

I Corinthians 7:14-16 **Mixed Marriages**

Introduction:

When the gospel came to the pagan world, many from all walks of life became Christians. When the gospel came to the home, it wasn't always so clear cut. Sometimes the husband became a believer and the wife did not or the wife became a believer and the husband did not. This is called mixed marriage. There were more problems than this, because polygamy was popular, when a husband became a Christian through the gospel ministry he had multiple wives. We know in the Old Testament times, polygamy was tolerated but this was not the way it was in the beginning. (Mark 10:2-12).

Paul's specific advice relative to Pastor's qualifications is that they must be a man of one wife. Men converted in a pagan world may have had more than one wife but they cannot be a pastor or overseer. Some have taken this to mean pastor or elders cannot remarry, which is false. In fact the Bible has much to say about legitimate remarriage.

I. A Christian Married To An Unbeliever But Willing To Live With the believer – v. 12-14

A. Paul's Revelation versus Jesus' words – v.12 cf. v.10

1. Paul's words are the words of the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ – Gal. 1:1 I Thess. 2:13
2. Paul has the Spirit – 7:40

B. Sanctified – v.14

1. General blessing extends to the whole household – Gen. 17:7
2. Clean children – v.14b.
3. Covenant language – “Unclean” and “holy”

C. Holy by association

1. Timothy's influence by his Grandmother and mother – II Tim. 1:5
2. Children influence by parents – Eph. 6:1 “children obey in the Lord your parents” (Col. 3:20)

D. Influence without the Word – Turn To: I Pet. 3:1-6

II. A Christian Married To An Unbeliever But Unwilling To Live With A Believer – v. 15-16

A. A different case – “leaves” is the Gk. *chronizo*, “separated by divorce”

B. Willful Desertion

1. The deserted party is free to remarry – v.15
2. Christians are not called to enslavement – v.15 b.
3. Desertion is compared to death – Turn To: Romans 7:2-3

C. Called to Peace:

1. Paul's salutations – Rome. 1:7
2. Paul states the unbeliever does not know the way of peace – Rom. 3:17
3. Paul tells the Christian we have been justified by faith, therefore we have peace with God – Rom. 5:1
4. Paul says the Christian mind is set on the Spirit which is life and peace – Rom. 8:6
5. Paul says our relationship with the world should “if possible be at peace with all men” Rom. 12:18
6. Paul describes the Kingdom of God as not war-like, nor is it “food and drink” but “righteousness and peace in the Holy Spirit” Rom. 14:17
7. Paul tells us that ultimately ‘the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet’ Rom. 16:20
8. Finally where the Christian goes his feet are covered with the “gospel of peace”

D. Not peace at any cost:

1. God does not want a believer to remain in bondage after the unbeliever has broken the marriage covenant. (devastation, betrayal and forsaken) II Cor. 5:21
2. A glimmer of hope but no guarantee – v.16 (Leon Morris)

Conclusion:

1. *Mixed marriages come about when at first both parties are unbelievers but one member becomes a Christian and the other does not. Paul's encouragement here is to remain married because there is a sanctifying influence.*
2. *The Sanctifying influence brings blessing to both the unsaved husband or wife and the children by God's abiding covenant of grace.*

3. *The Christian wife or husband is not obligated to remain married to a deserted spouse.*
4. *The Christian life is one of peace and not enslavement, therefore the Christian partner is at liberty to remarry in the Lord unless the deserted spouse reconciles to the faithful partner.*

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