

Before You Say “I Do”... Premarital and Dating



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Before You Say “I Do...”



Purpose:

“to establish and pursue” God guided and God honoring decisions about:

- a) Singleness
- b) Marriage

Is Marriage Relevant?



- Our culture is stuck on viewing marriage through the lens of happiness first and foremost – defining happiness as romantic intensity and sexual chemistry, resulting in marriages lasting only as long as the “happiness” exists and “my needs are being met.”

Is Marriage Relevant?



- “**Try before you buy**” makes total sense to our culture today
- Even the **CRA taxation** gives greater benefits to single over married
- Why would you **rob yourself** of God’s best perfect and best gift for the forgery????

Is Marriage Relevant?



Exodus 20:4-6 “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Is Marriage Relevant?



*****The point*****

Don't settle for less than the perfect standard; it has rewards that last for generations.

What am I getting into (What is Marriage)?



“Marriage is when a man and a woman enter into a lifelong covenant with God and with each other to become husband and wife. It is the total commitment of two imperfect people toward a perfect ideal, which God established since Adam and Eve. It is the fulfillment of a mystery where two become “one flesh.”

Why marry?



Genesis 1:27 “So God created man (humankind) in His own image and in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Genesis 2:24 “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Why marry?



- a) God has created three institutions:
1. **Family (first)**
 2. **Church (community)**
 3. **Government (society)**

Why marry?



- b) The family is God's moral / relational foundation for every person in the world.
- c) Family provides the greatest support, love, encouragement, community, care.

Why marry?



d) I.E. like layers of an onion.

Layer 1 – **parents** (role models, identity, unconditional love)

Layer 2 – **siblings** (relationships, identity, protection)

Layer 3 – **grandparents** (depth, unconditional love, example, acceptance, security)

Layer 4 – **uncles, aunts, cousins** (identity, greater number of support)

Layer 5 – **wise friends**

Why marry?



e) Procreation

Genesis 1:28 “Be fruitful and multiply.”

Why marry?



- f) God designed family as a massive fortress to protect you from the destruction Satan wants to bring against God by destroying what He has created to reflect His greatness.
- g) As goes the family, so goes the nation.

Why marry?



- h) If Satan can destroy the family, he can destroy the culture, society, individual lives for the greater purpose of a massive attack against God.

Hebrews 13:4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled."

Why not marry? (singleness)



- a) The Bible says more about this vital area of life than we think it does.
- b) First and foremost – singleness has **God's stamp and seal of approval**

1 Corinthians 7:8 "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am."

Why not marry? (singleness)



- c) Singleness is an **honorable choice**
- d) Singleness is not **second class citizenry**
- e) Just as marriage is a God given gift, singleness is also a God given gift

Why not marry? (singleness)



- f) (see vs 8, 10, 12, 25) He also makes it clear that His ideas about the advantages of the single life are largely a response to the practical necessities of the immediate historical situation (ie. Persecution and hardship – see v 26).

Why not marry? (singleness)



g) Marriage is clearly not for everybody. And yes, from the Biblical point of view there's a great deal to be said for the advantages of the single life. That much we'll grant you.

At the same time, we can't possibly go along with the idea that "marriage is a second-class state" or that "singleness is the ideal". If that were true, why did God say in the very beginning that "*it is not good that man should be alone*" (Genesis 2:18)?

Why not marry? (singleness)



h) Biblical characters who did not marry:

-Jeremiah (Jeremiah 16:2)

-Jesus

- Paul (1 Corinthians 7:7, 8)

Why not marry? (singleness)



- i) Does God intend that every person should marry?
No

1 Corinthians 7:38 "So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better."

Why not marry? (singleness)



- j) Does God intend that every person should marry?
No

1 Corinthians 7:8 “Now as a concession, not a command, I say this, ‘I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.’”

Why not marry? (singleness)



- k) God has gifted some of His followers to make choices and or sacrifices as their best way to honor and serve Him. This is to be highly respected and honored.

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



- a) **Adam and Eve**
- b) **Isaac and Rebekah**

*Genesis 24:14 “may she be the one whom
You have appointed for Your servant Isaac;”*

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



c) Samson and his wife (unnamed)

Judges 14:4 “However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord,”

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



d) Hosea and Gomer

Hosea 1:1-2 “When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.”

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



- e) **Ruth and Boaz**
(could be argued both ways)
- f) **David and Abigail**
seems choice over pre-determined
- g) **Jacob, Rachel & Leah**
seems choice over pre-determined

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



- h) Yet, **all other** examples of marriages in the Bible do not indicate whether God pre-determined or if it was an individual/mutual choice.

Proverbs 18:22 “He who finds a wife finds a good thing.”

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



- i) There seems to be sufficient evidence in the Bible that “choose or predetermined” is not an either/or question but and/both.

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



- j) Either way the same amount of **serious preparation** is needed where you focus on learning and growing how to be the husband / wife God wants as well as searching for a spouse with the characteristics / traits of a husband / wife.

Is my life-mate pre-determined by God or is it my “choice”?



Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In ALL your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.”

Healthy Dating



- * stage one: **large group** (scouting)
- * **smaller groups** (fellowship groups / life groups)
- * **double dating**

Healthy Dating



- * time with each other's families (meals, games, events)
- * set curfews
- * strategize dating times with an established purpose (why do we want to do this / go here / how will this enhance our relationship?)

Healthy Dating



- * discover mutual interests, hobbies, recreation
- * discover each other's dreams, ambitions, goals
- * avoid places of compromise (car, apartment, home alone)

Healthy Dating



- * consult with parents, close friends, pastors
- * discuss your intentions early in the process
- * worship together (testing a sense of spiritual oneness)

Intimacy & Boundaries



- a) Premarital Sex - Sexuality is sacred (as is ethnicity, personhood). Therefore it is to be guarded and protected for a time when it can be experienced to its fullest potential / joy / expression of the bond of “oneness.”

Intimacy & Boundaries



- b) Sex / virginity / purity is your most treasured wedding gift you can give to your husband / wife. If you no longer have your virginity, the best gift you can give is your purity.

Intimacy & Boundaries



- d) **Sexual fidelity** is also a matter of character / integrity / respect / honor / trust. Sex outside of marriage sends an unspoken message to your spouse that you are willing to violate that standard. It creates a cloud of question for the future.



He Drew a Line in the Sand

He set a boundary. Why? To show us that the waves are His, to tell us that He is sovereign, creative, and wise — and that He can be trusted.



Gallons of Mystery

Sex is reserved for the ocean depths of marriage, not the safe wading depth of dating.



Is God Stingy?

He wasn't trying to deprive them. He was trying to *save* them. Satan takes the infinite wisdom and love of the Father, and makes him sound overprotective.



“How far is too far before marriage?” That’s where most of our conversations about boundaries begin.

- *Where do we need to draw the line?*
- *What are we allowed to do now?*
- *How much should we save for marriage?*



Acts of War in Dating

Every act of obedience, in life and in dating, is a free act of defiance in the face of Satan's schemes and lies. We're not just *guarding* ourselves from him by setting and keeping boundaries; we're *seizing* territory back from him in dating.



1 Thessalonians 5:3-7 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality / that each of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.”

Pursuing Compatibility



- a) Compatibility needs to be seen not as a **noun** but as a **verb**.
- b) “Compatibility is the **process** of learning how to turn our **differences** into assets not **liabilities**”.

Pursuing Compatibility



- c) This is part of what God means in Genesis when he says about marriage: “**two SHALL BECOME one flesh**”

Marrying a person who is not a follower of Jesus



Marrying a person who is not a follower of Jesus –
unequally yoked

2 Corinthians 6:14 “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.”

Devotional Preparation before Marriage



- * Read together Christian books on marriage / roles / expectations
- * Pray together – **out loud**

What am I getting into?



- * **second biggest** choice of your life (#1: God, #2: Family, #3: Career, #4: where to live.)
- * what the **commitment** requires:
change in priorities / lifestyle (requires “adjusting / giving up” in: personal time, friend time, recreational time, hobbies, shopping, socializing, family time, work time)

Traits to Look for in a Spouse



- a) Does this person truly trust Jesus?
- b) Does this person follow through on his / her word?
- c) Does this person make me stronger?

Traits to Look for in a Spouse



- d) Is this person **hard-working**?
- e) Is this person **generous** and **hospitable**?
- f) Is this person **wise** and **eager** to help others?

Fourteen things to talk about



- a) Your Hopes and Dreams: Planning a future together
- b) Family Background and History
- c) Education

Fourteen things to talk about



- d) Life experiences
- e) Career
- f) Ethics and Values

Fourteen things to talk about



- g) Love and Commitment
- h) Sexuality
- i) Children / Family

Fourteen things to talk about



- j) Spiritual Practices
- k) Past Relationships
- l) Finances / Money
- m) Household

Things to Consider



a) Look in appropriate places

Genesis 24:3,4,10 “...that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among who I dwell (meaning – same world view), but go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

Things to Consider



- b) Seek wise advice. Parents, close friends, grandparents, family, people with longstanding successful marriages, pastors.
- c) Realize that opposites attract.

Things to Consider



- d) Realize that minor differences now are a gazillion times bigger after marriage.
- e) Realize that there is a love that will bring you to marriage but there is another love that will be necessary to keep you married.



****Note****

Don't marry the person you can live with, marry the person you can't live without.



The goal of premarital counseling as provided by your spiritual leaders is to prepare you to enter into marriage with **as few surprises as possible.**