



“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; (Philippians 2:15)

**OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS?**

We are encouraged to “labor and work honestly with our hands, so as to have something to share with the needy.” (Ephesians 4:28 NRSV)

We are involved therefore, in many occupations, and there are a variety of circumstances relating to our businesses and careers.

Some vocations are complimentary to our real profession as servants of God; others may compromise our hope.



**YOKED IN BUSINESS?**

Whether we are in our own business, or in a large industry, there are relationships that we must form with supervisors, co-workers or partners. Care must be taken not to become unequally yoked in a situation that may make it difficult for us to maintain our integrity.

Most businesses have a code of ethics, but these are often more prominent on paper than they are in practice. The quest for a bottom line profit may seriously compromise both our motives and our methods.

**LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE**

There may be no better opportunity to shine as lights in a dark world, than in the circumstances that arise in the workplace. If we demonstrate to our associates that our principles are based on the word of God, we provide them an example that will certainly stand out in a “crooked and perverse nation.”

We make choices every day. We can go with the flow, looking the other way, or we can take advantage of the opportunities that are allowed in our respective positions, to witness to our hope.

If we give in to the temptation to use dishonesty to advance the cause, we deny our Master. There may be a time when it would be better for our spiritual health to make a change in either our environment or occupation.



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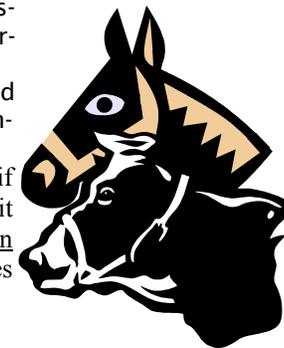
The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

**“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14 NIV)**

The Instruction above can relate to many aspects of our lives and it is good advice for all servants of God.

The words of the Apostle Paul echo certain Old Testament teachings such as found in Deuteronomy 22: 9-11 (NIV):

“Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled. Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together.”



**Unequal Yoking**

These commandments under the Law of Moses were more than practical instruction for everyday life. They were intended to teach principles that could be applied to our life as disciples of Christ.

Paul provided some very specific examples of how we ought to apply these principles in 2 Corinthians 6 where he asks this question; “What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (Verse 15 NIV)

He then concludes his instruction with this advice: “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.” (verses 17-18)

The principles are clear. We must not yoke ourselves in the affairs of this life with someone who does not share our hope. Not only are we to refrain from being unequally yoked, but we are instructed to widen the gap by separating ourselves from the unbeliever.

**The Inevitable Struggle**

When we are yoked with an unbeliever, both parties are likely to be pulling in separate directions. You may have a firm goal for the Kingdom of God, but they may be following hard after achievements in this life. Which one of you will control the process? How will the continuing struggle affect your own hope?

“Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. **For they will turn away thy son from following me**, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.” (Deuteronomy 7:3-4)

### YOKING IN MARRIAGE

Marriage is one of the most important relationships in our lives. It is in this special bond that the scriptural admonition that we refrain from unequal yoking is most essential.

When the children of Israel entered the promised land, they were instructed to remain separate from the inhabitants of the land. This separation related especially to marriage, as we see in the quotation from Deuteronomy 7, as recorded in the box above.

The reason was clear. There would be a struggle for control and the unbeliever would likely turn away the heart of the believer from following God. If such were the case, God would certainly be angry.

The best course of action is to obey God's word from the start. We should not initiate a relationship with someone who is not of the same faith.

### Marriage Today

Today, marriage is not the result of an agreement by the parents, as it may have been in Bible times. Our marriages are normally the result of a long process that begins with mutual attraction, friendship and dating. We can never be sure when we begin the process just how far it will lead.

Consequently, we must take care to keep in mind the Bible principles that discourage any unequal yoking. Before our heart takes control and our head simply nods, we should be certain that there is a common goal. We can not walk together with someone who is going in another direction. Our walk to the kingdom should never be compromised by any relationship.

### Marriage in the Lord

The Apostle Paul was a single man with his mind fixed on the Kingdom of God. He understood that marriage was honorable and that a good mate was from the Lord, but he also realized that all too often marriage can lead to an alienation of affection that could interfere with our love for God.

Consequently, his advice was that if we choose to marry, it must be a “marriage in the Lord.” This is the only way that we can reasonably hope to find the spousal cooperation that is necessary for maintaining our commitments to God. (1 Cor 7:39)



“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”  
(2 Corinthians 6:18 NIV)

### Sons and Daughters of God

We are the children of God by faith and baptism into Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26-29) God takes pleasure in receiving us as His sons and daughters, especially when we keep His commandments.

When we read that we are to “come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you,” **This is not an optional requirement.** (2 Corinthians 6: 17)

If we consider the entire context of these words, we learn that we are asked to avoid some very specific relationships. (2 Corinthians 6:14-16) These are relationships that just do not mix well together. They include:

1. **LIGHT and DARKNESS** - Light replaces darkness. It is not possible for the two to both exist together. When we turn on the light of God's word, we dispel the spiritual darkness of the world. When we walk in darkness, with no light to guide us, we stumble and fall.

2. **RIGHTEOUSNESS and WICKEDNESS** - If we have been made righteous, through the blood of Christ, how can we remain a faithful companion to someone who has no interest in the justification that is available through faith. Wickedness may seem too extreme a term to be applied to some of our friends. The Bible, however, uses wicked to describe anyone who is not actively serving God. (See Malachi 3:18)

3. **CHRIST and BELIAL** - Christ was tempted even as we are yet he did not sin. He encourages us to overcome. There can be no real harmony between someone who is working hard to resist sin, and the sons or daughters of Belial, who seem to rely only on their natural instincts, enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season.

4. **TEMPLE of GOD and IDOLS** - There can be no agreement between one who worships God and someone who practices idolatry. There is only one true God, but there are many persons, places and things that can become idols. Natural men are inclined to worship the work of their own hands and things they can see and feel. We worship the living God, having faith in the unseen.

5. **BELIEVERS and UNBELIEVERS** - It really is very simple. What do we have in common with someone who does not believe? When we examine our own close relationships, do we find that they are often based only on the needs of the flesh, and not on the mind of the spirit.

When we learn to separate ourselves from these unequal yokes of this world, we will live in the assurance that we are the temple of the living God. As God has said “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”