

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 The Need for Separation

I was 19 yrs old in college working at the Sheraton Hotel in Newport Beach.

A) I was asked to play on the Hotel's softball team for a tournament

B) First Practice – going good, I was playing short stop, made some good plays

1) captain said – lets take a break – came in we all sat down – broke open some cokes

C) He then proceeded to light up a joint – took a hit and started to pass it around. – One by one guys were taking hits

1) I was visibly uncomfortable – What do I do – stomp it out and start preaching about the **Background of drugs – Pharmakia – witchcraft**

D) I wanted to reach these guys – I wanted to be a witness – but was that the way?

D) It came to me – I did nothing – passed it on! - felt so awkward!

1) Do I quit – keep playing – Lord what am I supposed to do. **Sure you have been in similiar**

That wouldn't be the first time that I experienced a situation like that of trying to figure out – how to navigate living for Jesus in a world that was so contrary to His heart and ways.

Well Corinth was also such a Place – Corinth was a large city - 700,000 people { Pop of N. County

A) The city was also a wealthy city - **It was called the VANITY FAIR Of the Roman Empire !**

B) And Because Corinth was a Resort type of city it attracted those seeking pleasure from all over the region. **But Corinth was a wicked city !**

C) It was a Port city which made Corinth a convenient & popular stopping place for sailors - looking to get drunk & indulge in one night stands

1) **Slogan what happens in Corinth stays in Corinth!**

The city of Corinth was also filled w/ shrines & pagan temples the most popular was the Temple of Aphrodite " Goddess of love"

A) Employed 1000 temple prostitutes who went out every night soliciting business in the name of worship

B) In Fact in Rome at the time they had a saying to describe those who lives were characterized by living Loose / immorality & drunkenness

1) They said you are behaving like a Corinthian.

So it was to these believers living in that type of environment that Paul Wrote these words – v.14-7:1

A) Now this is probably the most familiar & most often quoted portions of Scripture found in 2 Corinthians. **"Do not be bound together, or unequally yoked with unbelievers."**

B) Problem w/ many of the Christians in Corinth is they were in one way or another still attached to the World –

1) Reputation for being a Carnal Church

C) **So this is a call to Separation:**

So What does it mean to be Unequally Yoked ? What does it mean to come out from among them and be separate?

A) 1st What it doesn't mean!

B) NOT ISOLATION: Isolate ourselves from Society – Christian community – Only Christian friends, shop Christian owned places etc

C) Mark 16:15 Great Commission: Go into all the world preach the gospel to every creature, right? So we're not supposed to go out of the world.

D) Matthew 5 Jesus said we are Salt and Light – Light has to be seen – can't be isolated – Salt has to be applied – no good in the shaker

E) Remember Jesus also said: I send you out as lambs among wolves

1) It is clear that the Lord wants us in the world

F) If God wanted us isolated from unbelievers, He would have saved us and instantly took us to heaven.

Remember the context here is about – Paul pleading with men to be reconciled to God.

A) Urging men that today is the day of Salvation. We are meant to be in the world

B) So He is not talking Isolation -

So what is Paul talking about here: Come out – Don't be unequally Yoked? – What is a Yoke?

A) A yoke is a wooden frame or bar with loops at either end, fitted around the necks of two animals which tied them together and forced them to function as one.

B) Yokes have three characteristics by which we can always identify them

1st it ties two animals into a close relationship with each other with a common goal and master

C) Not a superficial relationship

The 2nd is that a yoke is not easily broken. It is a kind of permanent relationship.

A) This is why the church has always taken this passage to refer to marriage, especially. Marriage is that kind of a yoke.

B) It is more than a superficial relationship and it is a relationship that cannot be easily broken.

1) Yoked in Close relationship Dating/ friendship/ or even Business partnership

Now the 3rd mark of a yoke is that it constrains someone; it does not permit independent action.

A) The two animals had to work as one! Under the control of one master!

B) So to not be yoked together with an unbeliever would mean/ not put ourselves in a close relationship

1) or a permanent relationship that is not easily broken

2) Or a relationship that would restrict us or constrain us – in our actions

C) So this would definitely apply to a close friendship
Dating / marriage/ even a business partnership.

But if God wants us to reach unbelievers – why wouldn't He want us to get close to them in that way? 3 reasons

Why we should not yoke ourselves to unbelievers? #1 #1 It is unfitting

A) Paul describes in these verses two opposing worlds, two opposing realms or spheres or kingdoms or dimensions of life.

B) One is described and characterized by righteousness, light, Christ, believers and the presence of God.

1) The other is characterized, or described as lawless, dark, satanic, occupied by unbelievers and the presence of idols.

C) Two societies, two realms, two spheres utterly different, utterly distinct, and completely incompatible.

D) In fact Paul is borrowing an idea here from Deut. 22:10 where the Lord instructed Israel not to Yoke and OX & Donkey together

1) Two different types of animals – don't go together – Conflicts it doesn't fit

Interesting descriptions: 5 Rhetorical questions

What **fellowship** has righteousness with lawlessness? what **communion** has light with darkness?

what **accord** has Christ with Belial?

what **part** has a believer with an unbeliever?

Answer is none!

A) Righteousness has no fellowship with Lawlessness or wickedness

B) Fellowship: Share in common – answer is they don't share anything in common – polar opposites

1) Righteousness is about keeping moral standards – Lawlessness is breaking them

Light has no communion with darkness

A) Communion = partnership – an intercourse or a blending - again – there isn't one.

B) Light gets turned on darkness flees

Jesus has no accord with Belial – another name for the devil

A) Accord = Harmony – like in music – Harmony is the perfect blending

B) There is no harmony – always off key –

A believer has no part with an unbeliever!

A) Part = portion – sharing same life and goals

B) But my boyfriend /business pal ...is a nice guy – not a Satan worshipper –

C) Our old Master - Ephesians 2:1-3

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

C) We were yoked to the devil and his mindset

1) Lived to please the flesh – fulfill it's lust

Remember I said: Yoke puts two animals together under the Control of one master

A) In Christ we voluntarily Yoke ourselves to Him - -not forced. Invitation

Matthew 11:28-29

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

B) **Yoke is easy = Well fitting** God has a general plan for each of us – Well fitting We were created to bring God pleasure

1) Live in relationship with Him

Yoking a Believer w/ an unbeliever isn't going to fit

A) The Believers goal & priority is going to be to Honor the Lord in all things / to seek the Lord / to be led by the Lord

B) The Unbeliever is not going to share that same heart – So there is Potential for Conflict & struggle

C) Someone is going to have to Compromise!

So first of all Paul says Don't be unequally Yoked because it doesn't fit – Not fitting – different natures / Different goals –

#2 It is unholy: What agreement does the temple of God have with idols?

A) **Agreement is Union – connection – there is none – no union – there is no connection**

They are opposites

B) This is really at the heart of the issue that Paul is addressing here with these Corinthians

1) We learn in 1 Corinthians 10 that some in the Church were still participating in pagan idolatry.

C) Which often also involved – engaging in sexual immorality with temple Prostitutes

Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians Ch. 6 – Engage in sexual immorality with a Prostitute you are becoming one with her – defiling your temple.

A) Sex is not just a Physical thing – it is Spiritual thing.

So there were those in the church in Corinth that were still participating in these pagan practices and idolatry – COME OUT.....

A) And there were others who were trying to bring some of these pagan practices into the Church – creating sort of a **religious popouri**

B) A little bit of everything – **Don't be unequally yoked**

C) **Israel's history** - The Glory of God dwelt in the temple of God – the Kabod – there was a weightiness – a heaviness

D) But everytime a king or ruler brought idols or pagan practices into the temple or the worship of Israel it became – Ichabod – the glory of God departed

Paul in 1 Cor 10 exhorts them to flee idolatry!

A) Now we don't have idols like they did in Paul's day – not of stone or wood

B) Maybe Metal – Cars – Fiberglass – Boats

1) **ICONS** – PEOPLE WORSHIP {Shows / Mags

C) But there is an idolatry that is prevalent in our culture- cancer in America today

1) Part of the American dream {**Yoked to a mentality**

THE WORSHIP OF SELF! – All about me!

A) Even Christians get sucked into this mentality

B) We think God is more concerned about me being **happy – than being Holy** {Lots of little compromises

1) So Christians cheat on their taxes

2) Doesn't matter if we tithe

C) Pleasing self takes precedence over everything including God's word and God's standard

D) So People **rationalize all kinds of sin** – because it makes them happy –

1) They get divorced without any Biblical grounds or precedent

All because – they have bought into the lie that their personal happiness is the main objective!

A) Romans 12 – Paul exhorts us to put self on the Altar – Living sacrifice

B) Not to be conformed to the mindset of this world

Live for self

1) But to be transformed by the renewing of our minds - Minds renewed by the word.

C) To be Unequally Yoked to the worlds mindset

#1 Unfitting #2 Unholy - #3 Unprofitable V.17-18

Therefore "Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."
18 I will be a Father to you,

And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty."

To not to be separate is so foolish because what you're doing is cutting yourself off from the blessings of an intimate relationship with God.

A) Here is God your Father who wants to embrace you, *receive* literally means to receive with favor.

B) Separation from God's point of view is always in the Positive:

1) God is not wanting to deprive us of something

Opposite: he is wanting to bless us.

C) Satan's lie from the very beginning has always been that God is holding out on you –

1) The world has something you need and God is trying to keep us from that when He asks for separation

E) But from God's perspective it is always about relationship and our being close to him

1) Separation is not just about being *contrary* to the world – more about being *consecrated* to God

2) Not separation *from* but more Separation *unto*

I have done 100's of marriage ceremonies – there always comes that point in the vows – Forsaking all others and keep yourself unto __as long as you both..

A) In the 100's of ceremonies I have done – I have never had a groom – pause or hesitate at that line.

B) It is not even a thought - - He wouldn't have it any other way – She is so great – there is no one else I want to be with

1) It is not just a departure it is an Arrival – Arriving at a new relationship – a new intimacy

C) That is God's heart toward us when He says – Separate yourself

1) Exclusive relationship w/ you – not share

D) It is only when we don't realize Who God is and what His kingdom is about that we see this as a negative {Separate from instead of Separate Unto

It is then that the goal becomes – How far can I go and still be saved –

A) Have much of the world can I enjoy and still go to heaven

B) We miss out on the relationship with God as the loving Father He desires to be in our lives.

C) Think of it this way.

: If I wanted to take my family out to dinner, but my kids were all muddy from playing outside, I'd say, "I want to take you out to dinner. Go wash up."

D) Now, if they responded by saying, "We don't want to wash. We like this mud," they'd still be my children,

1) but I couldn't take them out for dinner.

So, too, God says to us, "I will be a Father to you, taking you great places, doing wonderful things for you

A)if you're separate and clean.

B)If you're not separate, you're still My child, but I can't do for you what I would have done **in and with and through** you had you separated yourself from the world."

C)Word from the Lord for some of you today:

Let God be the Father He wants to be to you and your family by separating yourself from unclean partnerships and relationships, activities and priorities.

2 Cor 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved,

A)Hear the endearment of that word. He is not speaking roughly, harshly.

B)This is a loving exhortation.] **let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

RSV Make holiness perfect or complete.

Stedman "You are holy in God's eyes – Make holiness perfect or complete = to make it visible."

A)Note Who is this up to? Cleanse yourself

B)This is repentance: Change of mind – change of direction – change of action

C)Removing those areas of compromise!

1)Unfitting / unholy / Unprofitable.

So lets put this all together – We are to be in the world – not isolated – but not of the world

A)Doesn't fit – Not holy – Doesn't profit

B)To reach the world – we need to be:

Pure: The world needs to see a difference!

A)Living for something other than pleasing self.

B)If we are just like them no attraction.

Purity not Piety: Neg Better than you religiosity

1 Corinthians 5

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since **then you would need to go out of the world.** 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.

Not unbeliever – we need to eat with them.

A)Jesus ate with them – Mark 2 Calls Matthew tax collector – Party invites all his friends

B)Meet Jesus – Jesus is there – He is the focus

1) Friend of sinners and tax collectors

C) Pure: Not sinning – but not Pious like Pharisees

D) Sheraton Lakers and a Beer – Ice tea

Relational with a Purpose.

Our purpose is not to fit in – but to reach out

Purpose: Enter into their world

1 Corinthians 9

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 NLT

19 Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. 20 When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. 21 When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

22 When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find **common ground** with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. 23 I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

Paul said: I become all things to all men – that I might win some. Find Common ground.

A) Husband isn't saved – Charger fan – become a Charger fan { One morning game.

B) Common ground – unless Raider fan

C) Neighbor Vista High – go watch play.

D) Paul sought to find common ground – with those in his sphere of influence.

1) Food good common ground – Barbecue

2) Kids – Music -