

Common Ground?

-- By Les Dennis

Some of the commands of God bring joy to our hearts, but there are some commands of God that are difficult to practice. We all like to get along with other people and be well liked. But what if other people are trying to get us to disobey God? Peter and the other apostles give us an answer that has become a classic answer for such occasions, they said in acts 5:28, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This can be very difficult for us if those are trying to influence us away from Scripture are either Christians or at least believe that they are Christians.

II Corinthians 6:14 we are told, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." (In biblical times a yoke was placed on two oxen to create a team in order to make the work on a common task more effective.) The command is reinforced by a series of rhetorical questions that follow this command, "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" If churches or denominations forsake the foundational beliefs, it calls into question as to whether they accept the biblical view of salvation. We should not try to work with them because we are not going in the same direction. You cannot travel together with someone who is traveling in the opposite direction.

Believers and unbelievers do not have the common ground necessary to form a team (to be yoked together). We must go our separate ways. We believe in their right to go the direction they are going, but we also believe that we have the right to go in the direction that we believe God would have us to go. If we join with those who do not believe in the very foundational beliefs of Christianity, we give legitimacy to false doctrine and risk being party to deceiving other people into believing that the foundation is unimportant. Sometimes it is difficult to tell people who have high moral standards and even believe that they are doing God's work that we cannot work with them. But as Peter and the other Apostles said, "We must obey God rather than men."

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