

Unequallyyoked1

2 Cor. 6-14-16

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

[Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers] This is closely connected in sense with the previous verse. The apostle is there stating the nature of the remuneration or recompence which he asks for all the love which he had shown to them. He here says, that one mode of remuneration would be to yield obedience to his commands, and to separate themselves from all improper alliance with unbelievers. "Make me this return for my love. Love me as a proof of your affection, be not improperly united with unbelievers. Listen to me as a father addressing his children, and secure your own happiness and piety by not being unequally yoked with those who are not Christians." The word which is used here heterozugeoo (NT:2086) means properly, to bear a different yoke, to be yoked heterogeneously-Robinson (Lexicon). It is applied to the custom of yoking animals of different kinds together (Passow); and as used here means not to mingle together, or be united with unbelievers.

It is implied in the use of the word that there is a dissimilarity between believers and unbelievers so great that it is as improper for them to mingle together as it is to yoke animals of different kinds and species. The ground of the injunction is, that there is a difference between Christians and those who are not, so great as to render such unions improper and injurious. The direction here refers doubtless to all kinds of improper connections with those who were unbelievers. It has been usually supposed by commentators to refer particularly to marriage. But there is no reason for confining it to marriage. It doubtless includes that, but it may as well refer to any other intimate connection, or to intimate friendships, or to participation in their amusements and employments, as to marriage. The radical idea is, that they were to abstain from all connections with unbelievers-with infidels, and pagans, and those who were not Christians, which would identify them with them; or they were to have no connection with them in anything as unbelievers, pagans, or infidels; they were to partake with them in nothing that was special to them as such.
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The command may be rendered: "Stop becoming heterogeneously yoked with unbelievers." The principle goes back to the Mosaic legislation (cf. Lev 19:19; Deut 22:10). Christians are "new creatures" (2 Cor 5:17); they must not be united spiritually with dead unbelievers (cf. Eph 2:1); The word (metoche) translated fellowship is found only here in the NT; it means "sharing, participation" (Arndt). The word (anomia) back of unrighteousness really means "lawlessness" (Arndt). Cf. Heb 1:9 for a similar contrast. Communion (koinonia) involves "close relationship" (Arndt), as in marriage or as in spiritual relationship with God (cf. 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3,6). The contrast between light and darkness is especially prominent in NT literature (cf. John 1:5; 3:19; Eph 5:7,11; Col 1:12-13; 1 John 1:6-7; 2:10-11) 15. The word concord (symphonesis) is found only here in the NT. The holiness and purity of Christ cannot harmonize with the wickedness and impurity of Belial (a synonym for Satan). Cf. 1 Cor 10:21. The ASV correctly translates what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? The two are spiritually incompatible. The word (meris) back of portion (ASV) suggests a deep sharing of things in common (cf. its use in Luke 10:42; Acts 8:21; Col 1:12).

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I
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II. The caution or exhortation itself, not to mingle with unbelievers, not to be unequally yoked with them, v. 14. Either,

1. In stated relations. It is wrong for good people to join in affinity with the wicked and profane; these will draw different ways, and that will be galling and grievous. Those relations that are our choice must be chosen by rule; and it is good for those who are themselves the children of God to join with those who are so likewise; for there is more danger that the bad will damage the good than hope that the good will benefit the bad.

2. In common conversation. We should not yoke ourselves in friendship and acquaintance with wicked men and unbelievers. Though we cannot wholly avoid seeing, and hearing, and being with such, yet we should never choose them for our bosom-friends.

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3. Much less should we join in religious communion with them; we must not join with them in their idolatrous services, nor concur with them in their false worship, nor any abominations; we must not confound together the table of the Lord and the table of devils, the house of God and the house of Rimmon. The apostle gives several good reasons against this corrupt mixture.

(1.) It is a very great absurdity, v. 14, 15. It is an unequal yoking of things together that will not agree together; as bad as for the Jews to have ploughed with an ox and an ass or to have sown divers sorts of grain intermixed. What an absurdity is it to think of joining righteousness and unrighteousness, or mingling light and darkness, fire and water, together! Believers are, and should be, righteous; but unbelievers are unrighteous. Believers are made light in the Lord, but unbelievers are in darkness; and what comfortable communion can these have together? Christ and Belial are contrary one to the other; they have opposite interests and designs, so that it is impossible there should be any concord or agreement between them. It is absurd, therefore, to think of enlisting under both; and, if the believer has part with an infidel, he does what in him lies to bring Christ and Belial together.

(2.) It is a dishonour to the Christian's profession (v. 16); for Christians are by profession, and should be in reality, the temples of the living God—dedicated to, and employed for, the service of God, who has promised to reside in them, to dwell and walk in them, to stand in a special relation to them, and take a special care of them, that he will be their God and they shall be his people. Now there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols. Idols are rivals with God for his honour, and God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another.

(3.) There is a great deal of danger in communicating with unbelievers and idolators, danger of being defiled and of being rejected; therefore the exhortation is (v. 17) to come out from among them, and keep at a due distance, to be separate, as one would avoid

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