

## ***“A Match Made in Heaven”***

Marriage is God’s idea. It’s a holy covenant made between man, woman and God. The purpose of which is for a man and woman to have a unique ministry to each other. A lifetime commitment built on trust, respect, honor, caring, sharing, and love. God did not intend for man to be alone, but rather that man should marry and be a good spouse.

*Gen 2:18* ” *And the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.” (NLT)*

*Proverbs 18:22* “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.” (NKJ)*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9* “*Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor.” (NLT)*

Though marriage is God’s idea, still many end in divorce, frustration, and unhappiness. The primary cause of the high divorce rate today is that too many people enter into this sacred covenant for the wrong reasons. They do not have a clear identity of self, they may have the wrong motives (to please someone else), or they make the decision to marry too quickly. A commitment of this magnitude requires a great deal of prayer, planning, and time to think through the decision.

### **Preparation for marriage begins by knowing yourself:**

During this time of singleness, God wants to develop His character and values in you. As you mature spiritually, your focus and priorities begin to conform with the will of God. Remember, marriage is a ministry and ministry is service.

*Psalm 51:6* “*You deserve honesty from the heart; yes, utter sincerity and truthfulness. Oh, give me this wisdom.*” (TLB)

- ⌚ We all are gifted and called of God, but everyone has areas of their personality that could use a little improvement. If you are humble and honest with yourself, you will have a truthful understanding of your shortcomings and your strengths. Do you know your strengths? Are you aware of your weaknesses?
- ⌚ What will you bring into the relationship? (hopefully more than just a bunch of needs)
- ⌚ Do you have a healthy respect and understanding of money? What are your spending /savings habits like?
- ⌚ A great marriage requires two healthy people. Get yourself healthy before you get yourself married.
- ⌚ Ask yourself why you want to be married? Be sure it’s for the right reasons. Not to escape your problems or to please someone else.

### **Common ground:**

Similarity is critical in a healthy marriage. The most stable marriages are those involving two people with many similarities.

*2 Corinthians 6:14-15* “*Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What*

*harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?" (NLT)*

- ⌚ If you want to marry someone who is spiritually strong, then by the same measure *you* have to be spiritually strong. Do you read your bible, do you pray? Are you in a bible teaching church? Do you desire the same qualities in a mate?
- ⌚ Do you have similar or complementary gifts and talents? If you want to know what your gifts are, start with your interests. What are the things in your life you are passionate about? Take time to develop and grow in those areas. You will more likely meet people with similar interests when you pursue your desires and dreams.
- ⌚ Do you have the same values? (i.e., put similar importance on family)
- ⌚ Do you share a similar purpose? (Ministry)
- ⌚ Look for 'real' similarities in the relationship. The more things you have in common, the stronger your foundation for a lasting relationship. At the same time, be open to new ideas and people. God may bring someone into your life that has slightly different or broader interests than you do.

### **What do you want from a mate?**

Attempt to develop a clear mental picture of your ideal spouse.

- ⌚ Love of God: Is spiritual passion and commitment important to you? Do you want someone who can stand and pray with you through difficult times?
- ⌚ Children are an extremely important issue. This subject must be discussed in advance. Do you both want children, if so, how many? How will they be raised/disciplined? Education process? (private versus public schools) If there are children from a previous marriage, discuss the roll of the step-parent.
- ⌚ Lifestyle choices: where do you want to live? How do you want to live?
- ⌚ Ambition/work ethic: Careers can be a major source of stress in marriage. Both men and women work, and they often keep long hours. If you marry someone who has a demanding career, you need to discuss the impact this will have on the relationship and family before you get married. Also, business travel and social obligations all play a part in careers today and these can have a major impact on family life.
- ⌚ Finances: Do you have common financial goals?
- ⌚ Personality traits: is affection important to you, do you want someone with a sense of humor, how important is intelligence, creativity, etc.?

### **Differences that could cause problems in marriage:**

- ⌚ Expectations about male/female roles
- ⌚ Personal habits: cleanliness, personal appearance, orderliness, dependability, etc.
- ⌚ Emotional instability
- ⌚ Unrealistic financial goals
- ⌚ Different energy levels

Ask yourself if you are willing to spend the rest of your life dealing with these problems.

### **Character counts:**

Don't overlook or make excuses for bad behavior/habits: anger/rage, jealousy, lying/dishonesty, smoking, excessive drinking, etc. These bad habits, if left unchecked, can destroy an otherwise good marriage. They should be red flags to proceed with caution or to end the relationship immediately. If you feel that you are too far along emotionally in the relationship to end it, you must seek professional help before proceeding any further.

### **The 'spark':**

Dr. James Dobson once said "Don't marry the person you can live with, marry the person you can't live without." When all is said and done you've got to have the spark! The 'spark' is the physical, emotional, and spiritual attraction between two people. It does not necessarily have to come in the beginning of the relationship, but must be part of the package.

### **Demolish the dragon of fantasy:**

Fantasies can be destructive. There are no prince charmings or sleeping beauties, only real men and women created by God to accomplish His will and purposes here on earth. So don't waste your time sitting around dreaming about the perfect mate. Rather, focus on your own personal growth and development. Become an active, vibrant, enthusiastic, and joyful person. Enjoy the people God has put in your life now. Get connected to a group, or start one based on your interests, i.e. book club, theater group, golf, tennis, ski club, singles group, etc.

### **The importance of Prayer:**

Pray for wisdom and discernment.

*Philippians 4:6-7* "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus." (TLB)

### **God's timing:**

God is the ultimate matchmaker. Wait for His best!

*Psalms 37:4* "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires and secret petitions of your heart." (AMP)

*Ephesians 3:20* "Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes." (TLB)