

Articles and Sermons :: In Search Of Mr. Right by Keith Green

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Introduction

This is not meant to be a whole treatise on the subjects of dating and marriage. There have been more scholarly and complete articles, even whole books, written on these subjects. My purpose here is to point out some principles of the Word of God that are being neglected by the Church today.

My desire is to tackle some future marital problems before they even happen. I would like to talk to those of you who are single. I want to talk you out of the idea that, "Someday, you are probably going to get married!"

Single Christians

Today the "single Christian" is looked upon as some sort of an oddball. They are besieged with such questions as, "Oh, you're still single?" or... "Are you married yet?" Out of the muck and mire of this "predestined-for-marriage" consciousness, comes a unique American phenomenon - it's called "the singles' group" - where anxious (sometimes even lusty) single s can "fellowship" in such spirit-led functions as "car-wash fund-raising drives" and "spaghetti-dinner and disco-parties!" Under the pretense of "meeting the single person's special needs," I have often seen singles' fellowships serve as nothing more than what a singles' bar does in the world. I'm not saying that all singles' groups are like this - or even most - I am just stating what the usual underlying reason is for their existence - to bring about the meeting and ultimate marriage of the single population of the Church.

Where Is Dating In The Bible?

The closest thing to dating in the Bible is found in the book of Ruth, chapter three. Ruth is told by her mother-in-law, Naomi, to seek Boaz as her husband. She gives her instructions, gets her all dolled-up, and sends her off to seek her mate. In fact, dating (in the Bible) is really courting - seeking a husband or a wife. Today, dating by Christians has taken on all the aspects of the world. Many believers go in and out of relationships with as little thought or prayer as they would in choosing a restaurant for dinner.

We were never meant to try on people like shoes or clothes. Seeking a mate is to be done with much prayer and confirmation, and only after God's clear direction that we're called to marriage. But, since almost every church has a singles' group, and every single is unconsciously led to think he's weird if he doesn't get married - the "pressure is on" to date... many get deeply hurt... and many marriages occur that were never meant to be. I believe this is the cause of many unhappy and broken Christian homes.

Two Reasons For Marriage

According to the Bible, I can see only two kinds of people who are called by God to marriage. The first is found in I Corinthians 7:9. This verse talks about people who have very little self-control over the human passions - "let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn." To someone like this, singleness is not only an emotional problem, but a physical trial as well. And God, through both patience and prayer, calls such a person to marry as His divinely ordained way of channeling these feelings. (Don't get me wrong. I don't believe that marriage is an "out," or an escape for a Christian that finds himself with these hard-to-control feelings. I'm just saying with Paul that "each man has his own gift from God," (vs. 7) - meaning that both marriage and singleness are each gifts.)

The other reason that God calls two people to marry is for His sake. In other words, they can serve God better together than they can separately. Consider the example of such godly couples as Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Joseph, Zacharias and Elizabeth. Can you imagine how different their lives (not to mention history) would have been, if they would have remained single? You see, God directs people to marry mainly so they can please Him more. But today, many are marrying out of selfishness, not obedience. They consider it their human right, something that eventually will happen, rather than a partnership for ministry, specially called for by the will of God.

A Close Look At I Corinthians 7

My first impressions of I Corinthians 7 were not too good. Paul's position on marriage seemed unromantic at best. When I first read this chapter, I thought that Paul had let his own private opinions creep into the Word. I felt, "Well, Paul wants every-one to be just like him!" The Lord has since given me quite a respect for the Word of God; and as I studied this chapter, I started to see what Paul was saying. I realized that if God allowed Paul's views on marriage to get into His Word, then they were God's views on marriage.

Paul's Teaching

Paul says that if you marry, you "will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you." (I Cor. 7:28) By "trouble," Paul means, in serving Jesus. He says "I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord." (vs. 32) Paul is sharing the Lord's heart. Jesus desires His people to love Him with "all their heart." Paul doesn't mean that married people can't love and serve Jesus, he is just pointing out that it's usually only partial devotion. "But one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided." (vs. 33) Paul seems to be of the opinion (which, by being in the Word, is God's opinion) that only a single person can give what he calls "undistracted devotion to the Lord." (vs. 35) Paul is in no way saying that marriage is wrong; for he says that the one who marries "does well" but the one who remains unmarried "will do better." (vs. 38)

Conclusion

My whole reason for writing this article is to point out that one of the highest callings a man or a woman of God can have is being married to Jesus and remaining single "unto the Lord." I have met a few people who have realized this, and are some of the happiest Christians I know. They don't have to bother wasting time dating or looking for "the right one" - they've found Him! The only problem they have to deal with now is the opinion of the Church. They are looked upon as strange or even "latent homosexuals," and well-meaning friends are constantly putting pressure on them to date or trying to set them up. This is a tragedy, when God is looking for more full-time workers... people with complete "undistracted devotion." Even if the world looks upon a woman who remains unmarried as an "old maid," Jesus looks upon a godly one as a "young bride." Look, for example, at the witness and ministry of Corrie Ten Boom. Though she was never married on earth, she proved she had a Husband in Heaven.

Lastly, if you don't feel God is calling you to singleness, be patient. Don't "play the field" looking for the right one. But, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2 KJV), He "shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory." (Phil 4:19 KJV)

Your wise Father says, "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10 KJV) Amen!