

EAST
Singapore

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CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Lesson 3

God's Will in Selecting a Marriage Partner

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. You may be saying, "Selecting a Marriage partner, what does that have to do with me—I'm married." If you are single, this subject is very relevant. If you have children, you should start teaching them now about how to pick a marriage partner, and to do that you should know what the criterion is. If you are a grandparent, you are going to have some select precious moments with your grandchildren on this subject. Remember, we live in a culture which has a warped view of love, marriage and sex, and our kids need all the help they can get.
- B. In choosing a marriage partner, the first great principle for a Christian to lay hold of is that God has a plan for his or her life. Since God is sovereign, He has the right person for marriage chosen for you in the eternal counsels of God, providing God has decreed you should be married. This simple Biblical principle keeps one from rushing into marriage before he or she is emotionally and mentally mature for it.

*God knows, He loves, He cares!
Nothing this truth can dim,
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.*

The Christian's responsibility is to pray and seek the Lord's guidance in the right choice of a mate. This choice should always be made on the basis of Biblical principles. If you choose to marry an unbeliever as a Christian, for instance, then this is contrary to the directive will of God and you must pay the consequences for this act of rebellion.

II. WHERE AND HOW TO MEET A FUTURE MATE WHO IS A CHRISTIAN

- A. How?
1. A Christian should be in fellowship with the Lord and seeking to do His will. Many bad choices are made when a person is not walking close to the Lord. The Christian has the promise if he will seek Christ first then all other things will be added to him in God's timing. *"But seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).*
 2. If you are not obedient to Christ, do not expect Him to bring you a Christian mate. He just may allow you to marry the person in your folly which will bring a lot of misery to you.
 3. Dedicated Christians spend time with other Christians and in doing the Lord's service; therefore, there is a much better opportunity to meet

Christian men and women when you are excited about Christ. If most of your friends are unbelievers or nominal, professing Christians, you will probably end up marrying someone who you spend your most time with. We are who we associate with. “Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33)

B. Where?

1. The best place to meet Christians is to go where Christians are, such as church, church functions, Christian groups and Christian colleges. One of the best reasons I know for attending a Christian college is to get a Christian mate.
2. If not married, Christian singles ought to consider full time Christian work and go with organizations where they will meet the opposite sex.

Carol and I sacrificed financially to send our four sons to a Christian college. We did so for two reasons: 1) to give our sons a Christian world and life view, and 2) to have our sons meet and marry a Christian girl.

C. What?

1. There are several basic considerations which should be made when picking a life-time mate, such as oneness in the Christian faith, similarity in cultural backgrounds and similarity in educational backgrounds.
2. Knowing the qualities which make a good marriage partner will help you to recognize God’s guidance. Studies of numerous happy marriages show what the right person for you will be:
 - a. Someone you enjoy being with.
 - b. Someone whose character and personality you admire.
 - c. A person with common interests and mutual ambitions.
 - d. A person whose social and cultural background is similar.
 - e. Someone whose denominational beliefs are near enough your own so there will be no disagreement over church membership.
 - f. Someone whose standard of living will be easy for you to accept.
 - g. An individual whose intellectual and educational levels will be near enough your own to assure you the joy of companionship in shared understandings.
3. From the time our four boys were born, Carol and I started praying about their future mate. We had the following requests:
 - a. That each one would marry a Christian women who was dedicated to Christ.
 - b. That each one would marry within the social-economic-educational background of their parents.
 - c. That each one would marry a woman whose parents had not been divorced since this often puts additional strains on a marriage.
 - d. Then I personally had a fourth, that each one would marry a woman who was sovereign grace oriented in theology.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL MARRIAGE PARTNERS

- A. God has given the Christian a sound mind or a disciplined mind. *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (sound mind)” (2 Tim. 1:7)*. He expects the believer to use his mind for His glory. Choosing the right mate will not always be easy, for no bell will go off or lightning bolt hit you when the right one comes along. God expects you to pray and use your common sense. In this major decision, be sure your mind controls your emotions and not visa versa.
- B. Qualities a Man Looks for in a Wife
1. Feminine, neat and clean. Well-groomed and well-dressed even if on a low budget. Healthy lifestyle.
 2. Sexual purity.
 3. A Christ-like disposition: not selfish, demanding, domineering, snobbish, dishonest, mean, prone to sulking, pouting or throwing tantrums.
 4. Well adjusted personally so as to adjust to married life and a family.
 5. A good homemaker who is able to cook and organizes time wisely.
 6. Worthy of a man’s respect by her devotion, social abilities and intelligence.
 7. Patient and calm under adverse circumstances.
 8. Enjoys life without always having to do something.
 9. Will she make a good mother for his children.

It is fairly easy for a woman to get a man. It is much more difficult for her to keep a man.

- C. Qualities A Woman Looks For In a Husband:
1. A Christian with strong spiritual convictions and a consistent Christian life, who reads the Bible and prays with the family.
 2. A man who will be the head of the family as the spiritual leader and disciplinarian of the family. A woman needs a man she can respect and look up to.
 3. Loves children and interested in spending time with the wife and family.
 4. Has faithfulness and dependability.
 5. Is able to provide materially for the family.
 6. Has a healthy lifestyle and is neat and clean.
 7. Gives protection and security to the wife and children. A woman needs a man to lean upon for help and strength.
 8. Provides companionship.
 9. Romance: the woman needs a man who will be kind, gracious, polite, thoughtful and tells her that he loves her.
 10. Sexually pure.

These qualities in a wife or husband cannot be listed in order of importance for that would be impossible. Also, there probably is not a person alive with all these qualities perfected, but all of these qualities are attainable to some degree to everyone if they are willing to work at them. These qualities do not depend on social standing, financial state or education, but are available for all to attain.

IV. HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I HAVE THE RIGHT ONE?

- A. Do you and your partner have a common belief in Jesus Christ, the Bible, and are you seeking to glorify Christ in your relationship? There should be real enjoyment in growing in grace together.
- B. Can you be with your partner without constantly stressing the physical? Overly physical relationships rarely produce sound marriages.
- C. Do you really desire to be with this person alone and have no interest in anyone else?
- D. Are you able to share your potential partner with the Lord and others, not being possessive?
- E. Are you willing to always do the best and think the best of the one you claim to love?
- F. Can you and your potential partner talk about love and marriage rationally and scripturally, apart from the emotion aspects? It is important to get down to the “nitty-gritty” of spending a whole lifetime with a person.
- G. Are you willing to sacrifice all for the other person: pride, self-desires, material things? Are you willing, if you are a woman, to submit, faithfully do dishes, wash clothes, iron, clean house, change diapers, cook, devote time to your husband and children and give up your freedoms for another person, submitting yourself to him? Are you willing, if a young man, to make this marriage relationship a success, even digging ditches or holding down two jobs if necessary and give up your personal desires for this woman?
- H. Could you be happy with this person through sickness and health, through poverty and plenty? Will you go through thick and thin with this person?
- I. Most people never give much thought to their marriage vows because marriage is not seen as a God-given institution and a man’s word cannot be trusted.
- J. Are you ready to accept this person’s bad points as well as his good ones? Will you seek to change your partner to your liking after marriage? Do not expect to reform your mate after marriage. This is simply ivory tower reasoning. God may or may not change your mate, and, if He does, it will be progressive, not immediate. Yet even as your partner is changing, his and her bad character traits will show up from time to time.
- K. Are you completely honest with your partner with no game playing?
- L. If necessary, you should be willing to share your past with your potential marriage partner in complete honesty. If a person has been a crook, spent time in jail, sexually promiscuous, had an abortion or whatever, this should be made known. It is better to find out these things before marriage than after marriage and come to grips with them. Truth may hurt, but it is better to know the truth than to live a lie. If a person cannot live with a potential mate’s past, then it is better to break up a close dating relationship than to get married and break up a marriage.
- M. Do my partner’s strong points compliment my weak ones?

V. CONCLUSION

- A. You will not know immediately whether you have the right one. Much prayer, time spent with the person and mature reasoning must be put forth.

- B. Ask God to take the person out of your life if he or she is not the right one and pray this prayer right up to the time of the marriage ceremony.

Story of Henry Haswell and Lottie.

- C. You must depend upon God to give you assurance about the right marriage partner for you and He will give it if you are genuinely seeking God's will. While it may take sometime to determine the right one, it only takes a short time to know whether your love is based on sound Biblical and spiritual principles.
- D. Remember, it is possible to choose the wrong person to marry. You can fall in love with an unbeliever. You can make carnal decisions about a future marriage partner and be out of the moral and directive will of God. Whatever your motives, when you marry, it is a binding relationship. If you marry out of the will of God, it is difficult to live with the person, but not impossible. God always gives grace, but it is much easier to begin a marriage on sound, biblical principles, giving Christ the Lordship over that marriage.