

Inside this Issue

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Believers marrying unbelievers

Page 1

My Top Ten Books

Page 6

Fools in Fellowship: The Whisperers

Page 8

YPS

(Young Precious Seed) is a supplement of *Precious Seed* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live.

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Believers marrying unbelievers

'From the beginning ...'

When God made man in the beginning He gave him a task in paradise which involved meeting all the other creatures He had made. God brought them to Adam to see what he would call them and Adam took the role of the steward of God's creation and named them all. Yet in meeting all these creatures, Adam came to realize how 'alone' he was; it was evident that no creature was equal to him. So God 'made an help meet for him', Gen. 3. 19. God created another human being, out of the body of the man and made equal to him. This new creature was a woman, for God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. And it was God who brought them together, performed the first marriage ceremony, and gave them His blessing on their sexual union. The New Testament sums all this up when the Holy Spirit, through Paul, says, 'Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled', Heb. 13. 4.



Believers and unbelievers separate

Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden after their disobedience to God, Gen. 3. 1-13, 22-24. Their disobedience brought a variety of judgements upon the serpent, the earth itself, and upon themselves as individuals. Their sin brought death into the world, but it also gave them sinful natures which they passed on to the rest of mankind. Though Adam and Eve

BY IAN REES

Believers marrying unbelievers

were made in the image of God, Adam's son was begotten in his father's image, which was a sinful, fallen image, Gen. 5. 1-3. Soon that sinful image, likeness and nature would show itself in rebellion against God. Cain was envious of his brother, hated him and killed him. Cain became a refugee, living away from the presence of God and from the influence of his God-fearing parents, Gen. 4. 9-16. He brought up a family that neither knew God, nor loved nor worshipped Him. Human-kind divided itself into those that believed God and obeyed Him, and those who did not believe in Him or rebelled against Him. Some commentators think that the 'sons of God' mentioned in Genesis 6 were believers and the 'daughters of men' who married them were unbelievers. Others think the passage refers to fallen angels who married women. If

the interpretation is the first one, i.e. that the passage refers to believers m a r r y i n g unbelievers, we see in these early chapters of the Bible that such a practice was frowned upon.

God eventually destroyed most of these people in the great flood, saving only Noah and seven members of his family. Yet from those eight who were saved came the same great

division, between those who loved God and those who did not. The sinful nature of mankind again rebelled against God, until God scattered them over the face of the earth, confusing their languages, Gen. 11. From the vast majority of those who 'worshipped the creature instead of the creator' we read of a minority who feared God. Job was one such, as was Melchizedek and Abraham and his family, whom God called out of heathendom and promised to make into a great nation. Abraham left Ur and went to live a nomadic life far from the pagan society round about him, Gen. 12. This nomadic lifestyle did not please Lot, Abraham's nephew. Given the choice, he took his family into Sodom where his daughters married pagan men who did not worship God. Such was their disrespect for God and His ways that, when Lot came to warn his daughters of God's imminent judgement upon the city, his daughters died in God's judgement because their husbands thought their father-in-law was mad, Gen. 19. 14.

Abraham and Isaac set an example

No doubt Abraham saw what happened to his relations, Lot's daughters, in Sodom. When, many years later, it was time for his son, Isaac, to marry, Abraham was determined his boy would not marry an unbeliever. He made his servant vow he would not 'take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites', Gen 24. 1-8. The servant went back to Abraham's God-fearing family and brought Isaac a wife, Rebekah. She and Isaac



Believers who have married unbelievers have brought upon themselves huge problems and sorrows and have often been led astray

brought up their boys to fear God and to obey Him. Esau, their eldest, however, rebelled and showed his attitude by marrying unbelieving women. This was 'a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah', Gen. 26. 34, who worried that Jacob might do the same. 'If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?' asked Rebekah, Gen. 27. 46. So she sent him away to her family, saying, 'Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan', Gen 28. 1.

God gives an instruction

Why all this fuss, we might ask? Surely all that is important is for a man or a woman who is lonely to get married? After all, if it is better to marry than to burn with lust, 1 Cors. 7. 9, then any wife or husband, will do. Yet God saw the disastrous influence an unbelieving wife can have on a husband, and vice versa, and so He instructed His believing people accordingly. As they were about to go into the promised land, He told them they would find many nations in the land, but they were not to 'make marriages with them'. Why? 'For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods', Deut. 7. 1-4; Exod. 34. 12-16. Is this possible? There are many examples of this happening, not least of all Solomon who, despite his immense wisdom, loved and married many women, some of whom were unbelievers. And 'when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God', 1 Kings 11. 4.

Believers and unbelievers are fundamentally incompatible

The problem is simply this, 'Can two walk together [unless] they be agreed?' Amos 3.3. A believer should have completely different standards, aims, and interests to an unbeliever. A believer should want to submit every aspect of his/her life to God and to His will; an unbeliever won't. A believer should want to bring up any children he/she may have from the marriage to fear God and honour Him; an unbeliever won't. A believer should want to attend a place of worship every Sunday; an unbeliever won't. An unbeliever may want to drink alcohol regularly, go pubbing or clubbing; a believer shouldn't. How can a marriage last if it has to face the additional stresses and strains of constant disagreement in this fundamentally important aspect of lifestyle? 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' 2 Cors. 6. 14-15.

'Ah! But...' you say. 'Didn't Joseph marry an unbeliever in Egypt?' Gen. 41. 45. 'Didn't Moses marry an Ethiopian woman?' Num. 12. 1. Yes they did, but this was clearly before the law of God was given through Moses, and who is to say that because they did these things, we should? On the other hand, Joseph's wife was the daughter of a pagan priest but she

Believers marrying unbelievers

may have come to believe in the one true God. There is nothing to tell us that Moses' wife, though Ethiopian, was not a believer in the one true God either. The command of God in the Old Testament is clear, that His earthly people, the Jews, were not to marry the pagans round about them. It is equally true in the New Testament, where we read that God's spiritual people, Christians, are instructed, to put it at its simplest and straightest, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' 2 Cors. 6. 14.

Remember, then, that God sees only one division amongst mankind and it is simply this, that there are believers and there are unbelievers, John 3. 36. This simple division can be seen as those that have the Son and those that have not the Son, 1 John 5. 12, those that are in the light and those that are in darkness, those that are in the kingdom of God's dear Son and those that are not. But it is the same two groups. Secondly, God warns us in both Old and New Testaments that believers marrying unbelievers will

lead to compromise. Whenever someone from one group marries someone from the other there will be consequences. Those believers who have married unbelievers have brought upon themselves huge problems and sorrows and have often been led astray because it is easier to bring someone down than to life someone up. Remember Samson and Solomon.

Going out with unbelievers

'Alright,' you say. 'I take your point. But is there anything wrong in going out with an unbeliever? Surely that is acceptable to God provided I do not marry them?' The first question to ask is this, Why go out with them? Surely the purpose of dating/ courting/ going out with someone is to see whether you are compatible or not? And if someone is not a believer, and you are, you are fundamentally incompatible. A man or woman should only date someone who is a potential wife or husband; unbelievers are not potential wives or husbands until they are believers. 'Yes,' you say. 'But that is the whole point. If I go out with an unbeliever, and invite them to the meetings, maybe they will get saved'. Yes. And maybe they will not. In the meantime, you and he/she are getting closer emotionally and physically, and that is a dangerous position in which to be. Say, for instance, that non-Christian boyfriend of yours proposes marriage. Would you say, 'No. I can't marry you because you are not a Christian'. How would you reply, then, if he said to you, 'Then why are we going out together? You're just wasting my time'? What if that non-



Christian girl-friend of yours asks, 'Why don't we live together?' and you reply, 'We can't do that until we are married, but we can't marry until you are a Christian'. Is that fair to her? Are you not just putting pressure on someone to make a profession of faith that may prove to be unreal?

But what if I am already married to an unbeliever?

The teaching of the Bible is clear that a believing man should never separate from his un-believing wife, nor should a believing wife separate from her unbelieving husband merely on the grounds of faith or lack of it in their partners. It is clearly stated, 'If any brother hath a wife that believeth not . . . let him not put her away [divorce her]; and the woman which hath an husband that believeth not. . . let her not leave him', 1 Cors. 7. 12 – 13. Marriage, even one between believers and unbelievers, is sacred to God. It is surely the hope of all believers married to unbelievers that their unbelieving spouses can be influenced by their faith, their example and their godliness. It is also their hope that their children may be influenced by the Word of God in their homes, 1 Cors. 7. 14. Yet this does not lessen the fact that a home where one partner is a believer and the other is not, is a divided home. God can bless it, and save in it. But God's grace should never be taken for granted and should never be used as an excuse to enter into a marriage relationship that is forbidden by God.

Conclusion

There are certain decisions that you



and I have to make which are unique to ourselves and for these there is often no clear guidance for us in the Bible. Where I live, what job I should do, what car I should drive, whether I should marry or not, whom I should go out with, are matters that are different for each Christian. There are certain principles of Christian living, however, upon which God gives clear guidance to all Christians. These apply to every believer regardless of the generation, time or culture. God will not vary these principles for any one of us. If the principle of unequal yoke in marriage is given to all Christians, we have no right to think God will vary that principle for us, and we have no right even to consider disobeying it. Keeping company with unbelievers and getting too close to them will bring compromise. Don't do it. Neither marry, nor go out with, unbelievers. It may cost you everything.

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A man or woman should only date someone who is a potential wife or husband; unbelievers are not potential wives or husbands until they are believers.

My Top Ten Books

Bible:

The Greek/Hebrew Key Word Study Bible

Included under book number 1

1 The Greek/Hebrew Key Word Study Bible *by Spiros Zodhiates*

I have found this Bible to be an excellent language help study Bible. Key words in each verse are keyed to Strong's dictionary in the back of the Bible. Key Hebrew/Greek words are also listed in the back in a useful Lexical Aid section. New Testament Greek verbs are keyed to a Grammatical Aids section as well. There are good introductions to each book of the Bible and while not agreeing with every study note they are generally good and helpful.

2 Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible *by James Strong*

We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. James Strong for this monumental work. Each word in the

English Bible is carefully listed alphabetically and it's Hebrew or Greek counterpart numbered. Then each Hebrew/Greek word is transliterated, briefly defined, and other words used in English to translate that particular word listed at the end. This work is the key to hours of very profitable word studies opening up the beauty of the

original languages to the English reader.

3 Expository Dictionary of Words *by W. E. Vine*

For the student with no knowledge of Greek this volume is indispensable. The newer editions are keyed to Strong's Concordance which can be helpful. Learning the various English words translated from one Greek word or one the other hand various Greek words translated into one English word is valuable in understanding the fullness of both languages thus enhancing our Bible study. This greatly expands and enhances the dictionary in Strong's Concordance.

4 Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

by Harris, Archer, and Waltke

Hebrew is a completely different kind of language than Greek or English. This does for the Old Testament Hebrew what Vine's does for the New Testament. It has an index which is keyed to Strong's numbers and with this the English reader can find his way through the Hebrew alphabet by which this work is arranged. This is the most helpful Old Testament Lexical aid for the non Hebrew reader that I have found.

5 The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands *by Barry J Beitzel*

This Atlas is divided into three sections. There is a physical geography, a historical geography a history of Biblical mapmaking. This last section I have never read because



my interest isn't in mapmaking. The second section is the largest and for me the most interesting. A great deal of commentary is given all of which I do not personally endorse, but a great deal of which I have found to be very helpful. A helpful tool for background study in the Bible

6 The Crises of the Christ

by G. Campbell Morgan

Mr. Morgan divides the life of Christ into 7 crises events showing the beauty of the character of the Lord Jesus. It is devotionally written while thoroughly expository. Its 400 plus pages will point you to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Unfortunately, I'm not sure it is still in print. But if you can find a used copy somewhere it is worth the investment.

7 The Church. A discipleship manual for the body of Christ

by Randal Amos

This is a new book by a well-known and respected brother who has a real passion for the proper functioning of the local church. It is written as a study manual thus making it ideal for small group studies especially for beginners in church truth. As I read it I was greatly encouraged with its practical instructions and doctrinal integrity. Two elders that have recently read it have ordered copies for each family in their fellowship. I pray that this book will have a wide distribution.

8 Harvest Festivals *by H. K. Downie*

This book on the Feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23) is important for two reasons. First, it is more complete than most

books on this subject and its exposition is clear. He is careful to expound the Jewish understanding before jumping to its typical teaching which is very important. Secondly, as a first book a person may read dealing with the typology of the Old Testament it will greatly help in the understanding and interpretation of typology here as well as other passages.

9 The Pilgrim Church

by E. H. Broadbent

This book is a tracing of folks down through the centuries of the church that have sought to meet together simply endeavoring to be a testimony to the truth of scriptures not only in the gospel but in church order as well. This endeavor has put these folks outside the main stream of Christendom. Those who depend on the Word as their only authority, the Spirit as their only guide, and the Lord as their only head have always been in the minority. Be encouraged!

10 Shadow of the Almighty

by Elizabeth Elliott

Maybe the most important event in the spread of the gospel that occurred in the 20th century was the martyrdom of 5 men in the jungles of Ecuador in January of 1956. This is the account of the life of Jim Elliot, one of the five, by his wife. Jim's life of devotion to God and his passion for the gospel is one of the great missionary stories of our time. The famous quote from Jim Elliot's life is "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Fools in Fellowship

The Whisperers

Recognizing, but not being, fools.



BY IAN REES

Meet **Mrs. Gossip**. Of course, when we speak of Mr. Know-it all, Master Cynic or Mrs. Gossip we know that these characteristics are not gender-specific; there are many women who are sarcastic and know it all, just as there are many men who are gossips. But we are identifying a family in our assessment of foolish behaviour.

And we have all seen the Mrs., or Mr., Gossip at work. They are free with their tongues, unprincipled in what they say and to whom they say it, and are quite unconcerned about the results of what they say. Proverbs 18 and verse 8 describes such a person as 'a talebearer'. The same word is translated as 'a whisperer' in chapter 16 and verse 28. Mrs. Gossip is someone who enjoys sharing news about other people, especially if it is bad news. She often begins her conversation with, 'Did you know?' or 'Have you heard about so-and-so?' She will not, of course, spread her news in front of the person about whom she is speaking. Her work is usually done behind someone's back, with a 'nudge nudge', and a low, whispering tone. She is not always malicious in what she says. It is just a thrill for her to be the first to tell people something. 'A talebearer revealeth secrets', Prov. 11. 13, and she is so well known for this that some will say, 'Don't tell so and so or else everyone will know'.

The trouble is we all like to hear gossip. The danger of hearing gossip is as bad as the danger of spreading it. We are twice warned about this in the book of Proverbs, once in chapter 18 and verse 8 and then again in

chapter 26 and verse 22. 'The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost part of the belly'. The word 'wounds' here means 'dainty morsels'. It comes from the verb to 'devour' or 'gobble up'. Listening to gossip, and passing it on, is as pleasurable as eating the most appetizing pudding.

We need to be aware that gossip divides the best of friends, Prov. 16. 28. It is destructive. It causes strife, Prov. 26. 20. Gossip influences our thoughts and opinions of other people without us knowing it, and very few of us will go up to the person about whom people are gossiping to confirm the truth of what is being said. Gossip, therefore, often grows, and, like Chinese whispers, ends up completely different to the truth. If it is said kindly (and some of it is well-intentioned) it can still be inaccurate and harmful. If it is said maliciously, it can destroy a person's reputation, character, testimony and influence.

God hates gossip and gossips. 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people', says God, Lev. 19. 16. He hates 'he that soweth discord among brethren', Prov. 6. 19. Don't be a gossip, and don't listen to gossip. Turn away from it. If news has nothing to do with you, don't pass it on. Talk to the Lord about what you hear about others, and not to anyone else. 'Speak not evil, one of another'. Gossips are fools. Don't be one.

