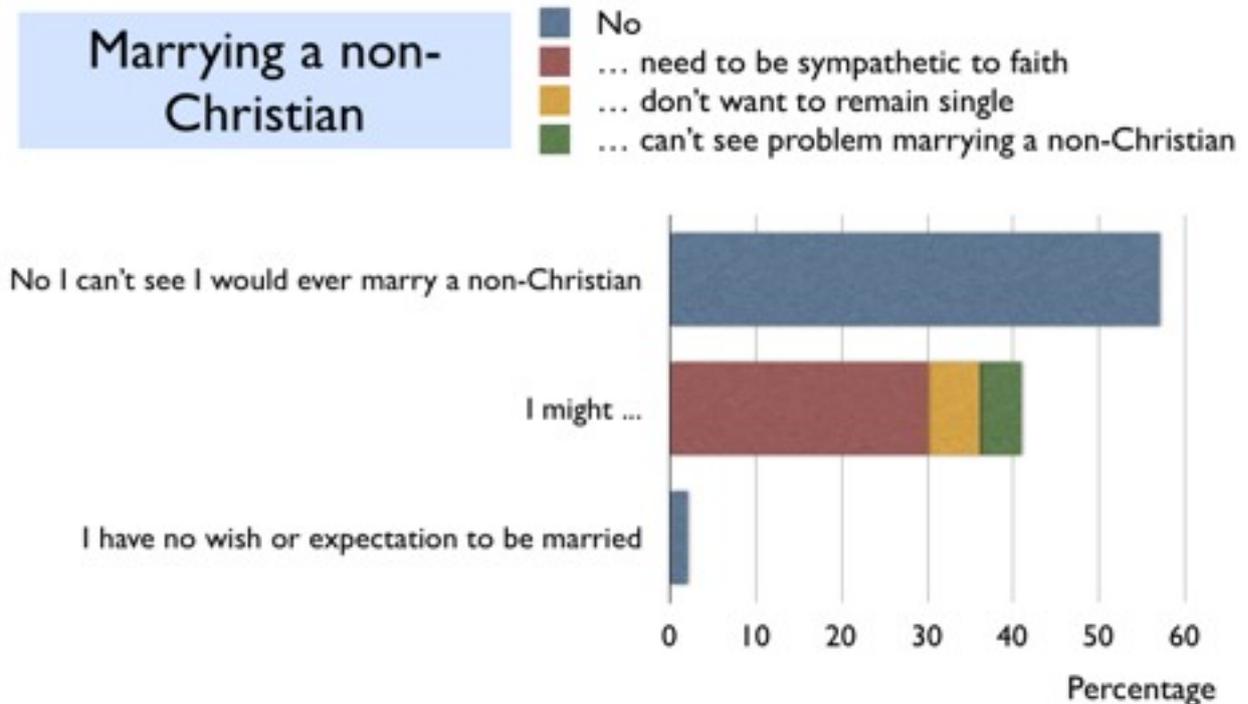


WOULD YOU MARRY A NON-CHRISTIAN?

Summary



Many apply their understanding of the Bible, which is supported by experience of dating and marriage with subsequent divorce with non-Christians, to say they would never marry a non-Christian.

Some women, in particular, find this very hard and there is real pain in living with the decision that results in not having children and they say that there is little support for them in their obedience.

With the gender imbalance, some look to marrying non-Christians in order to have love and family, pointing out that character is more important and that there is no guarantee of good relationships just because of marrying a Christian. Again there was a perceived lack of support in such relationships - even to create the possibility of conversion.

Overview

2,520 answered the question **Could there be any circumstances in which you would marry a non-Christian?**

57 %	No I can't see I would ever marry a non-Christian
30 %	I might but they would need to be sympathetic to my faith
6 %	I might, because I do not want to remain single and where I am there aren't many Christians available
5 %	I can't see any problem with marrying a non-Christian
2 %	I have no wish or expectation to be married

436 responded to the invitation **Any additional comments?** All were read through and 200 analysed in detail. In being given the opportunity to comment, most people explained the answers they had given. The types of comment were in proportion to the percentages above.

Reasons for not marrying a non-Christian

Of those saying they would not, they varied from:

- **Experience of non-Christian marriages**
Experience of non-Christian marriages from which they were now divorced (16%)
 - *Been there, brought the T shirt, and it didn't wash well (180)*
 - *Been there done that and got the divorce! Not for me :/ (74)*
 - *I was married to a non-Christian and there was constant conflict in the relationship. I would rather stay single than marry a non-Christian again. (77)*
 - *I have been married to a non christian and did not realise in my early twenties that this would be such a problem (140)*
 - *I did marry a non-Christian and it was the biggest mistake of my life...but I have three beautiful children...so I couldn't wish to undo it, but I wouldn't want to repeat it. (296)*
 - *Having dated a non-christian and seen the effect it had on my own faith, I wouldn't want to go there again (271)*
- **Experience of non-Christian dating**
A few commented on their experience of dating non-Christians:
 - *I have had non Christian boyfriends in the past, and my faith has always been the reason they have broken up with me. We have had such different outlooks on life and our futures that it wasn't possible to reconcile those differences. (411)*
 - *I have tried dated non Christian before, i can hundred percent guarantee it dragged my faith down the spiral. (50)*

- **Wanting to share every aspect of their lives**

12 noted specifically that they wanted to be able to share every aspect of life and that this was not possible with a non-Christian.

- *My belief is that the ideal union is where both share faith especially as you can share everything before God. (59)*
- *Personally I think you can be happy married to a non-christian but I don't think it is God's best. It all depends on how important your relationship with God is to you. I would find it extremely difficult not to be able to share that vital part of my life with someone I love. (104)*
- *A partnership should have God at the centre and have shared life vision and love for God. I cannot imagine compartmentalising my faith if the other person didn't love Jesus too it would be denying my true self. I think it would bring hardship and so I feel it would be better to be single. (227)*
- *As i said earlier - i cannot share my life with someone who doesn't understand what makes me tick and can help me with that. I have seen too many struggles in couples who are not both Christians. (292)*
- *Now less on principle rather that my faith is so much part of me that I would not be able to share significant things or discuss things in so much depth without having a christian partner (41)*
- *If you can't share your faith, which provides the base of your entire lifestyle then what can you share? (34)*
- *I would rather marry a strong Christian so that we could support and encourage each other in our faith. I personally know of 2 men who married non-Christians, their wives are now both Christians too so I wouldn't say I think marrying a non-Christian is always wrong. (375)*

- **Stating it is what the Bible says**

Many stated that they were being obedient to what they understood the Bible says and so they would not consider marrying a non-Christian:

- *The bible clearly forbids this. (118)*
- *It's unscriptural, tempting as it may be (312)*
- *Biblical command and practical common sense to share same faith/interests/ideas/friends (61)*
- *2 Corinthians chapter 6 vs 14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (81)*

- **Affirming that they would not marry a non-Christian, but that it is hard**
 - *Just that the answer I have given has made me count the cost of following Christ more than any other single thing (384)*
 - *Sincerely hope I remain true to my reply. I get more attention from non-Christians, I only hope I am not led into temptation to be with someone who doesn't share my faith, however sympathetic they are (254)*
 - *I pray that I won't, but I don't know how strong I will be in the future especially the older I get. (206)*
 - *It's difficult, I find a lot of single women in the church are overly timid, have no real idea who they are and aren't the kind of strong woman I would like to be with. I meet far more of these people outside of the church, so it does make it difficult. Ideally, I'd love to be with a Christian, I think that its right by God, but it's exceptionally tough. (434)*
 - *I really don't want to be single, but I also know I don't want to marry a non-Christian. I have given a few close friends permission to hold me accountable on this and to give me a very hard time if they see me slip. (334)*
- **Living with the pain of not marrying a non-Christian**
 - *Have met some lovely caring men along the way but they did not share my faith and conversely some Christian men who shared my faith but who I did not love - If you have integrity and remain faithful to yourself/God you are left waiting, lonely and completely unfulfilled as a woman if not a Christian (62)*
 - *At 55 I doubt whether I will marry and it is a source of sadness and regret that I spent time on certain church activities, when I could have been looking for a partner. (97)*
 - *Right now, I am looking to marry a christian. I was going out with a non- christian 10 years ago and I felt God spoke to me in answer to a prayer, telling me to go out with a christian. I was 30, and I am now nearly 40. It is a constant battle to remain faithful to this instruction, as time goes on I wonder when and who I will meet. Some christian friends of mine have married non- christians and I think that works for them, but as I have heard directly from god (or at least I hope so!) I feel I need to stay faithful to this. It is not easy, especially as child-bearing years slip by, especially having given up a very loving relationship 10 years ago. I can only assume that god has something better planned. (136)*
 - *Yes, I have been in a relationship with a non-Christian that was a friend for a couple years then all of a sudden we ended up realizing how much we were smitten with each other and the magnetism is beyond powerful. We have the emotional tie through friendship, the physical wowowow but no the spiritual as he follows another religion all together. It's unrequited love and devastatingly sad as he is all I think about but I can't be with a non believer. (298)*

- *Difficult - I have always been taught it is wrong and I don't think it is biblical. The best relationship I have ever had was with a non-Christian, but I ended it for the above reasons and am still not sure I did the right thing. (338)*
- *I broke up with someone because they were not a Christian, but now I wonder if in the future I would make the same choice. I always felt strongly that I wanted to be with a Christian but as time goes on I am more open to other ideas... (412)*
- *There are not many available christian men and my minister was against my marrying my very keen last partner, even tho he came to church with me, as he was not a Christian! (429)*
- *I LOVED a non-Christian, I was Told if I were to Marry him, my dear mentor would stand up for me in the church and resist the Wedding. I walked away, often it still hurts. But at the same Time I want and still hold out for a CHRISTIAN MAN. There was NO SUPPORT or Understanding for the LOVE I felt, or Support for Praying him in/ getting alongside him/ or just Accepting Him as he was. My chance to have kids has now left me, and LIFE is SLIPPING BY. . . Yet, we could have had kids and made a GO of LIFE. (217)*

Reasons for considering marrying a non-Christian

There were a variety of reasons given for considering marrying a non-Christian:

- **Character is more important than Christian or not**
 - *A good character , kindness and honesty are all important whether they come in a Christian wrapper or not ! (161)*
 - *It depends exactly on the definition of 'christian'. I would probably want to marry somebody who has an outlook in which every individual is valued, and where goodness, fairness and honesty are prized as things to be encouraged, and where ambition and self-interest are never put above anything that is wrong. So in that sense, the person would be a christian (a follower of christ), regardless of their view on any of the doctrines of the various churches (220)*
 - *Better a partner who did not claim to be a Christian than one who claims he is but who does not live as one. (166)*
 - *I would have more difficulty marrying a fundamentalist Christian (or any sort of fundamentalist, for that matter) than someone of another faith or none. (358)*
 - *Once I would have said no to this, but I have actually found some non- Christian ladies to be more sympathetic as people than some in church, where I have felt less accepted at times. (369)*
- **What are the options when they aren't many potential partners?**
 - *But the thought has crossed my mind as there aren't many single Christians where I live (142)*

- *It's very difficult to meet Christian men. There's far more christian women than men. Therefore if you want to be with someone you have to consider going out with a non christian. (350)*
 - *I want to marry a christian man but I feel like I'm saying I want to win the lottery - neither is very likely now I am 40 (78)*
 - *The maths just don't add up = let alone in the village where I live, NATIONALLY!! If the Church is preaching it has to be to Christians, the Church needs to get bringing men in !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (370)*
- **That you can advise but not legislate for love**
 - *You never know what life is going to throw at you, and God works in mysterious ways. Check out who married who in the Bible! (406)*
- **Christian marriages aren't necessarily successful just because Christian**
 - *I used to be very black and white about marrying a christian - which I did - and it backfired horribly - so now I don't know (112)*
 - *Do find some christians as boyfriends have severely wobbled my faith by not sharing my values. so even a 'christian' and a church-goer is not necessarily suitable (151)*
 - *I believe that we should not be unevenly yoked however i have been married twice both professed to be Christian. My first marriage was not consummated and my second husband had an affair and left. I have just dated a non Christian who attended an Alpha course; he treated me better than anyone I've been with. He has not made a profession so I can't allow it to go any further, but it makes you question where all the real Christian men are. The church needs to teach men how to be real men and real biblical teaching about what it means to be a follower of Christ. To teach them how to love women and to stay away from the evils of this world. (3)*
- **There are good marriages of one partner being Christian**
 - *My parents are my role models - my dad is a Christian and my mum is not. They'll have been married 30 years next March. (130)*
 - *My late husband was not a Christian, but he supported me in my faith and activities. (222)*
 - *Christian friends married to non Christian husbands are a zillion times more fulfilled and happy than single Christians (353)*
 - *I was taught that it is wrong to marry a non christian and I would find it hard to marry someone who I wouldn't be able to talk about theirs and my faith. Its such an intrinsic part of who I am. However I have heard of people who have married non christians and their partners have become Christians and one friend of mine has a husband who is more supportive about her faith than many of my Christian friends Christian husbands are (417)*

- **The possibility of power of prayer**

- *I do believe in the concept of flirt to convert! Statistically, the ratio of single christian men to single christian women is in the favour of the men, certainly in London, which does not give us girls much choice. I am strong enough in my own faith to deal with being married to someone who isn't a christian when I meet them, but I also believe in the power of prayer and there are probably many guys out there who could be saved, if only someone would take the time to pray for them. I would have the faith that that person would come to Christ but peace if they didn't. (307)*

Comments on not answering

Some didn't answer one way or the other by saying that it might be God's plan (6 people). One other questioned that anyone should make the division into 'Christian' and 'non-Christian'.

- *I wish the church would stop lumping Christians and non Christians into those two categories. Each is a person who may or may not be open sympathetic to faith. Drawing lines to create an 'us and them' is ridiculous and unhelpful in terms of all of us journeying with God. Each relationship needs to be analysed by those involved and supported by the church. Churches tend to 'drop' people who don't play by the 'rules'. How many more people would come to faith if church took befriending non christians in the dating world seriously. There are ore dynamic ways to think and support the individuals and where they are in their faith. (398)*