

## **Study Guide for “Lesson on Should Christians Marry Muslims?”**

To be used along with the video of the same name on [www.ChristianfromMuslim.com](http://www.ChristianfromMuslim.com)

### **Summary and Notes:**

Quick Summary: This program shares thoughts on the intermarriage of Christians and Muslims. It draws on the experience of Christians from Muslim countries, former Muslims, and Christians who have married Muslims. Some of the segments were filmed live at a wedding, so you will hear joyous outbursts in the background.



Rather than a teaching session, the video lesson is comprised of several interviews. Because material covered this way is usually not complete or organized, the study guide provides additional information. Besides reviewing the speakers' content, it includes more examples and testimonies from Christians who married Muslims, a list of questions for Western women considering marrying Muslim men, and a printable testimony tract that you can give to a woman considering marrying a Muslim.

- Notes:* 1. The people in the examples are known to us personally. Most names have been changed.  
2. See also study guides and Lessons on Confusing Muslim Marriages, and Islam and Women.

### **Why Christians Should Not Marry Muslims with George Saieg**

In our training we like to emphasize the relationship between **Principles and Practices** of Islam and Christianity.

George Saieg is an expert in Islam from a Muslim country. He has studied the Islamic documents in Arabic and so knows the principles. And from living in an Islamic society he has seen the practices that fit with them. In this video segment he shares with us some of his ideas of why a Christian shouldn't marry a Muslim.

**Islam does not allow Muslim women to marry Christian men**, if they do, Islamic law is harsh with them unless the man converts (more on this in our *Lesson on Confusing Muslim Marriages*). The main justification for this is the consideration that a Muslim women should not be under the power of an infidel. Also, there is the concern that the children are not as clearly on track to be Muslim. And financially, this means that the dowry, or *maher*, would pass out of the Muslim community.

**Islam allows for Muslim men to marry Christian, Jewish or Muslim women.** Because of this, usually the situation that arises is that of a Christian woman being tempted to marry a Muslim man. In the West, this is usually a willing conversion.

George tells us that the Bible says Christians should not be united to unbelievers (II Corinthians 6:14). Marriage is certainly a form of being bound, or “yoked.”

Saieg also draws our attention to the **status of women in Islam** as a practical reason that a Christian woman should not act upon the temptation to marry a Muslim. He gives us are two of the many examples:

the way women are described as a **possession** in Islam and the fact that according to the Prophet Mohammed, most of the people **in hell** are women

On a side note, Saieg says **English translations of the Quran are soft**, and that Western women would never marry a Muslim if they could read the Quran in Arabic.

**Example of a Christian who Married a Muslim, Saieg's cousin:**

As a practical example, Saieg cites the case of his own cousin who married a Muslim man. At first the man assured her that she would be able to practice her Christian faith freely; however as time went on he continued to pressure her more and more to become a Muslim. (This is a situation commonly reported by Christian women marrying Muslims to him and Dr. Cynthia.)

**Example of American woman held in Iran:**

For a way to make the risks of a Western woman marrying a Muslim man real, Saieg suggests that any woman considering marrying a Muslim watch the film *Not Without My Daughter*. This film tells the true story of the escape of Betty Mahmoody and her daughter Mahtob from a situation of oppression in Iran. Although it is the story of one woman and her daughter, this film starring Academy Award winner Sally Field, captures the situation of many women in Islam, especially those from the West.

Betty's situation is an example of how the human rights principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948), are often violated against women, even when agreed on by their government.

**Why Ada Resisted Marrying a Muslim**

The video introduces us to Ada. Ada was stationed in the Middle East while in the American military. There, she met Muslim men who were attractive and as she says, "tall, dark, and handsome." They were also very friendly and flattering to her. She understands why American women might want to marry one.

However, she shares with us in this video segment why she wouldn't marry a Muslim. Her concerns are based on the difference in the religions' teachings, following what is true, and potential problems.

Ada draws attention to the loving approach to others that Christians are taught to have and how this teaching is lacking in Islam. Islam, she says, is false teaching.

Ada knows that in divorce in Islam, the father retains ultimate control of the children. She reflects on how sad it would be to lose one's children, especially to someone who would teach them a different basis for life than we have in Christianity. She also reminds us that the Bible teaches we should not be unequally joined to unbelievers, which would be the case if a Christian marries a Muslim. (I Corinthians 13:4-8,13; Matthew 7:15, 16; II Corinthians 6:14)

**Christian and Muslim Marriages with Dr. Cynthia and Pastor Ayman Armanious**

Dr. Ayman Armanious is a PhD from Egypt who immigrated to America a few years ago and now leads an Arabic-speaking church here. His background puts him in the position to know what the Arabic sources say about Islam and marriage. He has counseled people from Muslim and Christian backgrounds in marriage and other issues, both in Egypt and America. He has experience with Christians marrying

Muslims. In his experience this has not turned out well. He explains this and gives several examples to support his points. Dr. C adds cases she has seen.

Dr. C asks Ayman if he has seen differences between Muslim and Christian marriages.

*“Christian marriage is entirely different from Muslim marriage,”* says Ayman.

Ayman tells us that for example, Muslim men can **marry four women** at once. Yet the Bible shows us that when God created people, he made only one man and woman for each other – Adam and Eve.

*“She’s not equal to a man,”* Ayman says with feeling. *“She’s not equal at all.”*

He tells us that the **Muslim wife must obey** her husband. She is his servant and mainly to provide for his pleasure of one sort or another. In fact, you can see in the video how uncomfortable he is in telling us about the kinds of rights the husband has over his wife.

**In Christianity, he tells us, men and women are equal.** The Bible tells men to care for themselves as they do their own bodies. They should **love their wives as Jesus loves** the church and gave himself for it. (Ephesians 5:25-33)

If a man wants another wife, Ayman says, **the Muslim does not need to tell or get permission** from the first wife. For example, if a woman does not get pregnant after a year, this is a common excuse for divorce or getting another wife. Dr. Cynthia gives an example of a man who did not disclose his marriage.

**Example of an Egyptian man in America who Hid that he was Married to commit Bigamy:**

Dr. C knew Abdul, an Egyptian man, and had met some of his children. Brother E had shared the gospel with him, without success. Subsequently, Mary, who was in ministry with Dr. C, told her that Abdul had proposed marriage to her Christian friend Cathy – but he didn’t tell her that he was already married! In other words, he planned to commit the American crime of **bigamy**.

Mary’s first conversation with Cathy went like this,

Mary: Doesn’t it bother you that his faith is so different than yours?

Cathy: *No. He promises to respect my faith.*

Mary: Does it bother you that he is already married?

Cathy: *dead silence*

Before the second conversation, Cathy confronted Abdul about his secret marriage and proposed bigamy. She then explained to Mary,

*Cathy: Yes, Abdul is already married. He explained to me that his wife is the mother of his children, and he does not want to disgrace her by divorcing her. He will marry me in the mosque, where it is legal under Islamic law. I will be his “real wife.”*

Mary was appalled that even when Cathy knew the situation she would be willing to go ahead with it. She would be complicit in bigamy, or adultery, depending on how you look at it. And she will have no legal rights as a wife in America.

Advice not followed: Follow-up adds more to Cathy’s story. Despite Mary’s council, Cathy went ahead with the marriage. The decision did not go well for her. Cathy stayed married to Abdul for about 6 years, the last two of which they were separated. Abdul became abusive to her. Much afraid of him, Cathy fled the state to escape. Finally she got a “divorce.”

Ayman says that it is **common for Muslim men immigrating** to the West to build a relationship with a woman from that country, hiding their previous family. They see nothing wrong with this because they are authorized by Islam to do this – they can have several wives.

Often a Muslim man will **assure a potential Christian bride that he will respect** her religion.

**Example of a Danish Woman who Married a Muslim Man:**

Ayman gives an example of a nominal Christian from Denmark. She was told by a Muslim that he honored her religion and would allow her to practice it. However, things happened in the relationship which did not fit with his promise: married in the mosque, she was tricked into saying the *shahada*, the Muslim creed of faith. She was also requested to pray in Arabic.

Later the Danish woman became a true Christian and wanted to be baptized. Her husband was not true to his word to respect her faith. He would not allow it.

Ayman says this happens many times.

**Another Example of Being Tricked into saying Shahada:**

In the video lesson, Dr. C tells Ayman that once (on outreach in Europe) her son was surrounded by Muslims. They asked to repeat some words in Arabic. Unbeknown to him, it was the shahada. He was simply trying to say a few Arabic words; but the Muslims started rejoicing that he was converted.

(Note: Ayman and Dr. C are not saying that someone truly converts by repeating words they do not understand. Probably most Muslim authorities would agree. However, these are two instances where this did happen with average Muslims. It has also happened in history with mass conversions to Islam.)

**Example of a Convert to Christianity who Married a Muslim Man:**

Also in the video, Dr. C gives the example of River, a Muslim woman she knows who became a Christian. During her university years as an immigrant to America, River started talking to Christians. As a result she began comparing Christianity and Islam. She then became convinced that Christianity was right and became a Christian.

However, before she understood that Christians should not be unequally bound to unbelievers, her parents approached her with a marriage offer from a Muslim. He was nice and said that he would respect her Christian beliefs. River found this acceptable and married him.

Over time, her husband became more and more religious. He became less and less tolerant of her faith and more and more imposing of Islam on her. It came to the point where he told her that she must return to Islam or he would divorce her. River chose Jesus. She became divorced and rejected rather than forsake her Lord.

Ayman concludes the video segment by explaining that if someone asks him if he would sacrifice himself for his wife he would – because Jesus sacrificed himself for us.

*“This is the idea of Christian marriage,”* he says.

**Why a Christian Shouldn’t Marry a Muslim with Georges Housney and Elias**

Rev. Georges Housney and Elias, who were raised in Muslim countries different from those of Saieg and Ayman, discuss why they believe a Christian shouldn’t marry a Muslim. They present for us their

concerns, but advise that any Christian considering this step spend much time in consultation with a mature Christian advisor.

Houssney and Elias admit that not everything they share applies to every case, and some intermarriages may be happy. But only if the couple are not devoutly religious. They give us spiritual and practical reasons against intermarriage – especially for Christian women.

### **Spiritual Reasons Against Intermarriage:**

Elias shares that a Christian shouldn't marry a Muslim because of the **lack of spiritual common ground** they would have. This actually would apply in every case of true Christians and unbelievers of any background. In II Corinthians 6:14, they both remind us that the Bible says light and darkness do not have fellowship, and should not join together.

A marriage relationship will be strained with such different backgrounds as Christianity and Islam. George agrees with Elias. He adds that they will not have the **basis for problem-solving**, because their outlooks are different. And they cannot pray together about their challenges. He has counselled many couples in this situation.

Elias says that without spiritual common ground life will be harder, and the soul thirstier.

### **Practical Reasons Against Intermarriage:**

Christian women should be aware that they will face challenges they might not be expecting:

First, a woman should be aware of is that in Islam, the father has priority in **custody of the children**. If separation or divorce happens, you would very likely lose your children to the Muslim family of your husband. Houssney says he knows of more than 10,000 cases where this happens. Often the husband takes the children out of the country, and the Christian wife never sees them again.

Even though before marriage he promises freedom, the Muslim **husband may forbid** the children going to church and may insist on the mosque.

Since the Quran gives a man the right to have **4 wives**, whom he can divorce rather easily, it tends to put a man **in the mindset of always checking out other women** as possibilities. Why not? It is their right in Islam. Houssney has heard this from many women. For example, they find that their husband is going out with another woman. He may then divorce her, or simply marry the new one in addition to her.

**Why would a Christian woman ever marry a Muslim man?** George asks.

Elias says it could be simply attraction, without thinking about it and doing adequate research.

Houssney recognizes that Muslim men can be attractive because compared to American men they are **very romantic, and give generous gifts**. It seems like they will do anything to gain the hand of their loved one in marriage. But in his large experience counseling around the Muslim world, **this changes after marriage**.

Houssney strongly encourages that before taking such a significant step as marrying a Muslim, that a Christian get counseling from an experienced leader, and look deeply into what they might be facing.

## **Six More Examples of Christian-Muslim Intermarriage**

Religious differences are the most important ones that couples of mixed Muslim/Christian background face. But whether or not one converts to the other's faith, there are still substantial worldview and cultural differences to be faced. There are so many that they are beyond the scope of this program.

However, we want you to be aware that issues like family structure, the place of women, finances, truthfulness, customs, and expectations need to be discussed in detail before any intercultural marriage is approached, whether or not the religion is the same.

### **Example of an American Christian Marrying a Muslim Overseas:**

As a 21 year old nominal Christian, Hope visited North Africa with her boyfriend. While there she was forced to marry him. In fact, she even had to say the shahada to be able to leave the country. Her husband was at first kind and loving, however, in the following years, she and her children suffered abuse at his hand.

Now A strong Christian, Hope's heart is burdened to warn Christians against marrying Muslims – or any other unbeliever.

*(For more of Mary's story, see Appendix 1, after the study questions for this lesson.)*

### **Example of an American Christian Man Marrying a Muslim Student:**

William met a very beautiful woman who had recently converted from Islam to Christianity. Everywhere she went men chased her. She had started to be discipled as a Christian, but since they met soon after her conversion, her focus changed to romance. William had thought that since she was willing to go to church and conferences, he would be able to continue her discipleship on his own.

However, after their marriage she soon dropped her interest in Christ. Instead, she focused on finances and differences in their cultures. After only a few weeks together she returned to her country and cut off communication with William. At one point she said she reverted to Islam.

When William was asked what he would say to a Christian man considering marrying a Muslim or recently converted Muslim woman, he said, "Under no circumstances!" and "Her family will not accept you."

### **Example of an American Marrying a Muslim and living Overseas:**

Rita is an American who married a Saudi she met in college and moved to his country. She has found it very difficult to transition between cultures and expectation. Through much effort she has managed to stay married. She hopes that her husband is a closet Christian, without his family knowing, but she is not convinced.

A few years ago she moved back to America because of problems in Saudi, and to assure an American education for her children. She has taught her children about the Bible, and some are following Jesus.

### **Example of a Nominal Christian who Married a Muslim and Converted:**

Wanda told us her story – of how she converted to Islam out of a nominal Catholic background when she married a Muslim man. Wanda moved with him to Turkey. Her father-in-law kept pressuring her deeper and deeper into Islam. But as she got into Islam, she had less and less peace in her life.

Passing through life stress and panic attacks she came to the point she was willing to talk to a pastor. He told her that she could receive Jesus as her personal Savior. Although she was reluctant to do so because of her marriage to a Muslim, the Lord's love and peace irresistibly drew her to him. His peace has

sustained her through the distress she subsequently faced, as she has managed to stay married to her husband.

**Example of a Christian who Married a Muslim that she Thought was a Christian:**

Erika, a strong Christian from the Midwest says,

“We’ve been married 7 years. I was saved beforehand. He said he was a believer before we got married; but it was evident shortly after that though he believed in Jesus, he was not genuinely saved.

But as we continued to pray and fast God did a work in his heart all on his own. My husband became a Christian. He was saved and baptized in the beginning of 2017(4 years after marriage). We got pregnant with our first baby the end of that year.

There is a lot of difficulty with his mother. We do not speak. She did not accept me because I was a Christian. I’ve tried 4 times to give grace and create a relationship; but it had become dangerous to the point of her threatening and trying to physically attack me for absolutely no reason.

So at the moment my husband sees her on occasion alone. It is very hard as his mother has a great influence over him and it creates friction in the marriage. My father in law is very kind and they are separated, so we see him occasionally.”

**Example of the Child of American who Married and Moved to a Muslim Country:**

Several years ago, Dr. C met Rabab at Mary’s house and shared the gospel with her. Here is Rabab’s story:

While working in his country, Rabab’s mother met a wealthy Moroccan and married him. She moved to Morocco and accepted many of their values. Although Rabab was born in Morocco spoke English and looked and sounded American.

She was beautiful and privileged. Yet Rabab did not have the privileges of an American girl. She was not granted a full education. She had imposed upon her and also absorbed Muslim concepts, including marriage.

Rabab’s father, as she says, “sold” her as a child bride to a Muslim man when she was age 14. The man was abusive. Rabab managed to come to America where she remarried twice and had three children. The third husband was also abusive so they divorced. Without much education, Rabab was then unable to get a decent job to support her children.

Still relatively young, Rabab married a fourth time – to a prosperous Arab Muslim physician. At the time of this writing, they are still married, but their marriage has been tumultuous. He alternates between abusing her both physically and mentally, then buying her very expensive gifts. In Islam he has the right to keep her from leaving house. Even in America he uses it. Rabab is now a prisoner in her home.

Mary continues to share the gospel with Rabab. However, because of Rabab’s upbringing and difficult experiences she seems incapable of accepting God’s love. Rabab says that she has experienced many religions. She believes all of them and believes none of them.

May the Lord touch her heart and open her mind to the truth.

## Additional Considerations about Intermarriage

### Islamic Laws Apply

Divorce: Legally in Islam a woman can be divorced by pronouncement. This quick and easy way supports impulsive behavior, and results in confusion and a lack of paper documentation.

Custody: Children in Islam belong to the husband. He can take them from the wife entirely after they have reached an age of about 8 years old. Some of our friends have lost their children this way, and because of it others live in fear of marital break-up.

It is against Muslim law for a woman to take her children out of the country without the father's permission. If he is unavailable, she must obtain consent from another man in his family. Wafa Sultan describes this in her book, "A God Who Hates." She had to obtain the permission of a drunk in Syria because her husband was already in America.

Polygamy: Multiple marriages are being certified through mosques. It is not always clearly explained if other wives exist, that these marriages are not legal, and that these wives have no legal rights of marriage. They are considered single, and even encouraged to apply to the state for aid when they become mothers, as "single mothers."

Secrets: Middle Eastern men often come to America alone to study or to earn money to send home. Home – where unknown to anyone in America, they may already have a wife and children. Since Islam allows men four wives at once, in their mind they do nothing wrong by marrying an American in addition to another wife.

Rights: The Quran and hadith grant husbands other rights which could be unacceptable to Western wives. For example, the Muslim marriage contract entitles the man to not only exclusive, but also on-call sexual services from his wife, regardless of her activity or mood at the time.

Likewise, we read and have observed, that a wife may not leave the house or allow anyone into it without her husband's permission. In a rape case in the Middle East from several years ago a cleric condemned the victim saying, "Maybe she did not have a good reason for leaving the house."

### Culture, Culture, Culture

Besides religion, we have seen many other inbred differences challenge Christian-Muslim marriage. To reduce these, experts advise thorough pre-nuptial discussion on every aspect of marriage. Don't assume they're thinking what you're thinking about anything. Learn the risks and the questions to ask.

Erika, from the example above says even if your spouse has converted from Islam,

"There is difficulty shedding the culture of Islam. The men were raised to see women as second class citizens, and the woman were raised to believe as a Muslim woman they somehow are above a non-Islamic man. These can cause difficulties in marriage."

Remember that not all Muslim cultures are the same. Some are very poor and with limited opportunities. In this case, they may be quieter and less confident than Americans. Others, for example from a wealthy family, or country like Kuwait, may be used to spending lavish amounts of money on portable goods like jewelry, purses, and perfume in a showy way that seems unnatural even to wealthy Americans. They may find it normal to run up debt.



Hospitality, hygiene, food, family, modesty, friendliness, socializing, work ethic, expectations and treatment of women, and many, many more cultural differences may emerge to challenge a marriage between a Christian and a Muslim.

### **Questionable Motives:**

For Green Card: As with other nationals, Muslim immigrants have been motivated to marry Western women to gain favorable immigration status.

Prosperity: Compared to most people in the world, Americans are well-educated and wealthy.

### **Example of Encouraging Marriage for Immigration:**

Brother E, is a Palestinian Christian man came to America to share the gospel with Muslims. He had a protracted immigration case. During this time Muslims repeatedly suggested to him brief marriage to an American woman, followed by divorce – solely as a solution to his immigration problem.

For example, once he was playing basketball in a recreation area of a mosque with Muslim young men. When they heard that he was not yet a permanent resident, he was told,

*“Marry an American woman. Then it’s easy to get a green card. You can divorce her after, no problem.”*

### **Romance Differences:**

Romantic practices of cultures differ, especially during the courting phases. These can present big challenges to Christian-Muslim relationships. As you can see in the above true stories, the greater romantic sentiments expressed by Muslim men tend to attract Christian women.

Conversely, since American men are usually not so romantic, Muslim and former Muslim women who marry them can be strongly disappointed. They may see them as unromantic and dispassionate, when actually they are being sensible by Western standards.

### **Second Class:**

The Christian may feel “second class” when around the Muslim family. Part of this could be limited language and awkwardness in the culture; but part of it because Muslims are told in the Quran that,

*“You are the best of all peoples ever raised up for mankind.”* Quran 3:110

The verse goes on to contrast Muslims with Christians, saying it would have been better if they had been Muslims.

### **Dishonesty:**

Rita from the example above says,

*“Muslim men feel fine about basic dishonesty. It’s part of the culture and Mohammed was the perfect example. Also it is spelled out in the Quran. Secondarily, non-M women can be treated in any manner (thought of as lower status, it’s okay to lie to them, use them etc.), so for him to wine and dine her, make her feel special, lie to her about beliefs (“our religions are almost the same”), is acceptable.*

Once they are married life usually changes and the truth comes out, whether it is intentional or unintentional. Some men think they are open, but when children are born then their ideology, fears for the children, desire to have the family that brings them honor rather than shame all come flowing out.”

### **Status:**

Marrying a Western man is said to be a sign of success for a Muslim woman in the Arab Gulf – IF he converts to Islam.

### **Exotic Love:**

As you heard, Western women might be attracted to Muslim men because of their exotic appeal, but the reverse also applies. It has been said that Muslim men want the experience of a “white woman.” In fact blonde women have been one of the promises used to spur Muslim men on to conquest in the past and present.

PAST: Islamic commentaries on Quran 9:49 explain that Mohammed was enticing men to jihad by offering blonde women captives. This was causing men to lust. One man objected to this tactic and was cursed.

Mohammed said, “*Are you ready to attack the children of the blondes and make them mistresses and maids?*” (An-Naisiburi 505; also Ibn Kathir & at-Tabari).

PRESENT: Yazidi women captured by ISIS and being sold as slaves, were valued higher for their blonde hair and blue eyes, because their bloodlines had not intermarried with Arabs.

### **Love Jihad:**

This is a recent term coined to express the underhanded and often violent way which non-Muslim women are forced into Islam through involuntary marriage in some countries.

KIDNAPPING EPIDEMIC: In Muslim countries with a Christian population, like Egypt and Pakistan there has been an **epidemic of kidnappings of Christian young women** for brides to spread Islam. These women are snatched from the streets, forced to convert, raped and forced to marry. Then their parents are sent notice that this has happened. It’s over, done deal.

The Christian communities from these countries cry in woe at how they are losing their young women. The young women lose their families, their education, their freedom, and their virginity by almost unimaginable treachery. The parents lose their daughters and grandchildren, who are forced to be Muslims and into their culture. The young men are defrauded of potential Christian mates. We need to pray against this abuse of our Christian sisters overseas.

### **Example of Oppressive Coerced Marriages of Christian Women:**

In October, 2020, Arzoo Raja, a 13-year-old Christian girl in Pakistan, was kidnapped. She was forced to marry her 44 year old Muslim kidnapper and convert to Islam. In spite of widespread protests, Islamic courts upheld the marriage, saying that she had willingly converted – despite the fact that she tried to run to her mother in court, but was restrained by her husband. Subsequently the parents lost their jobs and have been threatened.

**Islam does not allow Muslim men to marry women that are considered polytheists**, like Hindus. This causes interesting complications for Muslims and Hindus living in a country where they are mixed, like India.

(Note: Not directly related to the topic of Christian-Muslim marriage, but connected to Islam and interfaith marriage are forms of love jihad reported between Muslims and Hindus. They can be just as diabolical as love jihad against Christians.

In one type, the young woman is gradually drawn into a web of deceit which “accidentally” becomes physical. Videos are made of inappropriate behavior and used to blackmail the girl. Marriage is promised. Rape by other men is used to keep her compliant at various stages along the way. Once married she is trapped inside the house, as in Muslim law, and raped by family members if she rebels. She has no legal recourse because they claim she converted AFTER the marriage. This means she does not get the dowry Muslim girls do. Moreover, the Muslim husbands claim rights to the wife’s family property under Hindu law. Meanwhile, the husband repeats the trick with another woman.

**Example of Love Jihad of a Muslim against a Hindu:**

In October of 2020, in Faridabad, India, 20 year-old Nikita Tomar was shot in the head and killed in front of her college, after a failed attempt to abduct her. The Muslim man who killed her had been her classmate since childhood. He had been repeatedly calling and harassing her to convert to Islam and marry him. Her assailant had even previously abducted her and been legally charged; but her family dropped the charges under pressure from his family, and a promise that he would stop harassing her. Sadly, he did not.)

**Questions about Muslim-Christian Romance**

**QUESTION 1:** Gary, a mature American Christian man asked us this question:

*“What do Christian women see in Muslim men that they don’t see in Christian men?”*

**ANSWERS** from Christian women who married Muslim Men:

Besides those given in the video and discussion, we received these responses to our question:

**Hope** says, “For me, at that time in my life as a college student, I think there was something mysterious that was intriguing about the attraction, including the dark and handsome aspect. There was that attention that I received that, looking back now was more representative of a controlling personality that appeared likeable at first, but not so later on with jealousy and control playing itself out.”

**Earica** who married a Muslim friend of her brother says, “One of the things that attract a woman to an Arabic man, is not so much that he's Muslim but that their culture is very hospitable and respectful toward strangers, And usually initially they're respectful to non-Muslim woman. It's something different than we're used to because it's showered and lavished upon us. So it draws you in. They're very generous and open.”

**Shaheen**, leader of a ministry to Muslims, believes that one of the things attracting Christian women to marry Muslim men is the beautiful and colorful, yet modest clothing of countries like Pakistan. She now stages annual fashion shows for Christians to show them how they can dress with Asian flare without converting to Islam.

**QUESTION 2:** Christian leaders often ask,

*“How do we keep Christians, especially young women, from getting romantically involved with Muslims?”*

**ANSWERS: In schools, neighborhoods, and work:** Christians are to be salt and light wherever they are. They are to share the gospel. Friendships between children of the same sex but different faiths could result in opportunities to love and share the good news with them.

If your children are in friendships with those of other faiths, it is a great opportunity to discuss with your children the differences in the faiths, and why Christianity is true. This puts more obligation on parents than in past generations when most children in schools and neighborhoods were at least nominally Christian, or Jewish. A degree of “apologetics,” knowing why you believe what you believe, is now essential for all Christians.

As children mature into adolescence, churches and families should share information about other religions, and the risks of intermarriage. They should emphasize the importance of not being unequally yoked with unbelievers, and discourage any serious relationships of a romantic nature between Christians and unbelievers of any kind. Using what you learned from this lesson, and possibly discussing the study questions would be a good idea.

**On outreaches and missions and other Christian activities:** There are cases reported that Christian women on outreach are getting into relationships with Muslim men while sharing the gospel with them. Some have even married them and converted to Islam.

This is a definite risk. Muslim men have pretended an interest in Christianity as a way of starting a relationship with an American woman. Christian men, on the other hand can get into trouble for talking to Muslim women and be confronted by angry Muslim men who misunderstand their intentions.

**How can leaders prevent this:**

Confront the risks in advance by **training** the team in what to expect and the risks of getting into relationships with Muslims and other unbelievers. (Perhaps using this lesson and study guide.)

Some leaders forbid any speaking to someone of the opposite sex on outreach or missions. We however realize that when distributing literature one will need to give it to people of both sexes. **Brief** conversations may then start. If brief and on topic, this could be OK.

If someone gets flirty with your team member, wants to get into deep conversation, or meet again to discuss Christianity, we advise that the team member **passes the connection** on to someone of that sex. They can tell the Muslim that it is their policy not to get involved beyond a few words.

One **exception** may be mature, older Christian women if they can speak to men as a mother. Dr. C has found that this works with her and is of little risk. The status of elder woman allows her to share with women, and men – including imams. However, once again if the men get flirty or want to continue meeting, it is advisable to pass the connection on to a man.

When **overseas**, leaders should train the team on appropriate behavior for that country. They will need to decide where and when it is appropriate to push cultural boundaries to forward the gospel, including situations where men and women might connect.

Learn to weigh **risks vs. benefits** of any Christian work (in fact it is a good idea for everything you do). Sharing the gospel carries a variety of risks. We must face them or we can't obey the Great Commission. Yet we can reduce them as reasonably possible while still sharing the gospel.

### **Summary of Why Christian Women are Attracted to Muslim Men**

Let's summarize the answers presented by our experts and testimonies above, plus more from our experience with in this situation:

Physical attraction to their "tall, dark, and handsome" appearance  
The strong factor of romance, and costly gifts, especially compared to Western men  
The appeal of the exotic culture, food, faraway places, and intricate or colorful clothing  
Simply the situation of the time and place of meeting  
Forceful personality seen as pursuing  
Affirmation: women considered overweight in Western culture are told that their curves are appreciated in Muslim cultures  
Easy life: being told that they are honored and respected, not expected to balance home and work  
Motivation of immigration, prosperity, or spreading Islam making men persuasive

### **Can Talking About it Prevent Christians Marrying Muslims?**

**YES, It can!** We shared with you the example of Cathy, who did not listen to warnings about marrying a Muslim man. But GOOD NEWS, sometimes advance warning does make a difference!

#### **Example of an American Dissuaded from Marrying a Muslim:**

One day our team got a call from a devout Christian woman who had heard them speak at a church. She was very worried because her daughter Shelly. Shelly had met a Turkish man, planned to go to Turkey with him, and marry him. Shelly was not a believer, so she could not appeal to her on that basis. She asked us to meet with Shelly and discourage her decision.

Shelly, an attractive college student, kindly agreed to meet with Dr. C and Brother E. While sharing dinner, Shelly heard the gospel, as well as details about Islam and what happens to women married to Muslims. She told them that she would consider what they had said.

A few months later the mother reported the good news that her daughter had decided not to go to Turkey. Shelly was still not a believer, however.

Fast forward over ten years. Dr. C was at a coffee house when an attractive woman with long and silky, golden brown hair came up to her.

She said excitedly, "Do you remember me? I am Shelly! You met with me long ago when I was thinking of going to Turkey. Guess what? I didn't! And a year ago I became a Christian! I am so excited about Jesus. I am studying the Bible, and tell everyone I meet about him!"

Praise God for that happy ending. May the Lord continue to strengthen her.

We hope that you too will try to discourage Christian-Muslim intermarriage.

### **Summary of Why Christians Should Not Marry Muslims**

Here is a summary of the reasons from our speakers and study guide notes for why Christians, nominal or sincere, should not marry Muslims:

**For Christian Women:**

1. **Christians should not be tied**, or “yoked” to unbelievers. You will have different worldviews and not have spiritual fellowship. If you knowingly do this, you will be disobeying the Bible. You will be asking for trouble in your life. (II Corinthians 6:14)
2. Muslims are encouraged to marry Christians to spread Islam, and might **not be sincere**
  - a. for immigration status
  - b. for security and prosperity of life in the West
  - c. desire for a “white” woman
3. **Flattery often changes** to battery after marriage (Quran 4:34)
4. The **children belong to Islam** and the father. This means that:
  - a. As the head of the household, he can make them Muslims
  - b. In the case of divorce, Islamic law grants them to him
  - c. The mother-in-law or other wife will have charge of the children of the divorced woman and might not care for them
  - d. He may take them and leave the country
5. Promises of religious **tolerance often changes** after marriage
  - a. Husbands frequently become more religious as they age
  - b. They start pressuring the Christian woman to convert
6. **You might become Muslim** –
  - a. Surrounded by Muslim culture, you might forget the blessings and reasons for believing in Jesus as your savior
  - b. You might be tricked into repeating words which would make you Muslim
7. **Polygamy** –
  - a. Because it is his right in Islam, your husband can practice this whether or not he promises you otherwise
  - b. Since in Islam he can do this with or without your knowledge, you will never be sure if he has another family
  - c. This creates the tendency for the man to always be looking for another or “better” woman, even if he can only have one
8. **Easy divorce**, since marriage is a contract, not a sacrament, as it is in Christianity
  - a. Can be done verbally or in mosque, which is not legal in America
  - b. He can marry someone else overseas even before your divorce is final
9. Whether or not you believe in Islam, you may be subjected to **living according to Islam’s rules**. These are not easy for women:
  - a. You are considered property
  - b. You can be beaten, forbidden to leave the house, forbidden to have anyone

in the house, forced to cover your body, not celebrate birthdays of your children, not keep family photos, fast when the culture does, drop everything when your husband calls for sexual attention, etc.

c. Religious rights must be performed in Arabic, which you do not understand

10. **Cultural differences** may make it difficult for his family to accept you, and you might feel excluded or disliked.

a. You and your children may be treated as “**second class**”

b. Eventually these feelings may be transferred to your husband, making him look down on you.

11. You may end up **living in fear** that someone may be coming to kill you or your spouse.

### **For Christian Men:**

1. **Christians should not be tied**, or “yoked” to unbelievers. You will have different worldviews and not have spiritual fellowship. If you knowingly do this, you will be disobeying the Bible. You will be asking for trouble in your life. (II Corinthians 6:14)

2. According to Muslim law, it is **not legal for you to marry** a Muslim woman. This means that either:

a. Your marriage must be kept secret from her family

b. You must convert

3. Realize that if you do convert to Islam, **if you leave Islam**, you must be killed and your wife punished. At least one fatwa states this.

4. If the woman that you marry converts to marry you, she might **revert to Islam** and leave you. If she does,

a. She can declare that her marriage to you is invalid. She can return to her country where she is considered single, but you are married according to America.

b. Islamic law gives her and the Muslims custody of your children.

5. **Cultural differences** may make it difficult for his family to accept you, and you might feel excluded or disliked. Eventually these negative feelings may be transferred to your wife, and she may despise you as well.

6. Whether or not you believe in Islam, you may be **subjected to living** according to its rules:

a. These lifestyle will seem foreign to you and is not easy

b. Performing all the required religious rites required will likely be a drain on your strength and time, and make it more difficult for you to work in Western style to provide for your family

c. Religious rights must be performed in Arabic, which you do not understand

7. **You might become Muslim**

a. Surrounded by Muslim culture, you might forget the blessings and reasons for believing in Jesus as your Savior

b. You might be tricked into repeating words which would make you Muslim

8. If she remains Muslim, not only are you unequally yoked, but your marriage is considered **invalid** in Islam.
- a. At any time she can leave you with the children. The ummah, the community of Islam, will encourage her to do this all along and will support her when she does.
  - b. If you are in a Muslim country, or if she returns to one, she may consider herself unmarried and free to remarry, while you are still bound in marriage to her under American law. In that way, Islam allows polygamy for women.
9. You may end up **living in fear** that someone may be coming to kill you or your spouse.

### **Five Questions for Women Considering Marrying Muslim Men**

We've seen serious problems with Christian or Western-Muslim marriage. Here are five questions which could protect a hopeful bride from hellish situations.

#### **1. Are you already married?**

It seems almost too crazy to be true, but you must ask. In the past, most people in America were from there or assimilated. They knew that marrying when you already had a wife was **bigamy** – a serious crime, and wrong. There was no need to ask.

For bigamy our federal government used to hunt men from state to state. But bigamy is happening in America now with increased frequency and decreased government intervention, and with the approval and at times promotion of mosques.

#### **2. Do you accept American laws and customs when they conflict with Islamic Law?**

This is especially important regarding child custody and women's rights. In America a woman still has hope of this, but not overseas.

#### **3. Can I practice my non-Islamic faith, and to what extent?**

No doubt the answer will be "yes" if you are of Christian or Jewish background. Other faiths are usually considered idolaters and totally unacceptable to Muslims.

You may think that your fiancé is open, yet be aware that although agreeable before marriage, but experiences have shown us that things change. Muslim men tend to get more religious as they get older.

#### **4. What is your immigration status?**

It is not uncommon to hear marriage being used as a solution to immigration problems. When marriage is seen as primarily as a contract, why not use it as a stepping stone into America... or for other benefits?

#### **5. Do you believe in temporary marriage? and Will this be a temporary marriage?**

Officially, temporary marriage has mutually agreed upon length and pre-set payment determined in advance. The time can range from an hour to years. A man's other wife/wives need not be informed of the arrangement.



Marriage may also be used as a temporary stepping stone by the Muslim man without the woman being aware that it is temporary.

(Note: Find more about Temporary Marriage, and other types of marriage, not had in Christianity in our video and study guide on *Confusing Muslim Marriages*.)

### **Scripture References for this Lesson:**

#### **Bible References:**

II Corinthians 5:17 & 6:14-16

I Corinthians 13:4-8,13

Matthew 7:15,16

Ephesians 5:28,29

#### **Islamic References:**

Women are possessions – Quran 2:223 & 3:14

Polygamy – Quran 4:3

Ok to marry Christian women – Quran 5:5

Wife beating – Quran 4:34

Muslims are the best of all peoples - Quran 3:110

Fighting for blondes – Quran 9:49 commentary An-Naisiburi 505, Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 140; also At-Tabari and Ibn Kathir

Most in hell are women - Sahih Al Bukhari 7:124; 1052

(Note: More extensive Islamic references, including those regarding marriage are given at the end of the study guide for the *Lesson on Islam and Women*.)

### **Study Questions:**

1. What are the main scriptural references that were used by the speakers in this video lesson?  
Review what they say and how it applies to Christians marrying Muslims.  
Can you think of other Bible references that would apply?
2. According to Muslim law,  
women of which religions are Muslim men allowed to marry?  
men of which religion are Muslim women permitted to marry?  
what religions are neither Muslim men nor women to marry with?
3. What are some of the things that attract Christian women to marry Muslim men.  
Try to name at least 5.  
What can be done to resist these?
4. What unexpected consequences might Christian women face after marrying Muslim or recently converted Muslim men?
5. What unexpected consequences might Christian men face after marrying Muslim, or recently converted Muslim women?
6. True or False:

If a Muslim man wants to marry more than one wife, he must first get permission of the prior wife or wives.

A Muslim man must inform his fiancé if he has another wife before he marries her.

A Muslim man can keep marriages secret.

Men and women in Islam have equal rights in marriage.

7. What kinds of questions should a Western person (Christian or not) ask or investigate before marrying a Muslim?

Do you think similar questions might apply to some degree before marrying anyone from a very different background?

8. Do you feel that Christians should confront other Christians who are considering marrying a Muslim?

What example did the study guide give of where confrontation did NOT help?

What example did the study guide give of where confrontation DID help?

Considering those, what might you say to a Christian or Western woman who was considering marrying a Muslim man?  
man wanting to marry a Muslim woman?

9. If you are a Christian, would you consider marrying a Muslim? Why or Why not?

If you are a Muslim, would you consider marrying a Christian? Why or why not?

10. Has watching this program affected the way you feel about marrying someone not of your faith background? Why or why not?

11. If you are leading an outreach or mission trip to Muslims,

What risks do you foresee with the sort of work you are planning?

What policies might you consider which would accomplish both the goals of your project, yet protect your team from romantic relationships with Muslims?

### **Appendix 1 Hope's Testimony of Marrying a Muslim**

*Hope is a Christian who married a Muslim man. She gives her testimony in brief here, hoping that you might read it, and print it out to share with any woman you know who might be making a similar mistake.*

Are you or someone you know in love with a Muslim man? As a Christian American woman, I have been in your place. So, please open your eyes, mind and heart to what I have learned.

**Just because** he looks good, doesn't mean he is. And just because he speaks sweet, kind and loving words to you, doesn't mean he believes it.

**Just because** he says it doesn't matter if you're a Christian and that you both really believe in the same God, don't believe it! In fact, investigate whether it is true or not. (It's not!)

**Just because** he brushes off questions about his faith, marriage and raising children, doesn't mean 'it will all work out'. While he may have accepted western life, he is still very much connected to his cultural and religious background. You cannot erase these things from your relationship and believe that they don't really matter that much.

**Even if** he says that he admires your faith in God, he will dismantle what you believe and may attempt to

bring you into his belief if you continue in this relationship. Later on, he may mock your Bible and discredit what it says.

**But, you say**, he loves me and treats me well. He cooks for me and is always a gentleman. You might even tell yourself that you never met an American man who treated you so well. And I would agree that the beginning seems like a great adventure dating a foreigner. However, the ending may not be what you imagined would happen.

**You might think**, *but all relationships have their problems*. Yes, but a Christian will always be unequally yoked with a Muslim or non-believer. That's why the Bible says,

*"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness. And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14)*

My romantic relationship with a man from North Africa led me to his country where I went to jail, was forced to marry him after being pressured to say the *Shahada* (Muslim prayer of acceptance), and live in a marriage filled with **mental and emotional abuse** that later affected my children. I was finally released from this marriage as he said he divorced me 3 times, which is part of the Islamic Sharia Law.

There is much more to my story, but my burden now is to warn those who might find themselves in a similar situation. **Seek God's plan for your relationship**. He will show you the right one in His perfect timing!