). God says abandon, depart, separate, dissolve and detach from all sinful relationships. It seems obvious to me that Paul does not have marriage in mind.

We read in 1 Corinthians 7:12-13, “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.” In these verses Paul specifically addresses an unbeliever. Here, the instructions are plain. “Let him not put her away” and “Let her not leave him.” Why would Paul tell believers to remain together in 1 Corinthians 7 and turn around and require them to not be yoked with unbelievers in 1 Corinthians 6? Such would be a contradiction.

We hear some rationalize that after a believer gets him-self into such a “fix,” he should go ahead and remain in the relationship because God hates putting away (Mal. 2:16). Well, the same kind of convoluted reasoning could be made about an adulterous marriage. Jesus said, “Whosoever putteth away and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18). Now then, since God hateth divorce, we could reason that those who divorce and remarry without cause could stay together since God hates putting away. If this kind of thinking is acceptable on 2 Corinthians 6:14, why not on Luke 16:18?

We often see 1 Corinthians 7:39 lumped together with 2 Corinthians 6:14 as a passage forbidding a believer marrying an unbeliever. The verse says: “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” To make “only in the Lord” the man the widow is marrying is to make the phrase adjectival in its modifying force. “Only (*mono*, adverb) in the Lord” modifies “to be married.” An adverb modifies a verb. Here “only,” an adverb, modifies the verb, “married.” Hence, the marriage is to be in the Lord and not the man in the text. Thayer states, “In the Lord” in 1 Corinthians 7:9 “denotes the Christian aim, nature, quality of any action or virtue” (211). Thus, marriage is to be in accordance with the principles of New Testament teaching.

Though Jesus and his apostles never made a prohibition against a Christian marrying an unbeliever, and such marriages are recognized in heaven, prudence and wisdom teach us that such action is fraught with dangers and, many times, serious problems. A Christian needs encouragement at home in living the Christian life and bringing the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

My strong advice is: Brother or sister, marry a Christian! When I say a Christian, I don't mean some irresponsible, lazy, immature, half-converted member of the church.

- Weldon E. Warnock.

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