
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What does the Bible say about interracial marriages?**

The scriptures contain the answer for every question that faces man today. Jesus told His apostles:

John 16:13

¹³ "... when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth ...

The apostle Peter confirmed that this did occur. Every truth which mankind needed to live a godly life was fully revealed to the apostles of Christ.

2 Peter 1:3

³ ... His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness ...

Every question which mankind is faced with is answered in the scriptures.

LAW MAKING

There is a very important point which we need to keep in mind when discussing interracial marriages, or any other subject: We must be content with what the scriptures say without adding to them, nor taking away from them (Gal 1:8-9; Rev 22:18-19).

When God's word specifically addresses an issue, we must do what it says. We may not eliminate passages which we do not like (Rev 22:19).

On the other hand, when God's word is silent about a particular issue, we must not begin making laws for God (Rev 22:18). The Pharisees made many laws which they expected men to

keep as though God had made their laws. Jesus clearly condemned this "law-making" business (Mt 15:9).

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES

Concerning interracial marriages, the Bible has little to say. There were several men of God who married women of other races with God's approval and these marriages were fully acceptable with God.

- 1) **Moses married an Ethiopian woman**. Ethiopians were black people, so Moses married a black woman (Num 12:1). Moses' brother and sister did not approve of him marrying this woman and they began to criticize him. God was very displeased with this criticism and He punished Moses' sister with the disease of leprosy (Num 12:10).
- 2) **Salmon married Rahab** who was not only of a different race (a Canaanite), but also a former prostitute. God used this union to help bring His Son into the world (Mt 1:5).
- 3) **Boaz married Ruth who was a Moabite**. This marriage was not only approved by God, but was likewise used to help bring Jesus into the world (Mt 1:5).

There are other instances in the scriptures where God's people married women of other races with God's approval. To many people's surprise, the Bible does not condemn interracial marriages.

A WORD OF CAUTION

One important thing to remember, however, is this: While interracial marriages are not inherently sinful, this is not to say it is always a wise thing to do. What is scriptural and what is wise are sometimes two different things.

For example, if an Israeli man met, fell in love with, and married a Syrian woman, we could not say that either had sinned. But their societies would not accept such a union. Both the man and the woman would be outcasts from their people.

Likewise, if a black man, in the south, met, fell in love with, and married a white woman, we could not say that either had sinned. However, they must be ready to be rejected by many. Often they will find themselves outcasts from their people.

An interracial couple must think of at least two things before marriage:

- Are they willing to be rejected by both their races?
- Are they willing for their children to be rejected by both races?

If they are fully aware of the rejection and difficulties that lie ahead, they may indeed marry without committing sin. When they do marry, they must remember that they have made solemn vows which are binding until death (Rom 7:1-3) and they are not free to break those vows if the going gets tough (Ecc 5:1-7; Mt 19:6).

MIXED MARRIAGES

There is another "mixed marriage," however, which people should consider just as carefully as an interracial marriage because this other "mixed marriage" can have eternal consequences that may affect their salvation. I'm talking about a marriage which mixes two different religions. When a Christian marries an unbeliever or someone of a different religious persuasion, that Christian will soon regret this decision.

In the Old Testament the Bible says this:

Deuteronomy 7:1-4

¹ "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

² "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

³ "Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

⁴ "For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

When God's people disobeyed this command, the prophecy came true: God's people were turned away from following after Him.

Solomon married many heathen women and they turned him from following after God (1 Kings 11:4). Many in Israel followed Solomon's example and likewise married heathen wives who turned them away from God (Ezra 10; Neh 13:23-27).

Not every "religiously-mixed-marriage" ends up in divorce, but this can become a great controversy leading to divorce. There could likely be arguing when children are born into the family. The believer one day will want to take the children to church with him/her on Sundays and the unbeliever will want the children to stay home with him/her. One parent will want to take the kids to her church while the other parent will want to take the kids to his church. The children are the real losers in this situation because they grow up in an environment where they receive a mixed message from their own parents. These children will not only have the world telling them that religion doesn't matter, they will also have one of their own parents telling them the same thing.

Here then are the dangers of marrying someone who is not a devoted Christian:

- That undevoted or unbelieving person will make the Christian weaker and weaker as time goes on.
- That undevoted or unbelieving person will become a hindrance to the children born into the family.

On rare occasions, the unbeliever can be converted to the Lord by the believer's good example (1 Pet 3:1-2), but there is no guarantee this will happen. Christians should not view marriage as a missionary endeavor.

SUMMARY

In summary, we may say the following things:

- It is not sinful to marry someone of another race.
- However, it is not always wise to intermarry with another race if the union would bring more heartaches than the couple is willing to bear.

- The kind of mixed marriage which the Christian must be particularly cautious about is a marriage to someone who does not share a belief in and a love for God and His word.

I hope this study has answered the question adequately and will be a blessing in your study of the scriptures.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on **Bible Talk**.