



Interfaith Marriages and Relationships

My children are growing up and out of the house now. As they got older I began to understand that the older they got, the bigger the blessings...and the bigger the challenges. Those of us who know the Lord and have children raise them to understand the importance of faith, the truth of God's Word, and the blessing of following Jesus. However, sometimes those who are the closest to us choose to turn in a different direction.

I am meeting considerably more Christian parents whose children have married Jewish spouses or are considering conversion to Judaism. Their children were raised in Christian homes, but met Jewish people, fell in love, and are now living their lives in an interfaith marriage or relationship. Most of them are raising their children in a home with little or no faith. *"We will let our children make their own decisions when they grow up,"* is the most common mantra.

I was recently approached by a lovely couple. Their faces expressed the grief that they were about to share with me. Their son had fallen in love with a Jewish woman and was now married to her. *"Murray,"* they said, *"we deeply love our daughter-in-law, but don't know how to relate to her. We feel uncomfortable. We want to embrace her, but also know that she needs to know the Lord. Can you help us?"* At that, the mother began to cry. I could only wait as she composed herself.

This couple is only one example of the many people to whom we minister who have Jewish family mem-



bers. We are contacted on a regular basis by parents who have children dating or falling in love with Jewish people, husbands and wives who have unbelieving Jewish spouses, and individuals with Jewish friends in an interfaith marriage.

Interfaith marriages bring an unusual dynamic into a Christian family and among Christian friends. When a son or daughter raised in a Christian home decides to marry outside of the faith, parents oftentimes feel betrayed and confused. There is always a sense of loss and grief. Family members don't know how to handle religious holidays such as Christmas and Hanukkah or Passover and Easter. The common question we get in our ministry is, *"What do we do?"* **Our ministry is here to help families and others who have interfaith friends.**

Whether or not you have a situation like this in your own life, the principles which we share with those facing these kinds of circumstances may be applied to any Jewish person with whom you might be involved.

- **Pray.** It's easy to forget that the most powerful tool the Lord has given to us to deal with difficult circumstances is the power of prayer. Pray for your Jewish family members or friends. Pray that God will help you to communicate with them in the most effective way possible. Ask the Lord to give you a heart of compassion. Ask Him to remove any bitterness, anger, or unforgiveness that might be in your heart. The only way for you to have compassion on others is to make sure that your heart is right before God. Pray for wisdom, healing, and restoration. Finally don't forget to **ask the Lord to reveal Himself to those Jewish people in your life whether they are family or friend.**

- **Don't put up walls, and take down any walls that have been built.** In most instances an incredible amount of pressure was put on your child or friend not to marry a Jewish person. **I have spoken to Christians who did not go to the wedding of a family member or friend only because they were marrying a Jewish person.** Deep and long lasting friendships break because well meaning Christians do not want to "validate an illegitimate wedding." Don't make that mistake.

Oftentimes parents put up such protests that they push their children away. And we can all push friends away. By protesting for too long and pushing too hard it is possible to cause resentment and build walls between you and the people whom you love the most. These walls

have to be taken down. Ask for forgiveness for building walls. Confess sin. **Let your Jewish family member or friend know that you desire healing in the relationship.**

- **Move toward them, don't expect them to move toward you.** People who marry outside of the faith in which they were raised have made a very difficult personal decision. I am a believer in Jesus and was raised in a Jewish home. **My faith and relationship with Jesus has been challenged by my family and many people very close to me.** Because of that, I have been made stronger in my relationship with the Messiah I have chosen.

The same is true for Christians who fall in love and marry outside of the faith in which they were raised. Usually, because of the opposition experienced, there is more resolve to hang onto what they have chosen. Once the relationship has been chosen there comes a time for you to accept that relationship.

- **Begin to build bridges.** Do not hesitate to embrace the Jewish family member or friend in a culturally relevant way. Recognize the Jewish holidays. Send holiday cards. Acknowledge Jewish family events such as Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Wear a Star of David because of your love for the Jewish people and because Jesus was Jewish. **Even if your Jewish family member or friend is not religious...that's ok. Reach out anyway.** They will notice and be positively influenced.
- Finally, be honest with yourself. **If a family member or friend who you thought was a Christian married someone who is not, there is the possibility that they never knew Jesus personally.** Or, they are surely living in disobedience to the Lord by marrying someone out of the faith. **Do not alienate them. Love them even more.** Show them how much you care by extending your love. Ask them what they think about Jesus. Encourage them in their faith. You will see results.



Please remember that our ministry is here to help you with any Jewish person whom God has put into your life. We are here to counsel, encourage, and try to give answers to the best of our ability. Please let us know how we can help.

I do realize that there are many of you reading this letter who do not have a Jewish friend, let alone a Jewish family member. **I share these stories with you because I want you to know the extent of the ministry we are doing.**

On a final note this month I want to thank all of you who are praying for us and who supported us as we closed out 2013. I am excited about our plans for this year. I have several trips scheduled and will be traveling to Israel, New York City and Myrtle Beach again. We will be busy during the spring speaking in churches and developing relationships with Christians. We are already planning for our shalom Basket outreach. We have a busy year ahead. Please keep us in your prayers!

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Passover 2014

We will be hosting our two ministry Passover events at Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, GA on Wednesday night and Friday night, April 2nd and 4th respectfully. Reservations for these two Seders can be made through our ministry. We will have special music and Messianic dancing, a Passover meal, and go through the order of service around beautifully set tables at the church. Seating will be limited to 200 per night. **Last year we sold out early and had a waiting list for both nights.**

Please invite your friends, Sunday school classes, small groups, and Jewish friends who do not yet know the Lord. **Reservations are necessary. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information.** If you are unable to attend one of those events, we are hosting several other Passover services in churches around metro Atlanta.

Other than the two services which our ministry is hosting at Fellowship Bible Church, each Passover seder is being organized by the individual churches. **A full list of Passover seders can be found on our web site.**

THANK YOU!

The impact that our ministry is having in the lives of Jewish people and the church is growing. We are being contacted by more Christians who have Jewish friends. We are meeting with more Jewish people.

Your prayers and financial support make our ministry possible.

In His service,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
 Light of Messiah Ministries