

Preventive Medicine

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Questions have been raised concerning marriage (and divorce) in the Church since its beginning. Much time has been spent discussing these questions — after they have become problems. As with any disease, “preventive medicine” is always the best treatment. This is certainly true in this case. In an effort to save a lot of conflict and heartache for all the brotherhood (married and unmarried alike), we would like you to look with us at some essentials that need to be considered before marriage.

First of all, we need to realize that God has always intended that his people marry according to his will. Abraham realized that it was important to choose a wife for Isaac that was pleasing to the Lord (Gen 24:1-4; 12-14). Verse 4, “*But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.*” Realizing the wisdom of asking God’s help in choosing a partner for his son Jacob, Isaac also sent his son to seek a wife from his own people (Gen. 28:1-7). Verse 6, “*Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.*” On the other hand, Esau did not listen to his father, and married a woman that was neither pleasing to his father, nor the Lord (Gen. 28:6-9). Samson also chose a wife that pleased him, but did not regard the wishes of his father or the Lord (Judges 14:1-4). God commanded the Israelites to choose a mate from among His people (Deut. 7:1-4). Verse 3, “*Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: So will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*” (Ezra 9:2; Neh. 10:30; Neh. 13:25; Malachi 2:11). God still requires that we choose our partners from among His people (Christians). 2 Cor. 6:14, “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...*” (See also Rev. 18:4; 2 Cor. 6:17).

1 Cor. 7:39 tells us that widows (and all Christians) are at liberty to marry whomever they want, but only in the Lord. So we see that we are free to marry any member of the church. If our first desire is to serve the Lord, and please Him, then we want to choose a partner from among God’s people who desire the same things.

Just as Abraham's servant prayed to the Lord for guidance in choosing a wife for Isaac, we also should ask for God's help when we are ready to begin looking for a partner (Gen. 24:10-14). James 5:16, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*" We need to ask the most important person in our lives to help find the second most important person in our lives. After talking to the Lord we should listen for His answer, and search through His Word. Jer. 29:13, "*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*". We need to examine this person in the light of God's Word. Will this person help or hinder me in my Christian walk? Is this person comfortable with talking to God on a regular basis? 1Thess. 5:17-18, "*Pray without ceasing.*". Phil 4:6, "*...in everything by prayer...let your requests be made known unto God.*" Does this person search the scriptures daily? Will they study with you? 2 Tim. 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.*" Acts 17:11, "*Search the scriptures daily...*" Does this person serve the Lord fervently? Will this person's candle merge with yours to form a brighter light? Matt. 5:16, "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" Will they encourage you daily in your work for the Lord (James 1:23-25)? We need to choose someone who is not just a forgetful hearer, but a DOER of the word. Is this person going to help you bring up your children? "*... in the nurture and admonition of the lord*" (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6). Will this person teach the Words of the Lord? "*...diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down. And when thou risest up?*" (Deut. 6:7). Children learn by example. Does the person you are considering possess the kind of habits you want your children to pick up? Is the person you are considering content to remain a babe in Christ, or do they desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby? (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).

Friends, marriage is the second most important decision we will ever make. Just as we cannot expect to marry someone from the world, and make them a church member, we cannot expect to marry someone who is merely a church member and make them a Christian. We want to make them certain of heaven. The mate we choose will either help or hinder us in achieving this goal.

Brothers and Sisters, when we are ready to choose a partner for the rest of our earthly lives, we need to very carefully, with the Lord's help, select the one person best able to help us gain eternal life.

Written in love, with the desire that we might all attain eternal life.

Jerry McCay

