

## Issues To Consider Before Choosing A Mate



I. The most important decision you could possibly make in life is whether or not you will choose to receive Christ as Lord of your life. This will determine if you experience eternal life today and in eternity. But, the second most important decision in life is who you will marry. This is a critical decision that will greatly determine not only your future happiness but also the degree to which you are able to serve the Lord. What does the Bible declare the important considerations to be?

II. First, you may choose whomever you wish, as long as he or she is a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39). There are no exceptions to this command. From the following principles you will see why God has made this a fundamental requirement for His children.

III. The next important question is, what kind of Christian is the person you desire to marry?

A. Is this person truly committed to loving and obeying the Lord? This is important because every marital problem you will encounter in your relationship will always result from a spiritual problem. If this person is truly committed to Christ, he or she will solve these problems in a biblical way. Therefore, how has he or she demonstrated this commitment? Do you see a love for God demonstrated in his or her life? Does this individual have a daily devotional life? Does this person share lessons learned from Scripture with you? Does he or she have a prayer life, and has there ever been a time when this person has suggested prayer with you? Have you seen him or her serving others since you have been together? Does this person serve with a motivation of love or only because of obligation? Does this person seek the kingdom of God more than anything else? See Gal. 5:22, Matt. 16:24, Acts 2:42, Gal. 5:13, Matt. 6:33.

B. Do you have compatibility in spiritual things? Do you agree on the major doctrines of Scripture? Do you agree on the church you will attend? Do you agree on how you will give of your time and money? Without agreement over these issues now, there will be great conflict over these issues in the future. See Amos 3:3

C. Can you trust this person? Has this individual given you any reason not to trust what he or she has said or done in any aspect of your relationship? Trust is the foundation of any lasting relationship. See Prov. 31:11, 1 Cor. 7:25.

D. How does he or she handle adversity? Does this person trust God, or fall into unbelief regularly? Have you ever seen him or her angry? Have you seen this individual angry with you? Did you resolve this conflict in a biblical way? Was forgiveness asked for and granted, or was the issue just forgotten after a while? The ability to reconcile conflicts in a biblical way is essential for a marriage that will last. See Prov. 3:5, Mark 11:25,26 Luke 17:1-4, Ps. 37:8, Prov. 16:32, Prov. 19:11.

E. Does he have a way to provide for you? Is he or she a responsible person with money? Money can be a great source of conflict in a marriage, so look for responsible action and decision making on this issue now. See 1 Tim. 6:10, Luke 16:14, Matt. 25:27, 2 Tim. 3:2.

F. Is he or she a good example? In the future if you have children, would your mate be a good example to them? If he or she is not a good example now, it will be a constant battle later. See 1 Tim. 4:12.

G. What issues do you agree and disagree on? Make a list of both to permit an honest appraisal of your compatibility.

H. Does this person have control of his or her sexual drives? Have you ever seen him or her compromise obedience

toward God and His Word? Is there pressure on you for sex? If he or she is not obedient or self-controlled in this area now, how will you be able to trust this person after you get married? See 1 Thess. 4:1-8, 1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thess. 5:22.

I. Does your prospective mate respect you and your opinions? Does he or she listen to you and receive your ideas and/or correction, or are you not even consulted over decisions? Respect and willingness to talk over issues is essential for a good marriage. You should both be able to compromise and find agreement over difficult problems. See Matt. 5:25.

J. Is there mutual submission between the two of you? Can each of you give and receive ideas, advice, or correction to one another? Is he or she truly open to your input? If not, you should not expect that after you get married things will be any different. See Eph. 5:21, James 1:19, Prov. 17:27, Rom 12:10.

K. Have you resolved the conflicts that have come up between you? The willingness and ability to resolve conflicts is essential for a lasting marriage. We are all very different from one another and should expect to find variance in our ideas and feelings. If you have never had a difference of opinion, this reveals that you don't know each other as well as you think, and one or both of you are not fully expressing your personal views. The only way you will know if your prospective spouse will be accepting of these differences is for you to express them. This is another area where open communication will reveal the strength or weakness of your relationship. If there is a conflict, will you be able to lovingly resolve it? Matt. 18:15 Matt. 5:23,24 Gal. 6:1,2

IV. How does your prospective mate treat other people? The way this individual treats others is ultimately the way he or she will treat you, so look very closely at these actions. Eph. 4:25

V. Have you known this person long enough to get an idea of what he or she struggles with in daily life? If you can't identify at least some issues, you probably don't know this person as well as you think. Everyone has faults; some more, some less. Ask this person what issues cause the greatest struggles in life and how he or she is dealing with these issues. Can you live with these faults or differences, knowing that people change very slowly? Can you live with the areas your prospective mate is not dealing with very well? Be very realistic, you should accept the fact that "what you see, is what you get." Deut. 1:12 . ( You should pursue a time of observation in a group setting before you even consider moving on to the next stage. Pastor Art Dykstra, Calvary Chapel, St.Pete)

VI. Is this person a giving individual? Being able to give sacrificially is the best proof of true love. If the person you want to marry is interested in you giving the majority of the time, this will not be a happy marriage. Rom. 12:10 Luke 6:38

VII. Each of the above issues requires effective communication. Without this occurring now, you will never have the relationship you desire in marriage. Communication is the lifeblood of a marriage because it enables a relationship to be nourished and survive the struggles that two people encounter. Prov. 18:21 Eph. 4:29 Eph. 4:31

VIII. Is your prospective mate your best friend? If marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His church, then friendship is essential. Jesus said to His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:13). A friend, according to Jesus, was one for whom He would sacrificially lay down His life and one to whom He would lovingly communicate His heart. Will you be marrying your best friend and a person with whom you can share your heart? If so, your marriage will be all that you expect it to be. Song of Solomon 5:16

IX. Now take these same questions and apply them to yourself. Your answers will determine where you might consider making changes in your own life before making a life-time commitment.

### **Some Things To Consider Before You Remarry After Divorce**

I. Have you understood the real causes of your divorce? List these causes and then what you have done to change these problems. This will help to assure you that these issues will not cause further conflicts in a new marriage.

II. Have you resolved these issues before God by asking for His forgiveness? This is essential if you want to start a new relationship with a right heart.

III. Have you asked your former spouse's forgiveness for anything that you did to cause the divorce? Is reconciliation with your former spouse possible? Have you exhausted all means possible to reconcile? This of course would be God's first desire since He "hates divorce" (Mal. 2:16).

IV. Are you absolutely sure that you have biblical grounds to be remarried? Has your spouse committed adultery (Matt. 19:9)? Is your spouse unwilling to live with you anymore or refusing to reconcile with you? Or, has he or she already divorced you (1 Cor. 7:12-16)? The word depart in this text is translated "put asunder" in Matthew 19:6, meaning to divorce. Has your spouse died (Rom. 7:1,2)? Was your previous marriage prior to your coming to salvation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)? If this is not the case, you must seriously consider Paul's command to "remain unmarried or be reconciled" to your previous spouse (1 Cor. 7:12). There are many varied circumstances to be considered with this issue, therefore take these verses and talk with your pastor about them.

V. Do you still entertain thoughts of reconciliation with your previous mate? If so, this should show you that the issue is not fully resolved; these thoughts will greatly hinder any future relationship.

VI. Do you sense that you are a different person spiritually, emotionally, and morally, than the person you used to be in your previous marriage? This is your only assurance that this marriage will be any different.

VII. Do you believe that you have the skills to solve problems instead of avoiding them?

VIII. Are you truly content in your life and relationship with Christ, or are you looking for someone to make you happy? A marriage partner will never be able to make you happy. "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144:15).

IX. Make a list of the things you disliked about your previous partner. This will help you not to marry the same type of person again.

X. Don't move toward a relationship with anyone whose divorce is not final. In fact, be extremely careful of any developing relationship with a still legally married person as you are accountable to God and should not be a stumbling block for that person reconciling with their spouse. A minimum "no relationship" period of at least 1 year after the divorce is final is good counsel so that the divorced person can focus on their relationship with the Lord and not jump into a situation where they are seeking a functional savior (something that fills a heart void that can and should only be filled by Jesus). (Pastor Art Dykstra, Calvary Chapel, St.Pete)

XI. Are you honestly looking for a person you can give to, or for someone to rescue and take care of you?

## Things to Consider Concerning Your Children Before You Remarry

I. Does your prospective mate love your kids as much as he or she loves you? Remember, he or she is also marrying your children and making a life-long commitment to parenting them too. This marriage is not just between you and your prospective spouse, this is an entire family.

II. Has your prospective mate established a real relationship with your children? Does this individual spend time together "one on one" with your child? If you have more than one child, is there any favoritism shown for one above another? Consider the example of how favoritism ruined Isaac and Rebekah's family (Gen 25:28). Can your prospective spouse find enjoyment doing hobbies or some recreation with your child? Does he or she even have an interest to do this, or is it only at your insistence? How do your prospective mate and your children get along when they do spend time together?

III. Do your children love and respect your prospective mate? Have they verbalized this to you? Have you given them enough time for this to be developed? Have your children demonstrated their love and respect toward your prospective mate? How? Have you asked your children if this marriage is acceptable to them?

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