Can Doctrinal Differences Make You Unequally Yoked?

* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**
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* COMMENTS **6**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION**: A friend told me that having doctrinal differences in a relationship means we are "unequally yoked." Is that true? Can doctrinal differences be a red flag?

**HE SAID:**

A doctrinal difference in a relationship *can* be construed as being “unequally yoked.” However, before you go out and immediately break off your relationship because of what someone says, I would suggest you seek for yourself what differences actually exist between you and your significant other.

Oftentimes, we oversimplify people by placing a label on them based upon looks, ethnicity, sex, political affiliation and even the church they attend. Just because a person is born into a religious group, attends a specific place of worship, or listens to a certain pastor doesn’t necessarily mean that person lives by ALL of those principles explicitly.

A church sign is also not a clear indication of what each and every person who enters the building believes.

Many of us don’t always agree with everything spoken nor the manner in which church business is handled, yet we still attend for other reasons. I’d be curious to know what percentage of church-goers actually know the entire doctrinal beliefs of their church and pastor. Likewise, many of us do not know that of the place of worship next door nor the one down the street.

As for your relationship, the only way to know whether you are spiritually compatible, as you would any other issue, is to sit down and honestly discuss with your significant other what their faith is based upon, not what their church, pastor or friend thinks.

It is both beneficial and imperative for each of us to challenge ourselves to figure out what we do truly believe and seek to yoke ourselves with someone who will encourage and share those ideals.

If, in the process, you find your values and personal doctrines do not line up and are “non-negotiable” matters, then you will be faced with a decision to make for yourself.

**SHE SAID:**

It all depends on what those doctrinal differences are.

Let's assume that you are both Christians, both saved and following the Lord every day. That you are both going to church, reading your [**Bible**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/), studying, and so forth. So it appears you are equally yoked. But after dating a while you realize that you have some differences in what you believe. Perhaps your partner goes to a different denomination (tip: learning about denominational differences could help you prevent a major dating blunder!). Maybe you found out they believe it's important to be submerged when baptized, while your church thinks a sprinkle is OK. Maybe you found out they believe women should be silent in the church, while you believe they have a voice. Maybe you believe you can talk and pray to Mary, mother of Jesus, while your boyfriend believes she died like all people have and can't hear you.

Here's the thing, for me personally I believe as long as the doctrinal differences do not affect my eternal salvation, I am OK. I believe you can only get to God through Jesus and his death on the cross by the acknowledgement that you need Christ to save you (as someone who is of age to make this decision). That once saved, always saved, otherwise Jesus would need to die on the cross over and over. But whether you sprinkle or dunk, wear a dress or pants to church, read the King James Bible only, dance and move around in church or sit still, are of no factors to me.

But please know, this is why you spend time with people first as *friends*. Although some of our doctrinal beliefs may not be a big deal to some, they are huge to others because they will affect your entire life. Learn what your church believes and pray about what you believe. Then realize that the person you date, the person you marry, needs to be in alignment so that you have spiritual unity with each other, and also in how you would raise your kids, grow your [**marriage**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/), and lead others around you.

*If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* ([**Romans 10:9**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=ro+10:9-9)).

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

***SHE is ...******Kris Swiatocho****, the President and Director of* [***TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries***](http://thesinglesnetwork.org/) *and* [***FromHisHands.com Ministries.***](http://fromhishands.com/) *Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is also the author of* [***three books.***](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/bookspdfs.html)

***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the Bible is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)*.*