**Intentional Relationships:** *Can Doctrinal Differences Make You Unequally Yoked?*   
By Kris Swiatocho and Pastor Dan Houk

**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?*

It all depends on what those doctrinal differences are. Let's assume that you are both Christians, saved and following the Lord daily. You are both going to church, reading your Bible, studying, serving, and so forth. So, it appears you are equally yoked. But after dating for a while, you realize that you have some differences in what you believe spiritually.

Maybe you found out they believe it's essential to be submerged when baptized, while you think it's ok to be sprinkled. As a result, you want them to be submerged to know they are really saved.

Maybe you believe women should not be in leadership in the church and should only be wives and mothers. As a result, you find yourself in heated discussions of women's roles with nothing resolved.  
  
Maybe you believe salvation is when you are a baby and are baptized and not when you can understand and verbally accept Christ as your Saviour. As a result, you find yourself divided and heading in different directions.

Maybe you believe certain gifts of the Spirit are not used today. As a result, your personal growth in Christ is affected, leaving one of you behind.

So, does this mean you are not equally yoked?

Here's the thing: 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 acknowledging that you need Christ to save you (as someone 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 no factors to me.

But please know, this is why you spend time with people first as *friends* and then building an "Intentional Friendship" (Chapters 9-10 of the Intentional Relationship for Singles Bible Study). When you are friends first, you can ask those questions and many more about their beliefs. Not only in what you believe spiritually but also in money, goals, raising kids, work, hobbies, and more. And you can also go to God in prayer about those differences. Will those differences divide you or unify you? 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. 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, and lead others around you.   
Note: Unequally yoked in a spiritual sense means a believer and an unbeliever. But there are plenty of issues that can be irreconcilable and make a couple incompatible.

### [*2 Corinthians 6:14-18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+6%3A14-18&version=ESV) *ESV*

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”*

Order your copy of Intentional Relationships for Single's 12-week Bible study to learn more about dating, friendship, and intentional friendship. This study covers topics on why our relationships fail, identity, gender differences, boundaries, conflict, blind spots, friendship (in all our relationships—family, work, church, neighbors, friends) but also intentional friendship, including red, yellow, and green flags, intentional dating, and engagement.