

God's Wisdom in Choosing a Mate (Part 1)

Some of this material is adapted from a sermon by Jeff Hamilton at
<http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVsermons/WisdomInPickingAMate.htm>

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (NKJV) Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.

1. **We tend to be rash or impulsive when young.** We dream and imagine the ideal. We tend to ignore potential problems, pretend they are not there, or think they do not matter. – 2 Tim 2:22; Prov. 7:21-23; 19:20-21

2 Timothy 2:22 (NKJV) ²²Flee also **youthful lusts**; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Proverbs 7:21-23 (NKJV) ²¹ With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. ²² Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, ²³ Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, **he did not know it would cost his life.**

Proverbs 19:20-21 (NKJV) ²⁰ Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days. ²¹ There are **many plans in a man's heart**, nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.

2. **We tend to think that our love for someone will overcome all obstacles.**

- a. One of the most important purposes of marriage is companionship, sharing common goals, interests and activities, but to succeed as companions we will need to love the Lord. **Matthew 22:37-39**
- b. Failure to share a common religious faith is one of the major grounds for conflict in marriage, especially when it comes to raising children.

I. A Christian should marry a faithful Christian for all the following reasons:

A. A faithful Christian will help, not hinder, your worship of God.

- Ideally a family will worship God together. They will commune together in song, prayer, the Lord's Supper, etc.
- **Joshua 24:15** - Joshua determined that he and his house would serve the Lord.
- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - Young couples, from the very beginning of their relationship, should determine to attend every meeting of the local church, and also enjoy other opportunities to worship.
- But if you do not marry a Christian, your spouse may not attend with you.
 - Worse yet, he may attend a false religious group.
 - He may even actively oppose your attendance with the Lord's church.
 - He may resent and oppose giving money to church.

B. A faithful Christian will pray with you, not hinder your prayers.

- Praying together is one of the most important things Christians can do to help one another be saved, which is the main goal of marriage.
 - **James 5:16 (NKJV)** Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
 - **Proverbs 28:9 (NKJV)** ⁹ One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

- **James 1:5 (NKJV)** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
 - Don't we need wisdom to have good marriages? Are there things about your marriage that you wish you had the wisdom to improve?
- **Philippians 4:6 (NKJV)** ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
 - Don't we often have concerns for our marriage and our family? Do we become anxious or worried about what might happen? Do we have needs we wish to see fulfilled in our homes?
 - Young couples need to begin this practice from the very early days of their relationship.
- If a young lady marries a young man who is not a Christian, who will be the spiritual leader in the home? If someone is not comfortable praying with you or does not think prayer is important, will he/she make a good marriage companion?

C. A faithful Christian will help, not hinder, your Bible study.

- Young couples should begin to study and discuss God's word on a regular basis from the beginning of their relationship.
- **1 Peter 2:2-3 (NKJV)** ²as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow ³thereby, ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.
- Suggest spiritual topics and study them together. This helps you understand one another's beliefs, develops your Bible knowledge, and establishes a spiritual foundation for your relationship.
- Yet a companion who is not a Christian may not be willing to study. If you initiate a spiritual discussion, the result may be argument and conflict.
- What are the chances he/she will work with you to achieve the ultimate goal of serving God and going to heaven? Instead of being a source of spiritual strength, your companion may become a hindrance and discouragement.

D. A faithful Christian will encourage, not discourage, proper morality.

- **Hebrews 5:13-14 (NKJV)** ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- Christian couples have a common standard by which to determine their moral beliefs and practices. But if you marry one who is not a Christian, he may develop habits you object to: drinking liquor, smoking, profanity, dirty jokes, gambling, dirty TV shows, suggestive clothing, even pornography or drug abuse.
- What if he/she spends family funds on things you consider to be immoral?
- What if he/she is dishonest in business dealings or refuses to pay family debts?
- What if he wants to donate funds to causes that you oppose?
- How can you appeal to him if he refuses to live by the Bible?

E. A faithful Christian will help, not hinder, your relations with friends and in-laws.

- **Proverbs 13:20 (NKJV)** He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.

- If you marry a faithful Christian, he will want to associate with Christians and good moral people. But if you marry one who is not a Christian, his closest friends will not be Christians.
 - And what about in-laws? When you marry you inherit your companion's family. Will your in-laws oppose your religious beliefs? How well you will get along with them, and how well will he get along with your family and friends? You need to consider these questions seriously before marriage.
- F. A faithful Christian will help, not hinder, your efforts to teach God's word.**
- Christian couples work together in this, inviting friends over to discuss and study the Bible.
 - But if your companion is not a Christian, he may object if you invite others to your home to study, and may resent the time you spend in teaching. He may even openly contradict the truth.
- G. A faithful Christian will work with you, not against you, in raising your children.**
- Most mixed-faith couples think they can handle it, and then the children come along. Nearly all the concerns we have already discussed become magnified. – ***Nehemiah 13:23-24; 2 Cor 6:14-18***
 - What will you do if your companion discourages your children from studying the Bible, attending services, or becoming a Christian?
 - What will you do if he insists the children go with him to attend a false church?
 - What will you do if he allows them to attend recreational or social activities instead of the worship assemblies?
 - What will you do if he or she allows the children to drink, smoke, dress immodestly, use profanity, attend dances, go to wild parties, and run with a bad crowd?
 - What will you do if he refuses to punish the children when they need it, or if he opposes your efforts to discipline the children?
 - Raising children is difficult enough, even when the parents work together.
 - How will you feel if one of your children is eternally lost because you chose to marry a non-Christian?

Dangers of Modern Dating

- Quickly embarks on a romantic progression of intimacy before people are ready to follow through and commit to marriage.
 - Tends to skip the “friendship” stage of a relationship.
 - Often isolates a couple from other vital relationships.
 - Easily mistakes a physical relationship for love.
 - Easily leads to lust and lascivious activity, then to fornication.
 - Can develop an appetite for variety and change, creating potential dissatisfaction and unfaithfulness within marriage.
 - Lacks the protections and guidance afforded by parental involvement.
- (This list was extracted from “Dating: Is it worth the risk?” by Reb Bradley; “I Kiss Dating Goodbye” by Jushua Harris; “Dating, Betrothal and Courtship” by Dr. S.M. Davis; “Dating vs. Courtship” by Paul Jehle.*

Recommendations for Parents

1. You are their parent first, friend second. You are their trainer for adulthood! (*Prov. 22:6*) Few things are more important than marriage.
2. Remind them of the purpose of dating. Help them understand that dating is the first stage of the marriage process.
3. Make an agreement with your child that you must FIRST meet the person and spend time with them in your home.
4. Allow group dating only, not double-dating. Group dating is many different boys and girls going somewhere as friends.
5. Do not allow them to be alone. As teens their hormones are running. Do not allow them to set up for sin.
6. Set a curfew and hold to it. Know where they are going and what they are doing.
7. Review with them their commitment to spiritual and sexual purity.
8. Be involved. Ask questions after each date. Do you see yourself possibly marrying this person? If not, stop dating.
9. Keep Christ as the center of your home. It is always about pleasing God. When Christ is first in your home, He will guide you and yours in the decisions that need to be made.
10. Be prayerful. Keep close communication with the most powerful source of all.

Wisdom in Choosing a Mate (Part 2)

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Selecting a husband...

1. Is he a hard-working, responsible leader? - *Prov. 10:5*
Proverbs 10:5 (NKJV)⁵ He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.
2. Is he kind, a help to the needy? - *Prov. 19:17; 21:13*
Proverbs 19:17 (NKJV)¹⁷ He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.
Proverbs 21:13 (NKJV)¹³ Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.
3. Does he listen to advice? - *Prov. 12:15*
Proverbs 12:15 (NKJV)¹⁵ The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel *is* wise.
4. Does he often speak critically about people and circumstances? - *Prov. 17:27-28*
Proverbs 17:27-28 (NKJV)²⁷ He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. ²⁸ Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.
5. Is he able to control his anger? - *Prov. 14:29*
Proverbs 14:29 (NKJV)²⁹ *He who is* slow to wrath has great understanding, but *he who is* impulsive exalts folly.
6. What are his friends like? - *Prov. 13:20*
Proverbs 13:20 (NKJV)²⁰ He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.
7. How strongly does he desire money? - *Prov. 15:27*
Proverbs 15:27 (NKJV)²⁷ He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.
8. How does he see/talk about women? Demeans? Flirts? Objects of lust? - *Prov. 6:27-28*
Proverbs 6:27-28 (NKJV)²⁷ Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?
9. Does he use alcohol or drugs? - *Prov. 23:29-30*
Proverbs 23:29-30 (NKJV)²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine.
10. Women have a tendency to accept a man in all his failings, believing they can change him. They can't.

Selecting a wife...

Proverbs 31:10 (NKJV) Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth *is* far above rubies.
Proverbs 12:4 (NKJV) An excellent wife *is* the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame *is* like rottenness in his bones.

1. Seek help from God, because a good wife is a gift from God - *Prov. 19:14; 18:22*

Proverbs 19:14 (NKJV) Houses and riches *are* an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife *is* from the Lord.

Proverbs 18:22 (NKJV) *He who* finds a wife finds a good *thing*, and obtains favor from the Lord.

2. Don't make beauty the highest priority – *Prov. 31:30*

Proverbs 31:30 (NKJV) Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing, but a woman *who* fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

3. Look for the exact same traits God looks for in a woman – *submissive, chaste, respectful, gentle and quiet spirit* – *1 Pet. 3:1-6*

1 Peter 3:1-6 (NKJV) ¹Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ²when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. ³Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— ⁴rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. ⁵For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, ⁶as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

4. Look for a woman who is hard-working, kind, generous – *Prov. 31:13,20,26-29*

Proverbs 31:13,20,26-29 (NKJV)

¹³ She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands.

²⁰ She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.

²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

²⁷ She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.

²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praises her:

²⁹ “Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.”

5. Avoid a contentious and angry woman. Such a woman is rarely pleased by what is around her, including you – *Prov. 21:9, 19; 27:15-16*

Proverbs 21:9 (NKJV) ⁹ Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

Proverbs 21:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman.

Proverbs 27:15-16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ A continual dripping on a very rainy day And a contentious woman are alike; ¹⁶ Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand.

6. Look for a woman who shows discretion, propriety – *Prov. 11:22; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; Tit. 2:5*
Proverbs 11:22 (NKJV) ²² As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, *so is* a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 (NKJV) ⁹in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

Titus 2:5 (NKJV) ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.