

Choosing a Mate

This list is not perfect, but hopefully will provide some guidelines to help you make good choices. Outside of becoming a disciple of Christ, the choice of a mate affects our lives more than any decision we make in life.

This list was compiled with help from Christians. These lists are indeed idealistic in some respects but are designed to be practical as well. Some negative characteristics are to be avoided altogether and should immediately cause a “red flag” to go up in the mind, while others are not as critical. The purpose is to provide you with guidelines in choosing a mate rather than acting out of emotion or physical attraction.

There is no such thing as a “perfect” spouse nor am I suggesting that such can be found. My advice: take your time and do not rush into a premature decision. It is better not to marry than to marry the wrong person.

General Qualities

1. **Marry a Christian.** If a Christian marries a non-Christian, they do not share the common values in Christ. God does recognize a marriage to an unbeliever (1 Cor.7:12-16; 1 Pet.3:1-2), but such a relationship will present problems that could otherwise be avoided (1 Cor.7:39; 9:5; 1 Pet. 3:7).
2. **Marry one who wants children** (Ps.127:3-5; Prov.31:28; Mal.2:15; Gen.9:1; 1 Tim. 2:15). Marriage is God’s way of multiplying the human race, but He wants **godly** offspring. Before you marry, discuss this subject and...discuss how the children are to be raised. Such things should not be taken for granted, as it will seriously affect the marriage relationship.
3. **Marry a virgin** (S. of Sol.4:12; Gen. 2:23-24). Examine Bible verses that stress virginity and see the implications. For example, a priest could only marry a virgin (Lev.21:7-15). Lawful sex pertains to the marriage relationship, and outside of that relationship it is forbidden—including pre-marital sex (S. of Sol. 2:7; 8:4). Abstinence before marriage is the wise and godly choice. This does not mean that such sins cannot be forgiven and marriage is no longer an option.
4. **Marry one who is honest** (Prov.11:1; 13:11). Honesty is a basic measure of character. If a person is not honest, that person cannot be depended upon in any area of life.
5. **Marry one who will be faithful to the relationship** (Prov.2:16-19; 5:3-14; 6:24-33; 7:6-23). Marriage is a covenant relationship (Mal.2:14-16) and must be respected. Question: Can marriage survive infidelity? Yes, but there has to be genuine repentance and forgiveness. There is a difference in having the right to divorce because of infidelity and divorce being required. We should work to keep marriages intact.
6. **Marry one who isn’t lazy.** This pertains to men and women (Prov.24:30-34; 31:27; 2 Thess.3:10). Laziness leads to poverty, dishonesty, and other bad traits.
7. **Marry one who is a good listener.** Good communication is a key to a happy marriage. One cannot consider the needs of others unless he/she is willing to listen (James 1:19). This is how we show that we care. Beware of those who desire only to hear themselves.
8. **Marry one who exhibits love for others** (1 Cor.13:4-7).
9. **Marry one whom you love and who loves you** (S. of Sol. 8:6-7; Eph.5:25-29, 33; Titus 2:4).

10. **Marry one who is considerate.** The opposite is to be crude and rude (1 Sam.25:3,25). This trait comes from an attitude of putting others ahead of self (Phil.2:3).
11. **Do not marry someone who is guilty of physical or mental abuse** (Prov.27:3-4). Ignoring such conduct does not solve the problem. Many wives who are married to abusive husbands become “codependent” and live in fear and misery.
12. **Do not marry someone who has a temper problem** (Prov.19:19; 22:24-25; 27:3). There is no peace for those who associate with such a person.
13. **Marry one who has a sense of humor** (Prov.17:22). Don’t take yourself so seriously that you lose your sense of humor. Godly humor is not designed to harm or put down others, but is designed to reduce tension, is appropriate to the occasion, and keeps sadness from becoming overwhelming.
14. **Marry one with whom you share common backgrounds and interests.** The more people have in common, the easier the adjustments will be in marriage.
15. **Do not marry someone addicted to drugs or alcohol.** Sometimes people get married thinking that love conquers all, or that they will rescue or reform their mate. If such people will not change *before* marriage, what makes you think they will change *after* marriage?
16. **Marry one who can forgive and accept forgiveness.** This is part of what it means to love others.
17. **Marry one who can accept correction or criticism** (Prov.12:1; 13:18). This requires humility and the ability to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.
18. **Marry a friend** (Prov.17:17; 18:24). Your mate should be someone with whom you can confide and open your heart; one who always has your best interest in mind (S. of Sol. 5:16).
19. **Marry one who is financially responsible.** Money issues are a leading reason for divorce.
20. **Marry one who practices good hygiene.** Cleanliness is something that we do for others and not just for ourselves. If one is sloppy in appearance, it will be reflected in other things as well.
21. **Marry one who is an optimistic and joyful** (Prov.18:14; Phil.4:4-7, 11-13).
22. **Marry one who has good self-esteem** (S. of Sol.1:5; 2:1). The Bible teaches that we cannot love others if we do not love ourselves (Matt.22:39; Eph. 5:28-30).
23. **Marry one who shares the same moral and spiritual values.** Someone who defends homosexuality or accepts the doctrines of humanism has no common ground with a Christian (2 Cor.6:14-19).
24. **Marry one who is a good example to others** (1 Tim.4:8-12). Good character should top any list.
25. **Do not marry one simply for looks** (Prov.11:22; 31:30). To be good looking, a good athlete, a powerful king, or a good lover is no substitute for true love that lasts.

Additional Qualities Sought by a Woman:

1. **Chose a leader.** This does not mean a domineering man. He needs to take into consideration his wife’s advice and needs, but is able to make final decisions and take responsibility for them. He understands that some matters need to be turned over to his wife (Prov.31:10ff). For example, a woman ought to have the right to make decisions that pertain to her domestic role in the home. The husband must understand that he must submit to his head—Christ. Male leadership in the church, for example, is first developed in the home (1 Tim. 3:2,5).

2. **Chose a good provider** (1 Tim.5:8; 2 Thess.3:10b). Since the man is the head of the family, he should be diligent in work (Gen.3:17b-19). Since marriage is a partnership, this does not fall exclusively upon the male (Prov.31:10 ff). Special instructions given to widows imply that women are to be diligent also (1 Tim.5:14-16).
3. **Chose a protector.** He must be willing to lay down his life for you (Eph.5:25).

Additional Qualities Sought by a Man:

1. **Chose a good mother**—a person who loves children (1 Tim.2:15; 5:14; Titus 2:4).
2. **Chose a person of character.** The way a woman dresses reflects her character. Does she put herself on display by showing an inordinate emphasis upon looks? God's woman is to reflect modesty along with a meek and quiet spirit.
3. **Chose one who enjoys being a woman** and rejoices in her God-given feminine traits.