

3 Timeless Tips to Find Your Mate

I've told scores of young men and women that the two most important decisions they'll make are their commitment to Christ and cooperating with God for a marriage partner. Settle these and then settle into the adventure!

We will soon celebrate 47 years of covenant marriage, following in the footsteps of my wife's parents who were married almost 70 years. Sometimes it's been a roller coaster ride, yet God has been faithful. He really does give the best to those who entrust "the one" to Him.

Madonna said, "I'd rather get run over by a train, than marry again!"

54-year-old, Lisa Marie Presley was buried after having four husbands and a horrible life in spite of all the money and fame.

I challenge you to position yourself on the path to success, pursuing your future with these Biblical principles from the Word of God.

3 Fundamentals for Finding Your Mate

1. Clean your house. Whatever your age, if you have a dream of not flying solo, rest in the reality that God loves you! He convicts us of sin to remove blocks to the "abundant life" (Jn. 10:10).

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18). Also, to know God's choice, you have to hear His voice! This means you've got to "Abstain from all appearances of evil." "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes" (Ps. 101:2).

12-Point Personal Inventory

- Habitually complaining, being negative and living a selfish life?
- Compromising sexually (not just fornication but foreplay)?
- Going to movies, concerts, clubs, bars or bachelorette parties with profanity, sensuality, drunkenness or drugs?
- Viewing shows or movies featuring nudity, adultery, homosexuality or graphic violence?
- Being dishonest with finances, IRS or on your job?
- Dressing immodestly and/or flirting in person or online?
- Indulging in gluttony and drunkenness while watching pornography?
- Engaging in and rationalizing “missionary dating” with attractive but “unequally yoked” non-Christians or counterfeit ones (“just hanging out”...“nothing serious”... “gonna’ change him”...).
- Refusing to take personal responsibility for sinful conduct by playing the “victim”?
- Resisting correction, reacting defensively and emotionally withdrawing?
- Refusing to reconcile with parents, siblings or former friends?
- Gossiping, spreading “bad reports” or criticizing authorities?

Time to sweep out the sin so you can position yourself for the favor of God!

2. Commit to stay committed. Pop culture knocks marriage, promotes promiscuity and “no fault divorce.” “Love” is based on sexual attraction, and when it wanes or conflict comes, the marriage must be “broken” so it’s time to bail. Couples simply cite “irreconcilable differences.”

The only kind of love that sustains a marriage is covenantal

“agape” love: An unselfish choice for the greater good of another. Discover qualities of this “God kind of love” in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.

I have a friend whose beautiful wife became totally incapacitated through an unexpected disease, yet Mark lovingly cared for her for decades not because of emotion but agape love. Isn't this what we solemnly pledge in our marriage vows to love our spouse “in sickness, in health, 'till death do us part?”

The time to cultivate this love is now for you'll soon face the inevitable “B's” of life beyond romance: babies; bear-like snoring; body changes; bothersome habits; bathroom annoyances; baldness; bulges; budget crises; business failures; bedroom conflicts; belligerent relatives; bills; bad breath; beauty fading; body odor; barely there libido; backtalking teen; body ailments and basic personality differences.

3. Make God your matchmaker. Finally, put marriage “on the altar” as Abraham did with Isaac and trust God to guide you. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” (Ps. 37:23, KJV). “A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (Prov. 16:9).

Steer clear of manipulation! There is no perfect marrying age, magic formula or fast way through the maze to find your life partner. Discard any “phantom hero/heroine” notions based on fantasy instead of reality.

Genesis 2:22 tells us that God “brought her to the man.” Jesus said, “Therefore what God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matt. 19:5). And if you're a man follow His promptings for “whoever finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor of the Lord” (Prov. 18:22).

In the meantime, those who are single should “serve the Lord without distraction” (1 Cor. 7:35) and when the time comes to marry do so but “only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39). God

prohibits being “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14).

Our godly niece was in her late 30s living in Virginia when providentially she was led to a job in Alaska, met a man at church who’d previously lived in Virginia (yet they’d never intersected), eventually married and that’s where they happily reside today!

I needed a ride to the airport when my driver suddenly bowed out. At the last minute I called a female friend. Along the way God “woke” me from my sleep (like Adam), and I noticed her in a new way and a few months later requested her hand in marriage!

Called to Singleness?

Unless you’re given by God a unique calling to singleness (-12) or in a time of extreme “distress” (1 Cor. 7:25), “Delight yourself in the Lord, (‘seeking first His will’ (Matt. 6:33)), and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4). Delight yourself in God and you’ll get desires from God!

A lady who married in her 40s once told me, “It’s better to be single in the will of God and experience some loneliness than marry out of the will of God and experience a lifetime of chaos.”

 In our 50 years of ministry we’ve shared close friendship with about 130 couples. There have been only three divorces. Adversities, deaths and miscarriages were part of their journeys but these Christ-centered couples who’d prepared for marriage (not just a wedding); had made vows based on covenant not merely convenience; and intentionally cultivated supportive relationships in a church community which were channels of God’s wisdom.

Here’s God’s Deal: “For I know the plans that I have for you,

says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). {eoa}

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