

FOR THE LOVE OF MUSLIMS

Lessons for Online Missionaries dealing with Muslims

Lesson 30: Is it Okay to Marry a Muslim?

How would you respond if a Christian emailed you and asked if it was ok for them to marry a Muslim? Perhaps he or she is from a Muslim background and their family is insisting that they marry a Muslim. Or perhaps a young Christian person has fallen in love with a Muslim and wants to marry him or her. What does the Bible have to say about this?

Certainly, God addresses this issue. You might want to share the biblical principle of not being “unequally yoked” with non-believers (2 Cor. 6:14-16) and the specific reasons *why* believers shouldn’t marry unbelievers. A word of caution about that unequally yoked verse: In typical Pauline fashion, he makes extreme comparisons:

Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? . . . For we are the temple of the living God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)

Many non-Christians are fine people, loving and honest. Understandably, they (or the Christian who has already fallen in love with one) could be highly offended by the suggestion that they are “wicked” or belong to the devil. These are theological truths about ultimate destiny that are too difficult to explain in the context we are dealing with. Simply state the command not to be unequally yoked (partnered) with a non-believer, and back it up with practical wisdom. The challenges of interfaith marriages are:

1. In many non-western cultures, a person does not marry only an individual, but marries into a family, clan, and community. It is not enough that a future spouse promises not to force conversion, when other family members could put so much pressure that the Christian would be forced to convert or be miserable.
2. Bringing up children and teaching them a religious outlook is something difficult for single people considering such a marriage to foresee. The children may end up siding with one parent against another, or learning that religion doesn’t really matter after all – which both parents may not believe!
3. The sadness of one partner feeling that the other cannot share his or her deepest beliefs and joys is deep. And after death there is no ultimate consolation.

Occasionally, you may hear from a non-Christian who wants to marry a Christian. In this case, you would want to share the above principles without referring to the Bible verse. Empathize with the seeker, since this is a matter of strong emotions.

If it is the case of parents wanting a follower of Christ to marry a Muslim, you can encourage your internet contact that they should try to be respectful and yet not marry. They should pray

for that intended spouse and try to share Christ with them if there is personal contact between them. If they are actually forced to marry, then it is by force. That is not their fault.

This website: www.InterfaithShaadi.org is not a Christian website, but reading some of the comments by young people in disastrous interfaith relationships should be enough to caution anyone.

What if somebody comes to Christ and is already married to a Muslim? If that is case, they should *not* divorce. God clearly tells us that he hates divorce:

“For I hate divorce!” says the Lord. (Malachi 2:16)

“But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)

The principle here is to pray for the unbelieving spouse. Who knows? God may use the life of the believing spouse to draw the unbelieving spouse to himself!

“If a Christian man has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. And if a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband brings holiness to his marriage...Don’t you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don’t you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you? Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you.” (1 Corinthians 7:12-17)

Send comments/questions to flmcomments@navajeevan.org