



Not of
this
World

As James headed home, his heart was lighter than it had been for months. After struggling with growing compromises, he had finally decided to dissolve his business partnership with a non-Christian friend.

The Bible says, "*Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

But our times are marked by the spirit of compromise. On every side we behold unholy mixtures, ungodly associations, unequal yokes. Many professing Christians appear to be trying to live as near to the world as they can and yet go to heaven!

Jesus, however, says His followers are **NOT OF THIS WORLD**. Therefore they are to separate themselves from the evils of this world and to abstain from all intimate associations with the ungodly.

SEPARATE LIFE STYLE

Be not unequally yoked together is a call to godly separation for every generation. To Abraham, God said, "Get thee out of

thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." To Israel He said, "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances" (Leviticus 18:3). It was their disregard of these very prohibitions that brought down upon Israel such severe chastisements.

At the beginning of the New Testament we see John the Baptist standing outside the organized Judaism of his day, calling on men to flee from the wrath to come. Jesus announced that He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out. Yes, God calls His people to separation. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

SEPARATE FELLOWSHIP

Not unequally yoked together is God's call to separate fellowship. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" After contrasting the people of God with those of this world,

the Lord says, "Wherefore come out from among them, and *be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17,18). This call to separation from all evil is a call to holiness—we are not to become contaminated with any form of evil. Instead of enjoying companionship with non-Christians, we are to fellowship with those who love the Lord, who will influence us to live uprightly.

SEPARATE IDENTITY

Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The disregard of this commandment is largely responsible for the low spiritual state of Christians. No one can be an unshackled follower of the Lord Jesus Christ if he is yoked to Christ's enemies. He may appear to be a truly saved person, but the testimony of his life and the witness of his walk will not honor the Christ of the Bible. Moses, who had an eternal perspective, refused to identify himself with Egypt (a type of the world).

He forsook Egypt and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

SEPARATE ASSOCIATIONS

Be not unequally yoked applies to our religious connections. How many Christians are members of "churches" where much that goes on is contrary to the Word of God, either in the pulpit teaching, the worldly attractions used to draw the ungodly, or the constant receiving into membership of those who give no evidence of having been born again. In contrast, the Lord calls us to separate ourselves from those who dishonor Him and join those of "like precious faith."

Be not unequally yoked applies to membership in secret orders where members are united in solemn oath and covenant with non-Christians. Persons may profess belief in a Supreme Being, but where is their love for God's Word? What is their relation to His Son? Any Christian thus unequally yoked should get out from under it without delay (Ephesians 5:11, 12).

Be not unequally yoked applies to marriage. The only two families in this world are the children of God and the children of the devil (1 John 3:10). Compromisers reap bitterly from mixed marriages, as we see in the histories of Samson, Solomon, and Ahab. What watchfulness in prayer is needed in the regulation of our affections!

Be not unequally yoked applies to business partnerships. Whatever may be gained of this world in wealth and social prestige, will but poorly compensate for the loss of fellowship with God. Disobedience here has wrecked many a Christian's testimony and pierced him through with many sorrows.

SEPARATE STANDARDS

Be not unequally yoked together. Since we are NOT OF THIS WORLD, we are to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Any occupation or association that hinders my communion with God or enjoyment of spiritual things must be given up. Anything in my habits or ways that mars fellowship with spiritual saints or robs me of power in service, is to end.

“For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). How plain and how strong are the terms used there! No excuse for failing to understand! In the whole range of the Holy Scripture there is no plainer language on any subject. “Righteousness—unrighteousness; light—darkness; Christ—Belial.” What bond is there between them?

The unbeliever disregards and defies God’s Word which regulates the life and walk of the saint. Then what fellowship can there be between one who is subject to God’s Word and one who is not?

SUMMARY

When Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon ourselves (Matthew 11:28-30), He invites us to a special relationship. Who would want to be yoked with unbelievers after being intimately yoked with Jesus Christ? God’s call to separation from all

ungodliness (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) is an invitation to intimacy. Remember His unfailing promises:

“I will dwell in them”

“and walk in them”

“and I will be their God”

“and they shall be my people”

“and I will receive you”

“and will be a Father unto you”

“and ye shall be my sons and daughters.”

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Does this characterize your life? Are you pursuing Christ and His approval at all cost? If so, He recognizes you as NOT OF THIS WORLD and will gladly claim and reward you when He comes for His own.