

Excerpts from...

## **“TRAVELING TOGETHER IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS”**

by Haddon Robinson<sup>1</sup>

“God strictly forbids marriage between believers and unbelievers for several reasons. **First, God prohibits such marriage because of what it will do to the non-Christian** ... If a believer marries an unbeliever he will start with a wall in his marriage. A Christian is a two-natured person. He has one nature that seeks to serve himself. He was born with it, and he will never lose it until he reaches heaven. When he accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God gives him a new nature—a nature that wants to please God. It is a nature that despises sin. It is the nature through which God works in the believer’s life. However a non-Christian has only one nature. He or she may be morally upright, cultured and refined. He may be the most outstanding athlete & she may be queen of the campus, but apart from Jesus Christ, they do not have a nature that seeks to please God & wants to give Him mastery of their lives.

**“When a two-natured person marries a one-natured person, the only basis of fellowship is the old nature.** Such a marriage joins two people who can never really belong to each other. One of them loves Christ and the other does not. How can they love each other way down deep where true love comes from? They will be legally—and morally—married, but there will be a high wall which separates them. Their marriage will not be all that God intended marriage to be—it just can’t be with such divided love.

“Imagine that a young man living in Dallas, Texas, is going to fly to Chicago. At the airport he meets an attractive young lady and, as young men have been doing for centuries, he gets into a conversation with her. He asks her where she is going and she replies, ‘*To Mexico.*’ ‘Well,’ he says, ‘*that’s marvelous, I’m going to Chicago—let’s travel together so we can enjoy each other’s company!*’ Any normal young woman would doubt his sanity. The suggestion is absurd. They simply can’t travel together in opposite directions.

**“What no intelligent man or woman would do in travel, many attempt to do in marriage.** Marrying a non-Christian means that a Christian chooses to spend his life with someone going in a completely different direction. When two lives move toward opposite destinations, they move farther apart & communication breaks down. That’s what life is like in a believer-unbeliever marriage. The Christian has no right to let anyone he professes to love be drawn into a life like that.” (Robinson, pp. 3-5)

**“Second, God forbids such marriages because of what may happen to the Christian partner.** God warned the people of Israel not to intermarry with the Canaanites because these pagan people would turn God’s children from following Him to serve other gods. Of course, many Christians who want to marry non-Christians don’t expect that to happen to them. Instead, they would probably say that they know of a case or two where that hasn’t happened, and they are convinced that this gives them a special right to ignore God’s command.

**“Occasionally a Christian wins his non-Christian partner to Christ after marriage, but this happens very seldom. It’s not worth the gamble to disobey God and to place a question mark after one’s marriage.** Mark Twain, the well-known American writer and humorist, fell in love with Olivia Langdon. Livy, as he called her, was brought up in a religious home and had firm religious convictions. Mark Twain was not a Christian, although he appears to have been touched by Livy’s life.

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<sup>1</sup> From an article written by Haddon W. Robinson and originally published in the *Good News Broadcaster*, n.d.

“Mark Twain and Olivia Langdon were married. Early in their marriage, Mark regularly asked a blessing on the food at mealtime and joined in family worship. But this did not last. One day Twain announced, *‘Livy, I don’t believe the Bible.’*”

“Bit by bit, Mark Twain’s lack of faith worked like a cancer on his wife’s spiritual life. Later in life during a period of crushing sorrow, Mark Twain tried to strengthen Livy by saying, *‘Livy, if it comforts you to lean on the Christian faith, do so.’* But his wife could only reply, *‘I can’t...I haven’t any!’*”

**“Marriage is no place for missionary work. God never intended that a Christian enter marriage to convert his partner.** The home is no place for that kind of activity. Marriage is difficult enough without starting it with the burden of an unshared faith. Not only will the Christian harm the person he marries, but he will harm himself. (Robinson, p. 5)

**“Third, God prohibits intermarriage between Christians and non-Christians because of what this will do to God.** God calls believers to live to glorify Him. That is the major reason that He gave this command to His people in the Old Testament and that is the major reason why it is repeated again in the Old Testament and that is the major reason why it is repeated again in the letters of Paul. **God did not make Christians and redeem them so they could live for their own desires; God has placed them in the world to glorify Him.** When they decided to take their romance out of the control of God, they are settling for life on a lower level.

“A Christian home also brings glory to God. When a husband and wife together belong to Jesus Christ and live in obedience to and dependence on Him, a vital witness is given to the world. Children born into such a home are surrounded by a father and mother whom the living God indwells and controls. In I Corinthians 7:14 Paul says that God has a special interest in the children of Christian parents. He wants those children for Himself. **A believer-unbeliever marriage is a civil war—hot or cold—and it stands in the way of God’s purpose for the children.**”

“One minister told of a mother in his congregation who came to him one day excited about the new girl her son had found. *‘Oh, she’s a lovely girl, and her family is so cultured and refined,’* she bubbled. *‘She has no bad habits, she sings beautifully, and she is an accomplished pianist!’*”

“The pastor responded, *‘That sounds very good, but tell me one thing: Who is her God? Does...she love the same Savior? Is she on her way to heaven? If not, then she’s not the girl for your boy, no matter how splendid she may be in every other respect!’* **That statement might have sounded rude, but it was the kindest thing a pastor could have said...**”

***“Marriage will only be what God intended it to be when Christians obey God’s instructions, and these instructions are found in His Word.”*** (Robinson, pp. 6-7)