



Should Believers Date and Marry Non-Believers?

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Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

A. Introduction

Without any doubt, the most important decision any person makes is to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The next most important decision is choosing the mate with whom you will spend the remainder of your life. *It's big—real big!* As with salvation, it is not a decision to be made with feelings. If you are indeed a believer in Jesus Christ, the real question is this, "Lord, who do you want me to marry?" Again, *please* understand the sheer importance of choosing a mate. With the question, "Should I date and/or marry a non-believer?" before us, let me say that most don't prayerfully consider this important question. Other Christians do, in fact, they spend a massive amount of time trying to discern God's answer when He has already addressed this matter in His Word. In the Bible, God makes clear that Christians and non-Christians shouldn't marry and He gives us a myriad of stories and lessons as to why this isn't good for either the Christian or the non-Christian. Honestly, the real question is not "should we marry a non-believer", the real question is "Will we, by faith, honor God's Holy Word? Friend, please turn off your "feelings" and take an objective look at the Holy Scriptures. When God makes clear His will, don't be afraid of it. He will take care of you. He does know best. Please, please reach for faith—not feelings. Don't be afraid to trust your Lord.

B. Is dating and marrying non-Christians okay?

No! II Corinthians 6:14-17 says that we should not be unequally yoked with one another. Believers should not be together with non-Christians in a serious dating relationship.

2 Corinthians 6:14–17, NCV -¹⁴ *You are not the same as those who do not believe. So do not join yourselves to them. Good and bad do not belong together. Light and darkness cannot share together.* ¹⁵ *How can Christ and Belial, the devil, have any agreement? What can a believer have together with a nonbeliever?* ¹⁶ *The temple of God cannot have any agreement with idols, and we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live with them and walk with them. And I will be their God, and they will be my people."* ¹⁷ *"Leave those people, and be separate, says the Lord. Touch nothing that is unclean, and I will accept you."*

2 Corinthians 6:14–17, ESV -¹⁴ *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?* ¹⁵ *What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?* ¹⁶ *What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* ¹⁷ *Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you..."*

The picture here is of two oxen "yoked together". In the field, they must work and pull together. If they were of different sizes or dispositions, they would pull in different direction or fight with one another and experience exhaustion. The same is true of two people who marry but don't share a common faith. Just like oxen pulling in different directions, a couple who don't share a Christian foundation will clash and experience conflict.

There will be times in any marriage when a home will face cataclysmic events—medical, financial, grief, legal, behavioral and emotional storms and many others. These will be times when the ability to survive will be in direct proportion to their ability to reach into their faith. There are moments when only faith may keep you together—it's been true in my marriage. Foundational Faith—the ability for a couple to stand firm in their faith *together* despite difficult circumstances (that will come) may be the most needed attribute of a Christian home.

C. Still not convinced?

If you are wondering, “We enjoy each other,” “We are attracted to each other,” “We love each other,” “But we’ve been together for so long,” or “Other than faith, we seem so compatible”. If you, in light of the clear teaching of God’s Word, are still considering marrying a person of a different faith or one who lacks faith, consider these questions you may be faced with in the future:

Who will be the ultimate priority in your life? Your mate or Christ?

How will you explain to your mate that you have chosen “faith” over them?

Will your spouse’s indifference to God affect your own spiritual walk?

How will you explain to your spouse how God guides your decisions if he/she does not know Him?

What if God calls you to something or to accomplish something that only faith can understand?

When children come, will your mate agree to let you raise them to know the Christ of Scripture?

Will they object when you want your kids to participate in church and they don’t?

Will your spouse’s unbelief hinder your children and grandchildren from trusting in Christ and, ultimately, affect their eternal destiny?

When you and your spouse have a disagreement, will your mate have the capacity to forgive?

When you do face the storms of life that will come, what do you propose you reach for when weathering that storm?

It’s not that your potential mate is a bad person—don’t hear that. It may be that they are just not the absolute best person for you to marry in light of your whole Christian life before you. You must get this decision right! Marriage is based on a common faith—that is for our benefit, blessing and protection. God want what is absolutely best for you. Make the decision to follow him and allow Him to help you find the right mate for you. Don’t miss that!

D. Be encouraged in your faith.

Dear Child whom I love with all My heart:

Everyone longs to give themselves completely to someone, to have a deep soul relationship with another to be loved thoroughly and exclusively. But God, to a Christian says; “No, not until you are satisfied, fulfilled, and content with being loved by Me alone, until giving yourself totally to Me, having an intensely personal and unique relationship with me alone, discovering that only in Me is your satisfaction to be found, will you be capable of the perfect human relationship that I have planned for you. You will never be united with another until you are united with Me – exclusive of any other desires or longings. I want you to have the best. Please allow Me to bring it to you. You just keep watching Me, expecting the greatest things; keep experiencing the satisfaction I bring. Keep listening and learning the things I tell you. You just wait, that’s all. Don’t be anxious. Don’t look at the things you want. You just keep looking off and up to Me or you’ll miss what I want to show you. And when you are ready, I’ll surprise you with a love far more wonderful than you could ever dream of. You see, until you are ready (I am working even this moment to have both of you ready at the same time until you are both satisfied exclusively with Me and the life I have prepared for you), you will not be able to experience the love that exemplifies your relationship with Me—a perfect love. And dear one, I want you to have the most wonderful love. I want you to see in the flesh a picture of your relationship with Me, and to enjoy materially and concretely the everlasting union of beauty, perfection, and love that I offer to you with Myself. Know that I love you utterly! I am the Almighty God of this universe. Believe it and be satisfied. As I have promised, I will meet every need you will ever have. I mean that and I will do that!”

-Your Heavenly Father!

E. Selected Articles

Is it okay to date non-Christians?

By Erin Davis, *Lies young women believe (blog)*, Used here with permission.

Hey, girls! We've been talking about guys and romance for years here on the blog. In fact, we are revisiting some of our most read posts this month as part of our attempt to give you some great advice on the subject of romance. Even if you've read these posts before, we encourage you to check them out again as a refresher on God's plan for your love life.

Lately there has been some discussion on this blog about whether or not it is okay for Christians to date non-Christians. We encountered this same conversation over and over as we did research for *Lies Young Women Believe*. In fact, this is one of the 25 lies addressed directly in the book.

The girls involved in the research phase of this book told us things like:

- "I really want to marry a Christian, but I'm not looking for marriage right now, so I don't really care."
- "I don't really think it matters if the guys I date are Christians or not. For one, we're just in high school. I don't really think that religion is an issue right now."
- "If you plant a seed, it can make a beautiful flower. You're spreading God's Word, whether it works out or not. If you can compromise, think about it ... you can impact a non-Christian."

Some of you have made similar comments here on the blog. Specifically, it seems that some of you are wondering if it's okay to date non-Christians. The short answer to your question is no. God's Word urges us not to link our lives with non-believers, and the consequences of choosing to do otherwise can be disastrous.

But I know that you might not be willing to simply take my word on this one. I understand the temptation to believe that dating non-Christians is okay. In fact, I get why so many young women have been deceived into thinking that it is a potentially wonderful missions opportunity. (I actually fell for this one myself as a high school and college-aged woman.) But since I now understand how important it is that we understand God's truth on this subject, I decided to recruit a friend of mine to be a voice of reason. Let me introduce you to Brice. He just happens to be a handsome, funny college student who is currently serving as the youth ministry intern at my church. I asked him to read the parts of this blog where young women were talking about dating non-Christians. His response? "I had no idea that girls thought like that! How do we convince them that they should only date Christians?"

I think that Brice's insights on this topic are wise and thought-provoking, and they may just be exactly what you need to hear as you search for truth in this area of your lives. Here's what he had to say:

I have recently been asked to write a section for this blog on the topic of dating non-Christians. I am very excited to be able to share my thoughts since they will be coming from a young Christian man's perspective to a female audience. I hope that I can be of some help to you ladies.

To start off with, I will tell you about a few of my own personal dating experiences. I am now 22 years old, and I have had five different girlfriends over the years and had crushes on many others. The first two girls I dated were Christians, in the sense that they went to the same church and youth group I was in. We kept things pretty low-key. We'd hang out, watch movies, talk on the phone, hold hands, and go to dances. We never did anything sexual, mainly because I personally thought it was wrong. I didn't think of the negative consequences that would be taken out on her heart or my heart. Looking back, I thank the Lord for protecting my purity and the purity of the girls in those relationships.

My next relationship was a bit different. My senior year of high school, a junior girl caught my eye. We started talking on the band trip that year on New Year's Eve. I told my youth pastor about her because she wasn't in the youth group. I tried to convince him (and myself) that it would be good for me to date her so that she might come to youth group and become a Christian. I was dead wrong!



A few years before this, my youth minister gave our youth group a lesson we called "the triangle talk." This talk consisted of a triangle drawn out, and the guy on the left base of the triangle and the girl on the right base. The concept was simple-when a person is focused upward to the pinnacle of the triangle (God), they will eventually meet up with that special someone that God has specifically designed for them. If a guy and girl are in a relationship, they should be focused on God, and as they grow closer to God they will inevitably grow closer to one another.

What I was doing with this new girlfriend was taking my eyes off of God and focusing on the really pretty girl. Well, this really pretty girl and I made out a lot ... way too much! There were some moments when we got far too close to a line that should not be crossed until marriage. Our relationship ended after she wrote me a letter telling me she thought I was the one for her, and I told her I wasn't. I had been called into ministry a year and a half earlier, and I knew that she would not give me the support I would need in ministry. We broke up a week later. The bottom line from that story is DO NOT WASTE your time, emotions, money, and most of all your heart on someone who is not a Christian. If they don't have a relationship with Christ, you shouldn't be yoked to them.

I went off to college and told all my buddies, "I'm going to find a nice Christian girl and get married to her." Well, I meet a girl my freshman year who was really sweet, loved the Lord, and liked doing fun stuff. We soon started dating. I prayed about it a few weeks later, and God told me I had jumped the gun and that we should break up. I was devastated. I thought all I needed to do was get to know her and once I knew her pretty well that we could date with the idea in both of our heads that the end result would be marriage. Not so. So I listened to God and broke up with her. This devastated me and her. She completely withdrew from me, which really hurt.

Before I left for camp that summer, I gave her a Bible and she gave me a journal and we said goodbye. I spent the summer at camp. We wrote letters a few times a week. It seemed like the Lord was restoring our relationship. We began dating that summer in early July. I don't remember consulting the Lord on that decision either. We dated for 15 months. It was a good time, but our focus was wrong. Our focus even as good Christian kids was on each other and not on God and how we were to be obedient to Him in His service. We were far too physical for a Christian couple.

The girl I dated for 15 months was a great girl and a strong Christian, but we were not equally yoked. She had a completely different way she wanted to live her life than I did when it came to serving the Lord. She had made plans for where she wanted to live, what she wanted to do 15 years down the road, and I still have no idea what I'll be doing after I graduate from college or when I'll graduate. The point I am trying to make here is that even when a guy is a strong Christian at a similar maturity level as you are, there are other factors that must be considered such as your views on spending and saving money. How you will give your time, money, and energy in service to the Lord? Are you both fine with living by faith and not have any real plans except to follow the Lord? Or does one of you want to be a lawyer and the other one wants to be an international missionary? There are many things that go into being equally yoked. For many of you, you may not be ready to be married. And to you I say don't date. Enjoy the friendships with guys around you as brothers. Let them know where you stand, and you will encourage and challenge them to grow as men of the Lord. If they are not down with respecting you for taking this season in your life to grow more as a woman, then you need to pray for them that they may understand your heart and that you are letting yourself be prepared for your future husband.

When you are not equally yoked to a believer of a very close maturity level in your relationship with Christ and when you don't have a very similar philosophy on how to live your life, then you should not enter into a relationship with that person. When you do meet that man someday that you connect really well with ... pray for him. Pray that he will grow and be transformed every day into the likeness of Christ. Ask God now to prepare you and your future husband for the time when you will be wed.

As a young Christian girl, you should focus on Christ; focus on His call on your life to follow Him. Seek to understand what that means for each one of you. Who are you in Christ? What is your identity in Christ? You need to be content with serving and obeying Christ. You must not seek to find your fulfillment in a man. It simply is not there. It is only found in Christ. As you seek the Lord and focus on Him, if you are to be married, the Lord will put the perfect man for you in your path. You should be able to see him in several different roles and know that you would be best yoked with that one man while on this earth. Pray for the man God is preparing for you right now, keep him in your prayers, and you will be oh so blessed when you meet him and see how God has been preparing you both.

BOTTOM LINE—Seek first the Kingdom of God and the rest will be provided.

Be blessed ladies.

Bingo!

Brice's words echo the guidance given by Nancy and Dannah in *Lies Young Women Believe*. It is so important for you to realize that as Christians we need to only be considering other Christians for dating relationships. It is also important to know that God desires for you to marry (and therefore date) a Christian. But that's not all. He desires for you to marry a man who can lead you spiritually. If

your only dating qualification is to find a guy who goes to church, you may find yourself in the situation Brice did. The consequences of being "unequally yoked" are painful!

Truth-Seekers Relationship Pledge

"I purpose never to become involved in a relationship with a guy who is not a true follower of Jesus Christ and whose character and lifestyle are not consistent with the kind of man I believe God wants me to marry someday."



Should a Christian Marry Outside the Faith?

By Wayne Jackson, *The Christian Courier*, (A academic approach to understand the scriptures). Used here with permission.

Is it wrong for a Christian to marry outside the faith?

This is a multifaceted question and it would not do it justice to answer it hastily. A preliminary foundation must be laid. We would offer the following thoughts for careful study.

First of all, we must observe that marriage is a sacred relationship which was initiated by the Creator for the benefit of humanity as a whole (Genesis 2:18ff). Any two eligible people (male and female, unfettered by a previous marital tie) may enter into this divine relationship with the assurance that the union is recognized by God. This is a universal circumstance, and has been since the beginning of time (though a lower marriage standard was tolerated in the pre-Christian ages [cf. Matthew 19:8]).

Paul acknowledged that some of the Corinthian saints had been guilty of the sin of adultery prior to the time of their conversion (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Since adultery is the violation of a marriage covenant, this clearly implies that these folks were married—even during their pagan days. The New Testament nowhere suggests, even remotely, that marriage pertains to Christians only (cf. Hebrews 13:4). The marriage relationship, therefore, is not a "church sacrament," as alleged in Roman Catholic theology.

In view of this, it is clear that a marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian is a union that is not to be severed strictly on that basis. To the contrary, if one finds himself in a relationship of that nature, he or she should work very hard to convert that unbelieving companion to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:12ff; 1 Peter 3:1ff).

Having noted the above, however, there are additional factors that must be taken into consideration. Let us preview some of these:

Every knowledgeable Bible student is aware that the general tone of Scripture, from the beginning of its composition till completion, has been to discourage believers from entering into marriage bonds with those who do not share the true faith—though biblical history provides us with many examples of those who did not respect this sacred ideal (cf. Genesis 6:2; 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1; Exodus 34:11-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-5; Judges 14:1-3; 1 Kings 11, etc.). The purpose behind such divine instruction clearly had a spiritual thrust—rather than that of maintaining a pure blood line, as is contended occasionally.

In the post-Babylonian captivity period, 113 Hebrew men were required to put away the pagan women they had married while in that heathen land (Ezra 10:10-11). This is a relatively small number when one considers the fact that the whole population contained approximately forty thousand adult males. This procedure, which clearly was more restrictive than the New Testament instruction for today (as mentioned above [1 Corinthians 7:12ff; 1 Peter 3:1ff]), was possibly an emergency measure required in a time of great danger—a danger during a critical period of history when the Messianic plan was ever closer to reaching fruition (Galatians 4:4).

There was, under the Mosaic law, a provision for how a foreign, captive woman could be taken by a Hebrew for a wife (Deuteronomy 21:10-14), though this procedure did not represent the highest spiritual plateau in the divine plan.

Every divinely designed institution of human history was intended, ultimately, for the implementation of Heaven's plan for human salvation. This certainly was true with reference to the home. If such was the case regarding marriage as an institution, is the principle any less valid for the spiritual welfare of the individual Christian?

There are several New Testament passages which lend their support to the proposition that Christians ought to marry only those of like precious faith:

(1) In the sermon on the mount, Jesus admonished his disciples to put the kingdom of Christ "first" (proton) in their lives. The adverb suggests that the interests of the Lord should be "above all" else (Bromiley 1985, 966). Can anyone honestly contend that the child of God who unites himself with the unbeliever in the most intimate of all human relationships is granting the reign of Christ the most exalted place in his or her life?

Numerous Christians can testify to the fact that their spiritual lives have been made infinitely more difficult since yoking themselves with those who do not share a commitment to God, to say nothing of bringing children into an environment where there are divergent spiritual influences. The fact that some Christians have converted their unbelieving mates eventually is wonderful indeed; that circumstance, however, hardly stacks up against the many more instances of disciples who have weakened under such a strain, ultimately abandoning their devotion to the Savior.

(2) In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says that the Christian widow should marry "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39). Some have suggested that the language, grammatically speaking, is adverbial, thus modifying the verb "marry," rather than being adjectival, i.e., identifying the status of the marriage partner. The meaning of the phrase, then, is supposed to be that she is to marry in harmony with the Lord's will, i.e., in such a way as to not surrender her faith.

Such a grammatical distinction hardly dissolves the difficulty. Is it the Lord's **will** that his people form intimate unions with those who have little, if any, sympathy for his redemptive purpose? Is the Savior **pleased** when his follower subordinates the highest of spiritual interests to those that primarily are physical and emotional?

I have never encountered the gospel preacher who will encourage the Christian to marry an unbeliever. Why is that? Such entanglements generally are characterized as unwise, foolish, dangerous, etc.; yet apologists for these mismatches sometimes contend that there is no spiritual deficiency at all in making such foolish choices. Such a view, in my judgment, has a focus that is much too narrow, i.e., it looks only at the validity of the union itself and does not consider a broader range of issues (e.g., motive and eternal aspiration).

Most scholars, it would appear to me, are either unaware of or unpersuaded by the adverbial argument. The phrase *monon en kurio* ("only in [the] Lord") is generally viewed as signifying that she is to seek a **Christian** companion.

- Arndt and Gingrich suggested that "marry in the Lord = marry a Christian" (1967, 259).
- Harold Mare asserts that the phrase means "the woman should marry only a Christian" (1976, 237).
- Marion Soards writes that these women "are to marry Christian men" (1999, 165).
- Ellicott notes that Paul's phrase "distinctly implies that it is to be a marriage with a Christian" (1887, 139).
- Fitzmyer contends that "only in the Lord" means "marry a Christian" (Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider, **Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament**, 1991, 2:442).

This clearly is the prevailing view among Greek authorities and Bible expositors. (For further study Woods 1976, 91.)

A study of Paul's use of "in the Lord" (or an equivalent expression) elsewhere is very illuminating. For instance, "in the Lord" is parallel to being a "saint" in Romans 16:2.

We might add this thought: if such was Paul's instruction with reference to the experienced widow, would a more relaxed view have been entertained regarding the marriage of the even more vulnerable young virgin?

(6) Later in 1 Corinthians, Paul argues the case for supporting gospel preachers and their families. In connection therewith, he asks:

Do we [Paul and Barnabas] not have a right to lead about a wife who is a sister, as do also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? (9:5).

The apostle could have made his point about family support without the inclusion of the word adelphen ("sister"); there obviously is a subtle suggestion in the employment of that term.

(7) In his second Corinthian letter, the inspired apostle charged: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" (6:14). Some have attempted to exclude marriage from this warning. They argue that since the Greek construction "be not" carries the force of "stop," and since Paul had forbade the believer to leave an unbelieving companion simply on that basis (1 Corinthians 7:12ff), the context cannot be applied to marriage (Thompson 1970, 94).

But the use of the negative particle here does not demand the interpretation so ascribed. If the apostle had heard the report that some of the Corinthian saints were entering into unions with pagans, he might well have written a caution, "Stop this practice," without suggesting that once the union is formed it must be dissolved. A. T. Robertson renders the phrase "Stop becoming . . . unequally yoked." He says: "Marriage is certainly included, but other unions may be in mind" (**Word Pictures**, 1931, IV:236). Many expositors suggest that this context involves a warning against spiritually mixed marriages. In fact, this is the most common view of this passage.

Finally, then, there is this question: what should one do when he realizes that, in marrying out of Christ, the primary interests of the Lord's kingdom were not pursued?

The answer is simple: repent of the **disposition** that led to that decision, and then set your mind toward the goal of making seek-the-kingdom-first choices henceforth in your life. There are many circumstances in our lives which are irreversible. Is it not possible that one could realize that he did not approach some of his earlier decisions with the highest of ideals?

There is nothing wrong with asking God's forgiveness for such superficial choices, resolving to make more spiritually responsible determinations in the future and working then to make the very best of one's present situation.

This, we believe, is a balanced view of this subject, which takes into consideration a broader variety of factors than some may have considered previously.



Should a Christian date or marry an unbeliever?

by Matt Slick, Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry. Printed here with Permission.

No, a Christian should not date or marry an unbeliever:

"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Unfortunately, some Christians hope that they can convert the person he/she is dating or marrying. They often think that their spirituality is strong enough so that they can witness, or motivate the other person to convert through their patience and love. Why do they think this? Three reasons: They love the person and are emotionally blinded, they are naive, or they do not know God's Word.

This may sound harsh, but something as serious as marrying an unbeliever needs to be dealt with properly and to-the-point. We are not to compromise the will of God and endanger our spiritual well-being. All we need to do is look in the Old Testament to see why God says not to marry unbelievers. This is what God said to the Israelites.

"When the Lord your God shall bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and shall clear away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, ² and when the Lord your God shall deliver them before you, and you shall defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. ³ Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods," (Deut. 7:1-4).

The reason not to marry an unbeliever is that he/she can influence you away from the Lord. Don't be so naive to think that "you" will never fall. It happens all the time.

Children

If you marry an unbeliever and have children, how will it effect their spirituality to have the parents divided over spiritual things? Is it a help or a hindrance to their spiritual health? Obviously, it is a hindrance.

Unfortunately, too many people do not take into account the extremely serious situation of children and their eternal destiny. Yet, because of "love" and because they listen to their hearts over the Word of God, many people marry unbelievers anyway... and often suffer dire consequences.

What if you are already married to an unbeliever?

If you are already married to an unbeliever then you need to love him/her as best you can, set a good example of being a Christian, and pray for your spouse's salvation. You cannot leave your spouse (unless there is physical abuse, adultery, or if you are abandoned). You need to stick it out. Seek the Lord.

F. Selected Scriptures

2 Corinthians 6:14–17, The Message –¹⁴ Don't become partners with those who reject God. How can you make a partnership out of right and wrong? That's not partnership; that's war. Is light best friends with dark? ¹⁵ Does Christ go strolling with the Devil? Do trust and mistrust hold hands? ¹⁶ Who would think of setting up pagan idols in God's holy Temple? But that is exactly what we are, each of us a temple in whom God lives. God himself put it this way: "I'll live in them, move into them; I'll be their God and they'll be my people." ¹⁷ So leave the corruption and compromise; leave it for good," says God. "Don't link up with those who will pollute you. I want you all for myself.

2 Corinthians 6:14–17, The Living Bible -¹⁴ Don't be teamed with those who do not love the Lord, for what do the people of God have in common with the people of sin? How can light live with darkness? ¹⁵ And what harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a Christian be a partner with one who doesn't believe? ¹⁶ And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For you are God's temple, the home of the living God, and God has said of you, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." ¹⁷ That is why the Lord has said, "Leave them; separate yourselves from them; don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you

1 Corinthians 15:33, ESV -³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

2 Peter 3:15–16, NIV -¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Amos 3:3, The Message -³ Do two people walk hand in hand if they aren't going to the same place?

1 John 1:7, NCV -⁷ But if we live in the light, as God is in the light, we can share fellowship with each other. Then the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin.

1 Corinthians 3:11, NCV -¹¹ The foundation that has already been laid is Jesus Christ, and no one can lay down any other foundation.



I recently wrote my young daughters a letter about their futures and specifically, their future mates. One of the lines reads, "I want you to find a man who will love God more than you and you more than themselves." My greatest fear as a father would be that they would marry outside their faith. Having lived through storms I never, never anticipated, I realize that faith is the single most important attribute that my wife and I have. There have been a handful of moments when only our deep faith in God allowed us to survive. Faith is essential! Without both our faiths—together—we would have never made it.

–Pastor Joe