

SERIES:	Keep Calm and Marry On
MESSAGE:	The Unequal Yoke
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	2 Corinthians 6:1-18, 1 Peter 3:1-22

MESSAGE SUMMARY

There is a hybrid relationship we haven't talked out yet—the *unequally yoked marriage*: when one spouse is a believer while the other is an unbeliever. Such a relationship can occur for a whole number of reasons and can provide a whole host of challenges. But it can also be managed, and done so well: with grace and great success. Let's consider this relationship today.

OUTLINE

- I. Marrying an Unequal Partner (2 Corinthians 6:11-18)
 - A. Being So Yoked is Understandable
 - B. Blaming Some Others is Unhelpful
- II. Managing an Unequal Partnership (1 Peter 3:1-7)
 - A. With Wise Submission
 - B. With Silent Preaching
 - C. With Balanced Beauty
 - D. With Mutual Respect

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Unique marriages
 1. Not ideal
 2. They make it work
 - B. Classified Ad in NJ paper (Gretchen)
 - C. We are all different
 1. Opposites attract
 2. Differences are great
 3. When they undermine the stability of the relationship
 - a. Unequal yoke – marriage relationship
 - b. Believer married to an unbeliever
 - c. "I have no way of knowing whether or not you married the wrong person, but I do know that many people have a lot of wrong ideas about marriage and what it takes to make that marriage happy and successful. I'll be the first to admit that it's possible that you did

marry the wrong person. However, if you treat the wrong person like the right person, you could well end up having married the right person after all."— Zig Ziglar

- d. *Washington Post* research compiled on mixed marriages
 - i. *In the 80s 15% of American couples had mixed faith marriages*
 - ii. *Today that's about 25%*
 - iii. *With that comes with a difference in world view*
 - a) *Strained relationship*
 - b) *Chance of divorce goes up*
 - iv. *Mixed faith: Catholic marrying an Evangelical, Baptist marrying a Mormon, Jewish person marrying a Christian, etc.*

D. Two Scriptures, 2 Corinthians 6:1-18, 1 Peter 3:1-22

- 1. Marrying an unequal partner
- 2. Managing an unequal partnership

II. Marrying an unequal partner

A. Term unequal yoke

- 1. Farming term—two animals yoked together
- 2. Same animals, same species, same temperament, same weight—no problem
- 3. Term comes from Jewish Law (see Deuteronomy 22:10)

B. In Marriage

- 1. One loves God, seeks God, wants to be in fellowship with other believers
- 2. Unbeliever doesn't understand those yearnings of the believing spouse
- 3. Example: We are separated because I'm saved...
- 4. How does such a circumstance come to exist?
 - a. Husband or wife gets saved, the other does not
 - i. Two unbelievers get married
 - ii. One decides to give their life to Christ
 - a) This new relationship is threatening to the unbelieving spouse
 - b) Jesus comes between them
 - b. Two believers are married and then one falls away and the other remains faithful to the Lord
 - c. Deception: When they got married, she thought he was saved
 - i. He pretended to be saved because he wanted to marry her
 - ii. After marriage the mask came off
 - d. Disobedience : Dating and then marrying an unbeliever
 - i. Missionary dating
 - ii. "I see him as my great assignment from God"
 - iii. Eventually she marries her schoolwork
 - iv. Often he drags her down and she compromises
 - v. Seeds of disobedience always yield a harvest of consequence
 - e. Earthquake off the coast of Japan
 - i. Devastated the coast of Japan
 - ii. Tectonic plates suddenly moved and caused devastation

- iii. When a two people in a relationship are moving in different directions, there is going to some sort of tremor that occurs
- iv. Then blaming occurs
 - a) Believer blames herself
 - b) Blames God
 - c) This is not helpful
 - d) No excuses everyone stands for their own choices that they make
- f. Encouragement: as much as you want your spouse saved, God wants them saved even more than you do (see 2 Peter 3:9 and John 3:16)
- g. Spiritually vulnerable situation

III. Managing an unequal partnership

- A. The marriage may not be ideal, but you can have a loving relationship
 - 1. Treat the wrong person like the right person and you'll discover that they were the right person all along
 - 2. Don't idealize another's Christian marriage—it's not a reality
- B. Don't divorce them (see 1 Corinthians 7:12-16)
 - 1. Stay in the relationship
 - 2. Spouse and children are sanctified by the believer
 - 3. "Wives, likewise, be submissive..." 1 Peter 3:1
 - a. Saved women, unsaved husbands
 - b. Six times more Scripture dealing with wives, than with husbands (women had it harder)
- C. Wise submission
 - 1. Not to sinful desires (see Act 5:29)
 - 2. Sounds counterintuitive—submissive to Christ or husband?
 - 3. Not a doormat
 - 4. Submit: Relinquish your own rights in order to meet someone else's needs
 - 5. Because you want to honor and please Christ
 - 6. Story: Woman married to a tyrant, she was miserable, he died, she remarried; she met her new husband's needs out of love not by threat
- D. Silent preaching vs. 1
 - 1. Doesn't mean you *never* share
 - a. You have to say something (see 1 Peter 1:23)
 - b. They've already heard it now live it
 - c. Don't nag, badger, or argue
 - d. Don't set alarm clock to loud preacher
 - e. Don't pin notes on his pillow
 - f. Don't stuff tracts in his lunch
 - 2. Be faithful to God and to your husband
- E. Balanced beauty v. 3
 - 1. Everyone appreciates beauty
 - a. Any house looks better painted—paint the house
 - b. Don't stop there, decorate the inside

2. A beautiful inside (spirit) is even more important than the outside
 3. Outward is only temporary (see Proverbs 31:30)
- F. Husbands be understanding vs. 7
1. For both husbands and wives
 2. Mutual respect and honor
 - a. Be considerate: sensitive to her physical, emotional and spiritual needs
 - b. Be caring: honor her, she's the special one in your life
 - c. Be chivalrous: weaker vessel
 - i. Not weaker intellectually
 - ii. Not weaker spiritually
 - iii. Simply about the physical constitution
 - d. 10-year-old boys were asked how they would make a marriage work, "Tell her she looks pretty, even if she looks like a truck"
- G. "That your prayers may not be hindered" v. 7
1. Naturally your prayers will be for spouse's conversion—petitions for salvation
 2. Respect and honor them or they will resent your Christianity
- IV. Closing
- A. If you treat the wrong person like the right person, you could well end up having the right person after all
 - B. Treat them like a gem, win them to the Lord

Publications referenced: *Washington Post*

Figures referenced: Zig Ziglar

Cross references: Deuteronomy 22:10, Proverbs 31:30, John 3:16, Act 5:29, I Corinthians 7:12-16, I Peter 1:23

Topic: marriage

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