

## **Christians Should Not Enter Into Mixed Marriages**

"What portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" In a marriage, what is the measure of agreement? What is a marriage like if the two cannot bend the knee in faith to the same God? Can full happiness be attained if God cannot be thanked, in concert? Can solid comfort come in trial if there is no common ground for prayer? Can death be faced with victory if life's ultimate destination is not the same for man and wife?

Any Christian contemplating matrimony with an unbeliever has to come up with a significant answer to these questions, and the difficulty is that the answer has never been given.

Partners in an unequal union have tried hard for answers.

"We agree to disagree."

"We go our own way, to our own church, or to no church."

"We do not discuss religion."

"We respect each viciations."

"My husband does not object if I go to church and take my children there." But these are not answers. They are only accommodations to a situation that is something less than ideal.

The point is not that there are some marriages in which the partners share the same faith and yet experience a distinctly unsuccessful marriage. Identity in religion, does not in itself insure a happy marriage. The point is that disparity in religion is an almost impossible barrier to complete happiness in marriage. And, more specifically, when one is a Christian and the other is not, the whole atmosphere is stunted for a really joyous marriage relationship. The Solution of difficulties in marriage -- and all marriages have some difficulties -- cannot be found outside of Christ.

There is, first of all, the relationship itself. Marriage is a bond. The two are made one. Two lives share their joys and sorrows. Christianity makes one happy in God's grace and gives stability when storms blow hard on life. When only one is a Christian, joy cannot be shared. Trials cannot be carried in the same strength.

Then there are the children. They are forced into a choice between parents. Children in a mixed marriage cannot and will not accept both lives. They will either reject Christianity, or they will accept it, but in so doing they will be forced to decide against one of the parents. The most important factor in child training will be weakened at best, and destroyed

at worst. It has happened before, It is happening today. It will happen in the future.

Does love conquer all? No, not the kind of love that is talked about so frequently today -- the synthetic, counterfeit, Hollywood type of love that some young people think will conquer all. This kind of love will not cover up a real problem.

Think twice before bringing such a union to pass. And if this seems to be a cliché, then make it this, "Think three times, four, five -- yes, keep thinking until such a union is pushed out of your mind."

Complete happiness is an impossibility in a mixed marriage. And what young couple is ready to settle for something less?

--Arthur W. Hoogstrate