

Review (43): *It's a Wonderful Life*: Definition of “Unequally Yoked”; Solutions for Those Involved in a Mixed Marriage, 1 Cor 7:10-11

Vine, W. E. “An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.” In *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984; p. 52:

ἄλλος / *allos* / expresses a numerical difference and denotes another of the same sort; ἕτερος / *heteros* / expresses a qualitative difference and denotes another of a different sort. Christ promised in John 14:16 to send “another Comforter” (*allos*, like Himself, not *heteros*). Paul speaks of a false Gospel compared with the true Gospel in:

Galatians 1:6 - I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different [ἕτερος / *heteros* /] Gospel.

v 7 - which is really not another [ἄλλος / *allos* /]

The distinction comes out in the compounds of *heteros*: In 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul refers to ἑτερόγλωσσος / *heteroglossos* /: a different or foreign language; in 1 Timothy 1:3 and 6:3 he warns Timothy about false teachers who teach ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω / *heterodidaskaleo* /: a different or false doctrine; and in 2 Corinthians 6:14 there is the mandate to the believer not to become unequally yoked: ἑτεροζυγέω / *heterozugeo* / with an unbeliever.

- (19) In the Corporate Marriage of the Church Age the union of one man with one woman is designed to demonstrate as a witness to the devil's world the mystery relationship of Jesus Christ with His church.
- (20) Consequently, it is impossible for a husband and wife to “pull together” in mutual “bondage” to the leadership of God through His Word if they are *heteros*—different, one a believer and one an unbeliever.
- (21) Paul amplifies the opposition that exists in such a union with several comparisons in:

2 Corinthians 6:14 - Do not be unequally yoked [ἑτεροζυγέω / *heterozugeo*] together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness?

v 15 - Or what harmony has Christ with Belial [**Satan**], or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

v 16 - Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

- (22) The Greek language demands that each one of these comparisons receive a negative response: “None!” Therefore, there can be no partnership, fellowship, harmony, commonality, or agreement in a marriage that is made up of one believer and one unbeliever.
- (23) So, what are those who are so engaged in such a marriage to do? The answers are given by Paul in:

1 Corinthians 7:10 - To the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

v 11 - (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not leave his wife.

- (24) In verses 10 through 16 Paul addresses a number of situations that developed among many of the citizens of Corinth after they had become believers in Jesus Christ. Let's note a few:

- 1) Many who believed in Christ were married; some were in single status while others were divorced and had not yet remarried. Some of those who were divorced had been married several times before their salvation.
- 2) The overriding principle that Paul will teach in this passage is this: whether you are single or married at the moment of your salvation do not try to change your status quo.
- 3) If your wife or husband is an unbeliever you are not to separate from them. The unbelieving spouse may in due time become a believer as well thus converting the union into a Christian marriage.
- 4) Those who are single should not rush into marriage since they fall under the grace of God in the search for a right person and the establishment of a Christian marriage.
- 5) This requires spiritual growth for doctrinal discernment of one's right person as well as becoming the right person.
- 6) Some in Corinth who were married when saved thought they should immediately divorce their unbelieving spouse if he or she did not believe in Christ when they did.
- 7) In every case, the believer is instructed to stand fast.