



*How To Choose a Mate*

*The Picking Process*

*How To Destroy Divorce*

*by Louis Cook*



# Dedication

I felt constrained to assemble this material, by those who I have personally known who are struggling in their marriage. Some are already divorced and some are pierced through with many sorrows, because **“The Picking Process”** was not used.

But then contrast that with those who used **“The Picking Process”** and enjoy the most wonderful relationship this world has to offer.

I dedicate this to my wonderful wife of 47 years, for her support, continual encouragement and strength she has provided to me through the years. Without her I could not have accomplished anything.

# A Challenge To You

Each of us helps to write a tory of the human race **every** time we make a **choice**. Every single one of us is part of this fascinating story. We either add to the dignity of our race by making **good choices** or further degrade the race by making **bad choices**.

*“History is the record of an encounter between character and circumstances,”* [D. Creighton] individually we are part of that encounter. Within every individual has the power of greatness to display the *inward character* that can change the course of history. Do we realize the importance of our own daily encounters with circumstances? When we make a single choice to do what is right before God, we change the course of history. “And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.” Matthew 10:42

It need not be on the public stage before hundreds of people, just the inward courage, real character, to make the right choice regardless of the circumstances. [Gary Henry]

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# What Is Marriage?

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, “*Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman, but because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.*” His expression here is that it would be better for all to remain unmarried and to devote themselves totally to the service of God, however not everyone can contain themselves and thus the instruction for marriage to *avoid fornication* let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

The first **Key** to a successful marriage begins with a good understanding of what marriage is according to God’s design and purpose.

1. Marriage is a sacred, God-designed relationship between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:18-25). From all of God’s creations there was not one animal that was suitable to remove Adam’s “aloneness.” God solved Adam’s problem by creating Eve as a helpmeet to take away his “aloneness” and to make Adam complete, the perfect couple as God created.

2. Leaving, cleaving and oneness. Genesis 2:23-24 states this idea and it is repeated five times in the New Testament because it is of utmost importance in creating a successful marriage. When we consider the leaving father and mother, this is a new step in the growth and development as we mature. We don’t forget mom and dad but we develop a new relationship. Cleaving is the *super glue* that holds a marriage together when difficulties come, as they often do to the unprepared. In Acts 11:23 the Christians at Antioch were “cleaving to the Lord.” They were attached and determined to remain with Him. We MUST have that same commitment to reach that state of oneness. The two “became one flesh,” as in Mark 10:6-8, “But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH;’ so they are no longer two but one flesh.” (NAS95) In this state, each has NO independent rights, privileges, cares or concerns and are joined together in all things. This oneness was illustrated by Christ in Ephesians 5:28-29 which says, “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.” That is the oneness that we must strive for. It seems almost impossible for this oneness to exist if both are not Christians.

### 3. **The plan for marriage is so plain:**

Romans 7:1-4 – “*Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to*

*another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.”*

~NAS95

4. The benefits of marriage begin with:
  - A. Companionship – Genesis 2 is the binding together of the hearts of two people as one, in thought and deeds. They enjoy each other’s company, enjoy the exchange of ideas, until they become an UNIT. (Mal. 2:14-17)
  - B. Prevents sexual immorality – 1 Corinthians 7; Proverbs 5:18-21; and Hebrews 13:4 show how God instilled the sex drive in us and He provided a method to use and control it to the benefit of mankind.
  - C. Reproduction – Genesis 1:28 is where marriage is God’s method of providing for the most helpless of all, a new baby. Married couples engage in the fullest and freest sexual expression without guilt, shame or fear, as the complete fulfillment of God’s design, children are the result of that beautiful union.

The Second **Key**, maybe the most important part of a successful marriage is what I call “**The Picking Process.**” Without great care you can fall in love with a person that you can NEVER have a successful marriage with or be happy with in the long term. There are many characteristics that can be present to prevent success, such as anger, lack of self-control, immorality, selfishness are some and the list can go on and on. Most relationships begin with physical attraction, how we look, how we present ourselves, but these should be way down the list of things that are truly important. Character, integrity and devotion to God should be at the head of the list. **Choose a mate with your ears not your eyes!!!**

As we work through these lessons we will focus on God’s word as the source of how to be successful in “**The Picking Process.**”

Questions:

1. Give a clear and concise definition of what marriage is?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Explain the common good to each partner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How do “independent rights” keep two from the perfect union?

4. What is Paul's point in Romans 7:1-4?

5. List any other benefits of marriage.

6. Who is your best friend?

**Key Scriptures:**

1 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:18-25; Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-8; Ephesians 5:28-29;  
Romans 7:1-4

# Who Are You?

It is important for young people to understand who we are, the likeness and differences in the opposite sex. During the teen years a person has many rapid changes in all parts of life, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. These can be very difficult years as the changes take place. We are affected by the customs, ideas, and people that are around us.

1. Created in God's image. Genesis 1:27, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 An individual, YOU Psalms 8:4-6 Created with the ability to choose! To discern! To reason!

2. Created male and female for a purpose. The first job was to cultivate and keep God's garden and to eat of the things growing there. God *always* provides for man's every need.

3. Woman was created as a "suitable" counterpart, companion, and complement to the man's life, without which God said "it's not good for man to be alone." The perfect completion to man's life, the final creation to fill a specific need. The woman is referred to as a "weaker vessel" in 1 Peter 3:7, which is not inferior, consider smaller stature, finer features, more delicate, more sensitive, and all of these features (created by God) perfectly complement man.

The fundamental needs of man and the drive to fulfill those needs affect our behavior. We want *recognition* by friends, family and peers. We use sports, music and other performances to receive the *recognition*. Another excellent method is our commitment and service to God. We desire to be *secure* in our home with the love and protection of our families. The *security* helps fulfill our need for protection, and solves many unwanted behavior problems.

4. Both are to be **Christ like**. 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 The greatest sermon ever preached is found in John 13 where Jesus washed the apostles' feet. In this lesson delivered by Christ the example is so strong that when instilled in our lives it will solve most all of our problems in life. The spiritual need is the greatest need that man has! Man has worshiped something forever to fulfill that need since the beginning. The Bible is full of examples of worship beginning with Cain and Abel, continuing until today. If you want to become a great husband or wife you must start by being "following in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

5. What makes you? We are who we are because of a number of things, the child of our parents and a product of our culture. Our inheritance (DNA) is settled by our parents. Things such as hair color, skin, eyes and other features. Our behavior patterns are developed by our parents, family, and church, sometimes called our environment, as we grow and develop. We are shaped and developed by those we have contact with in addition to family and church we are shaped by teachers and school mates, neighbors and community, all have an influence on us as we grow and develop. Without a strong faith in God and the determination to serve God, we can leave His "footsteps" and become someone NOT CHRIST LIKE. That is not a good prospect for marriage!



**Questions:**

1. Discuss the meaning of Job 7:17-18; Psalms 144:3-4 as it relates to this discussion?
  
2. What is greatest between God's creations - man or animal?
  
3. What are the major differences between man and woman?
  
4. How do these differences make them compatible?
  
5. Make your own list of needs that are important to you?
  
6. How important is 1 Peter 2:21 in becoming Christ-like?
  
7. Make a list of habits that are worth cultivating.
  
8. Make a list of habits that should be hindered and eliminated?

**Key Scriptures:**

Genesis 1:27, 2:18-23; Job 7-17; Psalms 8:4-6, 144:3; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 7-9;  
1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

## What is the Attraction?

Most often the answer to this question is *what they look like*. People are attracted to each other for many different reasons, some are important and others are not. How a person looks may make an initial impression, but that alone will not keep that attraction. Lets consider: if the “hottie” has a mean temper or some other dislikable feature the physical attraction grows weak. Genesis 6:2 — “*That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.*”

*Notice the attraction*—beautiful, fair was the bases for the choice. This was “the sons of God” who chose the “daughters of men” and in Genesis 6:5 we see how God felt about these events. He saw wickedness on the earth. THEIR PICKING PROCESS FAILED!!!!!!!

Isaiah 3:16 — “*Moreover, the LORD said, ‘Because the daughters of Zion are proud And walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, And go along with mincing steps And tinkle the bangles on their feet.’*” They were making a show of themselves ATTRACTING for the wrong reasons and nothing spiritual will ever come from this.

Judges 14:3 — “*Then his father and his mother said to him, ‘Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?’ But Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, **for she looks good to me.**’*” How did this turn out for Samson? THE PICKING PROCESS WAS IGNORED!!!!!!!

There was no consideration given to the more important qualities: *moral and spiritual values, personality, honesty, sincerity, habits, manners and intelligence*. These are the qualities that make it *possible* to develop a relationship with another person that has meaning even if it is not long term.

Very often people take the position that any attempt to improve one’s appearance is wrong, but the scripture makes reference to beauty, the glory of long hair and other statements that talk about how one should look. 1 Peter 3:3-4 does not condemn dressing well but that the importance should be on adorning the hidden person of the heart, the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God. That is what is important!!!! How good do we look to God?

Men have the same responsibility to present themselves dedicated to God’s service (Romans 12:1-2) with hearts adorned in the qualities of transparent honesty, integrity and faithfulness. These outweigh the “macho” physique that may attract some who live in the sensual world.

CONSIDER THIS THOUGHT: When you go fishing what you catch will be determined by what kind of bait you use.....

### Questions

1. How do you describe physical attraction?
  
2. What do you think about people with religious beliefs trying to have a meaningful relationship?
  
3. What kinds of compromises are you willing to make in your beliefs to establish a relationship with another?
  
4. How can a young man make himself attractive to a girl he wants to impress?
  
5. Rate the value of these qualities. 1 most important 10 least important
 

|              |       |             |       |
|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Manners      | _____ | Appearance  | _____ |
| Personality  | _____ | Habits      | _____ |
| Intelligence | _____ | Temperament | _____ |
| Morals       | _____ | Religion    | _____ |
| Interest     | _____ | Wealth      | _____ |

How much are you willing to **ignore** to pick out a possible mate for a courtship?

Love is a learned emotion between two people. Love is a reciprocal affection that two people learn to share based on their acquaintance.

Love at first sight—how does that work?

One marriage difficulty is we fall in love with personality, but we must live with character!!!

### Key Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Isaiah 3:17-24; Genesis 24:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:9-11; Genesis 6:2,5; Isaiah 3:16; 1 Peter 3:3-4

## Going Out

Going out or dating is a lot more fun now than centuries ago when the man used a club on the woman and dragged her back to his cave. Going out/dating is a wonderful and painful period in the lives of most people. Wonderful as we broaden our base of friendship, painful because these relationships typically don't last very long and being dumped can be painful. Going out begins the adjustment from adolescence to the man-woman world and is actually part of preparing for marriage.

We all have a circle of acquaintances, and from that group we develop friendships. It is from these friends that dating usually begins. We need to choose our friends carefully because of where it can lead in the future. Friends are people who learn to like each other for the qualities they find agreeable in each other. Friends like each other, they like doing things together, they like many of the same things, and they are truly considerate of one another.

Dating may arise out of a simple desire to have a good time, good clean fun, with someone who is fun to be with. Companionship is one of our most basic needs (Genesis 2:18). Aloneness is not good. The safest way to start dating is with "group dating" where several people go on a picnic, to a party, to outdoor games, or a to Bible study. The next stage is "double dating" which provides for a lot of fun, easy conversation to keep things fun and interesting without much pressure. The final stage is "couple dating," which can bring about more serious problems for those who may not be mature enough to handle the uncertainties that can arise.

Going out/dating helps to broaden the base of friendship as you get to know more people. Use the opportunity wisely. There are many ways to make yourself more dateable without using improper dress or behavior to attract attention. Become a better conversationalist by reading things of interest to others and then enter into a discussion with them. Sharpen your listening skills. Since we have two ears and only one mouth perhaps we should listen more and talk less.

Be cheerful, optimistic about life by solving problems as they arise. Be yourself, hold on to your good traits and work on others. Be considerate and courteous to others while accepting others as they are. Show an interest in things outside yourself, learn from new interests, and broaden your range of interest to make yourself a more interesting person.

The Christian must always set the standard for what you do on a date. Never attend anything that would embarrass you or your date, or lead to any appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Use Philippians 4:8 as a guide for dating activates, see if they pass the test! This gets increasingly harder as the world grows less spiritual each day. Remember in the long term your spouse **MUST** be your best friend for a marriage to last a life time.

**Questions**

1. Mark these traits in their order of importance to you
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Dependable and can be trusted
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Clean in speech and actions
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Physically and mentally fit
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Acts their age, not childish
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Is considerate of me and others
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Has a good disposition and sense of humor
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Takes pride in manners and appearance
2. Discuss how important friendship is in dating?
3. List some activities that you could enjoy on a date?
4. How can you make yourself more dateable?
5. What is meant by setting the standard?
6. At what point should young couples pass from “Double dating” to “Couple dating”?
7. What are the dangers of “Couple dating” too early?

**Key Scriptures:**

Genesis 2:18; 3:12; 1 Corinthians 2:15; 11:9; 1 Timothy 2:13; Philippians 4:8;  
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

## Dating Behavior

The title may sound a little old fashion and it is, all the way back to the Bible. However these Bible principles have kept young Christians from many sorrows throughout the ages. The first and foremost rule for all times is: think of the other person first, not yourself. If both consider the feelings and concerns of the other person that will benefit both of you by providing a fun filled time (Philippians 2:3-5). This is a good *principle* for every walk of life.

Some guidelines to consider that will improve the impression that you make on your date:

1. Avoid being an “I” specialist. Most of us won’t impress many people that way.
2. Drive sensible, “show offs” usually fall before they are finished showing off.
3. Listen to your date; remember you have two ears and one mouth listen more talk less.
4. Think about your speech, Ephesians 4:29; Mark 7:21-23 and try not to embarrass yourself.
5. Remember the first rule: consider the other person.

Why is it important to plan a date, especially, in the early stages? If you are a Christian and dating a Christian there should not be many conflicts about what you may do on a date. **HOWEVER** remember “who you are” you belong to God. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 — “*Abstain from every form of evil.*” This should be the guiding principle in all that you plan and do. Something we lose sight of the why people date, the primary reason is to get to know a person better and to have fun. **REMEMBER** the person you marry began with a first date. There are people out there that you can fall for that you can never have a happy life with, and who can prevent you from going to heaven. The greatest danger is “picking” with your eyes only!

2 Timothy 2:22 — “*Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*” **WHEN YOU ARE ON A DATE?** You bet your life on it!!!!!! Your spiritual life.

1 Corinthians 6:18 — “*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body*” (KJV). To a lot of people the term sexual immorality doesn’t sound as bad as fornication, but both are sin. Flee—think about that word—escape from something dangerous or harmful to us. **YES, YES** not only is fornication a sin against our heavenly Father but there are painful and bitter results that come from this act. You have sinned against your own body, you have stolen from the other person, and you will disgrace the family of God. There may be an unwanted pregnancy (yeah that’s not going to happen to me), venereal disease, or AIDS. And there is more if you want a list. “*All these things are not going to happen to me,*” **THINK** about who is telling you that (the same guy who told Eve, “You won’t die.”) Dating is a wonderful and a sometimes painful period of life, but following God’s word can remove most of the pain and leave the “wonderful” to be enjoyed. The most important thing about dating is getting acquainted with a person of the opposite sex with whom you could establish a relationship.

**Questions**

1. How well should you know a person before going out with them?
  
2. Discuss how friendship in dating is important?
  
3. How do you judge what kind of movie to watch with a date?
  
4. Give some specific answers on how to overcome being selfish on a date?
  
5. Do you as a guy feel responsible for the safety of the girl?
  
6. List some ways to avoid anything unpleasant from happening on a date?
  
7. When is it ok to start “making out”?

**Key Scriptures:**

Galatians 5:26; Colossians 3:8, 16; 4:6; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Matthew 12:36; 1 Timothy 1:5; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Philippians 2:3-5; Mark 7:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18

# Courtship- Getting Ready For Marriage

Just as dating leads to courtship, courtship should be leading people to a good marriage. Courtship gives time and opportunity to learn who they are, how they react to different situations, and how they react to each other over the course of time and through trying times that will surely come. Long before most couples are ready for marriage some will suggest, “Before we get too serious let’s see if we are compatible,” “let’s have sex and see how it goes.” If that works out, ok later we will “test-drive” the future marriage by *moving in together*.

## **Eight Reasons why living together is not a good idea:**

1. Fornication – Galatians 5:19-21
2. 40% end the relationship before marriage
3. 50% higher divorce rate
4. Unhappier marriages which separate more and have more counseling
5. More frequent arguments, fights, and violence
6. Sex not as satisfying (well duh)
7. More behavior problems, alcohol, drugs, and abuse
8. Children with more behavior problems – oh no, there’s not going to be children – **Right (Do you know of any high schools that have daycare?)**

*Remember*—Marriage is not an experiment. It is life, ordained by God for the benefit of man!!

Courtship is a time to get to know your companion, to learn about each other, to spend good time together, to see how adaptable each can be to different problems. Remember most problems are magnified by marriage not eliminated. How well does each of you handle the stress of financial problems (because they do usually come), how will we deal with children, and the list goes on. Without the benefit of a good courtship “**The Picking Process**” will fail. The value cannot be overestimated; courtship has a direct bearing on quality of the marriage!!!

The basis for the commitment that carries a marriage through *all the way to heaven* is being formed during this period. The joy and fun times, the disagreements, the uncertainties, all demonstrate the compatibility that you are developing. Consider what the wise man gave us in Proverbs 14:29; 15:1-2, 28; 16:32; 19:11. All these passages teach how to use our understanding and knowledge as we develop relationships with others.

Ephesians 4:29-32 – “*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each*



*other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” NAS95 (Problem solving 101)*

Paul wrote in Galatians 6:4, – “*But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*” We understand that Paul is speaking about our service to God, however I believe picking a mate that will lead you to heaven is part of that service to God! Without the Bible where would we learn about marriage, maybe Cosmopolitan? Lol

#### Questions

1. What is your idea of courtship?
2. List 5 ways courtship will help form a good marriage?
3. What is wrong with the “test-driving” principle? Do you want to be the car or the driver?
4. What is the underlying reason that the “living together” arrangement doesn’t usually work?
5. Does saying “I Do” change anything about a person?
6. Why does marriage cause incompatibilities to be more pronounced?
7. Explain how the Proverb passage will help in courtship?
8. True/False the quality and durability of a marriage will be determined by the courtship?

#### Key Scriptures:

James 1:19; Proverbs 14:29; 15:1-2; 16:32; 19:11; Matthew 12:36; Ephesians 4:29-32; 5:4; Colossians 3:8; 1 Peter 2:1

# How To Pick a Mate

After becoming a Christian choosing a profession and a mate are the main decisions in life. To pick someone to share the intimate life together for 50 years or more is a very serious matter. You are picking someone who will partner with you in the journey to heaven. Rather than thinking about what you want in a mate, consider *what you need* and what you can get. Let's make a list of traits that will provide a mate that will be "suitable" (Genesis 2:20) to go to heaven with.

1. **Are they a Christian?** Marriage is spiritual relationship, and the surest foundation to establish a successful marriage. Are they committed to serving the Lord first? If not tell them to get serious or take a hike. Marriage is also about eternity!!!!!! Every crisis will bring your faith to the surface.

2. **Do they have real character?** This question should not need to be asked of a Christian, however you must be sure. Character is sometimes defined as "what you are when no one can see you." Character is the glue that binds a home together. Character is made up of a solid-core of honesty, fairness, courage, responsibility, self-control, common sense and spiritual insight. There is NO substitute. Look past charm, wealth, popularity, beauty, cool, macho, and hot because all that will fade, disappear, and be replaced with wrinkles, baldness and sagging.

3. **What about family?** You are not marrying the family (remember that leaving and cleaving in lesson 1) but the fact remains that each of your families will have an impact on your marriage. As children come, grandparents usually help play a role and aid in helping with the children, so what kind of family becomes important to consider. Do they share your spiritual goals and values?

4. **Are they compatible?** Do you have many similar interests? Is there a big age difference that can be a conflict about your activities? Can you disagree without being disagreeable? Are your backgrounds similar? Are you willing to correct problems? Do you have a common-sense approach to things? Are there health issues that will create a strain on the marriage?

5. **Are you both in love with each other?** Because the word love is so overused and misused it is hard to define, but is not hard to demonstrate, it is not hard to see. Many people "fall in love" too often for the wrong reasons with the wrong person. "Love at first sight," "I knew he or she was the one," are statements that shout you don't know what love really is, remember marriage is not a sprint it's a marathon, and only a joint love that is grown, developed and nurtured can support that long endurance race to the finish line which is heaven. It is so sad to see a couple get married for other reasons, getting away from some situation, in love with idea of getting married, and other less than great ideas. Many will not last, others will create great unhappiness, sadly some will eternally lost when "**The Picking Process**" is ignored!!!

The Greeks use four different words to describe love; all go together to create the kind of love (the superglue) that will hold a marriage for them long term.

**Storge**—the love of family (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

**Eros**—self-fulfilling or sexual love

**Phileo**—friendship—I like you

**Agape**—unselfish service

Often those without the right spiritual base don't know the difference between "love" & "sex." Society talks about *making love* and just means *having sex*; generally love has nothing to do with it. It is nothing more than gratifying the physical lust!!! It is an act of theft! The spiritual purity given by God has been taken from each one and replaced by guilt and shame!!!

6. **Are they your best friend?** Do you have a best friend "at first sight?" Friends are grown and nurtured over time while working out problems. When you consider that 95% of a couple's time is spent doing other things than sex you *need* to like each other, *need* to enjoy each other's company regardless of what you are doing.

#### Questions

1. What is meant by the question, "Are they a Christian?"
  
2. How can love work to solve problems in marriage?
  
3. What clearly shows the difference between love and sex?
  
4. Show by the scriptures the Bible difference? 1 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 5:25-29
  
5. List the qualities that make up character?
  
6. Cite ways you can tell if you are good friends.

#### Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 7:1-6; Hebrews 13:4; Acts 10:35; Matthew 16:24-27; 23:11-12

# Are You Mature Enough To Marry?

Maturity is a learned quality. It comes with experience not necessarily with age. Some comparable young people have attained a level of maturity, while some older people show signs of poor judgment that usually is a sign of immaturity. We will look at five measures of maturity as it relates to marriage. One survey showed that when two teenagers marry the divorce rate reaches 85% in 5 years!!!! That is astonishing to me, but it shows that the need for maturity is so vital in a successful marriage.

How old are you, **chronologically**? How many years have you lived? The more important question is “what have you learned during those years?” Having 21 candles on a cake makes you able to vote but doesn’t guarantee a person is old enough to marry.

How old are you, **physically**? There is a close relationship between chronological age and physical age. The early teen years are characterized by rapid bodily growth, weight, height and sexual development. By age 18 most people have reached the height they will be and by 24 most growth has stopped except for growth in the waist which usually comes much later in life. The *average* person is physically “mature” by age 20, although some may require a little more. We have the mention of Jesus’ maturity in Luke 2:40, “*and the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*” (RSV)

How old are you, **mentally**? Which really means how wise are you? Have you had enough training in the home, church and school, (in that order) enough experience and background to take on the responsibilities of marriage? Mental maturity is not your I.Q. which is a measurement of learning capacity, but the accumulated learning, wisdom and skills to negotiate marriage. Some studies show that the most of our intellectual development takes place by 21 although some lack enough self-control to be mentally ready for marriage.

How old are you, **vocationally**? Do you have enough training in some field that will allow you support a family? Please don’t start a marriage on CREDIT. Financial problems can put a tremendous strain on any marriage. No matter how much love there is, it won’t pay the bills. One partner or both must be able to earn a living before you are old enough vocationally to get married.

How old are you, **sexually**? Sexual maturity means more than being able to have a child; any clod or moron can do that. Sexual maturity is mostly determined by children who were raised by emotionally well balanced parents. Parents, who listened to the child’s problems, helped them understand that God provided the sexual urge, and then taught them how to properly satisfy that urge and have a wholesome outlook about sex and its role in marriage. A person with this background will usually have reached a sexual maturity level to marry.

How old are you, **emotionally**? This may be the single most important measure of “Are you old enough to marry?” From the very beginning an infant is very “self-centered” with such demands as “I want to be dry, I’m hungry feed me, no matter what time it is, I want what I want NOW.” Unfortunately some people never grow out of this attitude!!!!!! If I don’t get

what I want I'll have a fit or I'll pout until I do. WOW that's the person I want to spend my life with!?! A baby's world is very small, parents, maybe a sibling, maybe grandparents, but not much else. As a child grows others are included, school friends who are just beginning to grow (emotionally). Then their world begins to expand beyond the home, to include the "gang." Later with those of the opposite sex they begin to date and finally select a mate. STOP AND CONSIDER, if you are still attached to your parents, still want to be part of the "gang," still want date, and are not totally committed to just ONE, and only one, *YOU ARE NOT EMOTIONALLY READY FOR MARRIAGE!!!!!!!!!!*

### Questions

1. List the 6 age levels discussed in this lesson.
2. Which two do you think are the most important? Why?
3. What are the evidences of immaturity?
4. Does age make a person mature?
5. What would you do if you are dating a person you realize is too immature to marry?

If you have been dating for a year.

### Key Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:5-8; 3:18; 1 Corinthians 2:6; Ephesians 4:12-15; Hebrews 5:12-14; Philippians 3:15

## Are you Sure You Are in Love?

Someone once it is easier to demonstrate *love* than it is to define it, and perhaps that is true because of the way the word *love* is misused. I love ice cream or I love my car, since love is a human relationship we only become infatuated with objects such as a car or ice cream. Sometimes we become infatuated with people, and that is often called “love at first sight.” Infatuation is in direct contrast to “real” love.

### **Infatuation**

Based on one or two traits (usually physical)  
 Produces insecurity and questions  
 Fallen in “love” with love  
 Suffer loss of ambition and appetite  
 Comes suddenly but doesn’t last

### **Love**

Based on many traits in all phases of life  
 Gives a sense of security  
 Grown to love another person  
 Work and plan to please the other person  
 Develops over a long period of time

Let us look at the parts that make up what love really is and what makes it work. We have a need to be with and are attracted to others by personality and physical attraction which helps to fulfill a need for us. “I like that person,” “they are fun to be with” this is the beginning of friendship, a sharing of experiences, someone to understand me, share my goals, to give me confidence and to relieve my loneliness. There must time to learn to share work, play, joy and responsibility which mutuality satisfies our differing needs. A study of 1 Corinthians 13 gives a great word picture of what love is and how it works. Love is kind, gentle, good natured, tender, affection, not jealous, harsh, or self-seeking but promotes happiness for all, and most of all is patient.

### **Is this the “one and only” for me?**

Is this person a Christian? In name or deeds?

Does this person satisfy my needs and do I seem to fulfill theirs?

Are we mature enough that our needs will still be met in 5 years?

Do we share deep and growing interests in similar things?

Is there mutual respect for each other that doesn’t require deep changes after marriage?

How well do we communicate?

Are there secrets between you?

Do you feel you have separate rights?

Is our family background similar enough that most major barriers have been removed?

Do they come from a happy, well adjusted family or have they been scared by an unhappy home?

Do you both share many of the same goals, ideals, and aims for marriage?

Do you fuss, fight and argue? Saying “I do” won’t change anything in this department?

Will there be disagreements over whose parents we will spend holidays?

How would I change this person once we are marriage? (Fat chance)

Do we confide in each other?

Do I respect their judgment?

What do our friends think of our chances of a happy life together?

What do we base our expectation of marriage on?

How mature are we both? What is the proof?

How will love hold a marriage together when difficulties come?

As you answer these questions honestly and sincerely you accurately determine if you are ready to move into a deeper relationship that will grow and endure. Love that passes the test of reason will be worth the work and sacrifice to continue growth and maturity.

Seek the counsel of a mature couple who have passed the test of time, and have demonstrated that *permanent love* has developed in their lives and discuss with them how “*love will carry you through.*”

Some may read this and think to themselves, “It’s surprising we made it” because we didn’t go through all of this, and many didn’t make it!!!!!!!

DON’T ignore “**The Picking Process**” or you will FAIL.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 10:12; 1 Peter 4:8; Philippians 2:4; Galatians 6:2; Romans 15:1; 2 John 1:4; 1 Corinthians 10:24

# Husband's Responsibilities in the Family

What is a husband? The answer is “a collection of virtues.” Among those that MUST be featured is *kindness*, a virtue that make him desirable (Proverbs 19:22; Ephesians 4:32). Kindness will flow to all those he knows. The kindness of Joseph to Mary, when she could have been greatly embarrassed, is a model for all husbands. He was very gentle (Proverbs 15:1, 4; James 3:17). The good husband is easy to get along with (Proverbs 3:30, 11:29). He will be cheerful and pleasant, which makes you want to be with him, nobody want to be around an old grouch!!! (Proverbs 15:13)

Ephesians 5:25 – “*Husbands, **love your wives**, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her*” (NAS95). Is this optional? Was Paul making a suggestion? NO, NO, NO! This is a commandment!!!! *Love* is the supreme motivating principle from God the source. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Love is the perfect bond of unity. Colossians 2:2 – “*That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ*” (RSV). If we are to love a fellow Christian in this manner, can you even imagine treating your wife with less respect? Ephesians 5:28-29 – “*So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church*” (NAS95). These verses place a special responsibility on husbands to honor the sacrifice of Christ by their obedience to Him in loving, nourishing and cherishing their wives.

The Greeks used four words for the different kinds of love.

Cheese cake love – **eros**- a devouring, consuming love

Grandma's love – **storge**- love of kinfolks

Basketball love – **phileo**- affection for skill or personality

Husband/wife love – **agape**- sacrificial service

Which kind of love do you want?

Man's responsibility is to be LOYAL to his wife above all others. In Genesis 2:24 God said “CLEAVE” (super glued, fused, welded, to be attached together) and let nothing come between you. That is the beginning of loyalty in a righteous marriage. Following loyalty, the HONOR that the husband should give his wife comes next (1 Peter 3:7). How do you feel about your prayers not getting higher the ceiling? Who said a thing like that? GOD did!!!!!! Consider 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5, “*That each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God; The wife is to be held in high esteem because she is part of you in marriage*” (RSV).

The husband's first loyalty is to his wife, followed by his parents (and hers), their children, and then others. The good husband will have a predetermined decision that when conflicts arise he will be loyal to his wife, as long as the righteousness of God is the basis of their loyalty. The great husband will do all he can to please his wife (1 Corinthians 7:33). The higher loyalty





5. What happen if the husband is not a Christian, regarding weekend plans and worship?

**Key Scriptures:**

Malachi 2:15; Colossians 3:12; Proverbs 12:25; Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 2:1; 1 John 3:18;  
2 Corinthians 2:10

# The Responsibilities of the Wife

God's plan for the wife was to be a companion of the man she loves. When God saw Adam's need He designed and created a companion for Adam because there was no animal that could cure his "aloneness." God made her in the same divine image, not from the head or foot but from under the arm that he should protect her and near the heart that he should love and cherish her always. God said I will make for him a suitable helper, an assistant that complements her husband, and the good wife glories in her unique relationship.

Helen Maddox Young wrote:

*"Her essential role is "one able to help." She is not a man, different in every way, neither superior nor inferior. She is the nurturer of life, and she is cheapened when she seeks to be a man. She has God given quantities which need full expression-these are devotion, sacrifice, compassion, and tenderness. The good wife was created to be a helper not a competitor. Marriage stretches their understanding and wisdom. The role of "helper" is much more the cooking and cleaning, it is a role of affection. Her role is to be attentive, his source of praise, and tender critic. She adds sentiment and warmth to his life. She keeps her life less cluttered to give him more time. She is always loyal even when others don't understand."*

Following God's order the wife is to be in submission to her husband just as the husband is in submission to God. The good wife will willingly submit to her husband as to God. The good wife will respect and reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:33) and she will lovingly submit to him (Colossians 3:18).

The duty of the Christian woman is to encourage her husband to accept the leadership God placed in his hands (1 Peter 3:1-6). Sometimes there are husbands who are disobedient to the word even while teaching a class or serving the Lord's Table and Peter states the wife can win them to God by their behavior. Think about the influence you have on your husband for good. This done without NAGGING (Proverbs 21:19; 27:15) one of the worst of bad qualities!!!!

Proverbs 31 describes the "excellent" wife, the one you are seeking to be and the one "Mr. Right" is looking for. What is her value? Why is she so valuable? Because she is "Mrs. Right," look at her influence on her husband and her family. She is the role model for every woman!!! She seeks to please her husband while at the same time pleasing God by leading all toward heaven.

The Bible describes a number of different kinds of wife's:

Wise or foolish – Proverbs 14:2

Clamorous, boisterous, noisy – Proverbs 9:13

Without discretion – Proverbs 11:22

Virtuous – Proverbs 31

Prudent – Proverbs 11:22, 19:14

Gracious – Proverbs 11:16  
Professes godliness – 1 Timothy 2:9-10  
Odious – Proverbs 30:21-23  
Adulterous – Proverbs 30:20  
Flattering – Proverbs 7:5  
Bad influence – Nehemiah 13:26  
Full of good – Acts 9:36

The wife too is a collection of virtues: meekness, quietness, modesty, considerate, faithful and loving. *The power of the wife's influence can make the difference in heaven and hell.*

*Remember:* Dump her now if she can't lead you to heaven!!!!!!

### Questions

1. Why was it not good for Adam to be alone?
2. Whose sin was worse Adam or Eve? Why?
3. Since the husband and wife are "equal heirs in the grace of life," why can the woman not have authority over the husband?
4. Is there any difference between the "first loyalty" that the husband has for the wife and the wife's duty in being loyal to her husband?
5. Study Proverbs 31:10-31. List all the desirable qualities you can find.
6. List all the undesirable qualities?

### Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 1 Corinthians 7:4, 16; Ephesians 5:23-33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5

# Engagement – What Does It Mean?

When a couple decides that the time is right to move to the next level, there is great excitement. The meaning in the world today *next level* would mean “moving in” together. In God’s world it means this couple has agreed to marry. They have dated and learned a lot about each other, the courtship has been filled with problems and joys and now this most important step - engagement.

The young lady can’t seem to have time to tell everyone, walking around with her hand out for everyone to see. The young man is as proud and excited as they have pledged themselves to marry one another. This public announcement is usually accompanied by a ring as a token of the promise made to each other. The average length of an engagement is from 6 months to 2 years and should be determined by the circumstances of the couple, the length is often affected by education or jobs, etc. Since this is a “time of adjustment,” use it to the fullest to plan our future lives together. Because of the excitement and joy of that sparkling ring, people sometimes forget to look down the road of life and consider how will you feel as things like wrinkles, baldness, sagging begin to show up (yes they will come). This is a time of preparation and growing understanding while devoting to each other alone, learning to spend a lot of time together, but knowing it is not the time for intimacy. That is reserved for marriage (remember Mary and Joseph). A good adjustment period, the engagement, is a predictor of a good marriage.

As you spend more time together those little annoying habits will surface. How you adjust and deal with them will contribute to your mutual happiness. As you learn more about each other, temperament and a common sense approach to solving problems is important. This is the last opportunity before marriage to correct mistakes. *Remember:* Can’t lead you to heaven – DUMP NOW!!

The engagement period is the time to *really – really* get acquainted with future in-laws. They will have a major influence on your marriage and can affect the success or failure. She may find out how he treats his parents and the relationship he has with them. He may find out if she can cook and keep house. Was their home a happy place or filled with conflict? Were parents fair and firm in discipline, not harsh or ill-tempered? Were the parents happily married? These are clues to your future with this person!!!!

Have parents been frank and open about sex in marriage? Have you been taught helpful and wholesome attitudes about sex? Were you taught to understand sex as God introduced the subject, as He intended it to be in a marriage? Ephesians 5:25, 28; 1 Corinthians 7 If you don’t have a good understanding of God’s truth about sex you are not ready for marriage!!!!

During this period there are many subjects to have open and frank discussions about. One of the most troubling subjects is MONEY. How and what to spend money on, who will control the checkbook, etc.? The question of children, none or some, attitudes about discipline, and the whole parenthood question? You should see the instruction book for answers to this question.

The Bible doesn't spend much time on engagement but in Genesis 24:50-58 the record of Isaac and Rebekah is beautiful and a good example of an engagement. Under the Law of Moses, an engagement was very binding as we see in Deuteronomy 22:23-24. God's laws were to be followed as they are today.

Professor Burgess listed 5 things a couple can do to improve the probability of a successful and happy marriage:

1. Work at achieving two-way adjustments during the engagement period.
2. Determine to make marriage a success.
3. Try to develop adaptability.
4. Prepare carefully for marriage.
5. Take advantage of pre-marriage counseling.

6. (Mine) develop great communication skills. The lack of good communications may be the world's greatest problem. It can be a real problem in marriage, so now is the time to make sure that you have good communication with each other.

Almost all problems are easier to solve BEFORE marriage rather than afterwards.

#### Questions

1. What is real purpose of an engagement?
2. List some valid reasons for breaking an engagement?
3. Consider: A broken engagement is better than a bad marriage.
4. List 5 topics that couples should discuss at length during their engagement?
5. What is meant by making adjustments?

#### Key Scriptures:

Luke 9:23; 1 John 2:15-17; Proverbs 14:12; Colossians 2:8; Acts 17:24-29

## Till Death Do Us Part

This probably should have been the first lesson because the attitude and strength that comes from the God given idea is so strong. The society we live in today is not so much different than in the days of John the baptizer, with the exception being that in John's day lust and deviant behavior was not seen much among the common people as it is today. In Matthew 14:1-12 John condemned Herod for taking his brother's wife stating in verse 4, "*For John said unto him, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her.'*" You can see that the Corinthians did not have the proper attitude about marriage. In 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 it says, "*It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.*"

Stacks of books have been written about divorce and remarriage, but the real problem for Christians is the failure to truly learn and *obey* God's word!!!!!! By following God's word in preparing your life for service to HIM also equips you for a happy successful marriage. His word will eliminate most of the causes of divorce, and will give you the tools knowledge deal with the rest before they become destructive. Remember that God's word states GOD HATES DIVORCE. He has from the beginning (Malachi 2:16).

Matthew 19:6 – "*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder*" (RSV).

Matthew 19:9 – "*And I say to you, 'Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.'*"

Matthew 19:9 – "*And I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery'*" (KJV).

DO YOU JESUS CHRIST MEANT WHAT HE SAID!!!! Many people don't think it applies to them and that those verses are for someone else. Jesus taught that we are divinely bound together in a single union as long as we both shall live!

Romans 7:2-3 – "*For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man*" (NAS95).

Marriage is more than a legal relationship. It involves love, trust, and interdependence.

There is always *sin* involved when there is divorce, always without fail. That is why God hates divorce. If one partner commits adultery there is *sin*, if a partner is put away for any

other reason there is *sin*. Just consider the Bible teaching on this subject rather than the emotional discussion that normally takes place, the ifs, ands, and buts that almost nobody can figure out. God, however, never gave any commands that man could not understand.

*I urge again, in conclusion, that successful marriages can be only to those whose lives are dedicated to Him who institute this relationship. He who promises bliss and happiness to those obey Him in this union upon this earth, does not cease to promise blessings merely with this life, but offers eternal bliss over there.*

~The Home, H.A. Dixon

### Questions

1. What did John require in Matthew 3:5-8?
2. Why did Moses allow divorce? Matthew 5:31-32
3. What was Jesus attitude toward divorce?
4. Does Jude 7 have any bearing on the discussion of divorce?
5. Give a definition of treachery from Malachi 2:16.
6. Study Galatians 5:19. Which of these usually causes divorce?
7. What is the best way to avoid divorce and have a happy marriage?

### Key Scriptures:

Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:17; Leviticus 20:21



**“The Picking Process”** was designed by God  
and through his infinite wisdom given to us  
through His inspired word for our use in life (2 Peter 2:3).

Assembled by ***Louis Cook***

In marriage each partner is to be an encourager not a critic  
a forgiver rather than a collector of hurts  
an enabler rather than a reformer.

#### Helpful Resources

Before You Say I Do by Wright & Robbins

Christian Family by Hugo McCord

Courtship, Marriage & Family by Dudley Spear

Family Live by L.A. Stauffer

Let Marriage Be Had in Honor by Paul C. Witt

Love Courtship & Marriage by P.D. Wilmeth

Marriage Enrichment Seminar by Brecheen & Faulkner

The Home by George Dehoff