

**Review (42): *It's a Wonderful Life: Solutions for the Unequally Yoked & Spiritually Dysfunctional: The Problem of the Unequally Yoked Marriage, 2 Cor 6:14-16***

- 17) The term “right man/right woman” irritates some because it seems so unattainable to them. But if God’s plan for every believer is perfect and the statements just given are true (and we have documented each with Scripture), then we must conclude that in eternity past God knew whose soul would best coalesce with whose and in desiring the highest and best for every believer makes it possible for that union to occur historically.
- 18) But again, in human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man must coexist by divine decree. Failure of either or both parties to advance spiritually can cause one or both to be unattractive to the other thus preventing romance from occurring.
- 19) These same people are attracted to the wrong people for all the wrong reasons and end up marrying one of them motivated by emotion instead of thought.
- 20) When this occurs and a Christian becomes entangled in eternal matrimony with an unbeliever, the believer is bound by Scripture to that marriage and has the priority of becoming an humble witness to that non-Christian spouse.
- 21) This couple is unequally yoked—a believer married to an unbeliever. There are also those who are believers but while one executes the spiritual life the other leads a life of carnality. This leads to a number of problems that require biblical solutions.

**Solutions for the Unequally Yoked & Spiritually Dysfunctional**

- 1- The believer is advised against marriage to an unbeliever in
 

**2 Corinthians 6:14 - Do not be unequally yoked [ ἑτεροζυγέω / heterozugeo ] together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness?**

**v 15 - Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?**

**v 16 - Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?**
- 2- The metaphor “unequally yoked” must be explained in order for us to fully understand the meaning of this negative mandate.
- 3- First of all the word “yoke,” *’ol* in Hebrew and ζυγός / *zugos* / in Greek, refers to a shaped piece of wood placed across the necks of draft animals such as oxen or donkeys that enables them to pull a plow, cart, or heavy load together.
- 4- The yoke enables two to pull as one, thus the concept of teamwork is noted by the phrase a “yoke of oxen.”
- 5- Yoke is also used to indicate a number of things figuratively:
  - (1) The oppressive policies of Solomon and his son Rehoboam are compared to yokes in 1 Kings 12:1-14

**1 Kings 12:14** - "My father (Solomon) made your yoke heavy, but I (Rehoboam) will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."

- (2) The concept of bondage and servitude is found in:

**Leviticus 26:13** - "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect."

- (3) Paul commands the believer to grow in grace and stand fast against legalism, works, and human good or otherwise he will fall under the "yoke of slavery" to these things.

**Galatians 5:1** - It is for spiritual freedom that Christ has set us free from sin. Therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.

- (4) The "yoke of legalism" is a heavy burden for it requires an excessive amount of rules and regulations that threaten one's eternal future.

- (5) But our Lord advises those who would put down such a burden to follow Him in:

**Matthew 11:28** - "Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest.

**v 29** - "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.

**v 30** - "For My yoke is easy and My load is light."

- (6) In other words, grace is easier than legalism and the Christian has a lighter burden than that imposed by religion.

- (7) But the figurative use that is pertinent to our study is that found in 2 Corinthians 6:14 by the term "unequally yoked." This metaphor is taken from:

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

- (8) This practice was forbidden out of concern for the weaker animal. If an ox and a donkey were yoked together there would be an unequal pull that would cause suffering for the donkey, the weaker animal.

- (9) This literal effect of unequally yoking oxen and donkeys is brought over into Paul's argument against a believer marrying an unbeliever in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

- (10) The Greek word translated "unequally yoked" is the present active participle of the verb **ἑτεροζυγέω** / *heterozugeo* /. The suffix **-ζυγέω** / *-zugeo* / means yoke; to couple two things together. It refers metaphorically to submission to authority or to be in bondage.

- (12) The purpose of a yoke placed on animals is first of all so they will pull together and second so they can be controlled simultaneously. Otherwise one or the other would veer off the furrow, or in the case of those pulling wagons on the Santa Fé Trail, out of the wheel-tracks.

- (13) The way the animals are punished for their attempts to stray left or right is by the use of goads for those plowing fields or by whips for wagoners.

- (14) When it is used metaphorically for people it refers to the breaking of one's self-will in the sense that God knows what is best for the believer. He seeks to guide us toward blessing and reward by the yoke of His Word and, when necessary, by goads of punishment when we stray from His wheel-tracks of righteousness.

- (15) But it is a part of human nature, with emphasis on the trends of the sinful nature, to try and break free from God's yoke.
- (16) Consequently, when two draft animals of a different kind are yoked together, it is difficult to control them and the one that is stronger will wear down the weaker.
- (17) When all of these concepts are carried metaphorically over to the Christian marriage then we can see the intractable problems that emerge when two are unequally yoked.
- 18) This brings us to the prefix ἕτερος / *heteros* / which must be compared with its synonym ἄλλος / *allos* / .