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UNEQUALLY YOKED - Men At The Cross Devo

JULY 29TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

UNEQUALLY YOKED - Men At The Cross Devo

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

14Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16What 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."

Imagine, as crazy as it sounds, that you are an ox named Bill. You live in ancient Istanbul and your job is to pull a cart with the beloved king of Turkey riding in it. You are sound, wise, and dedicated. You love the king you are assigned for life to serve. Unfortunately, somebody puts Sam on the other side of the yoke of this two-oxen cart and although Sam is big, strong, and handsome and seemed great the first time you met him, he is lazy, rebellious, and stubborn when the work begins. The king becomes frustrated with both oxen because you cannot work together and puts you out to pasture. Because of your sincerity, your

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heart is broken.

Oh, I know oxen don't have names or "people hearts" that can be broken! But that's the context of this terrific metaphor.

The teen letters I've received are many that tell the same story.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujg9](#) "Joe, my friends told me that getting high would make my problems go away. That wasn't true at all. First we tried speed, then pot, angel dust, and LSD. Although I only tried LSD once, it was an experience I'll never forget." -- 15-year-old.

"Joe, he told me he loved me and like all the rest we'd get married some day. He talked me into sex and then we broke up. I was crushed. I felt like I had two hundred knives go through me." -- 16-year-old

"I began to hang out with the wrong friends. They were always partying and drinking. Before long, they took me down with them." -- 17-year-old

"The worst mistake I ever made was building a business partnership with _____ (an unbeliever). I'll be paying for it (literally) for years to come." - A Christian businessman

A Christian must be a witness to the lost, no doubt. But a true, sincere Christian is solemnly warned not to be friends, partners with, or to date or fall in love with someone who is not a truly sincere Christian. This passage is a clear warning from God that if you don't listen, like Bill the ox, your heart will be broken.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think God is saying to you personally about not being unequally yoked?
2. How can the desire for love or friendship or the desire for money blind you?
3. If you find yourself unequally yoked today, what do you need to do?

LIFELINE:

Keep the yoke of family equally growing and growing strong.

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METAMORPHOSIS - Men at the Cross Devotional

JULY 28TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

METAMORPHOSIS - Men at the Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

14For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way,

we do so no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

There's not a scientist alive who can explain the miracle of metamorphosis. They can name it, they can report what happens during the process, but none have ever begun to explain the "why" and the "how" of the transformation. If an evolutionist is honest, the scientific method has never proven nor does the fossil record show one species mutating into a higher species. Radiation and mutation expert, Dr. [images/Blog Images/show/ujft](#) H. J. Muller, in the "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists", said *"...extensive tests have agreed in showing the vast majority of them (mutations) detrimental to the organism . . . good ones are so rare that we can consider them all bad."* Dr. Pierre-Paul Grosse, former President of the French Academie des Science said, *"No matter how numerous they may be, mutations do not produce any kind of Evolution There is no law against day dreaming, but science must not indulge in it."*

How much more difficult based on naturalistic processes is it to somehow transfer one's entire biological makeup from a lowly creepy caterpillar into a majestic butterfly that can fly from deep in the heart of Mexico to the northernmost parts of the United States to the exact tree where this butterfly's ancestors lived without a map or anyone telling him where to go! God is supernatural. He is unexplainable. He is un-provable.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujfs](#) If that's not amazing enough, who but God could take a senseless murderer and turn him into a soft, gentle, tender-hearted minister to other murderers behind prison walls? Or, who could turn a "hopeless" alcoholic into a trustworthy husband and caring father.

Last week a seventeen-year-old boy with the kindest eyes came up to me after I spoke to a youth rally and said, *"last year when you spoke here I was a heroin addict, but I became a Christian a month later, my drug habit has ended, and now I've been called to be a pastor some day."*

I, too, have failed in this life, way too many times to count, but I (like the caterpillar) crawled into the "cocoon" of grace and like millions before me was born again into a true child of the living God.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be a "brand new creature"?
2. What do you have to do to go through spiritual metamorphosis?
3. Describe the butterfly that Jesus has made you today?

LIFELINE:

Try to always forgive the "caterpillar" each family member has left behind and look for the "butterfly" in everyone around you.

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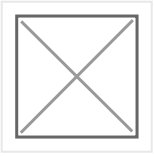


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"THE EARTH SUIT AND THE INNER MAN" - M@TC DEVO

JULY 27TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER



Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

1Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Randy Odom is a fine counselor at Kids Across America, our summer sports camp reserved especially for some of America's most deserving kids who come from the financially depraved concrete world of urban inner city America. Not only does Randy love God, but he loves urban kids with a passion.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujfd](#)

One stormy spring day, Randy pulled up in front of his trailer house at the exact moment a tornado arrived at his front door. In haste he jumped out of his car (as the door was ripped from its hinges), dove into his "home on wheels" where he was met head on in the hallway by a flying door. The door pinned him to the floor while his whole house was

[images/Blog Images/show/ujfb](#) literally demolished above him. Although his house was scattered for city blocks, Randy was protected by the door and escaped without injury.

These "earth suits" we inhabit while we visit this earth are about as stable as Randy's mobile home in a tornado. We can exercise them, feed them, and doctor them all we want, but the "tornado of time" will eventually scatter them into the dust of the ground. No medicine or vitamin or magic potion can keep the inevitable from happening. "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field so he flourishes. When the wind has

passed over it, it is no more....." Psalm 103:16.

Fortunately, oh so fortunately, our spirit is protected from destruction by the spirit of Christ, if indeed He is alive and well in our hearts. It is our spirit, sealed by grace for eternity by His spirit, that is destined to live with God forever....unscathed, unharmed, free to live, fit for life with a King.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our "blind spot" that causes us to focus so much time and attention on our "earth suit" with such a limited life span and so little time and attention to our "inner man" that will live forever?
2. What are some ways you can change your priorities to refocus on that part of you that will live forever?
3. How do you express high value to that inner being?

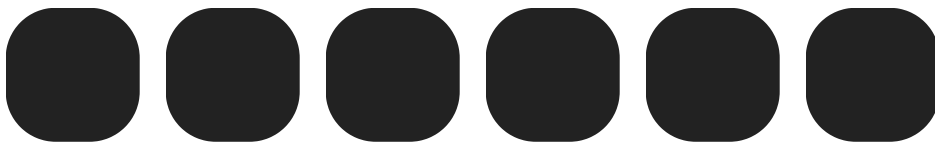
LIFELINE:

What a great time to pour our hearts into these daily devotionals to prepare the part of us that will live forever.

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PEANUT BUTTER JARS - Men at the Cross Devotional

JULY 26TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

PEANUT BUTTER JARS - Men at the Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

I've got to break the routine today and lead a major cheer in your home **"I LIKE THIS BOOK WE'RE STUDYING TOGETHER!** This second Corinthians letter is full of God's greatest treasures!"

Speaking of treasures, there is not (nor has there ever been nor will there ever be) a treasure as absolutely invaluable as the mega-karat diamond jewel of the Holy Spirit of Christ that hides Himself in the treasure chest in the heart of a true believer and follower of Jesus Christ.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujf6](#)

When I was a kid my dad worked awfully hard to come home with enough money to put beans and burgers and peanut butter and jelly on the table. We didn't starve, but we didn't have any leftovers to feed our dog "Pixie" either! My mom was a champion at stretching the dollar and she'd save everything of any potential value.

images/Blog Images/show/ujf7

Nothing went into the trash. Her mom taught her to save buttons, rare coins, toy marbles, trading stamps and such in common peanut butter jars that were emptied monthly. I remember one Friday night we even put a handful of fireflies in a peanut butter jar to make a natural flashlight for a game we played in the darkness of our room.

Treasures, in peanut butter jars . . . seems a little ironic, doesn't it!

But when I think of God putting His greatest treasure in the heart of a man who has failed as many times as I have, I feel just like a peanut butter jar; used, washed spotless, and filled with a treasure so I can share some of the rare and priceless jewel with folks who come my way.

images/Blog Images/show/ujf8

QUESTIONS:

1. How valuable is a used peanut butter jar? How valuable are you without Jesus?
2. Spiritual pride is the worst pride known to man. What is spiritual pride? How can I possibly be prideful when, without Jesus, I am only fit to be thrown in the trash?
3. How does this verse define humility to you?

LIFELINE:

When I'm empty, I would break if I fell, but when a peanut butter jar is filled with God's treasures, it is the strongest treasure chest on earth.

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FORGIVEN - Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 25TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

FORGIVEN - Men At The Cross Devotional

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

VIDEO OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 2:9-10

9The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven-if there was anything to forgive-I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake

Riding up the chair lift in Park Cities, Utah with my 22-year-old friend, Emily, was a learning experience I won't soon forget. Emily is an energetic snowboarder who can run circles around this "gray-haired knuckle dragger" (as the young snowboarder crowd terms old guys like me who enjoy racing these 160 cm mini sleds down the steep rocky mountain slopes).

The two-chair lift ride was a longest ride in Utah. It took the entire trip to give Emily sufficient time to tell me her emotional teenage-life story. At age 15, from what seemed like a model family, Emily's world shattered into small fragments when her mom announced that she was in love with the school music director and she'd be leaving home with all the furniture in the house and as much of the family's savings and income as she could get her hands on.

In defense of her gentle-spirited forgiving father, Emily's rage towards her mom boiled inside of her. Her anger seemed unquenchable and the inner fire of hatred blazed hotter with each passing year as her mom took more and more from the family and re-invaded their home continually with painful intrusions and demands and new announcements of her "Dance with the Devil" and continuing extra-marital affair.

[images/Blog Images/show/ujeo](#)

[images/Blog Images/show/ujep](#)

Then, five years later, this talented little athlete from West Virginia with a smile as beautiful as a Utah

Rocky Mountain sunrise came to our sports camp to counsel our teenagers. With all of her talents and Christ-filled beauty, Emily also brought to camp a loaded suitcase of bitterness that was crippling her like an age old case of arthritis.

During staff training week as I spoke continually of God's amazing love for us and my boundless love for my wife and kids, the Holy Spirit purposely and mysteriously melted Emily's hard heart towards her mom and she forgave her completely for all the hurt she had lashed upon her five long years before. Like a mighty wall of water caged behind a huge concrete dam, God's greatest medicine, the healing power of forgiveness, was now released to flow into Emily's life and enable her to be truly well, truly whole and truly free.

QUESTIONS:

1. Emily's sparkling eyes and contagious smile was the result of an unbridled, bitter-free heart. Why was the night of forgiveness so important in that smile?
2. Why does God demand that we forgive others as He forgives us?
3. Is there any speck of bitterness hidden in your heart that you need to deal with today?

LIFELINE:

Forgiveness is God's greatest gift to you and your greatest gift to your family.

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