

Going Further

@Home

- **Beloved Unbeliever**—Barry—Discover positive ways to approach the problem of being unequally yoked. Using the scriptural framework of love, *Beloved Unbeliever* shows how to love your husband into the faith.
- **Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch in Marriage**—Someone came between Lee and Leslie Strobel threatening to shipwreck their marriage. No, it wasn't an old flame. It was Jesus Christ. Their book offers useful advice to couples who are spiritually mismatched, either from the beginning of their relationship or through a change in belief.
- **Recommended website**—www.unequalmarriage.typepad.com
A community of believers who are living out their faith in Jesus and loving their unbelieving spouse welcome you and want you to discover God's Wild Hope for your life.

@Church

- **Life Group**—Adults are invited to connect with others at 8:00, 9:20, and 11:00 a.m. Visit www.bellevue.org for a current list of classes where you will experience biblical teaching, encouraging relationships, and fellowship opportunities.
- **Individual Plan**—Assess your level of intentionality over the last 90 days in a variety of areas—your walk with the Lord, your home and church life, your relationships, etc. This personal tool will assist you in planning specific next steps.
- **Bellevue's Biblical Counseling Ministry** provides a biblical approach to problem-solving and relationship resolution during counseling sessions. The goal is that individuals, couples, and families might grow in their relationship with the Lord and learn to apply biblical principles in their everyday walk and interaction with others. The ultimate goal is Christ-likeness. Call 347-5830 for more information.

Married to an Unbelieving Spouse

Following Christ Alone

By Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families

Growing in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is a source of great joy, but it can also be a source of conflict when your spouse doesn't share your commitment to Christ. It makes it more difficult to face life's challenges, to make important decisions, and even to grow in your faith when you are not both centering your life on God's will.

Even when your spouse is basically a good person, the disconnection of no shared faith in Christ or worrying about where your spouse will go after death can hurt your relationship. It's even worse if your spouse is hostile to your faith.

How can you honor God when your spouse doesn't? Is there anything you can do to help your spouse become a believer?

Be with believers—but not too much

Christianity is a group faith—something to be lived out among a community of believers. As a body of people following Christ, we give and receive fellowship, comfort, and encouragement (1 Corinthians 12:27, Galatians 6:2, Philippians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4). You need that community of believers, especially others who are following Christ alone in their marriages, but your spouse needs you as well. God designed marriage to be a source of mutual support. You are accountable to the vows you made to your spouse even if he or she is not a believer. To honor both your marital vows and your place in the body of believers, you should commit to regular church involvement that still leaves time for your marriage. There's a better chance your spouse will come to faith if you make time to go to church and he/she sees God now has priority in your life and has changed you. If you join every Bible study and volunteer for a broad range of extra activities, it can give the signal you are no longer committed to meeting the needs of your spouse—especially if you're doing things to keep yourself occupied apart from your spouse.

Let your actions be your witness

If you are a wife who is balancing your involvement in a body of believers with your involvement in your marriage, what can you say to help your husband become a believer? Not a whole lot. What really influences a husband more than your words are your actions. To wives of unbelievers, the Apostle Peter said, "*Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives,*" 1 Peter 3:1-2. No amount of nagging or persuading can move an unbelieving husband toward faith. Conversely, it might even drive him further away. The best draw will be seeing you live out your faith by showing him respect and loving care like he's never seen before. It won't be easy, and there's no guarantee that it will generate an immediate response. But if you choose to love your spouse as unto the Lord, regardless of how he responds, you can leave the rest up to God, knowing you were faithful.

Maintain a hopeful perspective

When you are growing within a body of believers and faithfully seeking to serve and esteem your spouse, you can be hopeful. You can't control the timing, but you can believe that God is able to use your commitment to win over even the most reluctant spouse.