

## ML203 Unequal Marriages

The pattern described in ML202 works well for believers, but the rules differ when one spouse is not a believer. Paul addresses this situation and gives his advice in First Corinthians 7:12-15:

[12] *"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. [13] And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. [14] For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. [15] But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."*

Beginning with the brother of an unbelieving wife, notice that V12 confirms the conclusion in ML202, that the husband has authority only over what the wife submits to him: "... if she be pleased to dwell with him" proves that husbands are not dictators. The problem addressed here — the unbelieving wife has different morals than the believing husband. Her focus is on the world; his focus is on the Lord. Paul's solution — the marriage can continue if the wife agrees to submit to the husband's morals.

In the reverse situation [V13], the wife has no authority over the ungodly husband. Yet the solution is similar — *"and if he be pleased to dwell with her"* the marriage can continue. In this situation, he submits to his wife's morals but does not relinquish his natural authority. In all other matters, he remains the head of his wife.

Thus, Paul advises unbelieving spouses to submit to the morals of believing spouses. Then he ends with this point: Believing spouses in unbalanced marriages are free to teach godly morals to their children. Otherwise, he says, *"The children are unclean."*

However, this uncleanness has nothing to do with their salvation. Being unclean means that the parents are not guiding them via a moral standard.

Thus, it isn't true that children of unbalanced marriages are lost. Every child is saved until he or she falls into sin. The motions of sin make sinners [Ro 7:5]. Children are not sinners until they sin. Original sin is a false doctrine. So, watch out for this doctrine — Satan is out there waiting to seduce those who are unskilled in the Word of God.

Finally, Paul teaches that when an unbelieving spouse won't submit to the morals of the believing spouse, that the believing spouse is not under bondage to remain bound to the unbelieving spouse.