

# Pastor's Pen

How are you yoked?

**Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14**

In the men's and ladies discipleship classes, I am stressing the importance of having loving, serving, and caring relationships with other believers. If you find yourself wanting to spend more time with unbelievers than believers you need to examine yourself to see if you're in the faith (2 Cor. 13:4-6).

For the modern reader, unless you work with a team of animals, it may be hard to understand the meaning of this passage. In Deuteronomy 22:10 we are warned against plowing with an ox and a donkey yoked together. Perhaps this is because the donkey would struggle to pull the ox's load and the ox could not go at the faster donkey's pace. In 2 Corinthians, Paul seems to be talking about a deeper spiritual reality, advising God's people to be cautious of yoking with people who serve lawlessness, darkness, and idol worship.

One commentary puts it like this:

"While we're clearly called to love, serve, and work with non-believers, Paul says not to be "unequally yoked" with them. What does it mean to be unequally yoked? The answer lies in the contrast to being yoked with Jesus, who says, "Take my yoke upon you." (Matthew 11:29). One part of the yoke is around us, and the other is on Jesus' shoulders. Jesus, like the lead ox in a team, determines our bearing, pace, and path, and we submit to his leadership. Through his yoke, we feel his pull, his guidance, his direction. By his yoke, he trains us to work effectively in his team. His yoke is what leads us, sensitizes us, and binds us to him. Being yoked to Jesus makes us partners with him in restoring God's creation in every sphere of life, as we explored in 2 Cor. 5:16-21. No other yoke that would pull us away from the yoke of Jesus could ever be equal to that! "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Jesus tells us (Matt. 11:29)."

It is almost impossible not to work with or have family members who are not believers. But, the image of the yoke implies being bound to the other person. When you yoke two animals together they do not have an independent choice. Uncomfortable as it may be, they must do things together. The yoke does not permit independent action. There is something that forces you to comply with what the other one wants to do, whether you like it or not. Any kind of relationship that does not permit a believer to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in all things is a yoke. Even a friendship can be a yoke. If it is the kind of possessive friendship in which you feel you cannot do what God wants you to do because you will offend your friend, then that is a yoke, and it must be broken.

What say you Christian? Do any of your relationships inhibit your freedom to love and obey God with all our heart, mind, and soul?

Your shepherd,  
Pastor Mark

# Grace Gems

Some people use pepper instead!- J.R. Miller (1898)

**"Out of the overflow of the heart — the mouth speaks."  
Matthew 12:34**

Hence we must get our heart right — if we would speak words that are Christlike. A bitter heart cannot give out sweet words — nor can an impure heart speak wholesome, pure words. Most people talk too much — they chatter on forever. Silence is far better than idle, sinful, or foolish speech.

We have suggestions in the New Testament as to the kind of speech that is worthy of a redeemed life. Paul has some very plain words on the subject: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may impart grace to the hearers." Ephesians 4:29. That is, no word should be spoken which does not . . . help to build up character, make those who hear it better, inspire some good thought, some holy feeling, some kindly act, or put some touch of beauty upon the life.

A Christian's words should "impart grace to the hearers." That is, they should impart blessing in some way. We all know people whose words have this quality. They are not always exhorting, preaching, or talking religiously — and yet we never speak with them without being the better for it. Their simplest words do us good. They give cheer, courage, and hope. We feel braver and stronger after a little conversation with them, even after a moment's greeting on the street.

In another place Paul says, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6. This means graceful speech, not merely as to its manner — but also as to its quality. It must be speech such as Christ Himself would use if He were in our place, and we know that every word of His was a holy seed. Our speech is to be "full of grace" — it is to be true, reverent, helpful, inspiring.

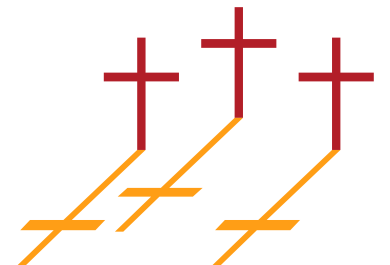
Our speech should be "seasoned with salt," that is, it should be pure and clean. Salt preserves from decay and putridity. The Christian's speech should have in it the divine quality of holiness, and its effect should be cleansing and purifying. Someone speaks of the words of Jesus as a handful of spices cast into this world's bitter waters to sweeten them. Every Christian's words should have like influence in society, wherever they are spoken.

The seasoning is important — our speech is to be "seasoned with salt." Love is salt. Truth is salt. Our speech should be always kindly. It should be without bitterness, without malice, without unlovingness in any form. The seasoning should be salt. Some people use pepper instead — and pepper is sharp, biting, pungent. Their speech is full of sarcasm, of censure, of bitterness, of words that hurt and burn. This is not Christlike speech.

We should never be content to talk even five minutes with another, without saying at least a word or two that may do good, that may give a helpful impulse or kindle an upward aspiration.

## Quote of the Week

"When husbands and wives are well yoked,  
how light their load becomes!"  
~ Charles H. Spurgeon



# Weekly Gatherings



## Bible Classes

New Testament  
Sunday School  
Sunday Morning @ 9-9:45 & 10-10:45



## Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM  
Men's Zoom Bible Study



## Job Study

Wednesdays @ 7PM  
Teaching Series (Online Only)



## Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team and forgot to sign up, please contact the team leader at the appropriate email address.



## Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM  
Youth Study  
AWANA @6:30PM-8PM



## Service Times

Sunday Service 8:30AM & 10:30AM  
Children's Church @10:30AM

### Giving from service on 11/08/2020

General Offering .....9,121.49  
Building Fund ..... 1,222.60  
Uganda .....100.00  
Total ..... 10,444.09

Attendance .....177  
Online.....14

### Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org  
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org  
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org  
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org  
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org  
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org  
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org  
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org  
Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org  
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org  
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org  
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org  
Security-security@ghbcva.org



ghbcva.org | 804.561.3742  
9821 South Redfield Drive, Amelia, VA 23002

# Grace Harvest Baptist Church

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