

**How are You
Influenced by the
Company You
Keep?**

How do your close relationships impact your habits, personality, attitude, and choices?

The crowd you hang out with

The language you use

The shows & books you like

The music you listen to

The work ethic you have

The purchases you make

The clothing you wear

The attitude you have

Your view of morality

How important you view God

3 Churches in Kentucky, Arkansas & Oklahoma Combined Marriage Statistics from 1958 - 2010:

- ❑ 231 Christians who married unbelievers
 - ✓ 175 left the faith (**76%**)
 - ✓ 29 unbelieving spouses came to the faith (**13%**)
- ❑ 105 Christians who married fellow believers
 - ✓ 12 left the faith (**11%**)
 - ✓ The Christians who married Christians were over 3 times more likely to stay married.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?

Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

Paul uses farming and military language to convey the importance of who you have close relationships with. In warfare, you don't just choose anyone to team up with.

Belial is tied to an OT word meaning "worthless or lawless person" and came to be used as another name for Satan.

Do your closest relationships bring you closer or further away from Jesus?

2 Corinthians 6:16 (NIV2011) ¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Though idols of false gods were a serious problem in Corinth, in America we have a tremendous amount of idolatry of a different kind seeking to seduce us away from the Lord. Those who follow Christ are the fulfillment of the temple and we should live as such.

Since we are God's temple, Paul quotes Leviticus 26:12 which identifies us as God's people. The Greek word for church is ἐκκλησία (ekklesia) and is a compound word meaning "Called Out Ones". We are called out to be His sacred church.

Do you recognize the incredible privilege and honor of being adopted into the family of God?

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (HCSB) ¹⁷ Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you. ¹⁸ I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.

Yes, we should have relationships with those who are not believers, but they should not be our closest relationships. Don't be blind to how you are impacted by each relationship.

Connecting with brothers and sisters in Christ remind you of the most important family you are apart of. We all have one, true Father and Savior.

Will you carefully choose your closest relationships that help transform you into the image of Christ?