

“What About an Inter-racial, Inter-faith, Same-sex Marriage?”

Dear Mrs. Bohlin,

What is your position and/or your church's position on inter-racial marriage? And the same on marriage between religious faiths? How would you advise me to respond to a relative who has stated intentions to marry an atheist, of the same sex and of a different racial and ethnic background?

I agree with my church's position on inter-racial marriage, which is that biblically there is no prohibition against it—the prohibition is about believers in Christ marrying unbelievers. realtruthrealquick.com/interracial-marriage-christian/

Concerning inter-faith marriage, that depends on your definition of inter-faith. Some make a distinction between Christian denominations and say, for example, that Presbyterians shouldn't marry Episcopalians. I don't think that is inter-faith, that would be *intra*-faith marriage. But when we're talking about, for example, a Christian marrying a Hindu, that is clearly prohibited in scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments. The children of Israel were instructed never to marry any pagan neighbors, and we are told in 2 Cor. 6:14 not to be unequally yoked, believer to unbeliever.

Concerning your relative: is s/he a believer in Jesus? Then I would ask them how they are dealing with the Bible's teaching not to marry a unbeliever, and the Biblical pattern of marriage as strictly between husband and wife (with no exceptions). Most of the time, people who do what they please regardless of what the Bible says, do so because they don't know what God has said in His word . . . or if they do, they

dismiss it for a variety of reasons, all because they want what they want. There is a heart of rebellion there. If your relative is a believer, the biggest issue is the authority of the Bible and their refusal to submit to it.

If the relative is not a believer, God's standards and commands are STILL given "that it may go well with you," (stated 8 times in Deuteronomy)—they function like guardrails on a treacherous mountain road. If we stay inside of the guardrails, we are protected from careening off the cliff to disaster below. But this person's relationship with God—or rather, the lack of one—is the most important issue. If they're not a believer, they probably don't care what God has said, mistakenly thinking that the Bible's commands and restrictions don't apply to them. But that's like thinking, "If I don't believe in gravity, I can do what I please and get away with it." No. No one gets away with trying to violate the law of gravity . . . and eventually, they discover they can't get away with violating the law of God either. Their biggest need is salvation. They need to know that God's Son, Jesus, died for his/her sins, was buried and rose from the dead three days later so s/he could be reconciled to God. That need overshadows questions about who they want to marry.

I send this with a prayer that you will be able to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) to your relative, and he or she will have ears to hear.

Blessings,
Sue

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“My Racist Parents Disapprove of My Boyfriend”

I am a Christian. I have had a boyfriend for almost three years. He is a wonderful guy...inside and out. He is a strong Christian and we have great chemistry and are very like-minded in our habits, finances, etc. I love him very, very much.

The only thing is that we are an interracial couple... with him being Chinese-American and me being white. There are some cultural differences in that his family depends on him for support...and that worries me. (That in the future, he will never leave his family so we can start our own family.)

Also, he loves his mother and sister dearly and I feel that he compares me to them...which I can never meet up. I can't help but to feel jealous for the way he loves and puts his sister on a pedestal. I compare myself to her frequently and it is killing my confidence.

Furthermore, my parents (they are non-Christians) strongly disapprove of our relationship because of his race.

I guess my questions are: 1) What does the bible say about interracial dating /marriage and 2) Should I obey my parents or give in to their racism?

I am just overwhelmed and have lost myself in all these problems. I know God will keep us together if it is in His will...but I could really use some godly truth and insight to all these things. Can you offer some insight into my problem?

The Bible makes distinctions between two kinds of people: believers and non-believers. It says nothing about interracial marriages. We have an article on that here: www.probe.org/what-does-the-bible-say-about-interracial-marriages/

Obeying your parents is a command for children. Once we become adults, we are commanded to *honor* our parents. The difference is that once we're adults, we take our direction directly from God. We honor, not obey, our parents by listening to what they say and seriously considering it, and then doing whatever God leads us to do.

However, the cautions you express about your relationship are very serious and should be explored even if your parents were 100% for your marriage. You not only have a cultural difference, you have a situation where your boyfriend's relationship with his mother and sister could very well be more important than his relationship with you. That's why Gen. 2:24 (later re-emphasized by Jesus Himself) says that a man should leave his mother and father (both physically and emotionally) and cleave (i.e., stick like Superglue) to his wife. If a man's primary emotional connection is to his family of origin instead of his wife, the marriage will be in trouble from day one.

You need to have a very frank talk with him about his emotional priorities. It may well be that this is a matter of your perception and not his reality, because of your own insecurities. If you fight jealousy and insecurity NOW, there's a good chance it will only get worse. That's a part of finishing growing up that you need to deal with before you marry anyone, but spend some time finding out who you are and what your strengths and "gift package" are so that you are content with YOU. If you're content with yourself and able to accept yourself, you won't waste emotional energy comparing yourself with others.

One other thing: if your boyfriend's emotional warmth toward his mother and sister is actually healthy and he would truly have no problem putting you first, then the fact that he has a good relationship with them is a good thing. It's when men are hostile and disrespectful toward female relatives that there is a red flag. (The other red flag is when a man bonds more

with his female relatives than with his male relatives.)

I would suggest that you spend more time talking to him about this, especially your fears that he will never leave his family so you can start your own. There are many, many forces against marriages today. If you get married knowing that both families are not in agreement, you are adding a huge amount of stress to your relationship, because I can verify after 28 years of marriage that you don't just marry a person, you marry a family.

You need to read some good books on Christian marriage: FamilyLife.com is a wonderful resource.

In the wise words of Dr. Laura, sometimes love just isn't enough. ☐

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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