

# **HOW TO MARRY THE RIGHT PARTNER**

**by**

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### **MARRY A PERSON WHO SHARES YOUR FAITH**

Someone has observed that marriages may be made in heaven, but they are worked out right here on the earth. There comes a time in every marriage when the strains of "Here Comes the Bride" fade into the background and are replaced by "Work for the Night is Coming." That is when a person discovers whether he has married the right partner.

Marriage is the most intimate, enduring, and influential of all human relationships. It has blessed the lives of most and cursed the lives of some. Whom you marry has more to do with your happiness in life than any other decision you will ever make, except the decision which determines your relationship with God in Jesus Christ. It is important whom you marry, I say. It is so important that I will share with you five Biblical and practical guidelines for selecting the right partner in marriage. They

will help you who are not yet married, and will help others of you in counsel with your children as they select their life partner for marriage.

The first principle in guiding one to marry the right partner is this: **Marry a person who shares your commitment to Christ.**

That principle is the natural expression of teaching of Holy Scripture found in 11 Corinthians 6:14-18. The passage begins with the command, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*" Then it continues by showing the reason for such a command. Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness; light has no communion with darkness; Christ has no concord with Belial; he who believes has no part with an infidel; the temple of God has no agreement with idols. Why then should a believer join himself in the marriage union - the most permanent and intimate of all human relationships with one who is an unbeliever? He must not. God commands, "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. and will he a Father into you and ye shall be my sons and daughters. saith the Lord Almighty*" (verses 17, 18).

### **1. A happy marriage requires Christian fellowship**

There is a spiritual separation between a husband and wife when one is a Christian and the other is not a Christian. Jesus warns us, "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matthew 6:24). Yet, in a religiously mixed marriage, one partner is serving one master and the other partner is serving a different master. Such a spiritual separation will certainly result in problems. Amos 3:3 asks, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* No, they cannot for there is a serious spiritual separation between them.

It is a little surprising to learn that segregation in the Old Testament was based on religion, not race. There was intermarriage between people of different nations in Old Testament times. But the Jews were under strict command not to intermarry with other Semitic people (which were a part of their racial strain) when some false religion was involved.

Ezra required the men of his nation to put away (divorce) their wives who held to the pagan religion around them (Ezra 9, 10). The great religious leader knew a pagan mother would have great influence on the spiritual lives of the family. So he protected the family by removing the person with the perverted religion.

That principle is carried into the New Testament and stated in I Corinthians 7:12-16. If a Christian is married to a non-Christian, let the Christian exercise spiritual influence and "sanctify" his non-Christian partner. But if the non-Christian is not willing to live with the Christian and departs, he should be permitted to go. The Christian brother or sister "*is not under bondage (to the marriage vows) in such cases.*"

I counsel young people in this manner: **(1)** Do not date a person who differs with your commitment to Christ. If you fall in love with such a one, it can lead to heartbreak either before and after marriage. **(2)** If you are already in love with a non-Christian, lead that person to Christ or do not marry him. To do otherwise is to invite trouble, and it will surely come to burden your life. **(3)** If you are already married to a person who is not a Christian, set the goal of your life to lead your loved one to personal faith in Jesus Christ.

There will be a continual spiritual division in the family where either partner in the marriage is not a Christian. That is even reflected in the divorce statistics. It is true that "the family that prays together stays together."

### **A happy marriage requires church fellowship**

But I must go a step beyond that. Not only should you marry a person who is trusting Jesus Christ as personal Savior but also you should marry a person who serves God through your church. I do not mean you should marry a person who attends the same congregation as you but that you should marry a person who agrees with you on the doctrines you hold in your fellowship.

I am not being critical when I say marriage of two people who worship God in the same doctrinal persuasion is more stable than two people who differ on doctrine. For that reason, I teach that a Baptist should marry a Baptist, a Presbyterian should marry a Presbyterian, a Roman Catholic should marry a Roman Catholic. That is the best way to assure harmony in *church relationships* as they are expressed in the home, I counseled some time ago with a young couple who had a "mixed" marriage. He was a Baptist and she was a Roman Catholic. They were fully aware that the differences in their respective faiths was a problem. In fact, neither was willing to accept the marriage ceremony performed by a minister of the other's church. So they had two weddings: one performed by a Baptist preacher and the other by a Catholic priest. They were convinced that because they truly loved one another, all would work out after they were married. It did not work out. She wanted their baby to have the Catholic sacrament of baptism, and he was insistent that it not be performed upon his child. And the problem magnified rather than decreased as they lived together. I have seen so many cases of broken hearts because of religious differences in marriage that I am insistent in saying, "Marry a person who shares your commitment to Christ and serve God through the church in which you serve God."

Get started off right by making sure that you are trusting Jesus as your own personal Savior. Has there been a time in your life in which you have invited Him to come into your life as Lord and Savior? If not, invite Him to come in now. He will take away all your sin, make you a dear child of God and give you eternal life. Jesus Christ will add a quality to your life which no other person or thing can add. Come to Jesus today.

And then, you who are still unmarried, look for a person who shares that same

precious faith in Jesus Christ. Marriage union with such a person can enrich your life and bless you as well as making you a blessing.

Follow this principle in selecting a partner in marriage: Marry a person who shares your commitment to Jesus Christ.

"Father, thank you that you make such a difference in all of life's relationships. Thank you for being so concerned about our daily affairs that you bless our homes and marriages when Jesus is truly the head of the home. Grant that this study will head off some young person from making a mistake in marriage but will direct him to follow God's word in selecting a life partner. Bless our homes that we may be a blessing to others. In Jesus 'name. Amen."

### **MARRY A PERSON WHO HAS A MATURE LOVE**

True love is the foundation of a happy marriage. That is why the Bible commands the husband to love his wife even as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). And that is why the Bible commands the older women to teach the younger women to love their own husbands and to love their children (Titus 2:3-5). Yes, love is recognized in the Bible as part of the key to a happy marriage.

But what is love? There is such a gross misunderstanding of that term today that it is necessary to spend some time discussing it. The term "love" is used in the English language to include every emotion from the basest sexual lust to the high and holy love of God for poor lost sinners. One word is used to cover that whole range. That is a tragedy, for the Bible does not use a single word like that.

#### **The meaning of love**

There are three primary words used in the Greek language in which our Christian New Testament was first written to describe the different kinds of love. One word is eros. It refers to physical passion particularly as it relates to sexual desire. The term is common in the secular Greek language but it is not found in the New Testament scriptures.

A second term is philia. It is a good word, a wholesome motion of human affection. From that Greek term we get our English word child which means "of a son or daughter, one of the family." The essence of this word is tenderness, dearness, preciousness. It is the highest form of love and devotion of which the natural man is capable of attaining. The New Testament recognizes it as honorable, and some form of the word occurs several times in its text

A third term is agape. That is the word for divine love. It is the only term for love used when reference is in the Bible to God's love for sinners, God's love for His dear children through Jesus Christ, or God's love manifest through the people of God. It means love which reaches out for the benefit of the beloved. It is love which delights

to lift, to bless, to help. It is love in its highest form.

A good marriage will have an element of all three qualities of love in it. A husband and wife will feel sexual desire for one another; they will share a sense of preciousness each for the other; they will have a sense of commitment whereby each devotes himself to the fulfillment and happiness of the other. All three elements must be there for truest love to be present.

But much of the modern concept of love is perverted; it is non-Christian. So much love is physical passion only. That is why people "fall in" love and "fall out of" love.

### **The manifestation of mature love**

How can mature and true love be identified? Here is the guideline: Mature and true love seeks to enrich, not to exploit the beloved. There are many people who are in love with themselves only. They "love" another person because of what pleasure or good that person might bring to them. Such love is not true love.

A young man tries to seduce a young lady to share illicit sexual relations with him. He will confess to her how much he loves her. He will appeal to her love for him. He will say, "if you love me, you will let me." If the young lady is wise, she will recognize that though she might love him, he does not love her.

Mature love finds delight in the enrichment of the partner, not in the satisfaction of self. When a young man leads a young lady into actions which leave her filled with guilt or fear, he has not shown love to her.

I was counseling with a young couple who were planning marriage. I asked the lovely bride-to-be, "What is your goal in life, as you think of your approaching marriage?" She replied, "My goal in life is to help my husband be a successful man." I was delighted with that reply. Here was true love. She was not concerned what she could receive from her husband, but what she could give to him. That is mature love, the kind of love that is the foundation of a lasting and happy marriage. Love must be given time to develop and mature. It does not strike like lightning. It grows and matures like a tree. "I want it now" is a sign of immaturity. A couple who love each other too much to wait for the proper time to marry are not mature enough to marry at any time. "I love you too much to wait" should be a warning sign. Wait, in that case, to see whether the love continues. If love will not bear the test of time before marriage, it will not bear the test of time after marriage.

I warn young people not to marry one person to spite another person. I warn them not to marry a person just because they feel sorry for him. Love is commitment which springs from desire. Anything less than that will lead to misery.

It is important, also, that one marry a person he likes as well as loves. It is possible for there to be physical attraction between two people and nothing else. One should respect his partner in marriage as well as love him.

We marry a whole person, not just a body. We marry a person with a mind, personal

discipline (or lack of it), personal habits, ambitions in life, emotional maturity or immaturity, fixed attitudes, etc. We marry a lifestyle, not just a body. How is the husband to provide a living for the family? What are his goals in life? What is his attitude toward children? What is his educational level? What is his profession? What does he enjoy doing for recreation? What habits (good or bad) does he have?

Those questions may seem "unspiritual!" but they are essential; to a happy marriage. A person who marries without taking those things into consideration is taking a great leap into the dark.

We marry a person with whom we have to live the rest of our lives, we are following the divine design for marriage. Some day physical beauty will fade. Some day the excitement of physical touch will lessen. Some day there will be no mutual enjoyment of the relationship unless there is a bond far deeper than physical attraction.

Have you known a couple who lived together for twenty or twenty-five years, and suddenly divorced? That is often caused by the fact that they had little in common through their years of marriage. The children held them together, or the challenge of building the family business held them together. But when the children married and left home, or when the challenge of the business was met, there was so little of mutual interest that they went their own ways.

The only guarantee to a lasting and happy marriage is true and mature love. It is a love which commits itself to bringing the partner's life to its greatest possible happiness. It is a love which delights to give as well as to get. It is a love which originates in God and is given from God. It is the kind of love you need in your marriage.

God's love is manifest to you in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Through personal faith in Him as Lord and Savior, you can enter into the experience of God's love in forgiveness. And then the love of God will be broadcast in your heart by the Holy Spirit of God who lives in each Christian (Romans 5:5). And you can love your married partner, and all other people, with the love of God.

"Father, we thank you for sharing your divine love with us, thereby enabling us to love more purely and helpfully than we could ever have loved otherwise. We thank you for the difference your love has made in our lives. Grant that we may be people through whom your love will flow to our families and our friends. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

### **MARRY A PERSON WHO WANTS A CHRISTIAN HOME**

Some one wrote the little rhyme, 'Some people got married and start out in life, and neither one fit for a husband or wife.' Though the statement may be pessimistic, it is true. That is why so many marriages are unhappy and so many marriages end in

separation or divorce.

Is there a solution to that problem? Yes, there is. Let a couple establish and maintain a Christian home and the joy will be complete for each will be fitted to be a good husband or wife. I suggest four guidelines toward establishing and maintaining a Christian home.

### **Recognize Christ as the head of the home**

That means more than having the Bible on a table or desk, than having religious decorations on the walls, or than having a religious ceremony when the marriage vows are made.

Christ is the head of a home when each member of the family recognizes Him as Savior and Lord. Both the husband and wife should be believing Christians, if they are to have a Christian home.

Christ is the head of a home when the Bible is read and obeyed. Parents should read the Bible privately and to their children. Each should read to himself and in family worship periods.

Christ is the head of a home when He is considered in all decisions regarding family affairs. Where will the family live? What will the husband do to provide a livelihood? Where will the family attend church? How will the family handle its finances? The Christian will be incomplete and unhappy if God is left out of the affairs of daily living.

There is a little motto which reads, "Christ is the Head of this home; the Unseen Guest at every meal, the Silent Listener to every conversation." May it be so in your home.

### **Be willing and able to fulfill your responsibilities in marriage relationship**

The Bible commands the husband to be the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23). The Bible commands the wife to be submissive to the husband (Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:17). The Bible commands the parents to train the children in the things of God (Ephesians 6:1-3; Titus 2:4f). Each has a responsibility in the home.

A young man should not marry until he is willing and able to be a good head to his wife. A young woman should not marry until she is willing and able to submit to the leadership of her husband. A young couple should not have children until they are willing and able to rear them in **the nurture and admonition** of the Lord. Anything less than that will **assure that the marriage relationship will** be a burden rather than a blessing.

You who are already married might review your situation in the light of those divine requirements. If you are failing in any area, ask God to make you strong there. Your marriage and your home is intended of God to be a demonstration of the relation of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). You want it to be as ideal as possible, and only God can make it SO.

### **Be committed for life**

Divorce is considered in many cultures to be the "easy way out" of an unpleasant marriage. But God never intended it to be so. A serious study of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 reveals that divorce was permitted in the ancient law of God only for the protection of an innocent and abused partner. It was never intended to become an escape from marriage obligations, as Jesus made very clear in His teachings on the subject (Matthew 19:3-12).

Do not consider divorce as any possible alternative when you approach marriage. Burn your bridges behind you.

Divorce will free you from some problems, but it will bring others. It matters not whether the divorce is by common consent of both parties or if one contests it, the tragic outcome of it is increased problems.

What are some of the problems which divorce brings? **(1)** You will know that you are living below God's highest design. **(2)** You will be judged by self-righteous people who have not committed the same type of sin. **(3)** Your children will be torn between loyalty to each parent, which will place them in a position of great emotional stress. **(4)** A divorced woman is often looked upon by men as being "available" to satisfy their sexual desires, and she is sometimes treated disrespectfully. **(5)** A divorced father may be required to pay child support, creating financial problems in trying to provide funds for two households. **(6)** Some people live with a sense of guilt because of personal responsibility of the break-up of the marriage. And those are only some of the problems divorce brings.

God can and does forgive every sin when we ask Him to forgive us through Jesus Christ. But how much better it is to work through the problem and save the marriage rather than running from it.

Show the spirit of Christ in your relations with your marriage partner (II Peter 2:21f). Do not sin, neither be hypocritical. Do not revile when your partner reviles you. Do not threaten when you suffer. Commit yourself to God, knowing He will vindicate you by working out what is right. Bear in your own body the sins of your partner, so as to effect healing of the relationship. Jesus did that and the result was our salvation! Such a like spirit results in the saving of many a marriage.

### **Rear your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**

This has been mentioned before, but it is of such importance that it must be developed here. Here are some questions which two people should discuss as they consider marriage: Do you want to raise children? How many children do you desire to rear? Are you committed to rear them for God? Do you have the spiritual and emotional maturity to assume such a responsibility? (That is, can you deal with their demands without abuse or neglect?) Can you be free from jealousy of the child because it takes time which your partner might otherwise give you? Are you able to handle it if a child is born handicapped? (It does happen in some families, you

know!) An honest evaluation of such questions will help you see how ready you are for the responsibilities of marriage and rearing a family.

It is serious business, isn't it? Marriage is much more than finding a person you love, who loves you, and who is willing to marry you. There are solemn responsibilities involved. More careful consideration would remedy much of the problem we now see in marriages all across the land.

The burden is too great for us to handle without God's help. God established marriage and the home. It was established for our good and His glory. He is available to help us have a happy Christian home. The Bible is a guidebook of principles to a happy marriage.

Please do not try to live your life without God. It will not work. The Bible says, "*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*" (Psalm 127:1). Ask the Lord to come into your life and to build your house.

"Father, you are so wonderful to be concerned about every detail of our lives. Thank you for such loving kindness. We want to have good homes. We want a happy place to live and to rear our children. But we are aware our homes cannot be so without divine aid. Therefore, we ask you to be the Head of each of our homes. Come into the lives of those who are not yet trusting Jesus. Bless them and make them a blessing through Christian homes. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

## **MARRY A PERSON WHO HAS WISDOM IN FINANCES**

"There it is! The bombing of bills and the fury of finances. The monetary maelstrom can wreck a home if we are not careful. Peace can come only with a well thought out program of finances. Over many a home could be hung this sign, Till Debt Do Us Part."

That quotation from Dr. Louis Evans' book, **Marriage: Dual or Duet?**, underscores another principle to be followed in selecting the right partner in marriage. One must take care to marry a partner who has common sense in handling the finances of the family.

God has spoken to us on the subject of family finances. More than 1,000 verses in the Bible deal with personal wealth: how to get it, how to give it, how to spend it, and how to save it. We use the term "stewardship" to describe man's relationship to material possessions. The Bible meets us where we live and speaks to our personal needs.

Here is the principle which we investigate now: Marry a person who has wisdom in handling financial affairs.

### **The Bible expresses God's attitude toward wealth**

It surprises some people to learn that wealth is not condemned in the Bible. Poverty is

not necessary for one to be spiritual. Some great men of God in Bible times were very wealthy. Abraham was called a "king" one time in the Hebrew text of the Bible. He had such a large number of servants that he could raise an army of men from among them. David was a man of great wealth. And Solomon was the wealthiest man in the world at his time. Jesus selected disciples who were independent business men. And the Bible says, "*Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth...*" Deuteronomy 8:18.

It is the wrong attitude toward wealth which is condemned in the Bible. Money is not evil, but "*the love of money is the root of all evil*" II Timothy 6:8-10.

The possession of personal wealth increases one's personal accountability before God. Jesus said, "*Unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*" Luke 12:48.

Be sure that your attitude toward material wealth is the same as that approved in the Bible. God will bring us into judgment for wrong attitudes as well as for wrong acts.

### **The Bible teaches us how to get wealth**

It sets forth a "work ethic." The poor and helpless are to be cared for from the funds of the society, but there is no welfare approved in Holy Scripture for the person who could work but will not.

God gave man a work assignment in the earliest part of human history. Adam was in the lovely Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it (Genesis 2:15). He put man out of the Garden with the requirement, "*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground*" (Genesis 3:19). He placed a requirement in the Ten Commandments which said, "*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work..*" (Exodus 20:9, 10).

And He confirmed all that in the New Testament with the statement, "*If any would not work, neither should he eat*" (II Thessalonians 3:10).

The good husband must be ambitious enough to provide the necessities of life for his wife and children. The apostle Paul wrote, "*If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*" (I Timothy 5:8).

Before a lady marries a man, she should be sure that he has both the skill and ambition to work that the family may be supplied. That removes the possible tragedy of a wife's having to support a husband who cannot or will not support them. But God will hold the man responsible in the day of judgment whether he has cared for those whom God put under his care here on earth.

### **The Bible teaches how to handle wealth**

The husband has the obligation under God to provide for the family, and the wife has an obligation to spend wisely what is provided.

The book of Proverbs, chapter 31, describes the "virtuous woman." One of the

outstanding qualities about her is how she manages wisely the affairs of the household in buying and selling. Blessed is the man who has such a wife.

A new husband will not be able to provide for a girl the way her father did. Her father was already established in his business or profession. The new husband is just getting started.

Both husband and wife must learn to wait and save to purchase things they desire. Otherwise, they will fall into the "debt trap" to their great sorrow.

It is important that a Christian family establish a budget to control spending. The budget should include 10% to the Lord's work, 10% to savings, 20% to debt retirement, and 60% to normal living **expenses**. If a family gets very far off that schedule, trouble will result.

There must be particular restraint in credit buying. Credit is the privilege of paying in the future for something received in the present. If it is not kept under control, it can break the harmony of a home.

It is estimated that one family in five is in serious trouble financially today. One survey showed that 40% of the cases where a man deserted his family, 45% when a man abused his family, and 70% of all family problems are involved with finances in one way or another.

Modern sales promotions are geared psychologically to create a desire for a product and to entice people to buy on impulse. The advertisement will promise, "Buy today and save \$50.00." The truth is that if you buy the product, you do not save "\$50.00," you spend however many dollars the price is. We do not save by spending, in spite of what the salesman might say. To save means to bring money toward you; to spend means to send it away from you.

### **The Bible teaches us to honor God with our material Wealth.**

*"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10).*

Your money is your life. If you work for an employer for \$10.00 an hour, you trade one hour of your life for one \$10.00 bill. Think about it! What you do with your money you are doing with your life. To honor God with your money is to honor Him with your very life. But God is not as much concerned with what you have as He is concerned about you personally. He loves you. He is not concerned with what you can do for Him, but with what He can do for you.

The happy home is the home where both husband and wife are committed to God, Who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. It is a home where both husband and wife look upon their material wealth as a gift from God and are dedicated to using it in the way approved of God and for the glory of God. Does that describe your home?

"Father, thank you for being mindful of us in view of our material needs. Thank you for the wisdom and skill to work, make money, and spend it to supply the necessities

and luxuries of life. Thank you for giving us the power to get wealth. Teach us to be good stewards of it for our good and your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen."

## **MARRY THE PERSON GOD HAS FOR YOU TO MARRY**

We are discussing some practical and biblical guidelines which will help Christians in selecting the right partner in marriage. It is one of life's privileges that God is available to help us in such a great decision as the choice of the person with whom we will spend the rest of our lives. And it is important that we seek the help of God in making that choice.

Thus far in our study, we have discussed four guidelines on "How to Marry the Right Partner." They are as follows: **(1)** Marry a person who shares your commitment to Christ and serves God in the same doctrinal persuasion as you. **(2)** Marry a person who has a mature love. **(3)** Marry a person who will maintain a Christian home. **(4)** Marry a person who has understanding of finances, how to get money, how to save money, how to invest money, how to spend money, and how to honor the Lord with your money.

Now we approach a fifth guideline. It is marry the person God has for you to marry." That principle is based upon this truth: God has a person for you to marry. The converse is also true: The devil has a person for you to marry. If you marry the person of God's approval, you will have a life of growth, fulfillment, and blessing to yourself and others. If you marry the person of Satan's preference, you will have a life of frustration, conflict, and grief. It is very important, therefore, that you marry the person God has for you to marry.

### **Marriage must be "in the Lord**

I remember the divinely inspired discussion of marriage recorded in the seventh chapter of I Corinthians. After looking at the issue from many viewpoints, Paul came at last to discuss the remarriage of a woman who has become a widow by the death of her husband. He writes of her, "*If her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 7:39).

The text suggests several truths. **(1)** It is right for a person to marry. **(2)** It is right for a person to enter a second marriage after the death of his or her first mate. **(3)** A widow is free under God to marry the man of her choice. **(4)** But the widow, as all others, must be sure that she has the approval of God in her choice of a partner. She must marry "*in the Lord*," under God's guidance and with His approval. That is a very important principle.

Effort must **be made to find the person God** has for you to marry

I counsel young people to refuse to date a person whom they might not have God's approval to marry. One never knows with whom he will fall in love. To love someone who is not a fit partner in a Christian marriage is to invite heartbreak. In

such a case there is sorrow if the marriage is not consecrated because the love will be disappointed, or there will be sorrow after the marriage is consummated because the union will not have God's blessings upon it.

Christians should date Christians. Baptists should date Baptists. Methodists should date Methodists. Moslem should date Moslem. Woe to the marriage of a mixed religion!

It is the duty of parents and Christian counselors to help young people to escape grief by directing them to date people of their own religious persuasion. That is not a matter of prejudice; it is a matter of wisdom. Religion is deeply ingrained in the spirit of a devout person. It affects **all areas** of his life. No one can be happy living in contradiction to his deep religious convictions. So we must help our youth in this area of life choices.

### **Make your marriage an object of sincere prayer**

I do not mean one should date freely, fall in love, and then beg God to approve the choice made without consulting Him for guidance. Of course not. Pray about your choice before you have become emotionally involved with some person.

There are three particular petitions which you should present to God regarding your marriage.

**A. Ask God whom He would have you marry.** Ask him to identify the person for you. That is not as difficult as it sounds. Approach it in this manner.

Say to God, "Father, I want to have a Christian home. I want to have as my partner for life the person who will help me have that kind of home. I want to honor You in my marriage and home. I am willing for you to identify the right person for my mate in marriage. I will wait upon you to make that person known to me."

Then go about your regular affairs of life. Be friendly. Date. Share your life with people God brings to you. And one day there will come a person to your attention who is that very one for whom you have waited. God will identify you to him and will identify him to you. And you will enter your marriage with joy.

**B. Ask God when He would have you marry.** Marriages may be entered too soon, just because the two parties desire to be together. A Christian must get the mind of God at this point. Are the parties ready in view of their age, education, profession or business, and spiritual maturity?

No one should marry without extensive counsel from a qualified Christian. The marriage relationship is so **intimate and enduring it should** be entered after great consideration and preparation. There will be a proper time, which God will identify to you, when the marriage should be consummated.

**C. Ask God if He would have you marry.** There are some people who should not marry (Matthew 19:12). The reason may be physical, or emotional, or mental, or spiritual. But there are some people who should never marry.

I counsel you, "Do not marry until you know every thing concerning your marriage is

approved of God." That might lead to temporary disappointment, but it will bring ultimate joy.

**Make your marriage a testimony to your faith in Jesus Christ.**

That involves three things.

**A. Have an honorable engagement.** Make your betrothal period genuine, not too short. (Remember that undue haste is a sign of immaturity.) During the engagement period, take no unseemingly liberties in your relation with your beloved. Hold your commitment to your partner in deep respect, as a sacred thing.

**B. Have a Christian wedding.** Let the vows be read by a Christian minister. Let a man of God pray the blessings of God upon your union, Let the songs and all social amenities witness to the people of the place of God in your life and home.

**C. Dedicate your relationship and your home to God.** The bride and groom should pray together privately to dedicate themselves and their new home to God. That may be the appropriate thing for them to do on their wedding day immediately after they are alone.

Bring God into your marriage plans, young people. There are three persons involved in every successful marriage: the groom, the bride, and God. "*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*" (Psalm 127:1).