

Scriptures Grant Men the Right of Marriage Refusal

A lot of men like to complain about the fact that the “best ones are already taken.” Well, it is true—in one very special sense. These women that I speak of are “already taken” by Christ.

In a strange way they, who have already given their hearts to another, are the only ones men should be pursuing. Other women have given their hearts to romance novels, the American dream, living it up, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (see 1 John 2:16). Many times, men are far from number one in a woman’s life. So at best, a woman who has Christ as number one will put her husband at number two, and not dead last (as is the case with many husbands).

You might retort, “But I’ve met a lot of Christian women who claim to put Christ first and they still treat me like dirt.” Yes? And your point is ...?

Do we need to rehash matters about the state of our churches today? Needless to say, religiosity, cultural conservatism and the like are not reliable metrics of spiritual maturity. Take the most conservative, Bible-believing congregation you like and compare them to the Pharisees. How will they fare? The Pharisees were moralistic (see Luke 15:2), zealous about studying the Scriptures (see John 5:39), and zealous about following the Law (see Acts 22:3).

You see, there many are who zealous for God’s Word and yet are not zealous to walk in intimacy with the One who authored it. Are they led by reliance upon God, Christ and the Spirit? Or are they led by their self-righteous expertise in knowing doctrine and performing religious acts? Now you know why so many conservative churches are utterly dead. They have

forsaken their first love (see Rev. 2:4) and have become country clubs for suburbanites.

Some would assert that Christian men “have no excuse” and that there are “plenty of women to go around” in our churches today. Those who assert this are looking at the matter through the eyes of man, not through spiritual lenses. The Bible is clear about the kind of woman a man should date or marry (see Prov. 31:30; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). This simplifies the picking and rejecting to a great extent. It has to do with one’s attitude, not a flurry of religious activity or putting up a front. It has to do with the heart, not the backside and where it is planted on Sunday morning.

So you see, when religious leaders tell me that I need to find a wife who helps me “glorify God” or helps me perform “kingdom work,” I think they often do not know what they are proposing. They may think of church buildings, programs, funded ministries, grandiose missions, professional clergy, filled church nurseries, filled pews, filled coffers, good times ahead for their man-made denomination, middle-class values, a return to the 1950s in the general culture, or whatever.

Being Spirit-filled does not equate to any of this. And being married to a Spirit-filled woman does not equate to any of this. It does look a lot like what one reads in 1 Corinthians 13.

The Christian man who has turned his back on the dating scene is not to be consumed with bitterness, selfish anger, vengefulness or hate. But he doesn’t need to bother with romance, either. True, he is called to love women as his neighbors (see Mark 12:33) or as his sisters in Christ (see 1 Tim. 5:2), but he is also called not to cast his pearls before swine (see Matt. 7:6). Quite frankly, a lot of women are acting like swine because their souls are in spiritual bondage to the enemy. This includes a lot of churchgoing women who are deceived by their own religiosity.

I have said many times that a Christian man has no Biblical obligation whatsoever to date or marry. Now, it may be that God may individually lead a man to marry and put a desire in that man for a wife, but that is God's private work in somebody's personal life, not dogma to be bound to the body of Christ (see Prov. 18:22; 1 Cor. 7:25a). The Scriptures still grant men the right to refuse to marry (see 1 Cor. 7:37).

What I'm getting to is this: A Christian man doesn't have to worry about what people think about his singleness if he is not even surrounded by Spirit-filled women in the first place. If he finds a woman filled with the Spirit, and if he is filled with the Spirit, there will be very little holding each of them back if the Lord is pleased to have them together.

The two of them won't need a "mandate" and won't have much use for pretense and stratagems. Love has a way of accomplishing what coercion cannot.

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