

Under The Influence

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 28th, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

For how do you know, O wife,
whether you will save your
husband? Or how do you
know, O husband, whether you
will save your wife?

~1st Corinthians 7:16 (NASB)

1) Living For Christ In A Non-Christian Home

- A) Amongst the Corinthians, there were some newer followers of Christ who were concerned that their marriages to non-Christians would pollute their relationship with Jesus (1st Corinthians 7:1-16).
- B) God's Word instructs followers of Christ who find themselves in "mixed marriages" (follower & non-follower) to remain in the marriage (7:12-13).
- C) The explanation for why a Christian should remain married to a non-Christian seems confusing (7:14). How is it possible that the Christian spouse can "sanctify" (make holy) the non-Christian spouse/children?

2) Living “Under The Influence” Of A Christ-Follower

- A) The word “sanctify” (make holy, ἁγιάσται, from ἀγιάζω) is a past tense verb which indicates “a present state of being, established by some past event” (Garland 2003: 286-287). In other words, it seems reasonable to say that any Christian in a mixed marriage effects “holiness.”
- B) Note that children are also included in this “sanctifying effect” which Christians have on their mixed marriage (7:14). Paul reasons with the Corinthians that “dumping” a spouse for being a non-believer makes as much sense as “dumping” your children for being non-believers.
- C) In fact, unlike many other relationships with non-believers (note 15:33), the presence of a Christ-follower in the midst of a mixed marriage brings the non-believing spouse into a sphere of holiness where the sin (unholiness) of the non-believing spouse cannot contaminate a Christian.
- D) This is an incredible gift of God for the Christian spouse in a mixed marriage! God made marriage so uniquely special that it stands alone as a relationship where the Christian has a positive effect on a mixed marriage!
- E) To summarize, since God brings people together in marriage, marriages should be maintained (7:10-11). Even mixed marriages are holy to God, and do not make the Christian “spiritually dirty” (7:12-14). Thus, mixed marriages are to be maintained in “peace” (7:15).
- F) This sphere of holiness can even effect an environment where non-believing spouses and children might become followers of Christ themselves (7:16). Living in peace for the sake of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ!