

I. Introduction and Review.

- A. Marriage is Designed by God to be a Blessing. Prov. 18:22
- B. Bad Marriage is a Disaster! Pr. 21:9 19:13 27:15 I Pet. 3:1
- C. Many Christians Need to Completely Re-Orient Their Thinking. Rom. 12:2
- D. What is the Best Way to Promote a Joyful God Honoring Marriage?
Dating or Courtship?
 - 1. Which will Help You to Make a Wise Choice. Prov. 31:30
 - 2. Which will Promote Your Purity - Physical and Emotional.
 - 3. Which will Prepare You for a Godly Marriage?

II. God's Design for Marriage. Gen. 2:18-23 Why begin here?

- A. God has a Gift for You. v. 18
 - 1. For Most, It is Not Good for You to be Alone. v. 18
 - a. A shocking evaluation "Not Good".
 - b. A helper and companion to assist Adam in carrying out God's mandate to subdue the earth. Ecc. 4:9-11
 - c. A suitable counterpart - complementary.
 - 2. Some are Called to be Single. I Cor. 7:1,7-8
 - a. Some may remain unmarried for life.
 - b. Many may called to be temporarily single.
 - c. Celibacy is not required for service to Christ. I Tim. 3:2-4 4:1-3 I Cor. 9:5
 - 3. God Gives His Gifts of Marriage and Singleness:
 - a. Not that you might pursue your selfish pleasures.
 - b. But that you might serve the Lord more effectively.
 - c. How can you determine your calling?
- B. God Still Brings Together Adams And Eves. v. 19-23
 - 1. Why Does God Have Adam Name the Animals Before Bringing Eve? v. 19-20
 - a. Adam is made aware of his need.
 - b. Male headship was God's design from the beginning. I Tim. 2:11-13
I Cor. 11:8-9
 - c. Male headship does not imply superiority of personhood, but involves distinction in function according to God's design. I Cor. 11:3 Gal. 3:28
I Pet. 3:7
 - d. The fall makes submission difficult. Gen. 3:16b I Pet. 3:1-2
 - 2. Why Does God Choose Such an Unusual Method of Building Eve? v. 21-22
 - a. She was made from the man that he would cherish her as precious and equal.
 - b. The first marriage was a covenant ceremony at which God gave away the bride.
 - 3. Marriage is a Gift to be Rejoiced in. v. 23

III. God's Directives for Marriage. Gen. 2:24 Eph. 5:31 Matt. 19:5 Mark 10:7 I Cor. 6:16

A. Leave - Marriage Creates a New Family Unit.

- 1. Your Marriage Takes Priority Over Any Human Relationship.
- 2. God's Design is Violated When Improper Emotional or Financial Ties Interfere.

B. Cleave - Marriage is a Permanent Relationship. *A Covenant of Companionship.*

- 1. You are Bound Together by an Oath.
 - a. In sickness and in health.
 - b. For richer and for poorer.
 - c. For better and for worse.
- 2. God's Design is Violated by Divorce and Separation. Matt. 19:3-9 Mal. 2:14-16
I Cor. 7:5
- 3. It is Possible for a Believer to be the Innocent Party in a Divorce or Separation.
I Cor. 7:15 Matt. 5:32

- C. One Flesh - The Physical Relationship in Marriage is a Gift from God.
1. Why Did God Create Sex? Heb. 13:4 Song of Solomon.
 - a. An expression of the lifelong marriage commitment. Eph. 5:28-30
 - b. God's chosen means to fill the earth. Gen. 1:28
 - c. God has given sex for the mutual enjoyment of husband and wife. Prov. 5:18-19
 2. God's Design is Violated by any Sexual Expression Outside of Marriage. Pr. 2:17
 - a. Homosexuality. Lev. 18:22 20:13 Rom. 1:26-27 I Cor. 6:9 Gen. 19:5
 - b. Adultery. Ex. 20:14 Matt. 19:9 I Cor. 6:16-20 Prov. 7:27 6:27-29 5:15-23 2:17
 - c. Fornication. Eph. 5:3 Prov. 7:6-27
 - d. Lust. Mat. 5:27-28 Prov. 6:25 Job. 31:1 **Pornography, fantasizing, Immodesty.**
 - e. God's design is violated by neglecting the your spouse's sexual needs. I Cor. 7:3-5

D. It is Wrong to Prematurely Introduce the Privileges of Marriage Before the Covenant Responsibilities have been Undertaken. ***For this Reason (and no other!) Many Dating Relationships are "Mini-Marriages" which end with Mini-Divorces***

1. Leaving - Replacing the Family Relationship.
2. Cleaving - Deep and Damaging Emotional Ties.
 - a. Emotional chastity is as important as physical chastity.
 - b. Multiple relationships with minimal commitment may set the pattern for future divorces.
 - c. God's design does not include recreational romance!
3. One Flesh - Most Romantic Relationships have an Inappropriate Physical Element.
 - a. The question should not be "How far can we go?", but what is best?
 - b. Physical involvement prior to marriage involves giving away something that belongs to someone else. ***You may be messing with someone else's wife (to be).***

- E. What is the Best Way to be Righteous in Relations with the Opposite Sex? (See I D)
1. Dating is Playing with Fire. I Cor. 10:12 Jer. 17:9
 2. Courtship Provides Safeguards Against Temptation. II Tim. 2:22

IV. Principles for Courtship. ***The mutual investigation of the possibility of marriage by people who are ready to take on its responsibilities.***

See Christian Courtship vs. the Dating Game by Jim West.

- A. The Man Initiates Courtship.
1. He Knows Enough About the Woman to Think that She Might Make a Good Wife.
 2. How Could He have Learned About Her without "Dating"?
 3. Courtship is not a Game, but Involves Open and Honorable Communication.
- B. The Family (Father) Plays a Major Role. Gen. 2:24 I Cor. 7:36-38 Ex. 22:16-17
As Opposed to Dating in which the man and woman are usually totally independent.
1. What Kinds of Issues Ought the Family to Raise?
 2. What is there is Geographic Distance?
 3. What if the Parents are Unbelievers or are Unwilling to Participate?
- C. The Goal of the Relationship is to Explore the Possibility of Marriage.
As Opposed to Dating, the goal of which is to have a good time.
1. Courtship Enables the Man and Woman to Get to Know Each Other for the Purpose of Determining:
 - a. Whether the other person is of a suitable character.
 - b. Whether the two persons have compatible beliefs, gifts, and life goals.
 - c. Whether there is a compatibility and mutual attraction.
 2. Not All Courtship Leads to Marriage.
- D. All Physical Affection is Forbidden. I Tim. 5:2 I Cor. 7:1

As Opposed to Dating which often allows sexual touching (other than intercourse).

1. What is the Purpose for Physical Affection (sexual touching)?
2. What is the Best way to Avoid Falling into Sexual Sin?
3. Absolute Privacy is Inappropriate and Dangerous for Unmarried People: Chaperons.
4. Don't Trust Yourself. Prov. 3:5-6 14:12 Jer. 17:9

V. How Should You Choose a Mate? See The Art of Choosing Your Love, by Jim West.

A. Follow the Scriptures, not Your Feelings! Prov. 3:5-6 31:30

1. Is There Such a Thing as Love at First Sight? Judges 14:1-2 16:11

Marriage is not an involuntary response to physical and emotional stimuli.

2. Is it Possible to Fall in Love with the Wrong Person? Jer. 17:9
3. Is it Necessary to be "In Love" in Order to have a Successful Marriage?

We must do more choosing than loving before marriage and must do nothing but love after marriage. Choose your love and then love your choice! (West)

B. Don't Even Consider Becoming Involved with an Unbeliever. II Cor. 6:14

I Cor. 9:5 7:39,16 Gen. 6:1-3 Deut. 7:3-4

1. Why Does God Want You to Stay Away from Unbelievers?
2. What is the best way to avoid Marrying a Non-Christian?

C. Set Your Standards High: Character Over Charm and Beauty! Prov. 31:30 5:3 7:21

1. Not Merely a Professing Believer.
2. But a Man/Woman of Excellence: Prepared to Take on the Responsibilities of Marriage. (See D&E Below)
3. Shared Life Goals and Compatible Gifts.
4. Eligible for Marriage. Matt. 19:9

D. Qualities to Look for in a Husband. Eph. 5:25-33 I Pet. 3:7 Job. 31

Will He Love You as Christ Loves the Church?

1. Is He a Committed Christian and a Spiritual Leader? Eph. 5:26-27 Deut. 6:1ff
 - a. Committed member local church involved in ministry.
 - b. Loves the Lord more than you.
2. Is He Selfless and Self Sacrificing. Eph. 5:25, 28-29
 - a. Does he respect you?
 - b. Does he understand you? I Pet. 3:7
 - c. Does he communicate with you?
 - d. Does he encourage you?
3. Is He a Family Man?
 - a. How does he treat his mother?
 - b. Does he want children? What are his views on training them?
 - c. How does he spend his free time?
4. Is He Able to Fulfill His Responsibilities to Provide for a Family? I Tim. 5:8 Eph. 5:29 Isa. 4:1 Gen. 2:15ff Prov. 28:19-20 13:11
 - a. Is he a hard worker?
 - b. Is he wise with money? Is he in debt?
5. Is He a Man to Whom You Can Submit? I Pet. 3:7
 - a. How does he respond to authority?
 - b. Are you confident he won't ask you to sin.
 - c. Is he sensitive and patient with you? Col. 3:19 I Pet. 3:7
 - d. Does he admit when he is wrong and seek your forgiveness?

E. Qualities to Look for in a Wife. Eph. 5:22-24 I Pet. 3:1-6 Prov. 31:10-31

1. Don't Focus Upon Outward Beauty Nor Be Deceived by Charm. Prov. 31:31 11:22 Judges 14:1-2 16:11 I Pet. 3:3-4
 - a. Is she modest?
 - b. Does she reflect inward beauty. I Sam. 16:7
2. Does She Love and Fear the Lord? Prov. 31:30, 26 Ruth 3:11

- a. Is she wise?
- b. Is she virtuous?
- 3. Is She Prepared to Fulfill Her Responsibilities as a Wife and Mother?
 - a. Does she long for a home centered ministry? Titus 2:4-5 Prov. 31:11- 12,29
 - b. Does she want to have children? Gen. 1:28 Ps. 127:1ff
 - c. Is she willing to devote her life to helping you?
 - d. Is she diligent? Prov. 31:13- 14,16,19,20,27
- 4. Is She Willing to Submit to Your Leadership?
 - a. How does she get along with her parents?
 - b. What does she think submission means?
 - c. Can you trust her? Prov. 31:11- 12
- E. Work at Becoming the Godly Man or Woman God Wants You to be.
 - 1. Marriage is more than finding the right person; it is being the right person.
 - 2. Are you Prepared to Take on the Responsibilities of Marriage?
- H. Pray, Trust God, and be Content with What God Gives You. Phil. 4:19,11- 13
 - 1. Many Single People Long to be Married.
 - 2. God Will Provide What you Need When You Need it. I Cor. 10:13
 - 3. It is Better to Remain Single than to Enter into a Bad Marriage! Pr. 21:9 19:13 27:15

VI. Principles for Engagement.

- A. Obtain Parental Permission (Approval).
- B. Engagement is a Promise to Marry.
 - 1. It Must not be Made or Broken Lightly. Ps. 15:4 Deut. 22:23- 24
 - 2. Is it Ever Right to Break an Engagement? Matt. 1:18- 19
- C. What are the Goals of the Engagement Period?
 - 1. Preparation for Marriage.
 - 2. Growing in Love. Titus 2:4 *Love is learned, not fallen into.*
 - 3. How Long Should the Engagement be?
- D. What About Physical Affection During Engagement?
- E. How Long Should the Engagement Period Be?

VII. Conclusion.

- A. What if You have Already Failed?
- B. A Better Wedding Yet to Come. Rev. 19:9