

I Married a Non-Believer, Now What?

by Candice Z. Watters

DEAR BOUNDLESS ANSWERS

Ten years ago, as a young girl raised with strong Christian parents and about to graduate from a Christian high school, I would have never believed that I would be where I am today. I feel sick to my stomach after reading these articles. The reason isn't because the articles are offensive, but rather because according to these articles, my life is terribly offensive to God.

- ["Missionary Dating"](#)
- ["Unequally Yoked \(& Call Me Beautiful\)"](#)
- ["Not Having Babies, Not an Option"](#)

I did "missionary date" my now-husband in college (well, actually I was in denial; his referring to himself as a Christian did not make him one), have been "unequally yoked" to him for five years now, and at the young age of 20 and 23 made "not having babies" our option. At 26, he had a surgery that made having babies not an option.

I've taken three wrong turns and I am lost. I am determined not to divorce and I'm reluctant to reverse our decision (and surgery) about not having children since the reason I decided not to still remains: I'm too afraid to raise a child without a Christian husband. Please advise me on the right way to live under these circumstances that I've created for myself.

REPLY

Thank you for writing. I'm so glad you did because I want to assure you and encourage you that while those articles speak to where you are, they were not written to condemn you. The primary reason for the first two articles is to encourage not-yet-marrieds to make wise dating decisions. The purpose of the third is to exhort believers who don't yet have kids (whether married or not) to have a biblical worldview about bearing children.

In your case, the articles are descriptive. But as your email reveals, they don't go far enough to say what to do if you've already ignored such advice. You've admittedly made some mistakes. That's the hard truth. The good news, however, is that [Christ died to cover your sins with His blood](#) and there is forgiveness at the foot of the cross and the empty tomb.

And if that wasn't enough, Scripture goes on to tell believers in exactly your circumstance what you can do about it. Paul tells the believers in Corinth who are married to non-believers that,

If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such

circumstances; God has called us to live in peace ([1 Corinthians 7:12-15](#)).

[Peter also addresses your situation](#), encouraging you that you can win your husband to Christ without even speaking a word.

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.

I admire your commitment to your wedding vows and your disdain of divorce. Both are powerful testimonies to your husband of your faith. I would encourage you to keep praying daily for him both [in your quiet time](#) as well as in agreement with other mature believers (keeping in mind that prayer for him should not be confused with gossiping about him). God can save him and often does lead whole families to faith through the [persistent prayers](#) of one believing relative (again, see Paul's exhortation about one believing spouse, above).

Finally, even if your husband never comes to know Christ personally, you can [trust God's sovereignty](#) to ultimately redeem your situation; to bring [beauty from ashes](#).

This is not the time to be downcast or discouraged, but the time to walk by faith, putting all your hope and trust in the Lord's ability to write the rest of your story in a way that demonstrates His faithfulness and miracle-working activity in the lives of those who let Him.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man ([Romans 8:1-3](#)).

As for the question of children, I think you have your hands full at present praying for and working on your marriage. If, however, your husband were to change his mind and reconsider his desire to not have children, I think it would be another open door for God to work in his heart and yours. At that point I would encourage you to be open to your husband's decision, keeping in mind what Paul wrote about your faith sanctifying your children.

Additionally, I think you might be greatly encouraged by a marriage message called [Love and Respect](#), presented by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs (available both as a two-day seminar and a DVD). In it, Dr. Eggerichs shows how much power you have to improve the condition of your marriage, even without the participation of your spouse. Of course, if your husband would watch it with you, all the better.

I wish you a long and fruitful marriage that bears witness to God's involvement in your life.

Sincerely,
Candice Watters