



CHAPTER 3

Christ in the Center of the Home - And Being Equally Yoked

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It's Your CHOICE – Christ in the Center of the Home – and Being Equally Yoked

CHRIST IN THE CENTER OF THE HOME – AND BEING EQUALLY YOKED

Because God's principles are true, they are true for both the believer and the unbeliever. In fact, God's principles are true even if one chooses to reject or disbelieve them. Just as the sun falls upon the Christians and non-Christians alike, so truth is true and there is benefit in following God's way because it is the RIGHT way. However, many of the principles I discuss in this book can be applied only if the husband and wife are both true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been born again (Psalm 14:2; Isaiah 64:7; Habakkuk 1:13; John 1:8, 12, 3:16, 8:24, 51, 10:9-13, 16:9; Romans 3:23; 5:1, 11, 6:23; 8:1, 8, 10:13; I Corinthians 15:21-22; II Corinthians 5:17, 6:2; Ephesians 1:13, 2:12-13; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:13-14; I Thessalonians 5:9; II Thessalonians 19; I Timothy 1:12, 16, 2:3-5; II Peter 3:9; I John 4:13, 17, 5:12-13).

In order for a marriage to be at its fullest potential and to be truly God-honoring, the husband and wife must be equally yoked (I Corinthians 7:39; II Corinthians 6:14). Therefore the Christian man must seek a Christian wife. The Christian woman must seek a Christian husband. However, it is still not enough for both the husband and wife to be Christians. Picture in your mind two oxen in a yoke. One oxen is deliberate in pushing forward and making progress and the other has no desire to stay in step with the first oxen and has no interest in where the first oxen is going. In that case there are two oxen in the yoke, but they are most certainly not "equally" yoked. Furthermore they cannot go in a unified direction or at a unified rate of progress. I suggest that to truly be equally yoked in a Christian marriage, the Christian husband and the Christian wife must both love the Lord with all of their heart, mind, soul and strength (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30), and must plow in step with each other.

Even if a spouse is a true believer, if he or she is not pursuing Christian growth through daily Bible study and prayer and is not striving to serve and please the Lord through obedience, then it is safe to say that he or she will be spiritually dull and will not be receiving the Holy Spirit's teaching and guidance through the illumination of the Word of God and will be insensitive to the leading of the Lord, and will not have a passion to please God.

This plays out in very practical ways in the marriage relationship. For example, a woman will not understand or agree with the husband being the head of the home, the leader in the home, the priest in the home or the protector and defender in the home unless she is a Christian AND she is walking with and growing in the Lord. It is similarly true that unless the man is a Christian AND walking with and growing in the Lord, the man will not believe or practice God's principles for the Christian husband, e.g. treating and considering his wife as a joint heir in Christ, loving his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave His life for her, loving his wife as he loves his own body, etc. If both the husband and wife have the goal to please the Lord (II Corinthians 5:9; John 8:29; Colossians 1:10-12), then they have the capacity to understand God's principles for marriage and to gladly obey God in their marriage. That in turn will allow the TRUTH to bring its benefits and blessings in the form of a happy and God-honoring marriage.

Christ must be the ultimate head and the center of the marriage. When the husband and wife believe the Bible and consider it to be perfect truth and authoritative, they will not second guess or challenge Biblical truth, and here are the wonderful results. If God said it, they believe it,

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they obey it, and they base their lives upon it. When God says that Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of every woman (I Corinthians 11:3) that is accepted as true, and the husband and wife have the freedom to work to obey such truth and to put it into practice in their marriage. When we are admonished that Jesus Christ should have first place in everything (Colossians 1:18b) neither the husband nor the wife engages in any kind of turf war, but both bow down and worship their Savior who consecrated for them as believers a new and living way. The couple draws near to God together (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Picture a triangle with the Lord at the top and the husband and wife at the other two lower corners. This is a visual picture of the reality that as the husband and the wife each are drawing closer to God (moving up in the lines of that triangle), they are drawing necessarily closer to each other. Note that this is true only if they are both progressing closer to the Lord. This picture is so true. The closer you and your spouse get to the Lord, the closer you are to each other spiritually and relationally.

If you are serious about keeping Christ at the center of your marriage, then you need to establish Christ centered goals. As my life goals have become more simple through the years, I have become increasingly happy, joyful and peaceful in my marriage and in my inner being. My life goal is taken from Acts 20:24, “However, I consider my life as nothing to me if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me –the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.” Think about that. It is a HUGE goal to enter heaven having reached that goal. (As an aside, I like to say “when I go to heaven” instead of “when I die” and “between now and heaven” instead of “for the rest of my life.” It is a great message, and it reflects the truth that the Christian HAS eternal life and will never die [John 3:16, 18, 36; I John 5:12-13]). If you are looking for a beautiful life goal of a great man, consider what the Apostle Paul stated in II Corinthians 5:9, “So we make if our **goal to please Him**, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

For the husband to be the leader of the home and the head of his wife, it is vital that the husband be diligent in his daily Bible study and praying. The husband does not have intelligence or natural abilities that are superior to his wife’s. The husband has the duty nonetheless to lead. Therefore he **must** draw upon the Lord to walk as he ought to walk and to lead as he ought to lead. Additionally, the husband must **demonstrate** that he is filling the role as priest of the home and head of the household by setting the example in his own commitment to Bible study and systematic, disciplined prayer.

Husbands, never forget that you must be a spiritual man. You must diligently work at being the spiritual leader not only in word, but in your own real day-to-day life.

Do you want to strive for something really big? Do you want to be a success in your marriage? Strive to know God and obey Him and to walk ever closer with Him. Strive to demonstrate the Lord in your life. Strive to aggressively tell others about a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Strive to be an effective and godly husband or wife according to Scripture. Strive to be an effective and godly parent according to Scripture.

I became a Christina during my last semester of law school on January 19, 1975. I was one of those “impossible cases.” Yet the Lord drew me to Himself and provided the way for me to be

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saved. Although I had been a rascal, my precious Pamela had always been a mature, sweet, considerate, nice, tender, sensitive, and good person. Pam liked very much the changes in my lifestyle and attitudes after I received the Lord. At first she thought that I just had a new toy. Then as the changes continued and accelerated she knew that there was something real. On October 31, 1976 my dear wife received Christ herself and we were finally united in Christ.

Pam and I experienced “unequally yoked” struggles and tensions when we were not both Christians during that 21-month period. I remember well the day my Pamela looked me in the eye and sternly asked me the question, “Do you love God more or do you love me more?” That was tense. Another example was our disunity about giving. We were so very poor, and I was giving money to the Lord and that was interpreted by my Pam as a direct attack on her and our young Nikki by taking money out of our family’s mouths and giving it to the Lord.

When Pam and I were both unbelievers, we had a pretty good marriage as the world would see it. During the time when I was a Christian and Pam was not yet a believer, we continued to have a pretty good marriage, but we had those disconnections. After we were united in Christ, our relationship gained a miraculous life that was previously unattainable. When there is a truly Christian marriage that is centered in Christ and is guided by the Lord Himself and the principles of His Word, there is the potential of a relationship with immeasurable joy, satisfaction and fulfillment.

Let me summarize this chapter. Be equally yoked in faith - with both the husband and the wife being true believers in Jesus Christ. Be equally yoked in your Christian living by both the husband and the wife walking with the Lord and striving to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When the husband and the wife are equally yoked in both of these ways, there is the boundless blessing of the involvement and participation by the God of the universe in the marriage relationship, and the couple has the treasure of the very knowledge, wisdom and Word of God as their guides for marriage. The closer the husband and the wife come to the Lord, the closer they will be to each other. The more the husband and the wife love the Lord, the more they will love each other. It is your **CHOICE**.