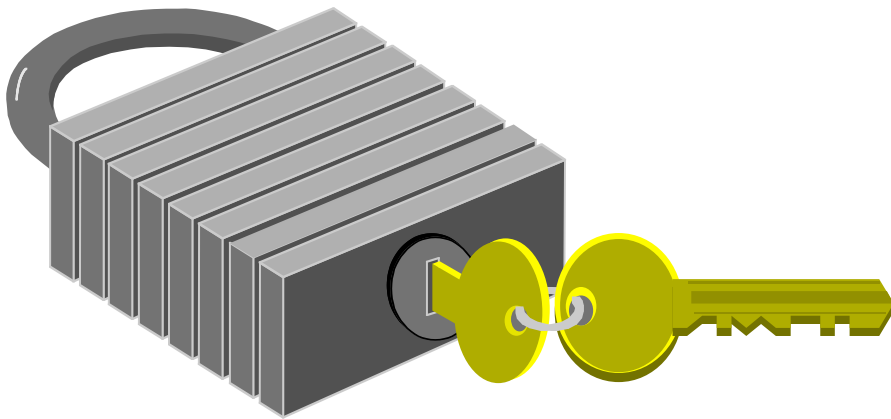


THINKING ABOUT "I DO"?

If so, this is an important lesson
that must be taught and well learned before you say,
"I Do."



CHRISTIAN YOUTH
IF YOU DESIRE A MARRIAGE FROM GOD AND MAY HAVE NO CLUE AS TO THE MATE READ
ON.
THESE KEYS WILL OPEN THE LOCK TO A SUCCESSFUL GOD-PLEASING MARRIAGE. GOD
ONLY KNOWS YOUR BEST MATE

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I. GOD KNOWS YOUR BEST MATE

It is not unusual for youth to be instructed to “seek ye first the kingdom of God...”, but instructions are little to none on what steps to follow after taking the first steps. To Seek God for your mate is a familiar statement, but what happens after taking care of first things first? Having been repented, baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost puts one on the right road to serve God. Serving God does not mean serving self. A Christian who thinks doing as one so pleases has clouded thinking and will not be pleasing in God’s sight. Presenting your body indecent and in a way to fulfill lusts of the flesh is not God’s way and all who do so will not get a mate from God. The scripture says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (*Romans 12:1*).

It is not an unusual or sinful desire for a Christian young man and woman to desire marriage at some point in their life (*1 Corinthians 7:1-16*). Usually the sin comes about by the manner in which a young person goes about seeking a partner for marriage. A Christian who seeks a partner must be certain that all actions and behaviors are God-pleasing. The scripture says, “Let not then your good be evil spoken of” (*Romans 14:16*).

The issues covered in this booklet serve as biblical guidelines for the Christian young man and woman to consider and follow in desiring a partner for marriage. For example, if you bake a cake and desire the results to be according to the recipe, isn’t it true that you will follow the recipe for that cake? Therefore, if you desire a God-pleasing marriage you too will follow God’s plan for God’s results. Both the young man and woman must display acceptable behavior at all times before and during marriage. Proper conduct is critical for the Christian young man and woman. Remember that Christians are to be as lights for Jesus Christ so that none occasion is given to the adversary to speak reproachfully against the name of Christ (*1 Timothy 5:14*). Others will be watching you and may follow after your behavior, believing it is appropriate. Others may know that your behavior is not as becometh holiness. In either case, you cause the name of Christ to be reproached.

Let’s take a deeper look into this passage of scripture. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. A young woman’s place is to marry, then bear children and guide the house. To date, force, chase after, or to live with a man and commit fornication is not God’s plan. Since the beginning of time the scripture has supported man and wife. The scripture also authorizes the man to marry. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (*Genesis 2:24-25*). The nakedness between man and wife is not shameful or sinful. The scripture does not support a woman to chase down after the man for marriage. Neither do the scripture support a man to date a woman or commit fornication with her.

II. SEXUAL MORALITY AND PURITY

There are biblical standards pertaining to sexual morality and purity, and the Christian young man and woman must follow what is ordained of God in order to be God-pleasing. By far, this is an area where society seemingly sanctions almost any and every kind of behavior as acceptable. The scripture speaks to the controlling of one's own body "in sanctification and honour" (*1 Thessalonians 4:4*), and not in "lust" (*4:5*). This scripture is for both the single and married. God's standard as it relates to sexual morality is very clear – "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (*Hebrews 13:4*). Sexual intimacy is reserved only for the lawful and legal marriage relationship with no exception.

In order to be God-pleasing there is no room for any part of a sexual relationship for a Christian young man and woman apart from marriage. The same applies to an "engaged/espoused to marry" couple. Sexual immorality and impurity covers a wide range of forbidden behaviors. To name a few, impure desire, lewd and degrading passions, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are considered grave sins (*Romans 1:24-32*). Sexual immorality and impurity include not only forbidden intercourse, but also involve any act of sexual gratification with another person other than one's lawful and legal marriage partner, through by uncovering or exploring and exposing the nakedness of that person (*Leviticus 18:6-30*). The Christian must exercise self-control in possessing his vessel with reference to all sexual matters before marriage. There is no biblical justification for "premarital" or "engaged", "espoused" or cohabiting for sexual intimacy for man or woman.

III. MAN CLEAVES TO WIFE

It is clearly stated in the scriptures that a man is to be joined unto his wife and not for the woman to take the lead in being joined to the man.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (*Ephesians 5:31, Genesis 2:24*).

During the second dispensation when the Lord established a covenant with Noah it started out man and wife. "...and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (*Genesis 6:18*). Notice no reference is made with respect to thy girlfriends.

It is wise to seek God for those things, which we cannot obtain ourselves. For example, think about the many millions of people in the world and the fact that God's plan only permits a man to have one wife, and a woman to have one husband. Do you have the wherewithal of yourself to find the right Christian mate for marriage? Do you have any reservations about such a challenge as to find the best mate to marry? If not, you should. Is finding the best mate to marry a challenge you are up to taking on? Is it the right choice you can make today, and be undoubtedly certain it will still be the right choice throughout your lifetime with the one you picked? Woe is unto you.

Marriage is not just an experience, although there are many experiences in a marriage. Marriage is not to be entered into solely for ownership of possessions or materialistic reasons. Marriage is until death of either party. Marriage remains where all else may fail. Though you have the authority to say, "I do" officially, and may do so you have no authority to reverse the wedding vows even should feelings or circumstances change thereafter. Officially saying, "I do" will change your life for the rest of your life. Now Christian young man and woman, after reading these earthshaking words, do you now see just how helpless you are in thinking you can find the right mate of yourself? The margin of error is much too great for the young man or woman who thinks he or she can pick the right mate without seeking God first. It is all but certain to result in an unequally yoked marriage. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14). Why not seek God and ask him to satisfy your desire to be married? Based upon the behaviors of humans it seems as though man and woman both think God cannot give the right mate. God knows all, sees all and understands all. He even knows your ending at the beginning. Likewise, he knows the success of your future marriage before it begins. Christian young man or woman if you are seeking God for a mate in the way of holiness keep this scripture in mind, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:4). God does not need any help from you. Let go and let God. God's timing is always the best timing. Marriage is for a lifetime. Why rush into it so quickly and prematurely?

IV. A BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF SEEKING A MATE

Take a look at the biblical account of someone whom prayed to God in seeking the right mate for his master. This man displayed the right approach to the situation of marriage, even though the desire for a mate was not for himself personally. There is no reason to doubt the same method in seeking the right mate for you. God is the same today, yesterday and forevermore. There is no condemnation in praying to God to bring about a God-pleasing marriage.

Abraham spoke unto his eldest servant of the house making him swear by the Lord that Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites (*Genesis 24:3*). Abraham further commanded that thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac (*Genesis 24:4*). It is clear in verse 5 that the servant perhaps had some reservations about the woman not being willing to follow him unto the land. This is an example of the many ways in which Satan will taint the plan of God. The servant swears to Abraham concerning the matter in verse 9. In verse 11 as the servant made ten of his master's camels to kneel down by a well of water, the scripture says, "at the time of the evening, even the time that woman go out to draw water" (*Genesis 24:11*). Take notice here that a man is going to the well of water at the time women go. The woman is not chasing down after the man, but in this case the manservant is going unto the woman. Take particular notice to *Genesis 24: 12-14*. This is such an important step that so often is bypassed altogether by youth. The servant not only prays, but specifically prays that the damsel who shall say, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac: and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master" (*Genesis 24:14*). This scripture serves as an acceptable guideline for a Christian young man and woman to seek God and pray specifically for the best marriage partner, and wait.

V. FAILURE TO SEEK GOD FOR YOUR MATE

As stated earlier “one may be an adult” and as such is responsible for the decisions and choices he or she makes in life. But woe is unto you if God is not sought and you lean to your own understanding! This definitely is the “head strong, dead wrong” approach. Remember some troubles will come regardless to what is done, but other troubles are self-inflicted due to failure to seek God’s direction first, and these troubles can be avoided. The scripture says, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (*Proverbs: 4:7*). Marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently and in the fear of God. It will change your life for the rest of your life. You see, marriage is not to be compared to a materialistic possession. For example, test driving a vehicle. At the end of the test drive you can very well say, “thanks, but this car is not for me” and leave it with no further obligation. Marriage on the other hand, becomes permanent at the onset of saying, “I do”. Before saying, “I do” requires wisdom, knowledge and understanding – Wisdom to choose the way of God first and always, knowledge to employ wisdom and understanding to mentally apprehend. Any couples desiring to marry absent of either of these three critically needed skills, without a doubt, will fail. Patience too, is of equal need. God works on time and he is the best timekeeper. Since God knows when you don’t, it is easy for you to become impatient and take matters into your hands. God does not need your help! Should you run too fast into a marriage not directed by God, there is no provision later to end the marriage saying, “the marriage is not what I wanted, I made a mistake, Lord forgive me”, and seek another relationship. Even though one might make these statements, there is still an obligation that follows, and it carries throughout the lifetime of the married couple. Concerning a vow, the scripture says, “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed” (*Ecclesiastes 5:4*). As part of the wedding vow, “until death us do part” it carries for a duration to which only death can part. When making wedding vows, although the couple may be in the midst of many witnesses, the vow is expressed audibly for their hearing, but most importantly, the vow is made before God and is binding until death. Once a marriage has been entered into unadvisedly, neither reverently or in the fear of God this is ground for a risky future and the marriage cannot be reversed. The scripture says it best, “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity...” (*Ecclesiastes 9:9*).

VI. CAN ENGAGEMENT BE VOIDED FOR EVERY CAUSE?

Very little is said about a man and woman who have engaged to marry but choose to void the engagement, falling short of the lawful and legal marriage. Can engagement be voided for every cause? First, engagement applies once the man and woman consent one with the other to marry, even though the actual exchanging of vows has not occurred. In such case the couple is engaged or espoused to marry, but notice that there is no lawful and legal marriage at this point. The couple is however still bound by the contents in **Section II** concerning sexual morality. The engaged/espoused couple cannot live together in cohabitation or behave themselves in any wise as man and wife. However, there is a just cause for which the couple can void the engagement as authorized according to the scripture. Before proceeding on this, it is to be clear that engagement as defined earlier in this text is consent to marry at some future time. Engagement is not to be entered into unadvisedly, and therefore, the youth must be cautioned about engagement and the obligation it carries. Engagement is not authorized or intended to take the place of the lawful and legal marriage, and neither is it authorized or intended in the sight of God to justify a sexual relationship. The man who consents to marry a woman obligates himself to that woman and that woman only unless for just cause as authorized by the Bible. How can the engaged/espoused couple be justified biblically to end and void the engagement and not enter into the lawful and legal marriage? Will God honor this action?

Now let's proceed on the issue of just cause by which a couple engaged/espoused can void that engagement/espousal agreement. According to the scripture, a couple who have engaged/espoused (consented to marry) is permitted to void the engagement/espousal agreement *only for the cause of fornication*. The scripture reads, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). In this scripture "wife" also refers to the unmarried engaged/espoused woman. Only the unmarried or engaged/espoused commits fornication. If the espoused/engaged man or woman is found guilty of committing fornication with another after having been engaged/espoused to marry, either party may void the engagement/espousal agreement should they so desire with no further obligation to marry. If a man is engaged/espoused to a woman and commits sexual impurity with her or another he is guilty of committing fornication. If a woman is engaged/espoused to a man and she commits sexual impurity with him or another she is guilty of committing fornication. Once again, being engaged is not justification to enter into a sexual relationship. Whether a Christian young man and woman are engaged/espoused to marry or not, should both fall short of sexual purity and commit fornication between themselves each has sinned and repentance to each other must follow so that God is pleased (1 John 2:1). Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but this is not so for engagement or cohabitation.

Let's take a look into and expound upon the biblical account of the birth of the Virgin Mary. The issue of engaged/espoused is involved with Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1:18). It is made very clear that Mary was espoused to Joseph and miraculously became the mother of Jesus. Notice in verse 18 the passage reads, "before they came together". The coming together implies to before entering into a sexual union or marriage. In verse 19 the passage reads in part, "Then Joseph her husband..." Notice that in verse 18 it is clear that Mary was espoused to Joseph, and was not the lawful or legal spouse. The term husband refers to the espoused man and the future tense of what he would become. In verse 19, Joseph was minded to put her away. Let's look into this matter further. Mary was espoused to marry Joseph and is found with child.

//Mary was found with child through fornication with a man, and not of the Holy Ghost, Joseph could have voided the engagement/espousal agreement. The void would be permissible if this were the case on the ground of fornication (Matthew 19:9). In verse 20 the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph and said, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Take unto thee refers to marriage as man and wife. In verse 24 Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:" At this point Joseph and Mary are man and wife. In verse 25 it is evident that no fornication was committed between Joseph and Mary. The passage reads, "And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son:" The word "knew" in several of the scriptures is applicable to the act of sexual intimacy (Genesis 4:1, 4:17, 4:25).

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

(King James Version Holy Bible)

I. God Knows Your Best Mate:

Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, Romans 14:16 page 3. 1 Timothy 5:14 page 4. Genesis 2:24-25 page 5.

II. Sexual Morality and Purity

1 Thessalonians 4:4-5, Hebrews 13:4 page 5. Romans 1:24-32, Leviticus 18:6-30 page 6.

III. Man Cleaves to Wife

Ephesians 5:31, Genesis 2:24 page 6. Genesis 6:18 page 7. 2 Corinthians 6:14, James 1:4 page 8.

IV. A Biblical Account Of Seeking A Mate

Genesis 24:3, Genesis 24:4, Genesis 24:11 page 9.
Genesis 24:14 page 10.

V. Failure To Seek God For Your Mate

Proverbs 4:7 page 10. Ecclesiastes 5:4 page 11.
Ecclesiastes 9:9 page 12.

VI. Can Engagement Be Voided For Every Cause?

Matthew 19:9, 1 John 2:1, Matthew 1:18 page 14.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

(King James Version Holy Bible)

Matthew 19:9 page 15. Genesis 4:1, 4:17, 4:25 page 16.

DEFINITIONS

The definition of the words below are defined as they relate to the context of the issue in this article.

Applicable – As it applies to.

Cohabitation – Living together outside of marriage as man and wife. Also known as “shacking up.”

Engaged/espoused – Consent or agreement between a man and woman to marry, or committed to a cause.

Fornication – Unmarried man or woman connecting to perform any act of sexual gratification with another person other than one’s lawful and legal spouse, and may also include uncovering, exploring and or exposing the nakedness of that person.

Knowledge – Awareness of facts, truths or principles or what is known.

Lawful – As authorized by the Word of God.

Permissible – Permitted and recognized by God.

Reservations – Uncertain or doubtful thoughts

Sacrifice – To give up something for another.

DEFINITIONS

The definition of the words below are defined as they relate to the context of the issue in this article.

Sexual immorality/impurity - A wide range of forbidden behaviors, such as impure desire, lewd and degrading passions, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality.

Understanding – Having full knowledge of and the mental ability to apprehend (grasp or hold).

Unequally yoked – A married believer with a non-believer, or saved with unsaved as man and wife.

Wisdom – The mental power of forming a sound judgment, discerning and judging rightly in any matter.

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