

# Sex: Dating, Courtship & Marriage

## Genesis 2:15-25

### What is Dating For?

In our day & age there are really two concepts.

Date for fun.

Date to mate.

Date for fun is rooted in seeking relationship or sex

as being disconnected from any form of commitment or social obligation.

It is ultimately an individualistic pursuit that involves two individuals.

Date to mate is rooted in exploring the possibility of a long term commitment.

It ultimately looks towards partnership and companionship between two people.

In the Christian context, it is about having a lifelong mate, not a temporary one.

In the Christian context, it is also about marriage.

Having said this, breaking up is a good thing.

If you are not compatible in having a long term healthy relationship, stop it.

It will save your life and the life of another person!

But we didn't here overnight.

There is a long history to dating, courtship and marriage.

So let's start in the garden of Eden.

### God's Good Gift: A Theology of Marriage

The theology of marriage is primarily rooted in the passage of Genesis 2.

#### Alone

God saw that Adam was alone

- and this is the first time in all creation God says something is not good.

But God does not make him a companion right away.

He shows Adam all the animals and has him name them.

Why?

So that Adam himself discovers that he has not suitable companion.

The longing of intimacy is what is hinted at here.

Yes, you can love your pet dog or parakeet or cat, but it is not a human like you.

God taught Adam what it was to be alone.

Adam had to feel it - the longing to be known, for companionship in life.

#### A Part

So then from Adam he makes Woman.

Sometime this is translated as "rib" but it is more than that - it is his side.

It is a part of him.

The woman did not become bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

She always was and inseparable part.

Not merely subordinate, helper, compliment.

There is something more here that remains a mystery.

She, in a way, is him.

#### One

And so in marriage, a man leaves his mother and father.

He is not aligned any longer with his own family.

He is aligned with her to form a new family.

And frankly, this flies in the face of all human tradition.

Women are given away in our fallen cultures.

Not so in Scripture.

It is the man who leaves things behind for her.

A man is to protect his wife from his own family.

In so doing, a couple becomes advocates of one another.

Partners, protectors, lovers, one flesh.

### Unashamed

The final verse reveals the beauty of marriage as intended.

They were both naked and were unashamed.

To be naked - to be vulnerable - no armour, no veneer, no fear, no insecurity.

You lay your defences down.

Accepting, seeing, protecting, understanding, forgiving.

And see one another as you truly are in the stark reality.

This is your companion, your best friend, your lover.

You are alone no more.

How beautiful and image.

But then the fall.

And even now in all our marriages we struggle to be honest.

To be vulnerable.

Do you know how real relationships start?

Conversation - usually private.

In which you risk revealing who you are.

Women get this better than men do.

You share your heart and it is received with grace.

Or so you hope. and so you dare...

Well, this is God's intention, but this is not how it plays out.

### **History**

For the majority of history all marriages were arranged.

Marriage was mainly about social economics and in some cases political alignment.

Marriage and sexuality was a form of power predominantly run by patriarchal systems.

Lineage & legacy.

Women were often commodities that were owned to be used and traded.

Marrying well for both men and women was important as a means.

The Bible has a number of significant stories illustrating the reality faced:

Isaac & Rebekah - Arranged

Ruth and Boaz - Love in a Dangerous Time

Esther/Vashti - Patriarchy, Abuse and Survival

Jesus - Celibate & Single

Paul - It is better to marry than to burn

Beyond the ancient world

You had anomalies in characters such as

Cleopatra, Victoria, Elizabeth I, Isabella of Spain

but these were rare and even they had to deal with issue of polity and marriage.

Only in the 19th Century was greater empowerment and recognition for women

given with suffrage.

New Zealand led the way in

In Canada it was 1917 (ahead of the U.S. by 3 years), Quebec only in 1940.

Voting is about choosing and about having a voice.

But people did still have to deal with families and the power structures within those.  
With the 1960s and the sexual revolution coupled with a political feminist movement,  
many of the traditional fetters were thrown off with far reaching results.  
It is what brings us to where we are today.  
The norm in our culture has been to arrange our own marriage.  
A very daunting task indeed.

## **What do you look for in a spouse?**

### **Preparation for Dating**

#### Community

Realize that being your own matchmaker is very perilous.  
I'm not saying ask someone else to choose for you, but consult wise friends, family and mentors.  
Sure, use a dating service, speed dating or a computer matchmaking site.  
Keeping your love life to yourself is dangerous and dumb.  
Never be ashamed of dating someone - if you are, something is already way wrong.  
Involve your friends in prayer, in meeting, in interaction.  
Group activities reveal a lot.  
Go it alone at our own peril.

#### Values

Aim at nothing and you'll hit is every time.  
In other words, know what you are looking for in a person.  
There are frivolous lists but then there are essential ones.  
As your pastor, a father and human being allow me to start with the top.  
Pick someone who loves God.  
Not just someone who calls themselves a Christian.  
Someone who loves God and really knows him.  
If you choose someone who loves God, they will love you.  
A relationship with God determines a lot about a persons's character and direction in life.  
This doesn't mean it going to be a cakewalk,  
but it's just advice that I am pretty sure will make an undeniable difference.

#### Conduct

Openness. Tell the truth.  
Always identify where you are with the relationship.  
Exclusivity, boyfriend, girlfriend.  
Don't be afraid to end it.  
Gauge your commitment.  
Forgive.  
Get good advice - not just from your friends.  
And frankly worldly non-Christian advice will have an obvious slant.  
Be sensitive in your behaviour to the people around you.  
Show affection without being clingy.  
And friends, walk alongside, pray and when needed, speak up.  
We wish the best for all who dare the wilds of the dating world.  
It's rough out there but you don't have to face it without friends.  
Hold of the sex and moving in until marriage.  
I know its hard.  
Get pre-marital counselling as soon as possible!  
It is meant to help identify strengths and weaknesses  
so you know what you're getting into.

## Questions:

*Is there one person that God preordains for you to marry?*

No.

No in that God gives you wisdom and freedom to choose -hopefully wisely rather than stupidly. But once you choose, that person is your chosen one.

*Is it okay for a couple to live together, considering that they will be married in the near future?*

*Does it matter if the couple has never been married or have been divorced?*

No. You jeopardize so many things.

I have heard every couple dating say they are going to get married soon.

But there are no guarantees until you really do.

That is the nature of marriage.

Until that covenant, you can walk away.

Sex is serious stuff.

*Knowing my Christian friend is in a common law relationship, should I tell them to stay sexually pure until marriage?*

First you have to have a good enough trusting relationship.

Understanding not condemning.

Ask them about their values.

Ask them about their discipleship.

Ask they why.

Ask them where God and his word is in this.

*Explain why sex should be just between a husband and wife?*

A. Honour - "Put a ring on it." Don't play house. Commit.

B. Sex isn't just about the physical - it has emotional, social and spiritual implications.

*What should I find in marriage?*

Is this a trick question?

Yourself. Heaven. Hell. Humility. Ecstasy. Friendship. Grace. Forgiveness. Redemption. God.

*Is it possible to be selfless in a marriage relationship? How?*

Yes. But you will find out what a selfish bastard you are first.

And it is a process that will take you the rest of your natural life.

Hopefully you are better 5 years than now than worse.

*Don't people get together not only for love but because it makes them feel good?*

Yes. At least that's what they hope for.

But as we have said, sex is never just physical.

And even friendship does not always feel good.

If feeling good is the basis of relationship, well, good luck with that.

That is hedonism and doesn't have a place among God's people.

We don't follow Jesus because it feels good but because it is good.

*What are healthy goals to strive for within marital sex? (ie. Why is orgasm so often the goal?)*

Orgasm is good. But frankly there is something better. The other person's orgasm.

You see, marital sex is not about pleasuring yourself.

That is why masturbation as an individual act is empty.

It may provide physical release, but ultimately it will be

psychologically, emotionally and spiritually unsatisfactory.

Marital sex is about total commitment, it is the physical expression and fulfillment of a psychological, cognitive, emotional and spiritual promise.

*Can sex be only used for pleasure/intimacy to the exclusion of the possibility of children?*

Yes it can. But whether it should, is another question.

Sex is given to us for pleasure and intimacy.

Tied to that intimacy and pleasure, however, is always the possibility of having children.

Not every act of sex will produce children, only the possibility of it.

In our day and age, given our specific cultural norms,

we have the technology to greatly reduce and even eliminate that possibility.

But we have to ask ourselves hard and honest questions as to why we do it.

Is it about stewardship?

Is it about economics?

Is it about maintaining a higher lifestyle?

Is it fear or insecurity?

Is it about faith?

Is it about freedom?

It is something that reveals more about ourselves than anything else.

*Can sex ever be an act of worship?*

Yes.

In fact, one of the central acts of pagan worship was an orgy.

The ancient world understood the truth that sexuality and spirituality are inseparable.

What you do with your body is directly tied to your spirit.

These aberrant religions, however, fly in the face of the worship of Yahweh.

Sex was performed with temple prostitutes - no trust, no intimacy, for money, for power, for favours.

This pagan worship was the total antithesis of the character of God or any of his people.

In fact, it is akin to the kind of social values of our own day.

When a Christian couple has sex, it is the expression of

God's character of giving, of generosity, of acceptance, of intimacy, of love.

It is done in an exclusive, private and intimate manner.

They are naked and unashamed as God intended.

## **Prayer for one another**

For singles and couples.