

Marriage on the Rock 11

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Marriage on the Rock. Here's Marv Weisman.

Live in non-marriage scenarios. We're devoting these next numerous segments to the current social phenomena of increasing numbers of couples choosing to live together without benefit of legal marriage.

The justification behind their decision to do so will be dealt with one by one. Of necessity, we cannot consider all the reasons they might give for their decisions simply because we don't know all of them.

But we are confident we can address the vast majority of those most common. However, before we can speak to any of their objections to a legal marriage, we need to distinguish between the three kinds of couples who are engaged in or plan to enter into living arrangements without a legal union. And those three kinds of couples consist of the following makeup. Number one, the unsaved couple. Number two, the mixed couple. And three, the Christian couple.

[1 : 15] Conspicuously absent in the kinds addressed are couples belonging to the same sex. They cannot be treated because the concept of same-sex marriage is an oxymoron, a complete contradiction in terms.

Never mind public opinion or even legal status assigned to same-sex marriage, we must limit ourselves to the only authority able to speak to what constitutes marriage, and that is the Bible. And we do so with full knowledge this will turn off a certain segment of our audience. Nonetheless, and without apology or equivocation, there must be some supreme authority for addressing this as well as other vital and deeply consequential issues.

Mankind and his laws, however well intended, have proved inconsistent and usually unworkable. The history of male and female marriage is as old as humanity itself, and has permeated every culture known to man, whether labeled civilized or even among those considered uncivilized. Peculiarities germane to males and females have always carried an undisputed identity, whereby one is suited only to the other.

[2 : 38] Modern insistence on overthrowing these identities is nothing more than an additional attempt of man to deny the authority and wisdom of the Creator, by replacing it, of course, with his own.

And while this is nothing new, our generation has succeeded in repudiating divine authorities to a new level. It is characteristic of what the Bible describes as humanity's last days, when man will seek to deny God and His authority in an unprecedented fashion.

Upcoming is the first couple identified as the unsaved couple. And our prayer is that each of those of you who are listening, whether singles or couples, will give serious thought and consideration to the points that are being made, because we believe they are very valid, and they can forestall a great deal of misery and heartache.

The unsaved couple, part one. The unsaved couple is the same as the lost couple.

And what makes them unsaved is the fact that they have not been saved. And what makes them lost is the fact that they have never been found. If these terms perplex you, be advised it is Bible lingo, and you have every reason to be perplexed if you are not familiar with the Bible.

[4 : 17] But also be advised, the Bible is very familiar with you. If neither of you who are planning to live together, or are currently living together, do not have a spiritual connection with God through Jesus Christ, the Bible says you are unsaved.

To be saved means, as the word implies, to have been rescued from sin, because you have admitted your sin, accepted the fact that Jesus Christ died in your place for your sin, and you have appealed to Him for the personal forgiveness of your sin.

Upon doing that, you are saved. Apart from doing that, whether because of ignorance or refusal, you are unsaved. You remain lost.

This is what the Bible means when it says in Luke 19 that the Son of Man, Jesus, has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Jesus Christ died a substitutionary death for the entire human race, because the entire race of humanity was lost, spiritually lost, and separated from God our Creator.

[5 : 35] When Christ died for the lost, He made the opportunity available to all the lost to be found by Him and move from unsaved to saved or rescued.

Our salvation becomes personalized when we as an individual, by an act of our will, transfer whatever we are trusting in to make us acceptable to God to Jesus instead.

Most among us are trusting, hoping, that our own goodness will be sufficient to impress God and allow us into His presence. Or their trust is in their church, the sacraments, their good intentions, or their promise to do and be better.

None of these avail, because all deny the need for Jesus even coming to earth and dying for our sin. Do you really think God the Father would have sent God the Son into this world to suffer and die as He did?

Had there been any other way to bring you to Himself? And do you think Jesus would have been willing to do what He did by way of crucifixion? Had there been any other way?

[6 : 47] The Bible alone clarifies this incredibly important subject of being saved, when in Ephesians 2 it says, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no man can boast. There you have it, saved and lost, and the difference it makes for the unsaved couple.

The unsaved couple, part two. The unsaved couple remains the pair now under consideration in speaking of the three kinds of couples considering or presently living together without marriage.

The others are the saved couple and the mixed couple. Our previous segment dealt with neither the man or woman as being saved, and we explain saved as meaning rescued, delivered, or saved from certain eternal destruction.

What is needed for anyone who is unsaved ought to be clear enough. What or who is needed is the Savior. Can you think of any other person in all of history who is entitled to be and has been declared to be the Savior?

[8 : 13] Neither can I. And the reason is simple. There is none other. Not Buddha, nor Mohammed, nor Confucius, nor Krishna, nor any other historical character can justly wear that title Savior.

The angel Gabriel told Mary in Luke chapter 1 that thou shalt call his name Jesus for, or because, he shall save his people from their sins.

This is the Savior the unsaved couple needs. This is the Savior everyone needs because we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This issue, saved, unsaved, lost, found, is the critical issue even above and beyond marriage. And that's because while the marriage union is only temporal, that is, until death thus do part, the spiritual union established with God on the basis of saving faith in the substitutionary death of Christ is eternal, clearly superseding all earthly temporal relationships.

If the unsaved couple put their trust in this Savior who loved them in such a way that he died for their sin, the unsaved couple then move into the category of a saved couple and absolutely everything is changed and changed radically.

[9 : 44] It's so radical it is described as being born again. Life affords a whole new beginning. It's a miracle and nothing less.

So say the untold millions who have moved from unsaved to saved. Also, bear in mind if you will please, this is an individual decision that both are enjoined to make.

If only one of the two does so, you move only into the mixed couple of category two, not into the Christian couple of category three. Also, because these segments are dealing with the benefits of legal marriage rather than a live-in arrangement without marriage, please don't link that to the issue of personal salvation because they are not at all connected.

And by that we mean going ahead and getting legally married in the traditional way does not improve your standing with God. The legally married couple without a personal relationship to Christ is just as lost and unsaved as before because legal marriage does not constitute salvation, not even close.

So how is this salvation thing actually done? Upcoming. The unsaved couple part three.

[10:59] Recall, if you will, there are three kinds of unmarried couples. If you and your partner consider yourself a couple, you inevitably fall under one of the three we mentioned.

Number one, you are a couple, both of whom are unsaved. Or, number two, you are a mixed couple, whereby one of you is saved and the other is not.

Or three, you are a saved couple, meaning both of you have come to a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ, his son. There are no other possibilities available.

You and your partner fit one of those three and only you can determine to which category you belong. In focusing upon category one, whereby neither of the two are saved, we concluded the previous segment with the question, how is it that one, or the two of you, can move from the status of unsaved to saved?

Exactly, how is this thing called salvation actually done? Well, let's allow the Bible to answer that. And it does. In the New Testament letter to the Ephesians, we read in chapter 2 that, it is by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

[12:17] It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one can boast. The Bible rightly calls this truth the gospel, which means good news.

Not only is it good news, it is also the very best good news anyone has ever heard. Yet, it is also the least heard and misunderstood good news as well.

No doubt this is due, at least in part, to its being so good, many are inclined not to believe it. You've probably heard that old adage particularly speaking of a sales pitch or an investment scheme.

If it sounds too good to be true, don't believe it. It isn't true. And that's good advice. We will all do well to heed.

Unless, unless, the offer is coming from an unimpeachable source who cannot and would not lie, and only one meets that criterion.

[13:17] He's the one who inspired this letter to the Ephesians as well as all the rest of the Bible, none other than God Himself. He says, it is by grace that we are saved, delivered, rescued, and it is on the basis of faith, that is, simple belief or trust.

Further, this salvation is a gift, gratis, free. This is what makes it such good news. And even though it may sound too good to be true, it really is true.

In fact, the man God used to write this to the Ephesians is none other than Paul the Apostle. Yes, the same man who before was Saul of Tarsus.

And when he believed this good news, it radically changed his entire life, his destiny, and the lives of millions more.

You too can be among them. How that can be? Upcoming. The Unsaved Couple, Part 4 The Bible text in Ephesians chapter 2 we earlier referred to relates the details of moving from the position of unsaved and unforgiven to that of the saved and forgiven, which is exactly what happened to Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the Apostle, used of God to write nearly one-third of the New Testament.

[14:59] It was this message of salvation by grace through simple faith or trust that revolutionized the then-known world and has impacted lives for the past 2,000 years.

We are told that this salvation or our removal from lostness is by grace. This means it is unmerited and undeserved, which is precisely what grace is all about.

That's the nature of a gift. You really don't have it coming, but you get it even though you don't deserve it. Grace does not depend on a deserving recipient.

It is the granting of what is not deserved from the hand of a gracious and generous giver, who is, of course, God himself. The very same one who gave this gift of salvation to Saul of Tarsus.

And you would have to look far and wide to find someone less deserving of God's grace and forgiveness than this wicked individual who persecuted the followers of Jesus, this man called Saul of Tarsus.

[16:07] This is why it's called amazing grace. Moving from lostness to being saved involves a transaction. It's a two-party thing.

There is a giver and there is a receiver. The giver is motivated to give because of his gracious character and disposition. Little wonder he is called the God of all grace.

The second party of the transaction is the recipient. The gift has to have somewhere to go. The gift can't be given to nobody.

And the someone is the lost person and the way they receive the gift is simply by accepting it as opposed to ignoring or rejecting it.

And how do you accept it? With your will, your volition. You voluntarily transfer your trust or reliance in whatever you were counting on to make you acceptable to God from whatever that was to the person of Jesus Christ.

[17 : 17] He came and died in your place for your sin simply so you would have Him in whom you could place your trust.

This is why Jesus is called the Savior. He saves. He rescues. He delivers us from what we do deserve and gives us what we do not deserve as a free gift.

It's called justification by faith or becoming right with God solely on the basis of believing Him. It is without a doubt the most glorious thing any human being can ever experience and it comes with eternal benefits.

We will conclude this upcoming. The Unsaved Couple Part 5 If you and your intended have recognized yourselves as being the unsaved couple our past three segments have explained how you can move to the category of being a saved couple and be reminded this has nothing to do with being either single or married.

That's because God doesn't save us as couples but as individuals. This means Christ must be received as one's own personal Savior.

[18 : 40] It's an individual thing not a couple or corporate thing. This is because each of us possesses a will and each of us with our own will must make that decision to accept or reject God's greatest gift to us.

If we accept Him we do so by faith that is by believing. It is the exercise of our will by which we place our trust our reliance our confidence in the person of Jesus Christ for our eternal destiny.

Now be reminded that to make this possible and available to us is the very reason God sent His Son into the world. This is what Christmas and the manger are all about.

This is what Easter and the empty tomb are all about. And it's amazing how many people make a big fuss about both of these every year yet miss the real meaning of them all.

Sadly to so many these are merely holidays of tradition. Well they aren't that to God because Christ who knew no sin was made to become sin in our place so that we might be given the very righteousness of God.

[19 : 59] Paul wrote that also in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. So this is how and the Bible makes it quite clear this is God's only provision for extending His undeserved grace to anyone.

It's all about Jesus. Who He is who sent Him what He did and why it matters so much. No question about it Jesus Christ either is who He claimed to be and did what the Bible says He did or He was not who He claimed to be did not do what the Bible says He did in which case He is the greatest scam artist that ever lived and He hoodwinked millions of people into living for Him and even dying for Him or He was precisely who He claimed to be and did exactly what the Bible says He did.

There is no room for in-between. If He is the latter nothing absolutely nothing matters more than your being rightly related to Him.

And oh yes I've been so excited talking about God's grace and provision I have yet to mention why it is even needed. This I call the hard part of the gospel and you'll see why.

You might even be thinking I knew this was too easy here comes the catch. Well sort of upcoming actually it isn't a catch but it is another aspect of God's gracious provision.

[21 : 36] You'll see what I mean. the hard part of the gospel. The gift of salvation is absolutely free.

Not cheap but free. Free to you and to me because someone else already paid the price to make it available. And all we need to do is accept it with an act of our will.

well why should we do that? And here is what I call the hard part of the gospel. The hard part is our willingness to admit our need our sin our weakness our inadequacy to be or do anything that God will accept.

And many upon hearing that will respond now wait a minute I'm not that bad. But we are. We all are. And it is so hard to break out of that denial and inner reality.

And this is why it's called the hard part of the gospel. This is the sin part of the gospel with which we are all infected. It's the moral and spiritual disease that holds us in the bondage of sin.

[22 : 41] And all that is steeped in our own self-centeredness. Our problem is we are all members of the human race. And we are all infected with this terminal disease called sin.

It will require the death of our physical body. But it cannot touch the non-physical spirit we have that dwells within us. And that's the part of us that is saved when we believe on Christ and at physical death our spirit goes to God while the body goes to the grave awaiting resurrection.

When the Bible says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that's Romans 3. Sin is our problem. All of us. No exceptions. No human being ever born escaped being tainted with sin except for Jesus Christ and he had to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary with the miraculous conception in order to avoid it.

This is why he was without sin and he alone is eligible to pay the price for sin as a sinless sacrifice. For many of us, it isn't difficult at all to admit our sin.

It's often embarrassing and sometimes very obvious. Yet, it's still a blow to the ego to admit. Not only are we a sinner, but we are unable to fix it so God will accept us.

[24 : 00] And this is the hard part of the gospel. Admitting the disease. Not only when we do are we able to repent or change our mind about our sin, but only then can we be convicted and become contrite regarding it.

And only then is God interested in extending his grace and forgiveness. You see, the good news is good news because the bad news is true.

In ourselves, we are and remain lost and undone. And when we are honest to God and to ourselves and own our sin, admit it and agree with God that it is what he says it is, then we are positioned to receive his grace and forgiveness.

But it is the hard part of the gospel. Ha ha, yes. The hard part of the gospel. Once we admit the disease, then reaching out to Jesus, the remedy is the easy part.

Where are you? is the hard part behind you? If either or both parties of your relationship have accomplished the hard part of admitting and confessing your sin to God, you may be sure you have conquered the greatest obstacle.

[25 : 31] This is meeting God's requirement of recognizing our need and inability to address it in ourselves. This is so critical, because only when we have done that have we moved from denial into the truth.

And be advised, God only deals with us in truth, not in our denial of the truth. To confess our sin simply means to agree with God as to what sin really is and our bondage to it.

The word in the Greek is homo legio, and the English spelling would be h-o-m-o, which means the same, and legio, l-e-g-e-o, which means to say.

Put together, it means to say the same thing. God in his word reveals what sin is, how all sin is an affront to him and contrary to his nature and holiness.

And when we come to this same conclusion about ourselves, we are in agreement with God. We are admitting that God is right and we are wrong. Well, think about that.

[26 : 33] That is the essence of confession. confession. It's all about agreeing with God as to our true state. It isn't pretty, and it's humbling to the ego, but it is accurate, and it is true.

Realizing this, owning our sin, taking responsibility for it when we realize its truth results in contrition. And this is the emotional pain we experience when we see how we have sinned against God and others.

Coupled with that is the emotional pain felt when we realize that God deeply loved us even while we were dead in our trespasses and sins. And it was his undeserved love for us that prompted him to send Jesus to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

That is, to make us acceptable to God. This is why the Bible says God has made us accepted in and through Jesus Christ in Ephesians 1.

Can anyone be aware of what God has done through Christ and the awful price Jesus paid to demonstrate his love for us and not be moved with contrition?

[27 : 40] Failure to do so can only be attributed to either not knowing or understanding this, or flatly rejecting it as untrue, even though the Bible affirms it throughout.

This whole issue of salvation and the gospel or good news that announces it is all about a wake-up call to reality. The gospel is good news that contains vital information.

And when we hear the bad news about sin and admit it, then we are positioned to do something about it. Because you can't address what you don't know, and this is all about dispensing information so that those hearing can respond to it.

We are all sinners. But God loved us anyway, and sent his Son, who was willing to balance the moral scales of the universe so we could be saved from our sin. If you have done this, then the hard part of the gospel, that is our denial of our true situation, is behind you.

The easy part that follows will follow upcoming. And it is the very best part of all. Now, the easy part. [28 : 54] The previous segment spelled out the hard part of the gospel that includes coming to grips with the reality of our sin and our inability to remedy the situation. We call this the hard part because all of us tend to be in denial about our true condition.

And this is because we see ourselves inaccurately and not as God sees us. And when we agree with God's assessment, we realize that our only hope is in God's provision for our lost condition, as opposed to anything we can provide.

Sin is the terminal disease affecting us all. Jesus Christ is the remedy, the antidote. But as said before, no one will seek a cure if he doesn't know he has a disease.

The gospel or good news begins with the bad news of revealing the disease which is sin. And when we agree with God that this is so and repent or change our mind about our sin, God is then prepared to provide the remedy.

It is but for us to believe in, trust in, rely upon Jesus as our Savior and Lord who died in our place. And when we do that, as a deliberate act of our will, God responds by spiritually regenerating us or making us alive to himself on our inside.

[30 : 18] This is by believing alone, as in Romans 4, 5 that says, But to him who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith or belief is counted or accepted as righteousness.

Now this has nothing to do with church, joining one, giving money to one, being baptized in one. It is a purely spiritual operation between the sinner, that's us, and the believer, and that's Jesus. Jesus then in the person of the Holy Spirit actually enters your being and makes you a new person on the inside. He gives you his righteousness, his forgiveness, and his eternal life, through which you become one in union with him.

This is called being saved, becoming a Christian, being born again, passing from spiritual death to spiritual life. It makes you a brand new person, forgiven, cleansed, and headed for heaven when you die, all because Jesus died for your sin and your trust is in him.

So, is this true of you? If it is, you have accomplished both the hard part and the easy part of the gospel.

[31 : 37] Ourselves and our sin made up the hard part, and Jesus Christ and his love and eagerness to receive you make up the easy part as we commit to him. If this is not true of you, we're not about to give up on you, nor has God.

But we would urge you to pray and ask God for more light. Ask him if this is true, and ask him to reveal himself to you if it is. Also, please read the gospel of John, and as you do, ask God to allow you to see the truth, if these things are so.

Our prayers are for any of you who may be in this position. God bless you as you seek more truth. The Motivation for Salvation There is really only one valid motivation for anyone to place their trust in Jesus Christ and believe on him as the substitute for our sin.

And it has nothing to do with marriage. We are not to become Christians so we may have a Christian marriage, as desirable as that is. The singular motivation for placing one's faith in Christ is simply because it is the right thing to do.

All other reasons excluded. This is the motivation that outstrips all others. Coming to this conclusion, it's the right thing to do, the only right thing to do, is what we have concluded after weighing the facts.

[33 : 09] Fact one, as a member of the human race, I am a flawed and sin-laden human being just like everyone else. And like the good book says throughout and very pointedly in Romans 3.23, that all have sinned and come short of the glory or standards of God.

And why should I or anyone else think we do not belong to that all of which the scriptures speak? So, fact two, taking my place among the all, I find God has a standard I cannot meet, nor can anyone else.

Fact three, that leaves us in the most dangerous and unsettling predicament any human being can experience, one of spiritual and moral lostness.

And once that truth sets in, and we really come to grips with that, and its potential consequences of an eternal lostness, we can only ask, is there anything that can be done to remedy this? Is there no way out? Fact four, this same Bible that reveals our sin, also reveals the remedy for it. This is what Jesus Christ is all about.

[34 : 19] Putting all these truths together will then provide the proper motivation for coming to Christ. It's simply the right thing to do, eclipsing any and all other motivations.

Now, stemming from that motivation of its being the right thing to do, there are numerous positive consequences that flow from that decision. To name a few, well, the realization of forgiveness and acceptance by God himself, and the eternal life which accompanies that.

And the entering into a peace with God that produces an assurance for one's soul, never before known. And the grasping of a new reality that allows us to see life and the world as they truly are, not as we wrongly perceive them like before.

A new ability to relate to our fellow man, because we now see people with a new set of eyes once salvation has been realized. All of these, and so much more, have become the new sphere in which one who has come to Christ is now living.

These are all byproducts, fruit if you will, that is now being produced by the new root that is in you, even Christ himself. And nothing the world has ever seen can begin to compare with this.

[35 : 43] No wonder our motivation for salvation is, it's the right thing to do. The only right thing to do. And if you haven't done that, you may right now.

What are you waiting for? The Unwed Mixed Couple Living Together, Part 1 We have categorized the three kinds of couples who are living together without marriage.

The first couple we described as non-Christian has been the focus of the previous nine sessions of Marriage on the Rock. We carefully detailed what was involved for them, or for anyone, to move from their position of being unsaved to that of saved, or from being spiritually lost to spiritually found.

Of the three categories, the two that remain include the mixed couple where one is a Christian and the other is not, and the third where both are Christians.

It is definitely the second, one a believer and one not, that we consider now, which is by far the more difficult and stressful of the three.

[37 : 02] And the reason is because both obviously have real feelings for each other. They enjoy each other to the extent they want to live together and perhaps are already doing so.

And both would surely declare their love for the other. So while they are on the same page, so to speak, in many ways, yet they remain poles apart in the way that matters most.

And this is because in the very area most critical in a marriage, they are clearly incompatible. And yes, of course, we speak of the spiritual. And in this area, the one who is a Christian and the one who is not represent two entirely different worlds.

Let me explain and reveal why this is so important. The Christian believer thinks and functions from a certain mindset and philosophy, a way of thinking, that is in keeping with their faith.

It profoundly impacts their worldview, their value system, their agenda, and their priorities. They cannot help it that they are that way because once one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, absolutely everything changes.

[38 : 19] They didn't change everything deliberately, but the introduction of Jesus Christ into their life changed everything for them right down to the core of their being.

It is no small thing to become a believer in Christ. It's the greatest thing there is, or that could ever happen to them or anyone else. They have been born again.

Old things have passed away and all things have become new. This is radical. And it takes place in every single person who comes to faith. It often is not immediately recognizable in their life because now they have a lot of growing and maturing to do.

But make no mistake about it, the change agent, the Spirit of God, is there and working. This is not true of the unbeliever they love.

Because of this, they are worlds apart, and incompatibility is germane to the relationship. More coming. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman thanking you so much for being a part of our ongoing spiritual family of Marriage on the Rock.

[39 : 36] The Unwed Mixed Couple Living Together Part 2 If you are a couple living together as husband and wife, but not actually married, you are well aware of all the arguments many have

presented for doing so, and you probably rehearsed them to each other when you decided to move in and live together.

This will all be addressed later, and will include some things you most likely did not think about. But for right now, we are considering an unwed, mixed couple living together.

And when we say mixed couple, this is not in reference to an interracial couple, or even an international couple, or an ethnic couple where differences occur, but it is in reference to one of the couple being a citizen of heaven, and the other a citizen of planet earth.

We can rightly say this unwed, mixed couple are from two different worlds, whether they realize it or not, and the likelihood is they probably do not.

Nonetheless, it is true. If one of you has a personal relationship with Christ and the other does not, no matter how compatible you may think you are, and you may well be in several areas.

[40 : 59] Yet, in that one critical area that matters most, you are essentially worlds apart. This is because the one who is a believer has a regenerated spirit within them which they received at salvation.

The other possesses an unregenerate spirit with which they were born. The believer has been born again. The unbeliever has not. This makes them fundamentally different in the very core of their being.

And by the way, this has nothing to do with the unbeliever being a nice person, maybe even a very nice person. However nice a person is, however kind and thoughtful and generous and so on, does not begin to compensate for being unregenerated in their spirit.

Bottom line is this. If this is where you are as a live-in couple, you are not candidates for marriage.

And in your case, it is well you have not entered into a legally binding marriage relationship.

Actually, you are already in a modified kind of marital relationship without the legal status. And for the one who is a believer, your conjugal relationship is called fornication.

[42 : 18] Fornication in the Bible. It's the sexual relationship that occurs between unmarrieds. High school and college campuses are awash in fornication and treat sex much like a recreational activity.

For the unbeliever who is the live-in, they too are guilty of fornication, but they have a problem much bigger than that. And moving out or getting married won't fix it.

John 3.36 explains it. He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. Now that is a problem.

For the wrath of God to find a home or abide on your life, that is a problem. That is a problem. The unwed, mixed couple living together, part three.

To say that one who becomes a believer in Jesus Christ is now a citizen of heaven is not a Christian cliché. It is a biblical truth that is declared by God himself.

[43 : 28] In writing to the Christians of Philippi, the inspired apostle Paul spoke clearly of the two classes of people in chapter 3. And after reminding the Philippian Christians that they are to conduct their lives after the biblical pattern set before them, he mentioned that there are those who do not and cannot walk that way, because whether they realize it or not, they are described as enemies of the cross of Christ.

He further says that their end is destruction, their God is their appetite, their glory is in their shame, and their mind is limited to earthly things, temporal things.

And then he follows with the dramatic separation that divides believers from non-believers by reminding Christians that our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, as the old song goes, this world is not my home, I am just a passing through. All Christians, even if they are unaware of it, have a permanent residence with Christ in heaven, and our time on earth is merely temporal.

One may be a true believer in Christ and not be aware of these truths due to their lack of spiritual maturity and their not being familiar enough with biblical teaching, but it is still true of one who belongs to Christ whether they know about this citizenship in heaven or not.

[44 : 56] And it is equally true of the unbeliever that his end is destruction, and they are capable only of minding earthly temporal things whether they know it or not or whether they believe it or not.

For the Christian, Christ is their head, and their entire life is wrapped up in him as the core of their being, whether they have grown sufficiently to know that or not.

For the non-Christian, this world, and Satan who is described as the god of this world in 2 Corinthians 4, he is the head of the unbeliever, and he succeeds in deceiving that unbeliever, that all is well, and that he as a non-Christian is just as good as anyone else, Christians included. In fact, one might well expect the unbeliever to scoff at all this, make fun of it, and entirely dismiss it as so much religious nonsense. And that, too, is what they are expected to say and do, and many have done so.

In fact, most completely disregard this content, just as the Apostle Paul himself did before his conversion to Christ.

[46 : 13] And that led him to say to the Corinthians in this first chapter that the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But, to those who are saved, that cross represents the very power of God.

There it is. Two different worlds. Two different gods. Two different destinies. As incompatible as possible in areas that matter most.

And there's more. Upcoming. The Unwed Mixed Couples Living Together Part 4 2 Corinthians chapter 6 addresses the issue of a believer in Christ marrying an unbeliever.

And it could not be clearer in its meaning or in the divine rationale behind it. Here it is from the inspired pen of the Apostle Paul beginning with verse 14. Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

For what does righteousness and unrighteousness have in common? And what communion does light have with darkness? What concord does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does one who is a believer have with an unbeliever?

[47 : 30] These are all rhetorical questions with answers that are automatic and obvious. Nothing or none. For instance, what does righteousness have in common with unrighteousness?

Nothing. What communion does light have with darkness? None. What concord does Christ have with Belial? None. What part does one who is a believer have with an unbeliever?

None. To make his point, the Apostle Paul draws upon a well-known analogy of his day. All were familiar with a team of animals pulling a wagon. And pairing the animals together, it was appropriate to yoke only the same kind of animals to the hitch in order for them to work compatibly.

For instance, a donkey was not to be yoked together with an ox. That's an unequal yoke and would surely not be appropriate. Donkeys, yoke to donkeys.

Oxen, yoke to oxen. And so on. Well, yes, both are animals. And yes, both will work and pull. But not together. They are not suited to be together because they are fundamentally different.

[48 : 38] And Paul uses this scenario, with which everyone in his day was familiar, to illustrate the stark incompatibility of a believer in Christ being yoked in marriage to an unbeliever.

The prohibition against doing so is unmistakable and for the same reason. Between the believer and the unbeliever, there is a fundamental incompatibility, and it's on the deepest level.

They represent two different worlds. I personally can speak with some authority to this issue because I was introduced to this biblical principle that forbade an unequal yoke consisting of a believer being married to an unbeliever in December 1956.

After a whirlwind romance all of four months, I was planning to marry the girl of my dreams. Barbara was a 19-year-old Christian, and I was a 21-year-old soldier away from home and very much a non-Christian.

And we had already been informed by Barbara's mother that she disapproved of our plans to marry and would not give her blessing. And then she added, It isn't that you are not a nice boy, Marvin.

[49 : 54] It's just that the issue is spiritual, and it's hard for me to explain it. Would you be willing to talk to our minister? Well, of course, I replied.

I assume he would be the one performing the ceremony. Sure, I'll talk with him. Can you make an appointment for us this afternoon? And she did. Upcoming.

Calling God Dumb The Reverend Harold Sweetland's church was in Ellensburg, Washington, about 25 miles from where Barbara's family lived.

Her mother had made an appointment for us to speak with the minister. She said he would explain why she did not want her daughter to marry me. Despite my assurances to her mother that I loved her daughter with all my heart, would do all I could to provide for her and make her happy, certainly never abuse her in any way, and Barbara equally made it clear to her mother about how much in love she was with me.

But there was no yielding on her part. So we were off to see the minister, whom she thought could explain her unwillingness. Actually, I thought the minister might end up being an ally of mine in convincing Barbara's mother.

[51 : 16] No way. And I shall forever be indebted to Pastor Sweetland for his staunch adherence to the Bible. After the usual introductions, the pastor turned to Barbara and asked, Barbara, are you a Christian?

To which she replied, Yes, I am. Then he turned to me. And what about you, Marvin? Are you a Christian? Well, all I could think of was my best buddy, Dave, with whom I had enjoyed the weekend pass when I met Barbara.

Dave was Jewish. Well, I knew I wasn't Jewish. Then I thought of the other buddies in the barracks back at Fort Lewis. Some of them were Catholics, and I wasn't Catholic.

Then it struck me that when I was inducted into the army, they issued a set of metal ID tags. We called them dog tags. And on mine, they had stamped a P.

And P was for Protestant. And, of course, everyone knows that Protestants are Christians. So I answered, Uh, yeah, I guess so. I guess I'm a Christian.

[52 : 28] And looking me straight in the eye and shaking his head, the good pastor said, No, I don't think so. And I'm sorry, but I cannot marry you and Barbara.

If you want, even though I wouldn't recommend it, there is a justice of the peace a block down the street, and he will marry you, but I can't. I was stunned. But I can't say Barbara looked too surprised.

Saddened, but not surprised. I was the one who was surprised. And I said, Look, we love each other. I'm a man, she's a woman, and we want to get married.

Here is a license to do so from the state of Washington. And per army regulations, I receive permission from my company commander at Fort Lewis to get married. Just what is the problem here?

And he replied, It's a spiritual matter. And since Barbara is a Christian and you are not, to join you in marriage would constitute an unequal yoke, and I just can't do that.

[53 : 29] A what? An unequal yoke? What do you mean an unequal yoke? Well, I didn't say it, but I sure did think it. That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of.

Little did I know I was impugning the will and wisdom of the Almighty, and that in reality I was the dumb one. Upcoming.

Equalizing the Unequal Yoke Part 1 December 8, 1956 Ellensburg, Washington Barbara, my bride-to-be, and I sat there before Pastor Sweetland in stunned silence.

He had just told us he would not conduct our wedding ceremony due to it being against the Bible and would create an unequal yoke. And as I was trying to process this really weird, far-out concept he was talking about, this unequal yoke thing, and whether if Barbara was willing, maybe we should go look up this justice of the peace the pastor said would marry us.

And just then, the pastor broke the silence with a question. Looking at me, he asked, Marvin, would you like to really know what a Christian is and how you could become one?

[55 : 00] Well, I could hardly believe what I was hearing. Is he saying that somebody actually knows that? Is he saying that he knows the answer to that?

And he is asking me if I want to know it? My immediate thought inwardly was, Well, of course. Who wouldn't want to know that?

For much of my young life, I had wondered if anyone really knew God in some, you know, special kind of way, but had concluded that probably nobody did, because if anybody did, they would tell everybody.

And no one had ever told me. But now, here was a man sitting across from me who gave me the impression that he had this information. And again, all I could think was, Well, yes, of course I would like to know.

Pastor Sweetland opened his Bible and began reading from it. And I am embarrassed to this day to admit, I do not know where in the Bible he was reading.

[56 : 08] Chapter and verse completely escaped me. But I do recall that what he read and how he explained it certainly made a lot of sense to me. More sense than anything I had ever heard from anyone.

Now, of course, I know the dear man was just giving me the gospel. That good news about God loving us in such a way he was willing to send his only son to pay the penalty for my sin. And that Jesus loved us in such a way that he was willing to come and do it. And this was all news to me. I mean, sure, I knew the basics about Jesus and the cross and the resurrection. I knew about the Christmas and Easter stuff, but I never actually put it all together. Certainly not in any way that could affect me 2,000 years after the fact. I never made the connection, nor did I even understand a connection could be or should be made. And if so, how to make it? And this man was telling me it could be done, and he was telling me how. An overwhelming desire arose within me when he then asked Marvin, Would you like to receive Jesus Christ as your very own Savior? [57 : 25] And my response was, Upcoming. Equalizing the Unequal Yoke, Part 2 There we sat, just the three of us.

Barbara, whom I eagerly wanted to marry, Pastor Harold Sweetland, and myself. Minutes earlier, he had informed us he would not be able to marry us because Barbara was a Christian and I was not. After that began to sink in, although I still could not really comprehend it, he then asked if I wanted to become a Christian myself, if I wanted to really know what was involved. I told him, Of course I did. My thinking was, Who wouldn't? He read and explained some verses from the Bible that certainly made sense. More sense than anything else I had ever heard. Barbara, during our four-month courtship, had also talked of Christ and salvation, and from time to time quoted a verse or two from the Bible, But I must admit, It just didn't register.

[58 : 36] Probably because I had stars in my eyes while feasting on the beauty of this woman I intended to marry. And having told Pastor Sweetland, of course I would like to become a Christian, he then said, All right, let's kneel down right here, and why don't you just tell God what you want Him to know, and what you want to do, that you want to become a Christian, and then I will pray. Well, we both got down on our knees, and I stumbled through a prayer, not able at all to recall what I prayed, because the only prayer I had ever known was, Now I lay me down to sleep. And that just didn't seem applicable for this occasion. Anyway, I prayed, such as it was, and then the pastor prayed. And I do recall that, when we stood up, I asked him, Is that it? And he asked me, Did you really mean what you said in your prayer? And I said, Yes, I did. I really meant everything I said. And inwardly, I told myself, No one in their right mind would even try to trifle with God, and I certainly wouldn't even think of it.

[59 : 58] Absolutely, I meant everything I said. Pastor Sweetland said, All right then, God has heard your prayer, and He has saved you. To which I replied, That's good. I must say, I felt no particular emotion, no tears, no feeling of a great weight removed, no feeling of having been cleansed, or any other memorable feeling. I just believed the verses the pastor had explained, and did what they said, and God has saved me. And I never doubted that then, and would not for a couple of years, when a crisis of doubt would arise.

But that's another story. And Pastor Sweetland then shook hands with me, and with Barbara, and then he said, You come back at seven o'clock this evening, and I will marry you. And as wonderful as it was to hear that, still, all was not well, not in my bride, nor in the bride's mother. Upcoming.

[61 : 03] Fear and trepidation about the yoke. The 7 p.m. ceremony that December 8, 1956, was very small and informal.

Barbara wore a beautiful tweed suit, and I had just purchased my first civilian suit in years, having worn my military khaki uniforms for the past nearly three years. Her mom and dad were there, a younger sister, and a married couple, who were friends of the family. These constituted the entire ceremony. It appeared that her mother managed a smile, but only with effort. And when we returned to the family home, after I had received Christ, Barbara relayed the good news to her mother, to which she replied, Oh, that's nice. That's nice?

That's nice? I thought she would be overjoyed that I was now a Christian and a fit mate for her daughter, and all I get is a, That's nice? I didn't say it, but I recall thinking it.

[62 : 11] Gee, thanks a lot. But, at the church, after the ceremony, we said our goodbyes. It was all of about 7.15 p.m., a newly married couple, with the husband being a three-hour-old Christian.

We left the church and intended a honeymoon with a trip to Canada. But a snowstorm soon developed into a complete whiteout. The wipers couldn't even remove the snow fast enough from the windshield to see.

And after driving several miles with more snow coming and less and less visibility, we decided to spend our honeymoon night in Yakima, Washington. We would do Canada later with better weather.

I made a lodging arrangement with the desk clerk at the hotel and began carrying in our luggage. All the time, actually, ever since the ceremony, and all the while on the road to Yakima, Barbara, my new bride, was in complete inner turmoil.

I had no idea of what she was dealing with on the inside, and she never told me until sometime later. And then she confessed that she was extremely upset, even right after the ceremony and the goodbyes to her family.

[63 : 27] What could she possibly have been upset about? The ceremony was short and sweet, like about every man would want it. And I assumed she was glad we were married.

My assumption was unjustified. She said she wasn't regretting it, nor was she able to rejoice over it. Rather, she was an emotional bag of mixed feelings.

Well, where did that come from? And then she told me her fear, and it was torturous, that my decision was not real. She didn't have any peace that it was, but she did not know that it wasn't. And on the surface, it may very well have been a decision I made just to get the girl. And her mother was suspicious also, which I later learned accounted for the that's nice.

Because Barbara said that if my decision wasn't real, she had just become married to what might be a class A manipulator who would do whatever it took to get whatever he wanted.

[64 : 30] She was desperate that God would do something to let her know and put her mind at ease that it was for real. And how God did that is upcoming. God came through for the bride.

Following our brief wedding ceremony and the two or three hours we drove in Washington winter snowstorm, Barbara spent those hours praying desperately.

She was begging God to let her know that her new husband was not faking it when he made what looked like a decision for Christ. But was it really? Actually, the idea of pretending to trust Christ in order to get the girl and have the minister then marry us never even entered my mind.

I had never been more serious about anything in my life. And I knew full well that I was completely sincere and meant from the heart everything I said in my prayer at the church.

Yet, there was no way that onlookers, including Barbara, could read my heart. All they had to go on was how things appeared outwardly. Upon hearing all of this as Barbara later confided in me, I must admit, it probably did not pass the smell test.

[65 : 48] You know, smells somewhat fishy. And then, I understood her mother's that's nice when she was told of my conversion.

Now, back up now to the motel and my carrying in all our luggage to the room where our honeymoon would begin. I'd just taken off my coat and I told Barbara that the first thing I had to do was call my family back in Ohio.

They knew we were to be married that day in Ellensburg, Washington, but it was all on such short notice they couldn't even consider coming to Washington for the wedding. So, I made the call from the room and my mother answered and I told her, Mom, you'll never guess what happened to me today.

She paused and then said, well, I think I know. You did get married today, didn't you? And I said, yes, we did get married.

But, Mom, I also got saved today. And when I said that, Barbara told me that an enormous burden on her heart and mind simply went away.

[67 : 02] She was persuaded that if my conversion had not been genuine, I would have never even bothered to mention it to my mother. Well, she was reading me accurately, I would not have mentioned it, but I did.

I did because it was the most real, genuine thing I've ever done in my life before or since. Without this newfound assurance God had given my young bride that her husband was for real, her internal disposition and feelings had changed dramatically.

Now she was entitled to have all the joy, security, and comfort which all new brides should be able to experience. God really did come through for her then, and many times later, over the ensuing 49 plus years.

Barbara is with the Lord now since 2006. When I get to heaven, I want first of all to see my Savior who loved me and gave himself for me.

Then I want to see Barbara. And next, where do I find Pastor Sweetland? Salvation Motivation Revisited Our motivation in coming to God for His salvation is not for trifling, and we surely need to keep in mind that we cannot con or manipulate God.

[68 : 32] He sees through us and He knows us better than we know ourselves. And the Deity is not one who bargains or makes deals. He has already set the terms for our coming to Him, and they are not alterable.

Several realities need to be in place. One wants to come to God through the only way He has provided, and this is through His very own Son Jesus, whom the Father sent for the express purpose, balancing those moral scales of the universe, by being made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

So says 2 Corinthians, 5 and verse 21. So a first reality that must be in place is a frank admission of our sin, and it's causing our separation from God.

And don't try to explain it, justify it, or deny it, just admit it. And when you do, you are in agreement with God, who has already said that about you and all the rest of us.

And one who has not yet come to grips with their sin and its offense to God, will never seek the Savior. They do not perceive a need. Why seek a remedy if you have no disease?

[69 : 49] But if people only understood how really bad off they are before a holy God, they would gladly and quickly come to the Savior for His forgiveness and cleansing. But because of deception, both the inner kind, whereby we sell ourselves a bill of goods, that we really aren't that bad and certainly were better than a lot of people, and that coupled with the deception that is without, namely the world and its phony philosophies, plus the God of this world, Satan, as revealed in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and these vehicles of deception leave the sinner looking pretty good.

No need to seek a Savior. I'm okay as I am. Maybe I need to tweak a little here and there and drop off a couple of bad habits and I'll be okay.

I'm willing to take my chances that the Almighty will smile upon me and open those pearly gates wide. No, He won't.

And this is another reality to factor in. Jesus Christ is the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father, but through Him. He Himself said so in John 14.

Put these realities together and they all spell one thing. Anyone, everyone must come to God through Jesus Christ because it's the right thing to do. It's the only right thing to do as regards our personal salvation.

[71 : 22] And no, we don't come to Christ so we can have a better marriage. But you may be certain that a better marriage then becomes a distinct possibility because when Christ comes in, everything is changed.

And He will come in and He will change everything when we come to Him for His salvation and eternal life. And did we mention it's the right thing to do?

The greatest motivator of them all. You've been listening to Marriage on the Rock. Marriage on the Rock A preview of Marriage on the Rock, Volume 12.

It is apparent that the concept of couples living together as husband and wife, yet not actually married, has swept the culture of our society.

Living together without marriage has even impacted the Christian community as well. A generation ago, it was considered unacceptable, or at least very ill-advised, for lovers to move in together without marriage.

[72 : 28] And any couple that did so usually wanted to keep it quiet and perhaps give the impression that they were married. But times have changed dramatically. For Christians, the only pertinent question about it all is whether the biblical standards have changed as well, whether the traditional view of marriage as set forth in Scripture has perhaps simply been misinterpreted and misunderstood all these years.

The non-Christian community, which we have already addressed in this present volume 11, are generally unconcerned as to what the Bible has to say about marriage, as well as its view regarding other issues.

And that is understandable for those without faith in Christ and the Bible. In fact, there is no reason why they should reject the biblical teaching regarding salvation and then all at once be concerned as to what it says about marriage.

Their denial of biblical authority and their attendant refusal to live by its dictates is not only very understandable, it is even expected.

And this is what the Apostle Paul addresses in Romans 8, when he reminds us that the unbelievers who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

[73 : 53] And that depicts the non-Christian. And Paul then goes on to say, but those who are according to the Spirit, that is, the believers in Christ, the things of the Spirit.

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.

And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So we really don't have any right to expect anything more from them than that. But Paul then addresses his Christian constituency by saying, however, you, meaning the recipients of this letter, the Romans, to whom he is writing, by saying, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you, but if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. These are very sobering words, whereby the inspired apostle again makes clear, a clear-cut distinction between Christians and non-Christians.

There is no reason why non-Christians should be expected to act like Christians, because they couldn't even if they wanted to, Paul is saying. However, a different attitude and actions are expected from those who call themselves Christian, because they, having the Spirit of God, are capable of meeting biblical standards.

[75 : 31] It is those couples claiming to be believers who are living together, without marriage, or who are thinking about doing so, that we will address on upcoming segments of Marriage on the Rock, Volume 12.

All told, it means that, at least in part, the non-Christians lot is not one bit improved should those living together, without marriage, actually get married.

Their living together without marriage is, in effect, the least of their problems. And the problem that looms much larger involves the eternal consequences that will be their sad lot outside of Christ. This situation was addressed in the previous Tracts 2 through 10 on this volume. Lengthy treatment was devoted to this issue more than any other because of its extreme importance and its consequences.

Please consider reviewing it if you would like a refresher. Regardless of where you are among the situations we have presented, be assured that God loves you more than you know, and He wants only the best for you, for now and eternity.

[76 : 51] That's why Jesus came. God bless you. This is Pastor Marv worksheet thank you for being a part of our audience. Thank you for being a part of our audience.

Thank you for being a part of our audience. Thank you for being a part of our audience. Thank you for being a part of our audience. Thank you for being a part of our audience.