

Russell Kelfer

God's Truth About Alliances

(Part I)

545-A

Series: The Beatitudes



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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

God's Truth About Alliances

(Part I)

About nine weeks ago, we were looking into the five attributes of a pure heart. They are the absence of hypocrisy, pure motives, the presence of a clear conscience, a single-minded spirit and a pure thought life. It was at this point in our study of the single-minded spirit that we began to look into the Christian's areas of conflict with the world's philosophies. We have found that Satan has developed cunningly camouflaged lies to confuse and undermine the Christian where God's absolutes are concerned, thus creating a double-minded man, unstable in all of his ways. These lies and the corresponding truths have fallen, basically, into nine categories which are:

- 1- Satan's lies about the character of man
- 2- Satan's lies about the nature of God
- 3- Satan's lies about the source of happiness
- 4- Satan's lies about standards of morality
- 5- Satan's lies about marriage and the home
- 6- Satan's lies about authority
- 7- Satan's lies about responsibility
- 8- Satan's lies about idolatry or who are our heroes
- 9- Satan's lies about holiness, separation or false alliances

In this lesson, we will be focusing on the last category of Satan's lies and God's truth about alliances or unequal yoking. The title of this portion is, "How Can Two Walk Together, Except They Be Agreed?" The lesson outline is as follows,

- I- Basic Concepts and Definitions
 - A- What is a peer relationship?
 - B- What are authority relationships?
 - C- What are alliance relationships?
- II- Satan's Lies - Six Big Whoppers

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III- What Is God's Truth About Alliances and Unequal Yoking

A- The Principles

B- The Practical

The Principles involve the basic truth found in II Corinthians 6:14-18. There are eleven underlying principles of which we will hopefully get through in this lesson. In the next lesson, we will look at The Practical. These three are grouped under the areas of:

1- National - Should a nation under God make alliances or agreements with professed, godless governments who denounce or deny Jehovah and the Lord Jesus Christ?

2- Personal - What is the truth about unequal yoking as it relates to marriage? What is God's truth concerning dating? Should you control your children's dating relationships? Partnerships- what is the will of God concerning business partnerships? Are they Scriptural and on what basis? Roommates- how important is it that your child's roommate be a Christian? Children's friendships, are there guidelines for helping children select godly friends? We will ask these questions in the next lesson.

3- Spiritual - Who is your real enemy? Is it possible to retreat in order to win? In other words, how can you make concessions to the enemy, or can you? Are you a dove or a hawk in the real battle of life?

Let's begin looking at the three basic kinds of relationships:

1- Peer relationships.

This can be confusing. Remember that as Christians we must live in the world and minister to the world and yet not become of the world. That is the tough part. What is a peer relationship? A peer relationship is where two or more people or groups or nations possess neither common authority nor mutual commitment, but they have a relationship. These are the people you work with. The neighbors who live next door to you are your peers. They may or may not be Christians. Nationally, the United States and Mexico are peers. The United States and Sweden are peers. The United States and

Canada are peers at least to a certain degree. A peer friendship can influence one another depending on the intensity of the friendship and the amount of time that is spent together. We will transmit both good and bad habits to one another, proportionate to the time we spend together. However, we are not yoked together in any way.

The Bible says that these relationships can be extremely helpful. It says that two are better than one and have a good reward for their labor. These relationships can also be extremely harmful. We must use discernment as to the level of our friendships and the quality of our friends. We must reach out properly to everyone that needs us. It is a tough area.

2- Authority relationships.

By definition, this is two or more people, groups or nations in a system of order where one has the authority or responsibility over another. It is totally different from a peer relationship. On the job, you are under your boss' authority. It is an authority relationship. As a citizen, you are under the authority of the government. It is an authority relationship. You may work for a non-Christian. He exerts certain authority in your life. You are not to work only for other Christians, but by virtue of your contract with your boss, you receive wages for services rendered, and your work must glorify God to him. Your response to him must glorify God even if he is unfair in his dealings with you. Authority relationships.

The people you buy from and sell to are Christians and non-Christians alike. There is no yoking and no commitment to their morals or to their gods. Money is received for products or services rendered. That is an authority relationship. The authority relationship is where you are under someone's authority who may or may not be a Christian, but you are not yoked together with common responsibility.

3- Alliance relationship.

This is an area where we will spend most of our time. If we can understand the difference between these three, I think it will help us understand the concept of separation.

1) This relationship is when two or more people, groups,

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or nations join together in union with shared authority and shared responsibility.

2) This kind of a relationship requires common objectives. You must have the same goals and priorities, or it won't work. It also carries with it assumed harmony and compatibility that allows each to achieve the common objective.

3) This kind of relationship involves mutual commitment, commitment to each other and commitment to the task.

4) It also involves a common bond and a mutual relationship that insures unity of purpose.

The best illustration of this is marriage. A husband and wife have an alliance relationship. They are sharing responsibility and authority over the children and in the home. They require common objectives to do this. They must be going in the same direction. They require an assumed harmony and must try to be at peace with one another. It involves mutual commitment. Marriage is an alliance relationship.

As we will see in the next lesson, dating is an alliance relationship. A business partnership is an alliance partnership. Nations who sign treaties with other nations enter into an alliance relationship. A church that joins a group of churches or a council of churches enters into an alliance relationship. Those are the differences between the three kinds of relationships. We must differentiate between them, or we will be caught in a web of confusion by these principles.

Let's review one more time the lies we are prone to believe about relationships.

Lie 1- You have to join them to win them. You have to wear their clothes, use their lingo, listen to their music. The lie is that you will fascinate them by being conformed. But the Scripture says,

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, (Romans 12:2a NKJV)

It is a lie.

Lie 2- Satan says, "God is in you, so you are stronger than they are." This is a mis-quote. You are not stronger than they

are, God is stronger than they are, and God is in you. But, the flesh is in you also. You may not be strong enough to withstand the temptations. Instead, the Scripture says to flee from evil and make no alliances with the enemy, because you will be destroyed by them. It is a lie.

Lie 3- Christ and Satan can co-exist peacefully. This is a lie. You cannot have peaceful co-existence in a time of war. Satan and God are locked in bitter conflict to the end over control of the destiny of the world and the lives of people. There can be no fellowship between light and darkness, between God and the devil.

Lie 4- The world's methods are adequate to accomplish God's purposes. This is a lie. The world says to organize the task. Promote your strength. You can do it. God says,

So are My ways higher than your ways.

(Isaiah 55:9 NKJV)

Agonize in prayer rather than organize your prayer. Yield up your weaknesses rather than promote your strengths. You cannot do it, but God can.

Lie 5- Alliances with godless nations can be fruitful. God says that alliances with godless nations can be fatal. You don't have to read your Bible to see this, although that is the best place to start. You only have to read the daily newspaper to see this take place.

Lie 6- You can make a deal with the devil. God says that you cannot believe a liar, and Satan cannot tell the truth.

These are Satan's lies, and we will see how God's truth unfolds as we go through these principles. If you don't mind my oversimplifying it a bit, the Bible has clear admonitions on how the Christian should relate to his peers. Some of these will surface in this lesson. The Bible is also very clear on how Christians are to deal with authority relationships. We have discussed this in the last few lessons also. But perhaps the most important area of all lies in the realm of alliances where two people or groups unite for a common purpose. We have heard the lies of Satan, now we need to look at the truth about yoking or alliances.

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The truth is, they can't. This basic truth is found in II Corinthians 6:14-18. It is an answer to the question asked in Amos,

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

(Amos 3:3 NKJV)

Let's use as an example two people we will call Tom and Wanda. If we were to ask Tom to turn around and walk three steps one way, and ask Wanda to walk three steps the other way, that wouldn't be too hard. If, however, they were holding hands, and I asked Tom to walk one way and Wanda to walk the other, we would see the problem. That shows us better than anything else what the problem is.

The truth is that they can't do it. Two people cannot move in opposite directions while being bound to one another without conflict happening. If we try to tie them together and have them go in different directions, we will have four things happen: 1) hostility, 2) confusion, 3) frustration and 4) conflict. There is hostility, because each one is questioning the other's moves. There is confusion, because no one knows for sure where the other one is going. There is frustration, because each wants to be with the other, but they want to get where they are headed. There is conflict, because sooner or later you have to come to a choice, are you going to let go or be torn apart? II Corinthians says in very clear language,

For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?
(II Corinthians 6:14 NIV)

It goes on to say that a Christian and a non-Christian cannot be agreed where alliances or yoking is concerned. Now remember that yoking is a relationship where two share authority, and by its nature it involves common objectives, assumed harmony, and mutual commitment. One example is marriage. Some others are business partnerships and national alliances.

Paul says that there is one basic criteria that is necessary for any of these things to work. Do you know what it is? The common bond must be Jesus Christ. That is the only way. Let's read II Corinthians 6 in the Wuest translation. It is

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very difficult to follow, but it is important, because it is very accurate.

Stop being joined as with a yoke to unbelievers in a common state or endeavor which matter or of a character different from or diametrically opposed to the state of a child of God; any endeavor in which he may properly engage, for what partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness, or what does light have in common with darkness?

Or what harmony does Christ have with Belial, or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?

What agreement does the inner sanctuary of God have with idols? For as for us, we are an inner sanctuary of the Living God; even as God said, "I will dwell in them and fellowship with them as in a home; and I will live my life in and through them; and I will be their God and they themselves will be my people.

Wherefore, come out at once from their midst and separate yourselves, says the Lord, and stop touching that which is unclean; and as for myself, I will receive you kindly and treat you with favor.

I will be to you a father and as for you, you will be to me as sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

(II Corinthians 6:14-18 Wuest)

What this basically describes is diametric opposition. Paul says that it is as easy for darkness to be compatible with light as it is for a Christian to have a compatible partnership with an unbeliever. You turn out the light and that results in total darkness. You turn on the light and if you can maintain a spirit of darkness while there is light in the room, you have performed a miracle. The Scripture says that light and darkness are non-compatible. Remember that we are not talking about friendships here, we are talking about yoking relationships. Satan says with a little give and take, you will make it. God says that it will not work.

Paul goes on to say that if you could wed righteousness with lawlessness, that is, if you could take perfect purity and blend it with total sin, then you could successfully wed believers with unbelievers in a meaningful alliance. Have you

ever tried to do that? It is impossible, because perfect purity cannot tolerate sin. When sin touches purity, it ruins it. Paul says to unite a believer with an unbeliever is to take the temple of God and pollute it with idols. But the last description is the most graphic. Paul says to yoke a Christian and a non-Christian in the same harness is to take Satan and Christ and try to unite them for a common purpose. Perfect truth, perfect lie. Perfect light, perfect darkness. God and Satan married. Can you picture that?

This is not a very popular truth to talk about. We have to be careful, because it is so easily misunderstood. Oftentimes, this develops into some kind of a separatists philosophy where Christians hide under a blanket with fear lest they become contaminated and cease to become salt and light. That misses the point. What this passage says is that to be salt, Christians must remain pure salt. To be light, Christians must remain pure light. There is no sound basis for a union with unbelievers in the home, in the business world, in the religious realm or in the international arena. This is not a popular doctrine. God's people are to steer clear of alliances or yoking relationships with those who are not His.

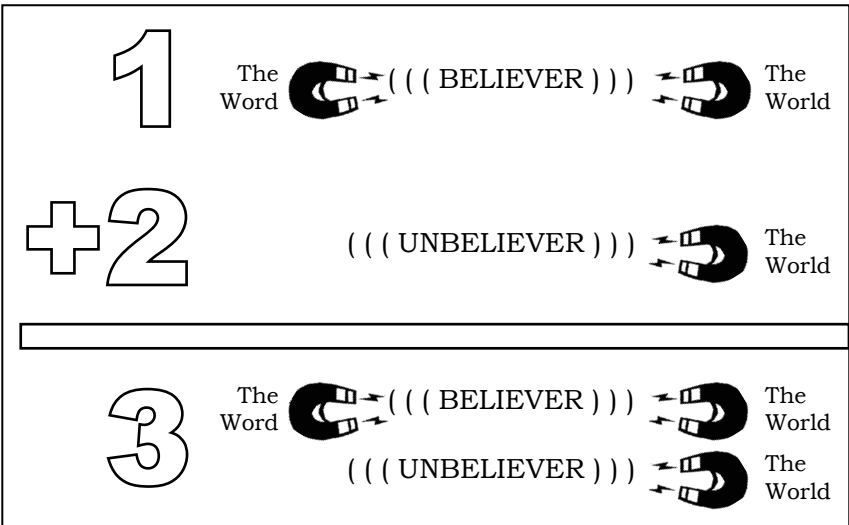
Satan's most popular argument, especially to young Christians, is if Christ is in you and He is greater than Satan, then why, when joining with an unbeliever are you not guaranteed to win them over? This is evangelism by association. Using this argument, Satan has filled Christian counseling centers to the brim. Broken marriages, broken business relationships, confused dating relationships and close friendships have been built on this sand. When the winds come and the rains come and the floods overtake and beat upon it, then great is the fall of it, because it is not built on the Word.

Now, granted, one believer in a relationship is better than none and that is why Paul says that a Christian who is married to a non-Christian should not seek to dissolve the marriage for the sake of the children and possibly for the sake of the salvation of the partner. You are to remain together. What Paul is saying is that you don't knowingly enter into those kinds of relationships. They usually bring disaster and compromise to

the Christian. Why does it work that way and not the other way? There are two reasons why this doesn't work:

Reason 1- The Christian who is in the will of God is filled with power. In that sphere of power, when he is in the will of God and obedient to the Word of God, there is power. What happens when the Christian steps out of the sphere of power? He loses the potential power that he has. Why? When you enter into an alliance with an unbeliever, he is violating the Word of God. It says, "Be not unequally yoked." So he steps outside of the will of God by disobeying the Word of God, and then he wonders where the power of God went. It went away when he went contrary to principles of Scripture.

Reason 2- We cannot enter into an unequal relationship and make it work. This reason is even simpler. In the illustration, the Christian on the left is drawn in two directions. There is the magnet of the Word drawing him to the Spirit, and there is the magnet of the world drawing him to the flesh. He joins hands and puts his arms around and unites with an unbeliever, as you see on the right. This person is drawn like a magnet only to the world. So the Christian is drawn to the world and the Word, and the unbeliever is drawn only to the world. Simple arithmetic plus the law of gravity ought to explain to you what happens when the two get together.



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The principle is that if you were in glory and the flesh did not exist in you, then the principle that you could enter into a relationship with a non-believer and win that person might be true. However, since the flesh still exists, and because we are still at war internally, we cannot enter into that kind of relationship and make it work. Don't take my word for it. Let's journey through the Scriptures and try to extract the principles for linking His children with the unbelievers.

Principle 1- Our God is a jealous God as far as relationships are concerned. Let's turn to Exodus 34:12. This is not the kind of lesson I like to teach, because we are going to quit in the middle before we get to the practical part. That will give everyone incentive to come back for the next lesson. Let's turn our attention to Exodus 34,

And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.

But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images

(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice,

and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

(Exodus 34:10-16 NKJV)

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The Living Bible says,

Be very, very careful never to compromise with the people in the land you are going, for if you do, you will soon be following their evil ways.

Instead, you must break down their altars, smash the obelisks they worship and cut down their shameful idols.

For you must worship no other gods, but only Jehovah, for He is a God who claims absolute loyalty and exclusive devotion.

No, do not make a peace treaty of any kind with the people living in the land, for they are spiritual prostitutes, committing adultery against Me by sacrificing to their gods. If you become friendly with them and one of them invites you to go with him to worship his idol, you are apt to do it.

And you would accept their daughters, who worship other gods, as wives for your sons- and then your sons would commit adultery against Me by worshipping their wives' gods.

You must have nothing to do with idols.

(Exodus 34:12-17 TLB)

The Scripture is very clear. By jealous it does not mean the self-centered kind of jealousy that wants something of another's that you cannot have. Scriptural jealousy is that precious kind of sacrificing love that watches over another with a jealous love, guarding it, if necessary, at its own expense to see that harm does not come. A mother has a jealous love when she sees her child out in the garden, and a rattlesnake comes up. A mother or a father has a jealous love for his child, when he sees them developing wrong friendships and wrong relationships. A pastor, teacher or friend has a jealous love over a young Christian when they see them making wrong decisions and getting involved in wrong activities. This passage teaches that God is jealous over the possibility that His children might be ensnared through unholy alliances.

Principle 2- God, therefore, demands that believers make no alliances with unbelievers. As the prior verse explained, and as we learn from Amos 3:3 and I Corinthians 6, two

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cannot walk together without agreement. Christ and Satan cannot agree. Therefore, we are commanded more than twenty times in Scripture not to join with unbelievers in any form of alliance. Let's look at one more passage in the Old Testament that is a portrait of this principle. We find it in Deuteronomy 7. I will read from the Living Bible.

When the Lord brings you into the Promised Land, and soon He will, He will destroy the following seven nations, all greater and mightier than you are: the Hittites, the Girgahites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

When the Lord your God delivers them over to you to be destroyed, do a complete job of it—don't make any treaties or show them mercy; utterly wipe them out.

Do not intermarry with them, nor let your sons and daughters marry their sons and daughters.

That would surely result in your young people's beginning to worship their gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be hot against you and He would surely destroy you.

You must rather break down the heathen altars and shatter the obelisks and cut up the shameful images and burn the idols.

For you are a holy people, dedicated to the Lord your God. He has chosen you from all of the people on the face of the whole earth to be His chosen ones.

He didn't choose you and pour out His love upon you because you were a larger nation than any other, for you were the smallest one of all!

It was just because He loves you and because He kept His promises to your ancestors.

(Deuteronomy 7:1-8 TLB)

So once again He gives us the command, and then He gives us the reasons. He tells us that we will be drawn to them if we make alliances with them. We will be affected by their gods and by what they choose to worship. God says, "You are a separated people, you are a chosen people by Me from among all of the peoples of the earth. You weren't chosen for your size. You weren't chosen for your strength. You were chosen, because I love you and I want to keep My promises." So He

told us to keep away from binding alliances with those who are not His own.

We will take up here in the next lesson. I hate to quit at this point. Unequal yoking is clearly defined in Scripture, and the consequences are clearly defined in Scripture. There are at least five of them. We will deal with them in the next lesson. But at least we have looked at some of the problems and some of the principles. Please do not draw too many conclusions until we have dealt with the practical.

In the next lesson, we will conclude looking at the principles and hopefully complete the study by answering the following questions:

Question 1- Is it ever the perfect will of God for a Christian to marry a non-Christian?

Question 2- What is the purpose of dating? How can you control who your children date?

Question 3- What are the ingredients that make a partnership succeed?

Question 4- Are there some steps from their earliest years to influence and control who your children's friends are?

Question 5- Should a nation under God sign a treaty trusting a nation who defies the Living God?

Question 6- Is it Scriptural to be at war with God's enemies?

Question 7- How can we relate properly to unbelieving parents?

Question 8- What is the devil's biggest lie of all?

Between this lesson and the next, I hope you will search out these principles for yourself. Please keep in mind and memorize God's pointed question. It goes like this,

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

(Amos 3:3 NKJV)

Keep in mind God's pointed answer, "They can't."

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
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