

20. Courting – or how do I find a marriage partner?

Principle: Godly discernment and obedience during the process of seeking a marriage partner is more important than how this happens.

Key Scripture:

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 24:36-38 My master's **wife** Sarah has borne him (Abraham) a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a **wife** for my son (Isaac) from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a **wife** for my son.

.....**Genesis 24:51** Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the **wife** of your master's son (Isaac) , as the LORD has directed.

Judges 21:23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the girls were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his **wife**. Then they returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled in them.

Genesis 41:45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his **wife**. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if **they cannot control themselves**, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Comment on Scripture

In the beginning, God accepted the responsibility for Adam needing a wife and he created Eve for him. Scattered throughout Scripture there are various examples of how husbands and wives came together. Some, such as Rebekah being found for Isaac, were sought out with a long period of Godly discernment; others with apparent randomness as in the case for the Benjamites effectively “kidnapping” from a group of dancing women. In the case of Joseph, his wife was given to him by the Pharaoh for whom he worked. In Judges 14:1-9 we read how Samson talks his parents into letting him marry a Philistine woman contrary to God’s command. This union was never blessed by God but He still used it to achieve his purposes. In the New Testament, because of the expected imminent return of Christ, single Christians are urged to stay single and to actively work for the Kingdom. However, if they are unable to control themselves it is still better to marry than to risk sexual sin.

Application in daily life??

- ♦ I believe God will provide a marriage partner for those who are to be married.
- ♦ God knows whether or not we will marry. If we are to remain single God will enable us to do so; if we marry, God will enable us to stay married if we are both committed.
- ♦ Our current western culture of allowing individuals to choose their partners is not common in Scripture but as in the example of the Benjamites, it has been done!
- ♦ Given our culture, encourage our young people not to solo date until they are of an age where marriage is a possible outcome – and - if they do date, not to continue the relationship once they have decided that marriage is not the likely outcome.
- ♦ Although women initiating relationships with men is not unusual in our culture, this greatly increases the risk of poor headship in her possible future husband.
- ♦ I believe there are lots of possible marriage partners for each of us in the world; we could marry any number of them and make it work – but by far the best outcome is to continually seek godly advice and His direction in every circumstance.

- ♦ Pray for our children in their search for a possible marriage partner.

Our example? Do we treat finding a marriage partner with a level of respect which reflects our desire for those involved to be spiritually discerning and sexually pure?