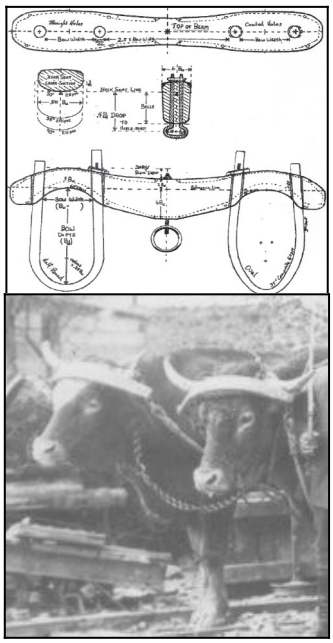
Don’t Be Unequally Yoked!

2 Corinthians 6:14-18
6/5/2011



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Separation Applied:

Don't Be Unequally Yoked!

2 Corinthians 6:14-18
1/2/08

Introduction:

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is filled with statements involving "separation."

For example:

--God separated light from darkness
--God separated dry land from sea
--God separated Abraham from the Chaldeans
--God separated Jacob from Esau
--God separated Israel from Egypt
--God separated the clean from the unclean (animals/food/people, etc.)

I. The Command for Separation (v.14a)



A **bow yoke** is a shaped wooden crosspiece bound to the necks of a pair of oxen, or occasionally horses. It is held on the animals' necks by an oxbow, usually U-shaped, that also transmits force from the animals' shoulders, hence the name bow yoke. A swivel beneath the centre of the yoke, between the animals, attaches the pole of the vehicle (when the animals steer the vehicle) or chains that are used to drag the load.



A **head yoke** is a yoke which fits onto the head of the oxen and has carved out sections which the horns fit into. The yoke is then strapped to the head of the oxen with yoke straps and ox pads for cushioning on the oxen's foreheads. The yoke is held on in that manner, it does not rest on their necks. A tug pole is held to the bottom of the yoke using yoke irons and chains. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoke)

The command to not be "**unequally yoked together with unbelievers"** is vitally connected with the immediate preceding and following context.

In verses 11 – 13 and in 7:2, Paul appeals to the Corinthians to open their hearts to him and to his message and to receive him (7:2), but he interjects a warning against unequal yokes, knowing that those you closely associate with will affect your reception of god's man and god's message.

"Evil communications" do in fact "corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33).

And Solomon spoke with firsthand knowledge when he wrote:

Proverbs 13:20
He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

To be "unequally yoked" means to be unevenly tied together or to be mis-mated. The imagery comes from the Law, where God commands Israel through Moses, saying: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass (donkey) together" (Dt. 22:10).

II. The <u>Reasons</u> for Separation (v.14b-16)

v. 14

Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions, all expecting the implicit answer "none" to show how foolish it is for believers to yoke up with unbelievers.

"**Be ye not" -** "no not become"

The present imperative with the negative is used either tos top an action or in progress or to prohibit a habitual action" (Rogers, p. 405).

"Fellowship" – *metoche* – to share in partnership or participation with

"Righteousness" - *dikaiosune* – with unrighteousness (*anomia*) – righteousness and lawlessness do not go together.

"Communion" – *koinonia* = fellowship; to have in common or together.

"Light with darkness" - children of God are associated with "light," having come to Christ who is Light and having received spiritual illumination.

Ephesians 5:8
For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

2 Corinthians 4:6
For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9
But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

v. 15

"Concord" – *sumphonesis* – from which we get the word "symphony"; it refers to harmony or agreement together.

"Belial" - a Hebrew word meaning "worthless one." It is used to describe Satan, the good for nothing, worthless one.

There is absolutely no harmony between Christ and Satan. As Jesus Himself said, ". . . the prince of this world cometh, and <u>hath nothing in me</u>" (Jn. 14:30).

Also implied here is that some people belong to Christ (and therefore have characteristics that are Christ-like), and others belong to Satan (and are like him – Jn. 8:44).

Satan's methods, goals, music, etc., are nothing like Christ's.

What **"Part"** does the believer share with the unbeliever?

--There is no portion with Christ.
--There is no portion in heaven
--There is no portion in the inheritance
--There is no portion of spiritual blessings

v. 16

"Agreement" - Used in the *papyri* of a decision arrived at by a group (BAGD, cited by Rogers, p. 405).

What united agreement is there between God's temple (which stood until 70 AD) and idols? None. Since the temple is no more and was unavailable to those at Corinth anyway, Paul reminds them that their bodies are God's temple.

III. The Benefits of Separation (v.17-18)

v. 17

In reference to Israel's call out of Babylon and back to her land, Isaiah said:

Isaiah 52:11
Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

God's call is not, "Stay in," but "come out." As in –

Revelation 18:4
And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

"Touch not the unclean thing" - Do not have any contact with that which is impure.

What would you consider impure? . . . . . God says have no contact with it.

"Receive" – *eisdechomai* – to receive with favor (Plummer, cited by Rogers, p. 406).

Such separation will not leave you all alone in this world. God promises, **"I will receive you."**

Salvation does involve separation from lies to truth; from self-righteousness to God's righteousness; from darkness to light; from death to life.

(Repentance is in view here.)

God is a father to those who have repented from uncleanness and have been willing to separate from anything that was keeping them from coming to Christ.

Separation Applied:

Separation is holiness applied! (being set apart) "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Holiness and Separation

God's holiness is the foundation (basis) for the doctrine of biblical separation. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Is.6:3; I Pet.1:16)

1) Moral Separation =Separating from practices which violate God's Holy Word (Rom.12:2; I Thess.5:22).

2) Personal Separation =Separating from people who violate God's Holy Word (Titus 3:10; II Th.3:6; I Cor.5:11)

3) Ecclesiastical Separation =Separating from churches which violate God's Holy Word (I Cor.3:17; II Cor.6:14-18).

It is important to note that separation is not merely a negative setting apart from sin, but it is positively a setting apart for God.

Illustration: Jehoshaphat's Compromise –
2 Chronicles 18:1-3
Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab. And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead. And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war.

2 Chronicles 19:2
And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

2 Chronicles 20:35
And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly:

1 Corinthians 10:21
Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

Psalms 1:1
Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

THE BLESSED MAN IS SEPARATED FROM THE WICKED (Psalm 1:1)
(He is a man of distinction)

NOTE: The process downward goes from bad to worse in one's choice of acquaintances (company). From ungodly to the outright verbally blasphemous scornful.

NOTE: The progression down in the activities (walk . . . stand . . . sit).

The verbs describe successive steps deeper and deeper into corruption.
1) You first accept the transgressor's principles;
2) Then you persist in the notorious sinner's practices;
3) Then you deliberately associate with those who mock the truth.

1. He doesn't follow what they say (v. 1a)
   (Their advice is no good)
   "Ungodly" = those out of bounds, transgressors. Those guilty of overstepping God's boundaries.
   We don't go to the world for spiritual, moral, family-related, etc., advice!
   We should seek counsel from: 1) church 2) pastor 3) Bible 4) Christian friends.
   It may not always be what you want to hear, but it will always be right!

2. He isn't found where they go (v. 1b)
   (Their alley/avenue is no good)

3. He doesn't fellowship in what they do (v. 1c)
   (Their assembly is no good)

   "Sitteth" = points to a permanence and settled enjoyment.
   The scorner like a dog barks at everything. He is sarcastic. He mocks truth. Makes fun of righteousness. He is an agnostic - he questions truth.
   Watch out for people with a rotten attitude - it will rub off!

God is concerned that we not be <u>contaminated</u> with the world (I Jn. 2:15-17)

1 Corinthians 5:9-11
I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

"Not to company" - lit. not to mix together with. Not to closely associate with; not to intimately fellowship with.
This would mean not having <u>close</u> friendships with sexually immoral people.
V. 10
"Yet not altogether" - We are not to break off all contact with the fornicators of the world.
To do this would necessitate our leaving the world entirely. Those in the working world rub shoulders with fornicators all week.

The city of Corinth was <u>filled</u> with fornicators (Wine, women, and wealth was what the average man of Corinth lived for. To worship, for a male citizen of Corinth, usually meant going to the Temple of Aphrodite and having sexual relations with one of the 1,000 prostitutes who served Satan there. The city had such a bad reputation that the term *"Korinthiazoma"* meant to "practice sexual immorality." Corinth's reputation was such that prostitutes in other cities began to be called "Corinthian girls" (Life Applic. Bible note, p. 2,088).

"Covetous" = greedy
"Extortioners" = robbers, swindlers
"Idolaters" = object worshippers

V. 11

"Any man" - none excluded; no matter how high and mighty they are
"Called a brother" - We should expect more from believers than we expect from the world.
If someone claims to be a Christian, then they should be expected to live like it.

"No, not to eat" - No breakfast, lunch, or dinner with him.
"Supping" meant "fellowship" (cp. Rev. 3:20).
To a Jew, having someone over for dinner meant your guest was on kosher terms with you (EX: Acts 10:28; Gal. 2:12-13).

The Bible teaches separation from "unequal yokes"
(READ: II Cor. 6:14-17) -
1) in marriage (I Cor. 7:3a - "in the Lord")
2) in business
3) in church relationships with other churches that don't hold the same doctrine.

NOTE: Separation is always negative and positive. Separation <u>from</u> evil counsel <u>to</u> God's counsel (v. 2)

God's People must not intermarry with unbelievers

As far back as the Mosaic Law, God forbade His people from intermarrying with ungodly pagans

This is first illustrated by the "Sons of God" seeing "fair" (good looking) women and taking them for wives.

(Genesis 6:1-2 - And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.)

"Sons of God" describes people identified with God.

"Daughters of men" – describes people identified with men (mere human flesh, nothing spiritual about them)

"Daughters of men" – had no spiritual life in them; that is why they are identified with men and not God. They were lost, worldly, corrupt seed, yet very attractive to the eye.

The "Sons of God" were attracted by what they "<u>saw</u>." (Note regarding the view that the "sons of God" refers to demons: Demons do not care what a person looks like, but people do. Men are attracted to beauty in women. These sons of God saw the external beauty (KJV – "fair" – good looking) of the ungodly women and fell into Satan's trap.)

By inter-marrying with the pagans, they would become corrupted and their offspring (which God wanted to be a "holy seed" – Ezra 9:2; cp. Mal. 2:15) would also be reared with an ungodly influence in the home. Such intermarriage would speed up the rate at which society and the world would become corrupt and ripe for judgment.

In the Law of Moses, God gave this warning against intermarriage with those outside of Israel:

(Deut. 7:3-4 - Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.)

Intermarriage with foreigners led to the corruption of Israel after they entered Canaan land

(Jud. 3:5-6 - And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:
And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.)

Solomon's intermarriage with foreign wives led to his ruin

(Neh. 13:25b-26 - saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.)

In Ezra's day, the same intermarriage occurred

(Ez. 9:2 - For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this tres-pass.)

Unequal yokes (cp. Deut. 22:10) between a saved person and an unsaved are a direct violation of God's Word!

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

Unequal yokes make for bad marriages because . . .

1) The couple does not share a common relationship with God (He should be the center of every Christian marriage)

2) The couple has a different world view, different standards of ethics and morals

3) The couple is destined for problems due to different goals, different motives and methodologies, different basic understandings regarding the home. Such as:
   (1) Roles and responsibilities
   (2) Convictions regarding the permanence of marriage
   (3) Love and submission
   (4) Child rearing and discipline

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:39 that a widowed woman was free ("at liberty") "to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (the phrase "only in the Lord" means only one who is "in Christ" – i.e. a Christian).