

# Christian Perspective of Seeking Partner and Marriage

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## **The reason for a man not to touch a woman: temptations start from touching**

During the last session, we talked about the relationship between two sexes and the issues on sexual desires. Today we would focus on marriage. Before we start, it is necessary to make some complements for the contents on the last session about sexual temptations. Let us read 1Cor7:1-2

**<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup>Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.**

Let us focus on verse one first, Paul said “concerning the things of which you wrote to me (perhaps previously they wrote a letter to ask Paul some questions, Paul provided the answers here). In the Chinese version, it was translated as “I say it is good for a man not to be near a woman.” What is the meaning of “A man not to be near a woman”? How near is regarded as near? If we read the Chinese version, perhaps we do not understand what Paul was trying to say. This statement seems to be too conservative. It lets us feel that Paul seems to be falling behind the times, outdated with this age.

The original meaning of the word “near” was “touch”. That is

body contact, meaning a man should not touch a woman. Nevertheless, we still think that this is too conservative. The Bible's system of values is very different from what the world has instilled in you. Even though you reckon the suggestion from the Bible makes good sense, when you are back to the world, you would still feel that this suggestion is too backward, outdated with the trend.

Why did Paul say so? Chinese also has this saying: "men and women should not touch hands when they give or receive things." From the perspective of manners, this is improper. And the reason that Paul made that suggestion, verse 2 told us that it was to avoid sexual immorality, in order to warn us from the spiritual perspective and from the temptations perspective.

Do you think that Paul's warning is too conservative? Is it necessary to be that cautious? Perhaps I ask you another question. Sexual temptation was mentioned during the last session. What is the definition of sexual behaviour? Perhaps you think that men and women have sexual relations only at the time of sexual intercourse. This is the definition that a general person would give.

Perhaps I ask you another question: Under what circumstances would this type of sexual intercourse take place? How does it begin? Obviously it begins with touching. Therefore, the boundary is not as clear as you think it should be. Do not think that as long as you do not cross this boundary, you would be alright. As long as you do not have sexual intercourse with the other party, the actions such as touching etc. are not sexual behaviours. If you think in this way, obviously you still do not understand what temptations are because touching is only a prelude, the temptation has already started. Therefore, it is not that Paul is backward, it is because you are foolish, thinking that it is alright to touch. When you discover the problem, it would be too late.

With this Bible verse, I want you to understand: the Bible's system of values is very different from the world's system of values. From the human perspective, you would think that the world's system of values is more clever and reasonable. But if you are a spiritual person, a truly wise person, you would know that every word in the Bible is true. If you listen with your heart, practise with your heart, you would be a wise person. You can avoid a lot of unnecessary troubles.

Touching is the first step of sexual immorality. Once it is started, I am afraid it would be very difficult to be stopped. If you have the experience of a love affair, you would know what I mean. If you do not want to fall into the sin of sexual immorality, you should pay attention to Paul's suggestion.

### **1. Do not try to counsel opposite sex**

Having mentioned these things, I still want to emphasize one point. Since Paul had given us such an advice, therefore, whether it is inside or outside the church, you have to be very careful when you come into association with the opposite sex. For example, a boy is fond of you. He likes to talk to you. But he is not a Christian. You then try to counsel him, help him, hoping to lead him to believe in the Lord. Or the person is a Christian. This brother has a problem and needs help. You take the initiative to counsel him.

Beware! Do not try to counsel the opposite sex. There are other brothers in the church. If you think that a certain boy has a need, you can introduce him to a brother. Let the brother counsel him. Building up a relationship or having a good feeling for someone starts from heart-to-heart talk. Sometimes the speaker does not have the intention but the listener thinks so. Perhaps you really do not have any intention. But the listener misunderstands you, thinking that you are interested in

him. Then he would turn back to take the initiative to contact you and become your temptation.

Perhaps I raise another example. Do all of you have QQ? Have virtual friends? When I first started to use QQ, one day, I found an email in my mail box. Because I only started to use it not long ago, only a few friends knew my QQ number. Therefore, I was puzzled. Who sent me this email? After I opened it, I found that it was a floating bottle. There are many types of floating bottles. Some want to make friends. Some only want to release some emotions. The floating bottle that I received was sent by a lady. She asked: What are you doing right now? Are you married?

You have to be very careful. Although you may not have any feeling for the other party, a lot of relationships, affections are established through this kind of communications. The internet is a virtual world. It is unreal. You cannot see the other party. The other party also cannot see you. This is also why people dare to talk to a stranger on the internet, because they know that the other party cannot see them, and do not know who they are. Perhaps the other party is truly very lonely and in need of talking to someone. But it is possible that he is just pretending. He just wants to find an opportunity to entrap a girl's heart through heart-to-heart talks.

A lot of temptations start in this way. Females are very fragile with their emotions. When they encounter someone who cares, admires and praises them, they would very easily be self-complacent. For example, in the real world you are not popular. But in the virtual world, someone admires you very much. Your heart would then open completely to him. You should now understand why some people acquaint each other on the



internet, and then get married soon after they meet. Or they may have one night affair at their first meeting. In fact, this can be easily understood, because their “affections” had been conceived already when they were in the virtual world, just waiting for the opportunity to fall into temptations in the real world.

Therefore, not only touching, even internet is very dangerous too. They would let you fall into temptations. I never make friends with strangers on the internet. I think there is no need to do so. The reason is very simple: if this person is very lonely, very lonesome, why not meet a friend? If this person does not have a friend, then there must be something wrong with him. At least he should have family members, relatives, classmates or colleagues. Can't he even find one of them? If this is truly the case, I can only say that there must be something very wrong with this person. It is not possible for me to help him. If this person does not sleep in the middle of the nights, always on the internet, I wonder if he is normal. If he is still chatting on the internet at 2 or 3 o'clock in the early morning, how can he go to work on the next day? Perhaps he does not have a normal job. Even if he has, he must be a person without the sense of responsibility.

In fact, this is only common sense, not major principle. I only step back to let you understand. Temptation is not caused by touching alone. It can also be caused by heart-to-heart conversations. I hope that you can be a wise person, because Christians should be the sons of light.

In the church, do not try to offer counselling to the opposite sex because heart-to-heart talks can easily cause misunderstanding, whether the person is married or not. Someone who is married, because the relationship between husband and wife is not good, the husband wants to find another woman to have a heart-to-heart talk. If

you take the initiative to show your care, unconsciously you are tempting him. After a certain extent, he would in turn become your temptation. Similarly, it is the same with a female. If her marriage is disappointing, naturally she would want to find someone to talk to. At this time, if a male cares for her, she would easily fall into temptation, because she feels that her husband does not understand her, does not love her. Now she has found someone who is nice to her, even nicer than her husband. Therefore, do not offer counselling to the opposite sex, because you would never know what the other parties may think in their hearts.

## **2. Do not create temptations**

To add one more point, last time I emphasized not to fall into temptations. Today I want to emphasize that you too do not tempt others. Because when you tempt others (I mean unconsciously), you are also creating temptations for yourself. It is a girl's natural instinct to like pretty things, and like others to notice and admire her. But make no mistake, especially on clothing. Prettiness and exposure are completely two different matters. Do not think that exposure is prettiness. This is the trend of the society today. Perhaps some girls are ignorant at the beginning. They only know that when they expose their body a little bit, many boys would notice them, would take the initiative to acquaint them. They think that this is prettiness, this is the way to attract the opposite sex.

I don't mind girls wearing pretty clothes, because being fond of prettiness is a girl's natural instinct, but you have to distinguish between prettiness and exposure. Being pretty, people would admire you. Being exposed, you can only attract the people who have ulterior motive to get close to you. Consequently, you are creating temptations for yourself. Among these people, there must be someone whom you

like. If he takes the initiative to approach you, are you able to handle it? You are actually creating troubles for yourself.

If you use the wrong way to attract the opposite sex, the people attracted by you are those who have ulterior motives, because they are attracted by your external things. External things are temporary. Perhaps after getting married, when he has a look at you without make-up in the morning, he may ask: how come you look like this? Probably when he sees someone who is prettier than you on the street, he would be attracted, because what he cares is your external being, not your internal being. If what he admires is your internal character and moral conduct, then no matter how your external changes, it won't affect your relationship with him. Then your relationship would be long-lasting. External things cannot last long. Perhaps one day when your pimples increase, he would not like you anymore; or perhaps when you get fat, he would also not like you anymore; or when you cut your hair short but what he likes is when you have long hair.....

I want to warn sisters especially. Do not fall into temptations. At the same time, do not create temptations for others. Do not wear sexy clothes. This is very unwise. If you wear sexy clothes and get sexual abuse, I have to say that you have to bear some responsibilities. You cannot say that you do not have any responsibility, because you are tempting others.

As the children of God, you have to understand these fundamental principles. Sometimes I see some words written on the back of the trousers on some girls on public transports. I couldn't help but think: why buy these kinds of trousers? Isn't this trying to invite people to notice your bum? Don't buy these kinds of trousers. Don't be a foolish person.

All in all, we must try to avoid sexual temptations. Also, do not become other people's temptations—for the benefits of your own, and also of others.

## **I. The meaning of Marriage**

Entering into today's topic, let us talk about the meaning of marriage. The marriage concept that is instilled by today's society is completely wrong. What is today's marriage model? What people care about is sexual relationship. Have a trial marriage first before getting married. The main purpose of trial marriage is to live together, focusing on sexual relationship, in order to find out if it is harmonious and happy when they are living together. If they are happy, then they would consider getting married. Otherwise, they would separate and look for another suitable target. Such is today's model.



According to today's model, what is the meaning of marriage? You would find out that you cannot tell the meaning of marriage. Actually there is no such thing as marriage. Both sides have already got a few boy or girl friends. Getting married does not make any difference with what has happened before. The only difference is that they are now legally registered. But how long would this legally registered relationship last? Owing to the fact that one's system of values affects how one behaves and treats others, the law cannot restrain anything.

You would also find out, even your parents too do not know the meaning of marriage. They push you to get married, because you have reached the marriageable age. Perhaps it is because they want a grandchild. If you do not get married, they cannot have grandchildren. I am not trying to criticise your parents. I can only say that a lot of people do not understand the meaning of marriage, including Christian



parents. They only care if they have grandchildren. Your responsibility is to get married soon so that they can have grandchildren.

A while ago I heard an incident. One of our sisters was forced to get married by her parents. Her parents were busy taking her to meet the would-be husbands, but she was not willing to, because she insisted to look for a Christian to be her husband. But there were no Christians in her hometown. Afterwards, her mum was anxious, she even said: you just get married, afterwards, you can divorce, I won't stop you. Her mum was trying to say that if you don't get married, I don't have face. After you get married, at least I have accomplished my mission. If you divorce, then it is no longer my business. Incredible indeed! What is the purpose for getting married? I believe that her mum has no idea too. Getting married at least saves her mum's face, because the relatives have given her a lot of pressure. In fact, perhaps parents do not want to give you pressure deliberately. But after other people have asked many times, they started to think that their own daughter could be abnormal. The only solution to resolve the face issue is to force you to get married.

Parents do not know how to actually care for you. Nevertheless, you have to understand the meaning of marriage. Do not just find someone to get married hastily when you are under pressure. Once you have an unhappy marriage experience, you won't have a good ending even if you get married again, because of your bad experience.

Let us have a look at what Genesis said. Genesis 2:18:

**Yahweh God said,'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.'**

Here it explained why God made a woman for Adam. The reason

was it was not good to be alone. Why was it not good to be alone? Some say a person can easily get lonely and bored when alone, because there is no one to talk to. However, women in fact are talkative. Men are less talkative. This is also why men and women can hardly harmonize.

There is a joke: When God created man and woman, man needed to say five thousand words a day. Woman needed to say fifty thousand words a day. The man worked outside for a day, he basically had said five thousand words already. The woman had nobody to talk to at home. Therefore, she had not said a single word. After the man returned home, the woman would pull him over and let him listen to her fifty thousand words. Eventually, they had to divorce.

Although this is only a joke, actually there is a lesson behind it. If you only care for your own needs, you should not consider getting married. Marriage cannot solve your problems. Perhaps sisters may think that they would be bored if they are not married. But you have to consider that after getting married, you may cause boredom to your partner.

If it is not good for man to be alone, then why do so many people divorce? If you choose to divorce, doesn't that mean you regret to have got married, decide that being alone is better? If your initial purpose is to consider your own needs only, then you still are not prepared to enter into a marriage relationship, because you have not yet understood how complicated marriage can be. Reality is always very different from imagination. Imagination is always perfect. Reality is never the same.

Why is it not good to be alone? Some people think that it is not good to be alone because there will be nobody to help when help is needed. Therefore, very often the reason for divorce is because people

feel that they cannot get help. You see, we always have demands from marriage, demanding the other party to treat you like this and like that. When you cannot get what you want after getting married, then just divorce, because the other party cannot satisfy your demands.

Many people think that the relationship of husband and wife can cope with each other after getting married. In fact, coping with each other should not be started after getting married. Prior to getting married, during the process of mutual understanding, friendship development, both sides need to learn to adjust themselves. If you rush, choose lightning marriage or living together, then you have no way out. Mutual understanding is very important. Whether a marriage relationship has solid foundation depends on whether both sides truly know and understand each other.

Why is it not good to live alone? Just imagine, was Adam happy then? He should be happy. Being relaxed everyday, he can ride a horse, or keep tiger or lion as pets. Unlike today, we can only have cats or dogs as pets. Then why did God say that it was not good for him? We can imagine, all the focus was on Adam. In addition, there was God to care for him. He was just too fortunate. Actually, it was not good for Adam because he became the “only child” in the family. He only cared for himself. It is the same in real life. If you are asked, “Do you love God?” Definitely you would say, “Yes”, because God would not have any conflict with you. Only when you live with someone, then you find out how much you actually love God.

God did not want Adam to live like this. So He made a woman for him. Interestingly, God did not make a woman immediately. He first brought some animals to let Adam to have a look. But Adam could not find the one he liked to be his partner. Why? Wasn't it that God did not know what Adam need? If God knew what he needed,

why didn't He directly make a woman for him? The process for making a woman was very special. It required the rib from the man's body. God wanted to teach Adam to understand that: a suitable partner is not easy to get, she has to be cherished. Therefore, when Adam saw the woman, he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

Then what is the duty of a woman? Be a helper. On this point, sisters would be very discontent. Why is a woman the helper of her husband? Why does she have to listen to him? You can ask yourself: Why is it so hard to listen to others? I encourage you to see matters from an objective perspective. Do not be influenced by the value system of the world. What the world emphasises is equality between man and woman. In fact, man and woman cannot be completely equal.

In real life, it is not possible for everybody to be equal. The key point is that it is the issue with management, not the issue with equality. The Bible does not regard men as superior to women. However, it is not feasible to advocate equality between men and women or among everybody because of the objection to regard men as superior to women. For example, in a company meeting, whose words are more authoritative? Of course, it is the leader. Is there equality? There is no equality. In voting, the majority wins. Is there equality? There is also no equality.

Sometimes we have to ask ourselves. Why is it so hard to listen to other people's ideas? Does this reflect that we have an error zone inside us? If we do not correct these plausible concepts, it would be very difficult for us to get along with other people. Why are there so many female champions in China today? I think men are



still more intelligent. It is because there is no solution to continue emphasising equality. Therefore, men have to give in. Otherwise it will end up with divorce. Emphasising equality is not a kind of marriage relationship. It is even not a kind of friendship. It can only be regarded as a kind of business partnership.

The Bible says women are men's helpers. Women cannot accept this point. The question is: in what area do women help men, washing clothes, cooking, and bringing up children? Then how do men survive before marriage, unless you assume that without a helper, Adam could not cook and would be starved to death? I do not think that the helpers are supposed to cook and to wash clothes only. In fact, a lot of men know how to do those chores, it is just that women may be better at those chores.

On what are women supposed to help men? Perhaps we need to understand what God wanted Adam to do first. Let us read Genesis 1:26

**Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."**

Here it was said that God made man in His image, and then said that let them have dominion over everything God created.

Adam had a mission. It was not to ride horses, walk dogs or breed fish all day. If you grow up in a farming village, you would know it is not an easy job to look after all these. There are a lot of works to do.

Continue with Genesis 2:15:

Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it.



A moment ago, we saw “manage”, now we see “cultivate”. God does not like people to be idle, because it is not good for them. Therefore God gave all that He created to men to manage. That is to say, God gave the earth to men to manage. The key point is: do you know how to manage? Would you manage according to God’s will? If you do not know how to manage your life according to God’s will, then you won’t know how to manage your family properly, not to mention managing the society, the country and the earth. Men have a huge responsibility, which is to manage all God’s creation according to God’s will. Everybody has his own thing to manage. If you cannot manage a country, at least you have to manage your family, and yourself.

What is women’s mission? In fact, it is the same task as the men. That is to support and assist men, so that men can finish the mission that is assigned by God according to God’s will.

Perhaps you may think that a helper seems to be secondary. Actually it is not. When the husband is weak, he would make mistakes. At this moment, the wife has to assist or remind him in time. When the wife is weak, the husband has to lead and guide her. The two complement each other. Perhaps you think that women are secondary. In fact, that is not God’s will. Both men and women are doing the same thing. They are just taking up different roles. Let’s read 1 Cor 11:7

**For a man indeed ought not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.**

A lot of sisters cannot accept this verse. Here it mentioned man is God's image and glory. Why did it emphasize that man is God's image? To put it simply, God let man to be His representative in the world. Being a representative, man must live a life that reflects God's glory, so that God is properly represented. From the perspective of a married family, man must elaborate this role, which is to live out God's image and glory, to be the example in the family.

Then why is it said that woman is man's glory? Is it because woman is secondary to man? Perhaps I ask you: Is woman more important or man is more important? Back to real life, which one is more important? What this verse talks about is the relationship in a married family. The man refers to the husband. The woman refers to the wife. If a family wants glory in it, both man and woman must fear God, have one heart and mind. Woman is man's glory. What does that mean? Man is God's glory. That means in a family, the husband is God's representative. He must reflect God's image and glory in every aspect. And woman becomes man's representative. Whether there is glory for the husband, the performance of the wife is most important. The wife can help her husband. She can also ruin her husband.

In real life, whose glory is it if the children's performance is good? Of course, it is the glory of their parents. The husband and wife relationship is also like that. When a wife has good moral character, people would praise her, saying she is the wife of such and such. This is the glory of the man. After the man has glory, he can then glorify God. If I have a bad wife, isn't it the evidence that I have not managed my family properly according to God's will? In that case, how can God's glory be witnessed?

In God's eyes, both man and woman are equally important. I'd like to summarise the words in Ephesians Chapter 5: Man has to love

his wife. A wife has to obey and respect her husband. Man has to love his wife so that the wife has the motivation to cooperate with the husband to glorify God. And the wife should submit to the husband. Submission is a kind of cooperation. Without cooperation, there is no coordination. This is a kind of extraordinary harmonious relationship. The words in Ephesian Chapter 5 not only are suitable for the husband and wife relationship, but also suitable for the mutual relationship in the church. Love and respect must be the foundation of a church life. Without love and respect, it would not be possible for brothers and sisters to build up the relationship to love each other.

To put it simply, the meaning of marriage is to act on God's will in one heart and like mind. Through helping each other, accomplish the missions that God assign to us on earth. Christians must manage their families properly (according to God's will). This is the only way that you can manifest God's glory, to bring blessings to the people around you. When people see God's works through you, you can then lead them to know God. This is a mission of a very high calling.

Do not think that the purpose of marriage is to have children, thinking that after having children, the mission is accomplished. Having children is not Bible's objective for marriage. Perhaps you think that what I say is against God's word, because in Genesis, God said man should be fruitful and multiply. At that time, it was the beginning of human history. Of course man should multiply. But nowadays, we are living in the age of population explosion. We do not need to be fruitful and multiply anymore. The government promotes birth control. This promotion is right. But whether the way to do it is right or wrong, it is a separate issue. To multiply is not the Bible's marriage objective. Otherwise, Jesus and Paul should have got married. If the purpose of marriage is to multiply, then Jesus and Paul had failed to act on God's will.



## **II. The rules for finding your spouse**

### **1. Manage yourself properly according to God's will**

After understanding the meaning of marriage, the next step is to talk about the rules for finding your spouse.

Thinking of getting married, what is the first thing you should consider? We care about whether the potential spouses would meet our standard, whether they can satisfy our needs. They are all self-centred. After you have understood God's will, if you are a sister, you should ask yourself: am I ready to be a good helper? Can I manage myself properly? If in your daily life, you cannot manage your own life properly according to God's will, obviously you cannot be other's helper. You can only be other's burden. You can even ruin others. If you cannot manage yourself properly, how can you help others?

Many Christians may think this way: I am very weak. Therefore, I need to get married so that my spouse can help me. Brothers would think this way. Sisters would think this way too. Is there any problem in thinking this way? In fact, this way of thinking has already deviated from the meaning of marriage. You are not considering helping others. On the contrary, you demand others to help you. Many Christians when they look for potential spouses, they often look for someone with a better spiritual life to help them. This way of thinking does not work in real life. If you have such requirement, the other party would also assess you with the same standard. If the other party has good spiritual life, he would have certain spiritual insight to discern that you are not a good candidate for him. If the other party cannot discern your actual spiritual condition, cannot see your spiritual problems, you can tell that there must be problems with the other party's spiritual life too. Therefore, properly manage your own life is the first step. You

must be able to manage yourself properly before you can lead others, or become other's helper.

Some sisters said after marriage: I regret indeed. After marriage, I then find out that my husband is so foolish, weak and incapable. I am much better than him in all aspects.

If sisters complain to me like that, I would tell her: your husband is indeed not so smart, if he is smart, he would not have married you. The fact is, even though he is not smart, he is still smarter than you. Why? At least he was able to trap you. Didn't you say you were smart? Then why did you make such a mistake, marry such a stupid person? All self centred people think that they are smart. In fact this is self-deception.

In summary, firstly, what you need to consider is: can you manage yourself properly according to God's will. If you cannot manage yourself properly, do not rush into considering getting married.

## **2. Learn to pray when you have someone in mind**

Suppose you have somebody in mind. Do not be in haste first. Pray for this matter properly. When you feel anxious, never rush into a decision. Do not worry that if you do not act quickly, you would miss the chance. This is the way people think. The key point is whether your choice accords with God's will. Never use man's way to hunt for your target. You must learn to pray. Ask God to lead you. Bear in mind, prayers are to ask God to lead you to make decisions, not to ask God to accomplish your wish.

## **3. Consult teacher**

There is a common saying that spectators are clear



in mind. If you have a target, I suggest that you talk to the pastor or teacher of the church. In the church, whenever brothers or sisters have any difficulties, they would talk to their teachers. Therefore, teachers should understand everyone's situation in the church very well. But you are only one of them. You may not understand everybody. Therefore, before you take any action, talk to the teacher first. The advantage is that if you initiate to start the relationship with the other party and the other party is not interested in you, you would be embarrassed. You couldn't find anywhere to hide yourself. Or perhaps the other party has already got a target. If you are ignorant enough to get involved in their relationship, would that not create a love triangle? Some people do not mind love polygon, thinking the more choices the better, the more advantageous to ourselves. This is worldly concept. Some people's minds are so immature like this.

Suppose all brothers and sisters would communicate with the teacher, then a lot of unnecessary misunderstandings and troubles can be avoided. The teacher knows the temperament and spiritual condition of brothers and sisters. He can give you an objective opinion for reference. Don't always worry that if you lose this opportunity, there won't be any more opportunities again. You have to trust God. You have to trust your pastor too. Never ever rush into anything, making decisions without thinking thoroughly, lest you will regret in the future.

#### **4. Make sure the other party has the same spiritual goal and direction.**

Fourthly, make sure both have the same spiritual goal and direction. There is a Bible verse that we all are very familiar with "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Don't think that this is only a religious reason, thinking that it would be alright to just

bring the non-Christian boy or girl friend to the church to get baptised. Actually, this is not so simple. The reason why believers and unbelievers cannot be yoked together is because both have completely different directions of life and system of values. One is the son of light. The other one is still living in sins, not interested in God's will. When a person who wants to act on God's will and a person who is not interested in God's will at all come together, what would the outcome be?

We often think positively, thinking that we can influence the unbeliever to believe. Once you think like that, you have already compromised. You have already chosen not to listen to God's words. God says believers and unbelievers cannot be yoked together but you reckon you can influence the other party. You started not to believe in God's words, thinking believers and unbelievers can be yoked together. This way, there is a problem already to start with. You have compromised already. How is it possible for you to help the other party? You are deceiving yourself.

Therefore, you cannot just bring the other party to the church to get baptised. This is not enough. Here it is mentioned to have the same direction of life – to act on God's will. Therefore, you have to think over thoroughly. If your goal is clear, what you are concerned with is to act on God's will. Then you have to make sure the other party have the same aspiration. Of course, if you do not have any aspirations, do not care about God's will, then I have nothing to say. But I suppose you care about God's will. You wish your whole life can be used by God, to be able to become many people's blessings, then you will surely hope that your marriage can accomplish God's will better. Therefore, you would insist to find a partner with the same aspiration.

## **5. Observe the other party before taking any action**

Fifthly, before you take any action, observe the other party well. What to observe? Observe the other party on how he treats others, not on how he treats you. If he has good feelings towards you, naturally he would be very nice to you. But this may not be his true being. You have to observe him on how he treats others. This would show his true being. During dating, both parties would be willing to do anything, because they want to win the other party's favour. But whether this kind of attitude can continue after marriage, nobody knows. Observe the other party on how he treats other people is very important, because this reflects his true being.



#### **6. Do not attract the other party with your look**

Sixthly, is what has just been mentioned, do not attract the other party your look. Some sisters in order to draw the attention of the brothers would present herself nicely in front of the other party, show off her figure and beauty. Do not try this. It is because if you use the wrong way, you would attract the wrong person. If you try to attract him with your look, then what he likes is possibly your look only, not your true being.

### **III. Things to notice during dating stage**

Suppose you have already decided, started to date. There are a few points provided here as everybody's reference.

During dating, you have to be particularly careful about the temptation of lust because you now have a specific person in mind. Previously, you did not have. A lot of your emotional inputs were unreal. It would not create specific temptations. I will certainly not underestimate those lustful thoughts. If you harbor those thoughts for a long time, once opportunity comes, those thoughts will be put into

action immediately. That is how sexual relationship could happen overnight.

During dating, both sides must be cautious to each other. For example, when the brother is dating you, he has already imagined how to come close to you, how to find opportunity to touch you. Now that he has a specific target, he can realise his imagination. This would be very dangerous. If you are not cautious, his initiation would become your temptation. Therefore I say, during dating, you must be more cautious, particularly in your thoughts. Here are some suggestions:

### **(1) Avoid body contact**

Firstly, avoid too much body contacts. Of course, I cannot forbid you to hold hand in hand, or ask you to keep a distance of two metres while walking together. I can only say that you must avoid too much body contacts. Perhaps you are not deliberate. But your body contact with the other party may create temptations for the other party. If the brother has any inappropriate behaviour, you must stop him. Otherwise he would advance even more. Eventually he would become your temptation.

### **(2) Have security measures during a date**

Secondly, during the course of dating, you should be prepared with some security measures. For example, when you meet, you can choose a public place. This way, a lot of unnecessary temptations can be avoided. Many people like to date at a place without anybody. Where can you find a place without anybody? It is your own bedroom. Actually, meeting at a place without anybody is trying to create temptations for yourself. To meet at a public place is to provide a secure and healthy environment for each other. At least there are

external factors to restrain you.

Security measures include the contents of your conversations. During a date, try to talk on some healthy topics. Dating is a stage for both parties to get to know each other. Through discussing on different topics, both parties can know each other more. For example, chat about each other's interests and aspirations, etc. You may even pray together, directing attentions to focus on God. Do not focus on each other only. You have to be ready with precautionary measures. Do not tempt the others, and also do not be tempted by the others.

### **(3) Often communicate the progress with your teacher**

Thirdly, back to the teacher again. You should often communicate with your teacher about the progress of your relationship. Sometimes you do not want to or feel embarrassed to let others know about the development of your relationship. Therefore, you hide this relationship deliberately. This way, you may let Satan have the opportunity to tempt you and to attack you. The advantage of communicating with the teacher is, if there is any problem in your relationship, the teacher can warn and help you at the right time.

### **(4) Respect each other**

Fourthly, I must emphasise on this point, during the course of knowing each other, you must learn to respect each other. What does it mean to disrespect each other? It means touching each other's body, always focus on the other party's body, treating the other party as an object to release your sexual desire. This is disrespectful to the other party.



If girls are loose in this, they would lose respect from the boys. People would suspect whether you are also like that with other boys. It

takes respect to build up and maintain a relationship. Dating is a stage for knowing and understanding each other. It is a stage for preparing both of you to cooperate better in the future.

I hope that everybody can remember this point. If you do not respect yourself, you won't give people good impression. You may even give people a very bad image. When you attract the other party with your body, he wouldn't say anything at that moment. But afterwards, he would have a bad image about you: why would my girlfriend be like this? Was she the same with other boys? Will she be the same when she interacts with other boys after getting married? Gradually, he would lose respect and trust for you, thinking that you are a loose girl, always worry about you.

Marriage is not for sexual relationship. Sexual relationship is just to prove that both of you have a special covenantal relationship. This relationship cannot be shared with others. We must treat sexual relationship with the right attitude, treat it as holy. This way, your sex life would be filled with joy.

Let us read some Bible verses, 2Samuel 13:12-15

**<sup>12</sup>But she answered him, “No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! <sup>13</sup>And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.” <sup>14</sup>However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. <sup>15</sup>Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Arise, be gone!”**



Amnon and Tamar were brother and sister from the same father but different mothers. Amnon became fond of his sister. He used an improper way to possess her – he raped her. But verse 15 mentioned a very strange statement: “Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.” Why? Didn’t he want to possess her very much? After he had possessed her, why did he then hate her exceedingly?

It is because the lust relationship acquired with improper ways cannot last long. You have to remember this point. After Amnon raped Tamar, certainly Tamar would cry and make noise, causing Amnon to start to be sick of her, because this relationship was not established through a normal process. Therefore, do not use external beauty or temptation to attract people, or try to bind the other party by living together. You are wrong. This kind of relationship would ultimately cause the other party to lose respect for you.

You must make sure your marriage is blessed by God

During the course of dating, make sure that your relationship would be blessed by God. Only a marriage relationship that is blessed by God can become a blessing to the people that you come across. If you are clean during the course of dating, then on the day of your marriage ceremony, our Heavenly Father must bless you both. On the other hand, if you sin during the course of dating, and you have not confessed and repented before your pastor, even hide it from your pastor; and you want him to hold the marriage ceremony for you and give you blessings, this would be terrible. Do you think God would still bless you? By all means, you must strive to be clean in your



marriage relationship. Only this way can you get the blessing from the Heavenly Father.