

Not Together

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Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" II Corinthian 6:14

The double-negative "not unequally yoked" can be somewhat confusing to our modern vernacular, but it simply means "do not be yoked together with unbelievers". The yoke spoken of here is referring to the wooden implement that binds two farm animals together. It was common that two oxen or mules would be joined together with this device, so they could plow a field together. We are not to be joined with the world and doing much of what they do. We should not be plowing the same "field" as they.

Although we should be friendly to all, we should not be yoked to unbelievers in marriage, business relationships, or other close relationships. When we are yoked together closely in such a relationship, we end up going away from God's direction for us. We are in the world, and we naturally may be in close contact with unsaved. That happens and is a good opportunity to be a witness and an example to them, but getting into the position that

"Oil and water do not mix, neither do the saved and the unsaved."

we are going in their direction is what God has warned us about.

A child of God is on the winning side. Why in the world would he want to go in the same direction as the losing side? We have a Leader that will take us His way. We should not be following those that do not know or live the way God desires. We should be guiding others in the right direction, not following their wrong pathways through life.

The Bible says there are two spiritual sides in this life: God's and the devil's (also called Belial). What can we possibly have in common with an unbeliever's thinking and goals? *"And what concord [agreement, union in opinions, sentiments, views or interests] hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 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 will be their God, and they shall be my people." II Cor. 6:15-16*

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Some Never Learn

Bill Brinkworth

I see a lot of human characteristics and actions in my backyard chickens. One of my recent observations about one particular chicken illustrates what is so common and destructive in people.



One Golden Comet hen was the victim of the other chickens' cruel treatments against her. I noticed it when I discovered the one hen had many of her feathers plucked out. At other times I would see other hens, for no apparent reason to me, go up to her and peck her. Over time, the bullying was so intense that the abused hen was bound to the hen house and could not even go to the outside run.

What finally broke my heart was seeing the bullies chase her to a nesting box. To flee the hen-pecking of the others, she would cower in the back of her nest. The other chickens would

unmercifully continue to peck at her while she was trapped in the box.

I tried to dissuade the vicious treatment but to no avail. One day I could not bear the cruelty anymore. I picked up the battered and frightened hen and put her outside the hen house. She was free from bullying. She had her food and water and could go anywhere she wanted on the property.

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Bill Brinkworth

One of the principles that will distinguish a strong Christian from a weak one, when practiced, is taught in II Corinthians 6:14-17. Not adhering to God's teaching on this doctrine has ruined many Christian lives and testimonies. It is the number one robber of joy for a child of God. The doctrine Paul teaches there is the separation of a Christian from those who are not saved

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After thinking that she would be glad for the freedom and escape her tormentors, I noticed a surprising behavior. Instead of walking around the large property and eating whatever she wanted, I found her staying very close to her past prison. She was safe on the outside of the pen's chicken wire from their pecking, but she was continually within feet of the other chickens. Even though her experience inside the chicken house was torturous, she would not leave it. She stayed as close as she could to those that did her harm.

Many people allow themselves to be in a similar situation. A sin or mistake has ruined or made one's life abhorrent, yet that will not stop the activity or their involvement with it. Rather than go where it is safe and far away from what hurt their life, they keep coming back to where they suffered great loss or side-effects.

Many have found themselves reaping terrible health problems from their smoking habit. It has weakened or even destroyed much of their health. Often after they get some relief from the habit or even stopped for a while,

they find themselves puffing again on the same thing that hurt them previously.

Drunks often have their lives destroyed by alcohol. Not only has the addiction bound them to the bottle, but their body is slowly weakened by the drink. Marriage or family problems also were caused by their compulsion. However, after a successful rehabilitation helped them get freedom from the controlling power of the alcohol, they find themselves back on the bottle and putting themselves again in a losing situation.

An adulterer gets caught in his sin. He lost his wife, children, and things for which he worked hard. Alimony robs him of even enjoying the fruits of his labor. After finally finding another wife, he allows his eyes and mind to wander and again becomes unfaithful.

A woman gets sexually involved with a man and finds herself pregnant. He leaves her, and she is left to raise the child by herself. Her life is a constant strain and has difficulty working and rearing the child by herself. However, it is not long until again she is sexually

involved with another man and not married.

So many will not learn from past mistakes! They continue to do what has hurt them in the past, yet they have not learned their lesson and return to the same place or involvement that previously scarred and ruined their life. They are no different than the hen-pecked chicken that would not forsake those that were cruel to her.

If you have respite from past mistakes or sins, keep far from what previously entrapped you. Some need to change friends that encouraged wrong behavior or involvement in iniquity. Others need to avoid places where sin's temptations overtook them. Many need to make it hard not to fall for the enticement that bound them previously. Something needs to change, or it will not be long until one is back in the same condition.

No one will be unscathed from sin's grasp. Put yourself far away from its hold. Flee it before it is too late.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial [a personification of all that is bad]? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [have the same thinking as an unsaved person]? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God [a

believer] 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 will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

II Cori 6:14-17

Seek the Higher Things

C. H. Spurgeon

Some years ago, there was a crossing-sweeper in Dublin with his broom, and in all probability his highest thoughts were to keep the crossing clean, and look for the few pennies the job earned. One day, a lawyer put his hand upon the man's shoulder, and said to him, "My good fellow, do you know that you are heir to a fortune of ten thousand pounds a year?"

"Do you mean it?" he asked.

"I do," the lawyer answered.

The now wealthy man walked away, and forgot his broom. Are you surprised? Who would not have left his broom when suddenly made possessor of ten thousand pounds a year?

I pray that some poor sinners, who have been thinking of the pleasures of the world, when they hear that there is hope and that there is Heaven to be had, will forget the deceitful pleasures of sin and follow after a higher and better life by obeying Christ's commandments.

"Maybe you should take the advice of people that love you and are concerned for your well-being when they warn you to stay away from a place, person, or group of people! Sometimes those looking from a distance see things that those that are close do not see." — B. B.