

Choosing a Spouse

A Serious Decision!

Who is the man
God has chosen
for me?

Who is the woman
God has chosen
for me?



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A Serious Decision!

Ernst-August Bremicker

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Welcome!

Dear reader!

The fact that you have started reading this booklet indicates that you want to learn about the biblical way of choosing your spouse, your future husband or wife, and not make a bad decision in this very important matter. Or maybe you want to learn more about this topic so you can help young people who are very dear to you to avoid making wrong decisions regarding their future married life. The aim of this booklet is to help you in this regard.

The instructions and recommendations you will discover in this booklet are intended to address your needs and your questions on the subject of choosing your spouse. God—in His infinite wisdom—gave instructions in His Word, the Bible, regarding this topic and the author has put these together in this booklet in helpful guidelines for this vital subject.

It is my wish that reading this booklet might be of blessing to you and I pray that you will find the necessary encouragement and help to make the right choice for yourself or to assist others in doing so.

Warm greetings in the love of the Lord Jesus!

Erik Chewa T.

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I – What God does and what we have to do

It is God who chooses and prepares the right spouse for us. He knows what kind of wife or husband you need. However the Bible shows us two aspects to consider in order to be able to clearly discern God's will. Give it your full attention as making a mistake in the process of choosing your spouse will have irreversible consequences.

1. God's Side

God saw that Adam was alone and said: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:18). Adam could not fulfil his own need. The animals had come to Adam to be named by him (Genesis 2:20). Adam was able to see that God had created them male and female. Was that the moment he became aware of his loneliness? The Bible does not say. However, God wanted to give Adam a wife. She had to suit him so that he would be happy with her. Later on, we see that Adam had indeed received his wife as from God: "The woman whom You gave to be with me" (Genesis 3:12).

God wants to give us the wife or husband who is suited to us. Keep this principle in mind. You are not left to your own devices but you can trust God to give you the right spouse for "a prudent wife is from the LORD" (Proverbs 19:14). I insist on this, for it is important for you to have faith in God to provide you with a suitable spouse.

2. Our side

The other aspect we should not neglect is that of our responsibility in finding the right spouse. Never has a note to indicate the name of someone's future spouse fallen from heaven! It is a question of searching the Bible for verses referring to the choice of a spouse, like for instance Proverbs 31:10; 20:6; 18:22: "Who can **find** a virtuous wife?", "Who can **find** a faithful man?", "He who **finds** a wife **finds** a good thing". Our part is the responsibility to search and find.

In Exodus 2:1 a man of the house of Levi went and took as a wife a daughter of Levi. He did not wait passively for something to happen; no, he was active himself. Similarly, Abraham's servant went to seek a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24). Nothing would have happened had the servant not left on his quest.

These two aspects—on the one side God acting and on the other our responsibility—complement each other: "One thing I have desired of the LORD, that I will seek" (Psalm 27:4). Searching implies an effort on our behalf. Prayer plays a decisive role in the choice of a spouse.

How can we pray according to the will of God if we do not search for what He says in His Word? Otherwise, even if we pray fervently we could nevertheless make a terribly wrong decision. If we do not seek biblical teaching, how can we know the will of God?

Remember: Finding the spouse God has prepared for you is a responsibility with serious consequences. If you are conscious of it, you will be all the more careful and will pray more fervently.



II – To marry “in the Lord”: How?

God desires that each one of His children who marry to do so in the Lord (read 1 Corinthians 7:39). Unfortunately, we can make many mistakes in searching for a spouse. Some dangers are not necessarily noticed straight away and can lead to failure.

1. Six warning signs



Danger 1: Mistaking love at first sight with real love

You meet a lovely young woman who responds, or a young man who has it all. You like her/him. She/he speaks to you. When she/he speaks to you, your emotions get involved. You fall in love—as we say so often!

Watch out! If this happens to you, think about this: **Being in love is not bad in itself. But real love is totally different from love at first sight.** Someone who is serious about these things is not governed by the idea of love at first sight. Feelings, as beautiful as they may be, are not a solid foundation to base a marriage on. If they are not controlled they can produce disaster. Very often, unfortunately, they are used by Satan as a hook to try to make us fall into his trap.



Danger 2: Looking at the outward appearance

A man will be attentive to a woman’s beauty; a woman to the social status, the profession, or the



Danger 3: Having already made up your mind

You may have another serious problem. Although you pray and know that it is God who gives you the right partner, internally you have already made a decision and you are only waiting for the green light from God. **Praying for something when you have already made your choice is unfortunately all too common in the life of a Christian,** and not only with regard to the choice of a spouse. This attitude is not good and can have disastrous consequences.



Danger 4: Dreaming of a spouse who will have the magic solution to all your problems

You imagine your future spouse in a very specific way. Then one day you meet someone who seems to correspond in every way to the object of your dreams. Do you think you will be able to be objective and accept it when God says “No”? You have to realise that the person of your dreams doesn’t exist. Each person has their own strengths and weaknesses. This has to be taken into account. The more you create an ideal type for yourself,



the more problems you will have in finding the right partner. In any case, it is very likely that you will be disillusioned.



Danger 5: Relying upon a spiritual “varnish”

You meet someone who leads an irreproachable Christian life on the outside. He attends assembly meetings; he is present wherever there are Christian activities. Is that enough? Be careful, because it may only be an external form. Be careful not to let yourself be dazzled. **An authentic life with the Lord is essential.** Look for someone who really walks with the Lord—it’s very important!



Danger 6: Ask for a sign from God to be clear

There are many people who would like to base their decision on a sign. For example, I remember a young girl who had asked God for the following sign: “May the first to offer me a Bible be, O God, the one you have prepared for me!” Later, whenever she was attracted to a boy, she would try to show him that she needed a Bible... Doing so can make you even more confused! Those who look for signs are generally referring to the story of Gideon (Judges 6:36–40). We must remember that Gideon lived in the time of the Old Testament; he did not have the will of God as it is revealed in the Bible and he did not have the Holy Spirit.

For us, it is different. **We have the Word of God and we can read it and let ourselves be taught by it. The Spirit of God dwells in us.** There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that we can still wait for signs or cast lots today. These things only happened before the Holy Spirit came.

2. The right foundation

Marriage can be compared to a house that is being built (see the parable of the foolish man and the wise man in Luke 6:46–49). In marriage, there is not only sunshine but there are storms too. The honeymoon passes quickly, and it is thereafter that a good foundation proves to be very important. **The foundation for a happy marriage is laid very early on.** It begins as soon as the first thought about a spouse rises in the heart. There the switch is flipped—the switch which decides the direction in which the “marriage train” will go: towards happiness or misfortune.

**Blessed
are those
who hear the
Word of God
and keep it**

(Luke 11:28)

If the conditions prior to marriage are not good, it should come as no surprise that problems and difficulties arise quickly.



III – Who chooses?

Choosing a spouse is your personal responsibility, not someone else's. There is a danger that parents or others may be involved in choosing your partner. According to Genesis 2, a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife. ***It is not up to parents to decide who their children marry. It is clear that the final decision is yours.***

Other people (e.g. friends, or siblings) can give good advice, but it is not up to them to decide either. Also be careful not to use 'matchmakers'. They forge secret plans to connect two young people. Occasionally, it may turn out well, but generally the opposite happens.

It is possible that the Lord will make you wait a long time. Maybe you shouldn't get married (it's much better to suffer from not (yet) being married, than to suffer from having married the wrong person!). In any case, we must remain open to all options as to the path of the Lord.

Remember: Deciding on a spouse is something far too important to let others get involved or to make the decision for you. It is your decision, not the decision of others.



1. The role of the man and of the woman

To the question, "Who chooses?", we can answer that it is both the man and the woman who choose! But there is a difference in the way they choose. In the Bible, it is usually the man who is active. I know of only one case where, apparently, it seems to have been otherwise. I will come back to this later.

As you read this, you may think, "So it's not both of them who **choose**". Yes, they do choose, but in different ways. As a general rule, men are active and women passive. This corresponds to sound biblical principles.



You, young lady, must let yourself be shaped by the Bible and remain reserved. In this, you will have God's approval.

And you, young man, have to be particularly careful if a girl gets too active towards you!



Is the man at an advantage? Yes, in a way he is. However, the woman can also search, but in a passive and unnoticed way. It would be disastrous if the girl would not ask herself the right questions and would say: "I am simply waiting for the one the Lord will send me", and that she would immediately accept the first marriage proposal. A godly young woman will prepare herself by praying intensely for this. ***As a sister in Christ, you have the responsibility to seriously examine any request expressed to see if it actually corresponds with the will of God. You can't rely on the man.*** Of course he has his own responsibility. But that doesn't diminish your personal responsibility.

Let us now look at the biblical example where it happened in a different manner. It is concerning Ruth and Boaz. I mention this example because it is often cited by those who highlight the active role of women. This is in fact a remarkable circumstance, but also an exception that confirms the rule. In Ruth chapter 3 we read that Ruth followed her mother-in-law's advice. She went to Boaz in the tent with a very clear goal. She wanted Boaz to marry her. The risk of being chased away was high. However, she did what her mother-in-law told her to do. Was it a conspiracy of clever women? A trick Naomi and Ruth used to trap Boaz? Of course not! The story is too pure and beautiful to allow such thoughts. Ruth had God on her side!

To properly understand this exceptional case, the following points must be considered:

- 1 This story has a prophetic meaning and cannot be transposed step by step into our time.
- 2 Naomi and Ruth were spiritual women. They had proven this. Later Boaz expressly stated that Ruth had not gone after the young men (3:10); she didn't go after the boys to catch one.
- 3 Ruth behaves tactfully and with restraint towards Boaz. She is straight to the point, but in a very delicate way.
- 4 As soon as Ruth has spoken to him, Boaz takes responsibility and prepares everything for the wedding. He doesn't leave it to Ruth.

Therefore, it should not be concluded from this event that women have to take the same active part as men. Nor should it be assumed that ambitious mothers should help their daughters find great husbands. It almost

always goes wrong! What we need to learn is balance. In general, men are active, but it should not be totally excluded that, in certain particular cases, women may have to leave their passive role. However, this must remain an exception.

2. The right time

So when is it the right time to take an interest in a spouse? The Bible gives important indications, but without specifying an age.

- ➔ The earliest appropriate time to take an interest in a spouse is when young people have become men and women. You need a certain inner maturity. This implies at least that puberty is over. You must also be able to leave and detach yourself from your parents. ***You have to be able to 'fly on your own' both financially and spiritually.***

Remember: The relationship between children and parents, however beautiful it may be, must one day give way to another relationship; the relationship between a man and a woman. The one who gets married must detach himself from the parental home. This requires a certain maturity in young people. At the same time, parents must let their children go.

Dear young people who want to get married, you must realise that you must leave your parental home—physically, materially and, above all, emotionally. As a couple, you will be an autonomous unit. You need to be prepared for this.

- ➔ Secondly, ***you must be able and willing to assume responsibilities.*** It is important that you are able to make independent intelligent and spiritual decisions. If you have children in the future, you must be able to bring them up, not only financially, but also intellectually and spiritually. Children cannot be raised by children, and you should not rely on your own parents to do so. ***The bringing up of your children is your own responsibility.***
- ➔ Thirdly, ***the ability and willingness to genuinely love must be present.*** To do this, men often need more time than women. The Bible says that a man must cleave to his wife (Genesis 2:24 KJV). This word “cleave” may seem strange at first sight; it could be translated as “adhere” or “stick together” or even “form a single plant”. It is a unity of mind, soul and body. See also the NKJV translation of this verse: “a man shall... be joined to his wife”. Marriage was given by God not as a “nut and bolt” type connection, but as a “cement” type connection. It must not be modified or destroyed. If this happens, however, lasting damage is caused. Marriage is a bond that must not be broken. God does not want a divorce; He hates it (see Malachi 2:16).

Remember: The “cement” by which marriage becomes an inseparable unit is love. Love is much more than just being in love. True love is shown more in deeds than in words... We are ready to give ourselves to the other, to seek after the best interest of the other. Love is dedication to each other, having time for each other. We must be able and ready for this love when we deal with the matter of choosing a spouse.

Note:

Marriages that take place too early are especially at risk. Usually women suffer more than men. Do not enter into the bond of marriage until you are in a position to form an intellectual, spiritual and emotional unity. Many young couples who marry too early experience difficulties, especially when there is too much contact with their parental home. Such a relationship with the parents can have a very negative effect. You must be aware of this.



IV – What are the criteria for choosing a spouse?

The way in which God brings a man and a woman together is a mystery, a secret. Nevertheless, God gives you guidelines and criteria. It is quite clear that the choice of a spouse cannot take place without emotions playing a role. The heart is involved. However, I'd like to warn you against the danger of letting yourself be led exclusively or predominantly by your emotions. The question is far too important to let your feelings run wild. It may seem very difficult for you, especially when you have just fallen in love, but it would be gravely reckless to leave your intelligence aside in this important decision. Above all, remember that this is much more of a rational than an emotional matter.

There are five important points you should consider:

- Remember:**
1. Converted?
 2. What does Scripture say?
 3. A pious excuse
 4. Proven track record
 5. Suitable?

1. Converted?

This is the first question to ask yourself and the answer must be clear and unambiguous. If you notice that an unbeliever is interested in you, or if you start to be interested in an unbeliever, all the red lights must come on! The idea of having an unbelieving spouse should not even enter your heart, let

1. CONVERTED?

alone settle there. Remember that marriage is a unity of mind, soul and body. ***It is inconceivable and impossible that a child of God should form such a unity of mind and soul with an unbelieving spouse!*** What remains—the unity of the bodies—will never be enough to make it a marriage according to God's thoughts. Leaving an unbeliever to hope for anything about a life together is not only unfair to the unbeliever, but also dangerous for you.

Remember: If you notice that an unbeliever is interested in you, clearly show him your colours and tell him plainly that you belong to the Lord Jesus. Make it clear immediately that any relationship between the two of you is out of the question as far as you're concerned. The clearer you are from the beginning, the better.

Janet was a young girl from a Christian home. She had decided to follow the Lord Jesus at a very young age. Her father had warned her many times not to marry an unbeliever under any circumstances. Her father died before Janet was old enough to marry. Later, she received a proposal from a young man who greatly appealed to her. Unfortunately, he was an unbeliever. Janet answered "no" to him in a clear and definite way, telling him why. The young man did not stop in his efforts to get Janet, but she remained unshakeable. It was incomprehensible to him. He wanted to learn the secret of her firmness. He began to read the Bible and attend meetings of believers. The truth of the Word of God convinced him. He came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

2. What does Scripture say?

God has spoken about this important subject of marriage in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Deuteronomy 7:3, 4 we read this in connection with the unholy nations of Canaan: “Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.” This Old Testament word is very clear. It was true for Israel, but its moral application continues to this day. In the New Testament, Paul writes to the Corinthians: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2 Corinthians 6:14–16). Think about how the words are linked here, and you’ll see right away that these are things that don’t go together:



- ➔ Fellowship between **righteousness** and **lawlessness**
- ➔ Communion between **light** and **darkness**
- ➔ Agreement between **Christ** and **Belial** (embodiment of evil)
- ➔ The **believer** having part with the **unbeliever**
- ➔ Agreement between the **temple of God** and **idols**

One more point

One more point: Marriage is a wonderful image of Christ and His Church, and the earthly bond of marriage is a representation of the heavenly bond of Christ and His Church. Can you really imagine representing the heavenly bond between Christ and His Church by marrying an unbeliever? It is irreconcilable and impossible. How can you, as a believing husband, love your unbelieving wife as Christ loved the Church? How can you, as a believing wife, subjugate yourself to an unbeliever as the Church is to Christ? Can an unbelieving husband **represent Christ**? Can a believing woman be **submitted to him as the Church is to Christ**?

However, a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever cannot be dissolved under the pretext that, in any case, God did not lead one to the other! That is not a legitimate argument. **Marriage is valid before God even when it has not been concluded “in the Lord”.**

3. A pious excuse

A well-known and apparently pious argument is the following: “I married an unbeliever so that he could be led to the Lord”. It sounds like a beautiful argument, but it certainly does not have the blessing of the Lord. Marriage is not a method of evangelism. I hope that is clear to everyone. I once read the following sentence: “It is easier to convert the whole world than your own spouse”.

4. Proven track record!

However, it is not enough that the potential spouse merely profess to be a believer. His faith must be real and authentic.

Two different tests

Testing the reality of someone's faith goes beyond the simple conviction that the future spouse is converted. Let us take the case where the future spouse is indeed a believer. Even in this case, testing the faith is necessary. That doesn't mean you can only marry someone perfect. If that were the case, I would still be single, and many others with me. There are no perfect people. However, faith must be tested in two different areas:

- ➔ **Earthly** matters
- ➔ **Spiritual** matters

As far as **earthly matters** are concerned, this means that you should only marry someone if they have shown that they are capable of meeting the demands of daily life. Solomon said to his son: "Prepare your outside work, Make it fit for yourself in the field; And afterward build your house" (Proverbs 24:27). We can apply the house to marriage. In order to be able to marry, it is important that the man has employment and has his life in order. Young people relying intentionally on their parents' wallets are hardly in a position to start their own home. A young woman must be able to take care of her own household. This is the minimum requirement she must meet.

Testing the **spiritual life** is just as important as testing the earthly things. Take care with this. Think carefully about the following questions before making a decision:

- ? Does he/she show an interest in the Word of God and His thoughts?
- ? Is what the Bible says important to him/her in daily life?
- ? Are you sure that your future partner can be a support and help in spiritual matters? And you, can you be that for him/her?
- ? Does he/she regularly attend Christian meetings?
- ? Does he/she have an interest in the things of God?
- ? Does he/she have an interest in the gospel?

This list is not exhaustive and you can no doubt think of other questions to consider. Of course, these are only external, visible signs, but they are important clues that can guide you.

In 1 Corinthians 14:35 we read that the husband has a duty to answer his wife when she has questions about Scripture. This is a great responsibility unfortunately neglected by many husbands. I would like to ask two questions here. The first is aimed at young women: "Are you picturing for yourself the man of your choice as someone who can answer your questions about the Bible, or does he belong to those who try to find Revelation in the middle of the Bible?" My second question is for young men: "Can you imagine that the woman of your choice will ask you questions about the Bible? Or will it be more important for her to know what the new hair trend and new fashion will be like?" There might be nothing wrong with that, but the important thing is that you have your priorities right.

You should be sure to marry a person who has a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord. You will have many questions to resolve together.

For example: How are you going to raise children? What spiritual tasks do you want to undertake together? Are you sure that with your future spouse you will be able to follow a common path in this regard? I am not only talking about the path you will follow as a couple, but the path you, as a couple, will follow with other Christians. This is an important question. Think about it: If you each attend a different Christian assembly, what will happen on Sunday mornings? Tensions will arise, especially when you have children!

Remember: Your marriage is not just for you. It should be for the Lord and His glory. This does not go without having proven yourself spiritually. Check this matter carefully. If you are not sure, then wait, or give up this relationship.

5. Matching?

Now let's assume that the 'spouse of your dreams' is a believer and has proven themselves. There is one more very important point. Does the partner you want to marry really suit you? When God created a woman for Adam, Eve was exactly the one for him. She was the woman who was comparable to him (Genesis 2:18).

A Unit

With your spouse, you will become one flesh; it is a much more intimate relationship than the relationship between parents and children, or the relationship between friends. It's also a lot more than having someone to go to bed with. The sexual side is undoubtedly part of it, but being married is infinitely more than that. It is an inseparable unity of mind, soul and body.

You share everything with your spouse: topics of interest, feelings, meals, housing, time, money, service to the Lord... Therefore you need to carefully consider before the Lord whether your future spouse really is "comparable" to you and whether you can share everything with them.

Maybe you're thinking inside: "Ah! That's way too complicated. The essential thing is to love one another; the rest will follow". Please be careful! I am not saying that love has no role to play; on the contrary, love is a basic element of marriage. Without love, nothing is right. Yet love is not everything. Anyone who believes this will soon be confronted with this harsh reality: ***Without love marriage cannot work, but love alone is not enough.***

There are several questions which are better to ask yourself beforehand, to prevent any unpleasant surprises later on. Remember that the title of this chapter is "Matching". This means that you also have to ask yourself these questions:

- ? Does he/she have communion with the Lord? Is his/her behaviour marked by the fear of God?
- ? Does he/she attend the meetings? Does he/she take part in other Christian events? What about taking part in the Lord's Supper?
- ? Does he/she go to great lengths to serve the Lord? Does he/she support the activities of the assembly?
- ? What has his/her circle of friends been like so far?
- ? What is his/her behaviour in a group? Is he/she friendly, ready to help, attentive, good at communicating?
- ? What does he/she care about? Do I have an interest in this area or are my interests entirely different?
- ? What is his/her behaviour at work? How does he/she talk about his/her colleagues? Is he/she zealous and persevering?

- ? What are his/her relationships with his/her parents and with his/her brothers and sisters? This is important because it is likely that a young man will behave with his young wife as he does with his mother.
- ? Are the material conditions for setting up a home in place? Careful: Do not rely on financial contributions by parents or parents-in-law. This is not a sound basis. The thought that at the beginning of a marriage the woman is responsible for the main income is also not healthy.
- ? As a woman, ask yourself whether your future partner is acting like a man. I am not talking about masculinity or charisma, but about qualities such as fidelity, reliability, or self-control. Is he ready to help in the household? Is he ready to care for children?
- ? As a man, ask yourself whether your future spouse is characterised by a *“gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God”* (1 Peter 3:4). Ask yourself some very practical questions: Can your future wife run a household? Does she know how to cook? Does she know how to maintain order? Does she know how to manage money? Can she raise children? However, don't forget that the ideal woman who does everything perfectly does not exist!

This list is not exhaustive—far from it. These are just a few points to consider in seeking to know whether your future spouse is right for you or not. You can think of other questions yourself.

Knowing whether or not your spouse corresponds to you is a rational question, which you must ask yourself with your intelligence and not with your heart. It is a question of whether you correspond in spirit, soul and body. Let's take a closer look at these three areas: spirit, soul and body.

Matching intellectually and spiritually

God has given us a spirit so that we can communicate with Him and with each other.

In marriage, communication means exchanging facts, thoughts, appreciations and feelings. For all couples, this exchange is important, both intellectually and spiritually.

Experience shows that many marriages fail at this level because of poor communication. That is why this point is very important!

We can communicate on different levels. The first aspect is intellectual. It is very important that a husband and wife discuss current and daily issues. In addition to general events, family life and professional life are also part of it. Do you know your future spouse's areas of interest, and can you identify with them to the point of communicating with him/her about them? To some extent, men and women must be at the same level. If you are interested in a person from a completely different culture, you should think carefully before deciding.

The second aspect is the spiritual level. This means that you are able to talk with your partner about Bible-related topics. You read the Bible together and talk about what you have read. You pray together. Have you realised by now that it is not enough for your spouse to be a believer? How could you have a spiritual conversation with your wife if on Sundays you did not attend the same place of worship? How could you discuss spiritual matters with your husband if he only had his career and football in mind?

Matching as to the soul

God has given a soul to men. The soul encompasses the emotional elements, the feelings. Communication is more than just exchanging facts. Communication is also about exchanging feelings and sensations. When I open myself entirely to the other, I let them enter my inner being. My partner needs to feel what is happening deep inside me.

Feelings and sensations are the breathing of the soul. Communication on the 'soul level' therefore goes very deep. We let the other look into our soul and we look into the other's soul. This is what is essential in marriage. Otherwise it remains an alliance and never really becomes a unity. If you want your marriage to have real depth, ask yourself if you and your future partner enjoy true emotional communion.

A marriage that seemed to have had a good start failed after more than twenty years. The husband then said something like this: "My wife never let me see anything from her world of feelings, from the time of our engagement; and on my side, I never really opened my inner being to her". This marriage was doomed to failure from the beginning. That's why you should think about this aspect carefully! It is important to ask yourself before the Lord if such exchanges are possible with your future spouse.

Matching as to the body

The question is not really whether the spouse is fat or thin, tall or short. However, the aspect of appearance is important. Some may say, "it plays absolutely no role—only non-spiritual people care about it". However, God has given us to be sensitive to beauty, even if this sensitivity is subjective...

I'm sure Adam was thrilled with his wife when he first saw her. God had certainly made her beautiful and Adam rejoiced to receive a beautiful wife.

Of course, the question of appearance is not everything. There are more important issues, as we have seen. But on the other hand, it can't be said that this doesn't play any role. It is normal for you to like your future partner.

I would never advise you to marry someone you don't like. Recently an 80-year-old man told me that in his eyes, his wife (82 years old) was still the most beautiful woman. I looked at him, stunned, but he really meant it.

Young men must delight in their wives and vice versa. It's important! The Bible speaks several times of women who were beautiful. But be careful! These women also had a real inner beauty. Rebecca, Isaac's wife, is an example of that.

An aversion to the spouse's body would be disastrous.

Remember: Do not marry someone you do not find desirable, but never use external beauty and your own lust as your main decision-making criteria. Beauty passes. Proverbs 31:30 says: "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised". A person's inner values are more important than their appearance and body.

What fits together well?

Some say: “Those who are similar go well together”. Others answer: “Opposites attract”. I don’t think either of these sayings help us. There are cases where two very different people get married. They have been attracted by their differences; they complement each other by their differences. There are other cases where the similarities are striking.

It is often observed that at the beginning of a relationship, differences attract each other. Subsequently, these differences are often a source of difficulty. At this point, the question is no longer: “What attracts me to the other?” but “What is it about the other person that irritates me?” Think about that carefully.



Conducting psychological tests, even if they have a so-called Christian background, makes no sense. There is also no need to make an announcement: “Help, I am single. Which man or woman is right for me?” Plenty of misinformation is available in specialised magazines or on the internet; it is especially dangerous for you, sisters. I can only warn you expressly: Do not touch this kind of thing! It won’t help!

The question of age difference is often asked. What is the maximum age difference? There is no answer to this question. A word of advice: Your marriage partner shouldn’t be too much older.

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V – True love

Let us now look at the importance of love between spouses in marriage.

Love is what binds a man and a woman together. Entering into marriage presupposes mutual attraction and love. The whole person of the potential spouse should attract. If not, it is better not to get married. Without love, no marriage can work.

1. Two dangers

- 1** There may be the danger of overemphasising the importance of love. As important as it is, it is not the only criteria for marriage. But it takes more than love to maintain the bond between man and woman in a truly harmonious and happy way. It is not without reason that in the account of Adam and Eve, God does not speak of love, although it was undoubtedly present.
- 2** We must be clear about what the Bible means by the word “love”. Love in the biblical sense is indeed very different from what most people understand by this word. If we have understood this correctly, we will notice that ***love dignifies*** and ***crowns marriage***.

Here is a 16-year-old teenager with sparkling eyes next to a 15-year-old girl at sunset on a park bench. He whispers in her ear these three well-known sweet words “I love you”, but what lies behind these words is infinitely more than physical contact. In reality, the young man does not

mean “I love you” but “I love myself, and because of that *I need you*”. It’s love in reverse—*it’s selfishness*.

2. What love is not

Love is not what you find in novels, songs and movies. This is not what happens when two young people kiss, caress or snuggle up to each other. Love is not when the heart beats fast and the pulse starts to rise; it is not whispering “I love you” to each other; it is not sleeping together either. I know that in the world that’s what they call love. But true love in the biblical sense is something completely different, something much deeper than that.

Erotic love

The Bible repeatedly speaks of love between a man and a woman. A negative example—a warning—is that of Amnon, one of David’s sons. He had a half-sister named Tamar, who was beautiful and probably had a lovely physique. She was the object of Amnon’s desire. The story is found in 2 Samuel 13. The Bible does use the word “love”: *“Amnon the son of David loved her...”* (v.1). He loved her so much that he became ill. Being love-sick is not a modern-day invention, since it is even found in the Old Testament. But what was Amnon’s love worth? It was only an erotic and instinctive love, a carnal lust, nothing more. Amnon wanted to have sex with his half-sister; his love did not go any further. Having forcibly satisfied his sexual appetite, his love turned to hatred. Verse 15 even tells us that Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. This phenomenon can still be observed today. Let’s

take the example of a boy propositioning a young girl. For various reasons, she does not immediately say “yes” to him. The young man gets angry and starts putting her under pressure.

This must be a warning to the girl who has to realise that it is an erotic (carnal) love as true love can wait.

Another example of erotic love can be found in the story of Samson and Delilah (Judges 16)! It seems that this is all about sex and money. He wants to satisfy his carnal lusts, and she is looking to improve her finances. The price of his love for Delilah is the loss of his consecration to God, his physical strength and his sight. This is a sad ending for a man who was to be consecrated to God from birth. It is only by the grace of God that at the end of his life, he is still granted a powerful victory over his enemies.

Remember: When love is nothing more than the satisfaction of carnal lusts, it is nothing more than selfishness. This can never be the necessary foundation for marriage. Marriage needs much more than that.

3. Affection and respect

In the New Testament, the epistle to Titus (2:4) invites young women to love their husbands. The word used for “love” in this passage means “to have affection”, “to appreciate”. These kinds of feelings are very important in marriage. You will only be happy with your future partner if you have affection for him, if you appreciate and admire him. It means that you find something in him that you like and that gives you joy. Of course, it’s not just your spouse’s body. Ultimately, you want to be loved in your entirety.

What would you think if your partner only loved your body? It's not about the wrapping, but about the content, the inner qualities and the virtues.

If you can't develop such emotional feelings, then it's better to end your relationship. Affection and respect are very important for marriage.

4. The deepest love

In marriage, love is much deeper than affection and respect. In Ephesians and Colossians, husbands are called to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19). Here the Bible uses a different word for "love"; it is the same word that is used to talk about God's love for men (John 3:16). ***It is an infinitely deep love, a selfless love, a love that gives, even when it has no reason to do so. This love is the true "cement" that ensures the unity of a marriage. We must be able and prepared to love each other in this way when we want to say "yes" to each other.***

It is not possible to explain this love, but we can see how it manifests itself:

Remember: Love is a state of mind, an inner disposition. It means that my spouse's interests prevail over mine. Love is shown by giving; it is shown in actions, in dedication, in the interest and understanding of one another. Love means we help each other. Love is shown in that we give protection and security to the other.

Love is not an "I" that stands at the centre of everything. It sees the needs and seeks to be useful to the other. To love means to be ready to sacrifice, to give something up. Do you think a marriage without self-denial is possible?

No. That's why it's best not to start by asking yourself, "What will marriage bring me?" Yes, it will bring you a lot. But it also requires from you. What does it require? ***Self-denial because of love!*** There are not only the good and beautiful days, but days of hardship and struggle. If we want to live as selfish people, it is better not to get married. Love implies service.

It is to be hoped that you have now clearly understood that we do not play with love, and that we do not engage in marriage lightly. In order to love selflessly, a certain maturity is necessary. A teenager who is still in the stage of puberty is not mature in this respect.

Love is like a beautiful but delicate plant. It needs time to blossom. Love is not an autopilot that you turn on once and for all. Love is fragile; it must be carefully looked after, protected and nurtured.

A father gave good advice to his sons as they were growing up: "Never marry a girl you don't love, but never say to a girl "I love you" if you don't want to marry her." This says a lot of things.

Love can be learned: For love to unfold, specific conditions must be met; it takes patience, trust, loyalty and dedication.

Love surrenders: It is good to learn to give up your own needs, and to value the desires of others rather than the satisfaction of your own selfish desires.

Love gives: It gives warmth, friendship, security and understanding. It helps the soul to mature.

VI – The choice of a partner according to the Bible

A positive example

We now want to look at an example from the Bible to see how to proceed with the choice of a spouse. Perhaps, so far, all of this has seemed rather theoretical to you, but the Bible is there to help us. It gives us examples we can follow. Please be aware that there is no magic formula, and that we do not want nor can define a standard model. On the other hand, we can discern biblical principles and learn from them.

The well-known example we want to examine is in Genesis 24. Start by reading this chapter in its entirety! At the beginning of the chapter, we see Abraham, Isaac's father, looking for a wife for his son and it ends with "Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her" (24:67). The conclusion of this marriage is happy and we can learn something from this story.

You may think to yourself: Who is the father who would want to send someone else to find a wife for his son somewhere—and in addition, a woman whom the young man doesn't even know? We agree on this point! But in this chapter we find principles and instructions that we can apply spiritually to ourselves. If we do so, this story will become alive, practical, and highly relevant.

Eight important points relate to our subject:

1. Trusting God

This chapter shows us people who have unlimited trust in God. The first to trust is Abraham. He is convinced that God has already prepared the right woman for his son. In this trust, he summoned his servant and sent him. In verse 7 he says: "He will send His angel before you". In saying this, he transfers his personal trust to his servant. The servant is as certain as Abraham that God will lead him and it is with this assurance that he leaves. He is attentive to the way God leads everything. In verse 12 he says: "LORD... please give me success this day...". In verse 21 he would like to see whether the Lord has made his journey prosper, and in verse 27 he says in retrospect: "The LORD led me". Similarly, Rebecca and her family had to have a high degree of trust. Without it, we cannot imagine that Rebecca would leave with this man she barely knew, to meet a man she had never seen before.

Choosing a partner begins with trust in God. You can trust that He will give you the right partner. This applies to both men and women. Trust in the Lord. He knows the right partner for you, the one you need.

Remember: As Christians, we must place all of our lives in the hands of our God, especially when it comes to the choice of a spouse. Trusting God is much better than indulging in feverish personal considerations, and to act independently in an untimely way.

Trusting God is much better than starting to flirt with the other gender in order to "gather experience". Stop it!

Trusting God is much better than flirting with the other sex to "experiment". Forget about that! It won't get you anywhere. Many relationships

that began in this way and led to marriage ended in an unhappy or even disunited household. The Word teaches us to hand the matter over to God and trust Him.

Place your trust in your Lord!

“Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”
Psalm 37:5

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.”
Proverbs 3:5

2. Prayer

The attentive reader quickly recognizes that prayer plays a crucial role in this 24th chapter of Genesis. Even if it is not mentioned directly in relation to Abraham, we can understand from the context that he had discussed his plan with God, and it is expressly stated that the servant prays. In verse 13 he simply hands his circumstances over to God. And Isaac also was a man of prayer who sought communion with his God (v. 63).

Remember: Without intensive prayer, you can't make the right choice. By this you express your dependence upon the Lord. Before you make an important decision, you must spend time in prayer with your Lord.

It is never too early to start praying. Even if you are not (yet) seriously facing the choice of a spouse, you can already pray for this and ask the Lord to lead you and keep you from making mistakes. In a completely different context,

the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians that they might be *“Praying also for us, that God would open to us a door”* (Col. 4:3). If we want to have an open door, especially with regard to the choice of a spouse, we must pray for this. God will not leave such a prayer unanswered.

It is first of all a personal prayer, but we can also do it with others, for example with our parents or close friends. It is a subject of prayer for which we can seek and maintain communion with others. In any case, prayer must precede the search for a spouse. As we have already seen above, it is not good to have already made up your mind more or less internally and then ask God to give you the green light.



3. The Word of God

It is striking that the decision regarding Rebecca takes place near a well (or fountain). The source is also mentioned several times. When Isaac first saw his wife, he was near a well. This is no coincidence. The well (fountain) or spring speaks here, as in many other passages, of the Word of God. It is the Word that must lead us in the question of choosing a spouse.

Remember: We pray to ask God for guidance. Through His Word, God speaks clearly to us to, teaching us His thoughts and the right way. There are many passages in the Bible that talk about marriage. They show us the principles given for our happiness. It is good that we consider these before committing to marriage.

To prepare for marriage and for the choice of a spouse, it is important that we know what God's thoughts are on this matter. We have already dealt with the criteria the Word of God presents to us. How do we want to meet these criteria if we do not know them? The essential condition for knowing them is to examine the Word of God and listen to what it tells us. Let's not take it lightly! God knows everything much better than we do.

There is another thought that relates to the fact that the servant and Rebecca, and later Isaac and Rebecca, met at a well. It is important that you allow yourself to be led by the Word of God, and it is just as essential that your future spouse does too. Seek to know what value he/she gives to the Word of God in his/her life.

4. *Patience*

Patience is a virtue that many people lack. In Genesis 24, everything takes place in **peace and quietness**. There's nothing unnecessarily feverish about it. I am sure the servant was very moved when he saw God's direction. And yet, there is no unrest in the course of events. On the contrary, the servant is patient. He waits for God to lead him **step by step**. It was only when everything was clear that there was no more hesitation, neither for him nor for Rebecca.

Not rushing into the issue of choosing a spouse is a difficult lesson to learn. Sometimes we think that if you don't have a boyfriend at 18, you must have made a mistake somewhere. Quite the contrary! We must allow ourselves the necessary time for these important issues. No one is rushing us—except maybe we ourselves. But if others put us under pressure (for example, our parents or friends) they never do it under God's guidance. In

Proverbs 19:2, Solomon warns: “Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet”. Let us take this warning to heart.

5. *No unequal yoke*

The events of Genesis 24 confirm this point: Abraham attached great importance to his son not marrying a daughter from the Canaanites among whom he lived. Weren't those girls pretty? Were they not hard working? I have no doubt they were. However, Abraham did not want this for his son. He attached the greatest importance to having a woman from his family. What was wrong with those other girls? They were idolaters, and Abraham did not want his son to be related to idolatry.

For us, this means that the spouse must be part of the family of faith. In the world, there are not only pretty people, but also people of noble character. What are they missing? They do not know the Lord Jesus. They serve another lord. What we have to do is very clear: Move away. There is no compromise on this point and this has nothing to do with discrimination.

6. *The parents' approval*

We have reached a delicate point here, but one worth considering. We have seen that before Isaac and Rebecca were married, their parents agreed to it. Isaac trusted his father, and Rebecca trusted her parents. I know that in this question, many young people find it painful to listen to their parents. If your parents give you advice, you do well to pay attention to it. Of course your parents do not decide who you should marry—I hope this is clear, also

for those of you who are parents. However, parents have a certain right to intervene, at least morally. To exercise it properly, you need wisdom. For many parents, it is difficult to stand back. However, dear young people, if your parents give you advice that doesn't suit you, bring it before your Lord, to find out if it is appropriate to listen to it or not. Many of the marriages that have failed are marriages that parents could not happily approve of.

There are of course two sides. One is the side I just presented. Are you ready, young people, to listen to your parents' advice? But there is also another side: Are we as parents ready to give our children good advice? Here is a young man who comes to his father and says, "Dad, I would like to get engaged. What advice can you give me on this subject?" "It's not my business, son, but yours. Work it out for yourself!" Could it be possible that we, as parents, would never discuss this important subject with our children?

Remember: It is important to talk about marriage with your parents, even before you are old enough to get married and have concrete questions. Develop a relationship of trust with your parents which will allow you to naturally talk with them about these important topics. The choice of a spouse is often a process that takes place over a period of time.

What if you don't have such parents to give you godly advice? Look for a mature friend with whom you can talk. In any case, it is good to seek spiritual advice from older and more experienced brothers and sisters.

7. Do not exercise pressure

In the account of Genesis 24, there is no constraint or pressure. The whole chapter shows a certain spontaneity. The servant, although sure of his case, gives Rebecca and her parents the opportunity to say yes or no. He's not putting any pressure on them. In verse 49 he said to the parents: "Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left", and in verse 58 we read: "Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go'". **She made her own decision.**

As difficult as it may seem, we must be prepared to receive and accept a "no" from 'the other side of the table'. We must not put any pressure on the other, but we must let them decide freely.

It is not good to put pressure on others. **This is especially true for boys. It is better not to use the argument "I am convinced it is the will of God".**

Remember: Be prepared to accept a "no". Also be ready to say no if you don't have inner joy or peace. A marriage cannot be dissolved. The decision is final. Such a decision should not be taken under pressure, but freely and calmly.

The situation worsens when third parties get involved and exert pressure on the two young people to marry. Do not allow something like this to happen to you. The damage from such interventions can be serious.

It is sometimes good to ask the other person to have a little patience. A "no" is not necessarily definitive either. Sometimes a young lady who receives a marriage proposal just needs a little time.

8. Inner value

Rebecca was a beautiful girl, even very beautiful. Dear young girls, thank the Lord if you are beautiful; it comes from Him. But don't brag about it! Remember that external beauty disappears sooner or later. What remains are the inner values and qualities. Rebecca possessed them in abundance. It seems to me that the servant, who was certainly not blind to her external beauty, paid special attention to her inner qualities.

What are these inner values that probably struck the servant?

- ➔ Rebecca was **kind**. When the servant asked her for water, she willingly gave it to him. Her beauty had not made her arrogant, and she served the stranger with kindness.
- ➔ Rebecca had **her eyes open to the needs of others, and knew how to get involved**. She not only gave water to the servant, but also watered the camels, which was not insignificant. A camel can drink a hundred litres of water in ten minutes.
- ➔ Rebecca was **a hard-working woman**. She did not act slowly or lazily. It is said several times "She hurried" or "She ran".
- ➔ Rebecca was **hospitable**. Although it was her parents' house, it was obvious to her that strangers could spend the night there.
- ➔ Rebecca was **capable of making decisions**. She doesn't appear to be a girl cared for by wealthy parents, but she is in a position to make important decisions for herself.
- ➔ Rebecca was **autonomous**. When it came to leaving her parents' house, she didn't hesitate for long, and went to Canaan with the servant.

These few points are exemplary. These are inner values that make her a valuable woman. This confirms what we have already seen: Appearance is not without importance, but inner qualities are crucial. Let us be aware that marriage is not a romantic walk at sunset. It is not an intimate meal on the terrace of a beautiful restaurant on a moonlit night, nor a romantic limousine ride under the bright sun. If God grants us such moments, let us take them with gratitude. However, married life is much more than that, and it is not always simple either. Life involving two people doesn't just go through sunny summits. There are also dark days. I wish each of you a beautiful honeymoon, but it passes quickly. Then everyday life comes along (I deliberately do not say "the dullness of everyday life"). There are times of crisis, professional difficulties, illnesses or problems with children. That's when inner values matter.

Ask yourself the following question once and for all: Does your future spouse really show dedication to you? Can you imagine, for example, the woman or the man of your dreams looking after a sick child all night long, or getting up at four in the morning to take care of your little one? Something like that will probably be necessary at some point if you get married.

Remember: Some days, marriage is a real challenge. Its requirements can be extreme. We do not need a wife who is a model, nor a husband who seems to have come out of a fashion magazine. We need a husband, a wife, who knows how to get involved, a husband, a wife, who can help. A spouse for the sunny days is not enough!

VII – The choice of a partner according to the Bible

A negative example

Unfortunately, there are also negative examples, both in daily life and in the Bible. One of them is Samson. This part of his history can be read in Judges 14. Unfortunately, Samson acted wrongly in every respect. He was a Nazarite, dedicated to his God. But with regard to women, his consecration had disappeared. **He acted according to his own desires and for his own pleasure.** His example is given as a warning!

- 1 Samson takes **an unbelieving woman** from among the Philistines. The Philistines lived in the land of Canaan with the Israelites, but they didn't belong to God's chosen people. The Philistines are a picture of the world around us, not so much in its character of moral corruption, but rather in its religious character. We can say that they are a picture of nominal Christians!
- 2 The woman he wants to marry **is pleasing to him** (14:3). He wants to have her, and doesn't listen to his parents' warnings. **He is stubborn and unintelligent.** He acts according to his own mind.
- 3 Samson **allows himself to be guided by his eyes.** He sees a woman in Timna, and he says "She pleases me" (v. 1–3). Yes, the Philistines have attractive and beautiful women. **Samson lets his eyes wander where they never should have.** Job, on the other hand, had made a covenant with his eyes, and did not want to look at a virgin (Job 31:1). Espe-

cially for men, the external appearance is often a particular danger. It attracts and blinds. There are many beautiful women in the world. But what about their inner qualities?

- 4 If on the one hand Samson does not listen to his parents, on the other hand **he does not really detach himself from them.** He doesn't seem to be ready for marriage. There are things he does not want to say to his wife without first talking to his parents (14:16b). We can well understand that the woman is not delighted and rightly so. Such behaviour weighs heavily on a marriage. Marriage is a unity. **If the spouse notices that parents are more important than he/she is, trust disappears quickly.**
- 5 **We don't see Samson praying** in this situation. He acts independently from his God, despite the fact that he should have had a special relationship with Him as a Nazarite.
- 6 We don't read anything that shows that he **really loves his wife.** On the contrary, one has the impression that it is only a pure satisfaction of his desires (Judges 15:1, 2). **Samson needed a woman to sleep with.**

Even before Samson's marriage had begun, it was doomed to fail. It is not without reason that God gives us such examples in His Word. They serve as a warning to us so we can avoid making the same mistakes.

VIII – 'Dating'

Before a young man—who has seen clearly before the Lord who the right wife for him should be—proposes to marry a young woman, there is often a period prior to that when they get to know each other better. There are various possibilities for this:

- ➔ In some cases, young people have known each other for years. They grew up together, maybe went to school together and go to the same Christian assembly. This has advantages because we can better appreciate the other when they are in their own environment. In such cases, there is nothing else necessary before the marriage proposal.
- ➔ Another possibility is to get to know each other in a group. When young Christians do something together, it is a good opportunity to get an impression of the other, without directly commenting on it. Family visits also offer this opportunity.

But we understand that there is often a natural desire to get to know each other more closely through personal conversations. We meet face-to-face. We share. We get to know each other better. Such occasions are especially appreciated by young people. What value do they have in the light of the Bible? We want to briefly address this issue.

1. Different opinions

It is no secret that the value of such meetings and encounters is seen in different ways by faithful Christians. Some experienced and valed brothers

warn against and even reject them, and they have good reasons for doing so. In reality, **such opportunities have often been misused**. There are no such encounters in the Bible. So should we get engaged directly, or can we start by meeting to get to know each other better in order to be more certain?

It is quite clear that two young people who are interested in each other and do not know each other (well) want to talk together first. This desire is understandable and fair. There is nothing wrong with that. **However, I personally advise caution. I do not exclude the possibility of such meetings, but they are undoubtedly dangerous. You don't meet someone you don't want to meet. Some feelings are already present!** There is a high probability, in such a situation, that you will stop thinking healthily. You may behave differently than you normally would. However, in some cases, getting together like this can be useful and provide a good opportunity to become better acquainted.

2. Conditions

Let's say a young brother would like to meet a young sister to talk alone with her. How do you behave in such a situation? I would like to indicate two conditions that I consider important for both parties involved:

- 1 Do not agree until you have prayed.** Without prayer, it is better not to go. You must be sure before the Lord whether it is good and right to meet each other or not. The responsibility to do the right thing before the Lord lies with you.
- 2 Talk to your parents about it and listen to their advice.** I recommend that you do not act alone in this matter. The approval of godly par-

ents is very important. As a principle, no meeting should take place behind the parents' backs. Explain to them why you're going there and what your inner motives are. If they have any doubts, it is better if you follow their advice.

3. Advice

I would like to mention a few points that Roger P. Daniel, an American brother, provides in his book "Dating, Marriage, Sex and Divorce".

- 1 **All 'dates' need to stay in the framework of Philippians 4:8:** *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."*
- 2 **Only meet someone you seriously trust.** It is not about having a good and nice evening nor a flirt, but getting to know each other. Young woman, you should only give your approval to a young man if you know a little bit about who is inviting you. If the young man does not have a good reputation or is unknown to you, it is better to drop it. You are taking too much of a risk.
- 3 **Pay attention to the meeting place.** There are places where the danger to fall into sin is particularly great. These include romantic places or the back seats of a car. Avoid being alone in a room or in a house. Preferably choose a place where you can talk in peace, yet without being completely isolated from others.

- 4 **All 'dates' must be an experience of the soul and the spirit and not a sexual encounter for the body.** If you go to such a meeting, go with the intention of getting to know each other. It is not meant to satisfy bodily lusts. In general, the danger is greater for young men than for young women. Such occasions are not for exchanging caresses. If you do, you expose yourself to the great danger of sexual immorality and possibly the life-long consequences that go with it.
- 5 **Dress yourself and behave in a way that the other is not sexually stimulated.** This especially concerns young women. Think of the effect that an inappropriate or indecent dress can have on young men. Your appearance can contribute to leading the young man to desire you physically and to commit the sin of adultery or fornication (Matthew 5:27, 28). Dress yourself in a neat and appropriate way. Pay attention to your behaviour, to your gestures and to your words. *"That the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."* (1 Timothy 2:9, 10).
- 6 **Do not play with the feelings of the person who you meet with.** Some young people have the tendency to act in a way to stimulate a genuine interest from the other before they drop them like a child's toy. Such 'little games' have very often caused deep wounds which are difficult to heal. A man or a woman is neither a toy nor a game, but a creature of God to be treated with dignity.

Don't forget the purpose of such an appointment: It is about getting to know each other better, so that you can make a decision with the Lord based on the certainty that the boy or girl is the spouse desired by Him.

I'd like to stop here by wishing you all the dependency and necessary wisdom to search and to find the partner that God wants to give you, the partner with whom you will be able to glorify God and fully prosper on this earth!

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