


**Messy Life:
The Story of Jacob**
Part 5
Oxen, Marriage and Faith

TALKING POINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

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A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 Solomon built a magnificent temple to Yahweh, the God of Israel. In 2 Chronicles 6:14-17 and 40-42 he prayed and dedicated that temple. Describe Solomon's attitudes and allegiances.
- 2 Now read 1 Kings 11:1-8. Describe Solomon's attitudes and allegiances later in life.
- 3 In 1 Kings 11:2 God tells Solomon **in which direction** hearts will **surely** turn. Will Solomon turn the hearts of his pagan wives toward Yahweh, or will they turn his heart toward their idols? **Why** is this?
- 4 True or False: "*Just as all roads lead to the top of the mountain, so all religions are just different paths to God.*"
- 5 What light do Deuteronomy 32:17 and Revelation 9:20-21 shed on this subject?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 6 So, **how can we make sure** that we "yoke ourselves together" only with those who **truly** share our allegiance to the one true God? Is verbal agreement sufficient? How about religious participation? In Matthew 7:16-20, to what "evidence of allegiance" does Jesus instruct us to pay **close** attention?
- 7 In Matthew 7:21-23, in what "evidence of allegiance" does Jesus put **little** stock?
- 8 According to Ezekiel 11:19-20, **who** is the determinative, active agent in salvation—God or us?
- 9 In Ezekiel 36:25-27, identify the "cause" and the "effect" of salvation.

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 10 When couples claim to have found their "*soulmate*," to what sorts of evidences do they typically appeal?
- 11 To what sorts of evidences of "soulmate status" does Scripture command us to pay attention?
- 12 What steps are you currently and consistently taking to ensure that **you** are becoming a godly soulmate?
- 13 What steps are you currently and consistently taking to help those nearest to you pursue God?

1 **Solomon's attitudes and allegiances:**

- He knew that God is peerless; all other gods are idols (v. 14)
- He highlighted God's nature: covenant-keeping full of lovingkindness (v. 14-15)
- He knew that God's character must be met by our response of whole-hearted faithfulness (v. 14, 16)
- He knew that he is dependent upon God (v. 17, 42)
- He knew that Israel needed righteous priests to mediate between God and man (v. 40)

2 **Solomon's attitudes and allegiances late in life:**

- He loved many foreign (ie, pagan, idolatrous) women (v. 1)
- He formed alliances with pagan nations via marriage, rather than trusting Yahweh for safety (v. 1)
- He was disobedient to God's explicit command to not intermarry with pagans (v. 2)
- He disobediently multiplied wives, contrary to God's design (v. 3)
- His heart wickedly turned away from Yahweh (v. 3-4, 6)
- He worshiped idols, in direct disobedience to the Ten Commandments (v. 5, 7)

3 Solomon's heart turned away from Yahweh, toward idols.

Why? Because the natural bent of every human's heart is anti-God. It is only through direct action by God (with us cooperating) that our hearts will ever turn toward God. Our default is toward idolatry. See Romans 1:18-32 and 3:10-18; John 6:44 & 65 cf. 3:18-20 and 5:44.

4 **FALSE!** Jesus is **the** way, **the** truth and **the** life—**no one** comes to the Father but through him (John 14:6).

5 All worship not directed at the Triune God of Christianity as revealed in Scripture is in fact, demonic.

6 Jesus instructs us that **visible godly fruit** is the "evidence of allegiance" to the One True God. This includes correct Christology (1 John 4:1-6), a love of righteousness and holy living (John 3:19-21), love for Christian believers (1 John 3:10), obedience to God's commands (1 John 2:3-4).

7 Jesus puts **little** stock in professions of faith/allegiance. Although a profession of faith is **necessary** for salvation (see Romans 10:9-10), it is not **sufficient** to save ("**Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord'... and I'll say, 'Depart from me, I never knew you'.**" Matthew 7:21-23).

8 **God**, not we, is the determinative, active agent in salvation!

9 **Cause: God** sprinkles clean water on us, **God** cleanses us from all our filthiness and idols, **God** gives us a new heart and puts a new spirit (the Holy Spirit renews our spirit) within us; **God** removes our the heart of stone, **God** causes us to walk in his statutes.

Effect: We become clean and free of all filthiness and idols. **We** walk in God's statutes, and **we** carefully observe God's ordinances.

10 Let your group members supply responses such as: "we understand each other—without saying a word", "we like the same music/art/hobbies/food", "we share the same political views", etc.

11 True allegiance to the God of the Bible, as evidenced by the items in #6 above.

12 You may need to "prime the pump" on this one—but wait 20 seconds before you speak. Give folks time to think (and get their courage up!). When (if) you share your answers, be authentic.

13 Ditto.

Sermon Summary Genesis 26:34–35; 27:46; 28:1-9

Our topic today focuses on the “principle of unequal yoking”. Beware of entering into a close, intimate, binding relationship with those who reject your faith and worldview. This principle has powerful present-day applications to marriage and business relationships. We see this clearly illustrated in the Scriptures as we continue our study of Jacob’s life as recorded in the book of Genesis. God has plans for Jacob—he’s going to work through him to bless the world. But for that to happen, Jacob must not marry an unbeliever. Esau is the opposite of Jacob. He doesn’t care whether he is chosen for the purpose of blessing the world. God’s values are unimportant to him (Genesis 26:34-35). Both of Esau’s wives were daughters of the Canaanite descendants of Heth (see 10:15) and they worshipped false gods and brought their false beliefs and immoral values into the marriage. Rebekah resolves that the same thing must not happen with Jacob (26:46 and 27:1-4).

This command to not marry unbelievers was not simply a command for Jacob. It became a command for all his descendants who would follow—a command repeated again and again down through the generations (Exodus 34:15-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-6; Joshua 23:9-13; 1 Kings 11:1-11; Nehemiah 13:23-27). To marry an unbeliever is to marry someone whose influence will draw you away from God and from the goals He has for your life. God has a special goal for your life. To knowingly enter into a marriage with an unbeliever is to compromise that goal. God has a plan, a blessing for our lives. He’s revealed Himself to us and called us to an eternity with Him. And His intention is for us to be part of what He’s doing in the world. As followers of Christ, one of the firmest commitments we should make is to marry someone who is as serious about their Christian faith as we are. As a husband and wife both pursue their relationship with God, what happens to their relationship with one another? They grow closer together.

To marry an unbeliever is to marry someone whose values will likely pull you away from God. Experience tells me that when involvement with God’s people declines, so does our spiritual health. We become spiritually lazy and some moral and spiritual compromises come to mark our lives. The truth is, at the very center of your life, your values and interests are different from your unbelieving spouse’s. Why? Because you both have different gods! You worship and serve the God of the Bible. The unbeliever’s gods are career, success, personal appearance, entertainment, or making money. But when we marry a fellow believer, we actually guard and strengthen our walk with God, and we pursue His goals together.

When Isaac said to Jacob, “Do not marry an unbeliever,” he wasn’t simply suggesting what he thought was a good idea. The Bible says he was commanding Jacob. This issue of who you marry is a huge matter in God’s eyes. If you are a Christian single and dating, for your sake, and for the sake of your future family, please choose to date other believers. If you only date other committed Christians, you will end up marrying someone who shares your faith - your same values and worldview.

Perhaps you chose to marry a non-Christian. Perhaps you were both non-Christians when you married. But in the ensuing years, you came to faith in Christ. However you got here, the important question is, “What do I do now?” Answer:

- Love your spouse!
- Live out your faith before them.
- Allow them to see Christ in you.
- Continue to personally pursue Christ.
- Seek to influence your children for Christ.
- Pray that your spouse won’t oppose your efforts to win your children to Christ.
- Seek to make your marriage the very best that it can be.
- Pray that God will draw your spouse to Himself.

(1 Peter 3:1–2; 1 Peter 3:1–2; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 7:12–15)

And that brings us back to Esau, Jacob’s twin brother. When Esau saw how much his foreign wives grieved his parents, he married a woman within the faith (28:8-9). It was an improvement on his Canaanite wives, but his choice demonstrated that Esau had no understanding of the uniqueness of the covenant family.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Hebrews 11:32-34 identifies Samson as a "person of faith"—who trod a very wayward path!
Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to learn how to avoid his errors...*

Monday— Study Judges 14:1-3 and 7.

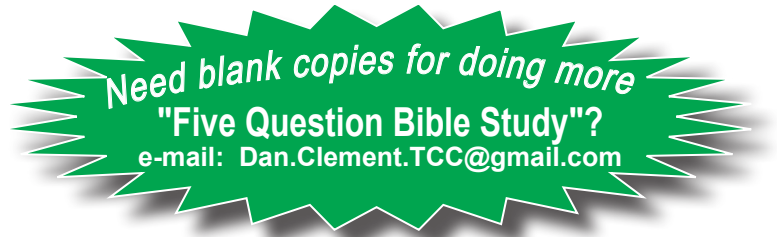
Tuesday— Study Judges 14:12–17.

Wednesday— Study Judges 15:1-8.

Thursday— Study Judges 16:1–2.

Friday— Study Judges 16:4-21.

Saturday— Study Judges 16:23–30.



Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]