

Marriage: When Seemingly Unequally Yoked

We have a song in the hymnal that says, “Though none go with me, I’ll follow Jesus.” I’ll speak of the One who literally came, offered me His hand as I had no hand I could trust to hold in this world 45 years ago. It is to Him I owe my allegiance, thus, I must look to Him to show me what to do and what to say in all my relationships – in my legal and physical family, my church family, both local and corporate, and my community and world communications. He spoke of this as an example we can learn to emulate: in John 12:49,50 Jesus is speaking to the people; “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command and what I should say and what I should speak. I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me , so I speak.” Also see 14:10 and 16:13 – 15.

Please read Isaiah 54, as therein is His promise to those whose spouse does not join with them in the calling that is upon them. I have claimed the promises in this as one grafted in with those to whom it was directly given and these promises have stayed me well. When I was comfortless in my marriage after 20+ years of struggling to change Jack, I found I was full of “If it wasn't for him(Jack, my husband) I could _____(fill in the blank). In general, “I could be some really great servant of the Lord, etc. ad nauseam.”

One day in the early '80s Jesus flat out told me to to get my hands and mouth off of Jack and leave him to Him – Holy Spirit actually said to quit praying about or for him. I was kind of stunned, but I now know I wasn't praying the prayers with the right motives. In the hidden recesses of my old man's heart I wanted him changed for my convenience. He, the Lord, had put Jack as His choice for me for He knew Jack would be able to be an anchor and covering that would keep me grounded for the work God would purpose for me. Jack would say we were meant for each other to make sure we didn't make two other people's lives miserable (– it's a family joke – we're not miserable any more.) The only time he says anything about what I'm doing in the ministry these days is when I over extend myself or he feels I'm being taken advantage of or have been hurt. The truth be known he has become proud of what I do and my friends think he's a big teddy bear.

Twenty+ years ago, I tried to separate myself from him a couple of times but the Lord tied that one up as Jack would say there would be no “separation.” If I wanted a separate life it would be by divorce. I didn't want a divorce – well, you know what I wanted. I wanted to do what I wanted, when I wanted. Jack also “left” twice, but turned around and came back within a week. The serenity prayer of AA finally taught me that I had no right to “change” someone else and I wasn't able anyway. The only person I had the right to change was myself, but lo and behold I could not even do that! It was only by submission to my Maker that that can happen – and it is only now that I can see it really has borne some good fruit, coming after much, pruning by the Gardener I'm so grateful not to have missed this journey of 50years with the earthly companion He absolutely picked for me before I really even knew who He was. No one else would have put up with this self-destructive, crazy person.

Now this is what He has shown me this morning to share with you : Jesus, my friend, my beloved Husbandman, Jesus – who loves my soul unto His death that I may be made whole and wholly alive in HIM. I must go where my heart goes because my heart is His – He gave me a new one after His own. I do not go as directed by the old “wineskin” (the old man, see Matthew 9:16, 17) – the way I think I should go as directed by the unrenewed mind, reasonable as it may seem, humanly thinking, but ends in chaos.

Peace, whether in the home, relationships, church, etc. is found in only one place, the source, God the Father, and comes as a gift from Jesus, His Son, to us. You and I have a perfect Father and as well as our Husbandman (To understand this concept see Isaiah chapter 53. whose ultimate gift is His Spirit, who has made a new and perfect and one- of-a -kind creation within us by coming into our dead spirit. That is the new life He created by the “2nd birth” with an upright spirit that measures up to the Creator's plumb line and a new, pure heart if we will choose to believe Him and not our old man with a corrupted heart dominating our mind and body.

Those who do not choose to go with us, will have to be left for our Father to deal with. His powerful Holy Spirit and His Son under His direction will be doing the will of the Father, (As His children we, too, will seek and do His will.) And deal with them He will as He will continue to seek and call them because of His love for them. This doesn't mean we physically leave something, but we walk on with our perfect Guide and continue in prayer including those who've not yet chosen the Way, the Truth, and the Life in the manner that has been made clear to us . Clarity comes to each of us at the perfect time, for each of us is foreknown to our Creator. We will trust Him, leaning not on our own understanding as regards our loved ones, leaders, etc. If we are required to move in the Spirit without our earthly mates it only means our relationship with the Lord will be closer and even greater. The way that has seemed to be so right to us is not necessarily the way that God will choose. We do right to wait for Him to show us what our part is – this is true whether it be the husband, a beloved child, or a friend. If one's mate does not forbid you to pray and serve the Lord as an individual, you need not determine that you are to go forward with the Lord alone. I have counseled several women who were constantly angry with their husband because he did not take the spiritual headship of the family as they were sure he must. As a result, their marriage and their relationship with the Lord remains stagnant or even nonexistent. They would say it is the fault of the husband, but our relationship with God is not dependent on anyone else. It is between you and Him alone. If none goes with you He will enable you as He will be with you Himself. You will even go without resentment towards those who stay back. There is a purpose if you will but believe and obey, continuing to move forward as He shows you. “Then the very God of Peace”(1 Thessalonians 5:23) spreads throughout your life as you make peace with others. When you grasp and hold onto the inner peace, it can spread to families, churches, communities, and even countries.....a nation will experience peace to the degree that the Very God of Peace controls the hearts of its citizens” – pray with extraordinary guidance for our nation. The Middle Eastern countries (the heartland of the false god of this world) as you do for your family, starting with yourself: “Lord, I want inner peace; come rule my heart. Help me influence others around me the way You've influenced me.”

“There will be wars and racial turbulence in the world. There will be interpersonal friction because people live for themselves The Very God of Peace does not rule the hearts of the vast majority of individuals. But while people may not be able to change the whole world, they can bring change into their own piece of the world. Some think they cannot bring change into their families; but when they change the way they relate to their loved ones, it creates the room for these same ones to make changes in the way they relate to you. Experience God's peace, and then spread it to others.” I know this is true because as I changed myself, asking God to help remove the character flaws revealed to me, I have realized that I was at the root of the changes that I thought were needed only to be removed in the others in my realm and family. Start with yourself and the power and truth found in God's own word, the Bible.

Key Thought:” Your experience of being at peace in God can influence others.”

Some quotes are from E. L. Towns, 365 Ways to Know God.

Bible references to read are: 1Corinthians 7; 1 Peter 3:1 – 4; and Jeremiah 6:16.