

Business Partnerships between Christians and Non-Christians

http://family.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/26167/~/business-partnerships-between-christians-and-non-christians

QUESTION

Would it be wrong for a Christian to go into business with an unbeliever? I'm thinking about doing so, but was wondering if it would be a case of being "unequally yoked" (2 Corinthians 6:14)?

ANSWER

Let's take a look at the biblical passage that forms the background to your question. In

2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul writes, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" The underlying principle here is that whenever a relationship, be it personal or business, is such that a believer's testimony to Christ's goodness and faithfulness could be harmed, damaged, or compromised, then that relationship should be avoided.

The significance of this principle emerges with special clarity if we apply it to a relationship like marriage. When a believer marries a non-believer - marries that person for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do them part - it's just about certain that his or her testimony for Christ will be impacted in some way. And That's because marriage is designed to be a total blending of two lives, a "one-flesh" union, in which a man and a woman lose themselves in one another and become extensions of one another, just as it is with Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:30-32). Whether you're willing to admit it or not, if your "other half" doesn't share your deepest convictions, those convictions are likely to change.

It's not quite the same in a business relationship. There are parallels and similarities, yes, but the intense one-anothering, the inextricable interweaving of bodies and souls that characterizes marriage, is completely lacking in a partnership of this kind. Generally speaking, people don't abandon their most deeply cherished beliefs simply because a co-worker or business partner disagrees. What's more, business relationships can be defined contractually. When entering into a business partnership with anyone, Christian or non-Christian, it's always wise to make the terms of the contract very clear and to determine ahead of time what circumstances would cause the relationship to end and what the terms of settlement would be if that

should happen. In the business world this is called an "exit strategy." Obviously, there's no place for provisions of this nature in the biblical view of marriage.

By way of illustration, let's suppose that a Christian OB/GYN who does not believe in abortion enters into partnership with another OB/GYN who is not a Christian. If the non-Christian partner insists on performing abortions or otherwise compromises the Christian partner's values or inhibits his testimony, then this would be an extremely undesirable and unwise arrangement. But it can be handled ahead of time by setting up a buy/sell agreement between the parties and mapping out a mutually satisfactory exit strategy.

Bottom line: as Christians, we believe that God has put us on this earth primarily to bear witness to His truth and to serve as representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're entering into a relationship of any kind - especially a formal and legally defined relationship like a business partnership - you need to ask yourself, "What is the likelihood that my testimony for Christ will be compromised or harmed?" *That's* the determinative and all-decisive issue.

For additional help and information on this topic, we'd encourage you to consult the resources and referrals highlighted below. Or if you have relationship concerns and challenges associated with this situation, please don't hesitate to give our Counseling Department a call. You can contact them Monday through Friday between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Mountain time at 855-771-HELP (4357). The Family Help Center staff member who answers the phone will arrange for a licensed counselor to call you back. One of them will be in touch just as soon as they're able.

Excerpted from *The Complete Guide to Faith Based Family Finances* by Ron Blue. Copyright © 2008, Ron Blue. Used by permission.