

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

*"Dating, Courtship,
Engagement,
and the Wedding"*

- 1 -- The Purpose, Value, and Dangers in Dating
- 2 -- The Value of Courtship and Engagement
- 3 -- Marrying a Non-Christian
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The Purpose, Value, and Dangers in Dating

Growing up is not necessarily easy for young people in our society. "Puberty" is the term that we use to denote that a child is no longer a child, but at the same time is not yet an adult. With puberty come changes—not only physically, but psychologically as well. Most adolescence will experience emotional changes as well as more demanded social changes. Most are ill prepared for relating themselves intelligently to the other sex. These changes and demands come at a time when he or she may feel inadequate to face them. As one writer expresses it:

"He (generic) feels simultaneously pulled in more than one direction by many aspects of life; he feels and he doesn't feel; he knows and he doesn't know; he loves and he hates in one breath. Old values conflict with new ones." (Robert Harper).

Another aspect of adolescence that has its dangers is the sexual development of the female of a year or two before the male begins to show interest. This tends to cause her interest to be shown to the older boys which makes her more exploitable by older boys and men. When the boys finally catch up somewhat to the females' development, it is then the time for the dating process to begin that will eventually lead to "engagement" and "marriage."

The Purpose and Value of Dating

Why do young people date? Who started this custom anyway? Should they date or not? Who should decide? At what age should young people date? Questions, questions, and more questions can be asked. What does the Bible say about dating, if anything? To whom can young people turn for some answers that can be depended upon? From my knowledge of the Scriptures I do not know of any direct statements that deal with "dating!" These are questions that parents should help their children to decide about; and, or, people of wisdom, experience, and a good knowledge of Scripture teaching.

How would you define dating? _____

Dating is certainly an avenue of getting better acquainted with the opposite sex. It also provides opportunity to have enjoyable occasions together. In a sense, dating is not only a way of growing up, but an indication that one is growing up. Dating can follow one of two basic directions: (1) To go "steady"; or (2) To "play" the field. It has been suggested by some who have made a study of such, that going steady has more dangers and renders the person less adjustable in dealing with other people. They may be less stimulated to acquire new skills, overcome bad habits, and to take into account the varying reactions of their associates. And, going steady may cause them to become too intimate before they are married which will have its effect in the way of guilt, emotional problems, etc. A good purpose for dating is that it helps to adjust to a man-woman world and helps to prepare for marriage itself.

Some suggested rules for dating:

1. Don't limit yourself too soon in friends.
2. Try to go with a group when dating.
3. Don't overdo it.
4. Going steady is not a sign of maturity.
5. Definite standards of conduct on dates will need to be set up in one's mind.

Making myself more dateable:

1. Be considerate and kind to others (1 Cor. 13:4).
2. Be friendly and cheerful (Prov. 16:7; 17:17; 18:24).
3. Show gratitude for any act or thought of kindness (Phil. 4:6).
4. Be yourself, but be the best you can be (Rom. 12:9).
5. Show interests in others (Phil. 2:3-4).

There would seem to be a lot of value to dating if it is done with caution and done on a high moral standard.

The Dangers of Dating

There are some special problems that will have to be dealt with during the dating period that could possibly affect the person the rest of their lives. There are several areas of temptations that need to be thought through and prepared to be faced morally and courageously. Dating will expose a person to other people's thoughts, habits, and morals. It is during our adolescence years and into the teen years that we face some of the following activities:

1. Smoking. Even if our parents do not smoke, there is a possible exposure to and pressures brought to bear to encourage one to begin smoking. Peer pressure is often great during these years of change and a large percentage of those who begin smoking will begin during this time. At first, it may appear innocent, but

as it becomes a habit, it also becomes addictive. The cost in money has become so great that people really cannot afford it. The odor is offensive to others. It tends to weaken our will power and eventually enslaves the person. Health problems are the end results of such. How do you feel that the following passages deal with smoking?

1 Cor. 3:16-17 _____

1 Cor. 6:19-20 _____

2. Drinking. Peer pressure again can become a big factor in introducing one to strong drinks. While I cannot find any place in Scripture where it states that drinking of wine or strong drink is condemned; I can find many passages that warn of the grave dangers involved in drinking such. In order to be accepted with the group or with the person I am dating, I am pressured to drink with them. This has led into all kinds of immoral and ungodly activities that can cause the soul of the person to be lost forever. Wisdom suggests that if I never take the first drink, there are no dangers of my becoming an alcoholic (addicted to strong drink)! How do you feel that the following passages deal with drinking?

1 Cor. 10:33 _____

Rom. 14:13-21 _____

3. Immodesty. We tend to want to dress up to be more attractive to others—both the boys and the girls. Girls will often overdo make-up, or dress or act inappropriately, in order to attract a certain boy. Girls learn quickly that the more they expose their bodies, the more attention that the boys will give them. Certain types of boys will feel that the girl wants to be involved with them sexually because of her conduct and will approach her with this view. If she is not prepared in mind and heart against immorality, she could find herself caught up in such. How do you feel that the following passages deal with immodesty?

1 Tim. 2:9 10 _____

1 Peter 3:1-5 _____

4. Sexual Immorality. A young man that does not have the moral teachings of the Bible in their hearts may try to satisfy his sexual interest by seeing how far he can press the girl into sexually stimulating activities. One of the reasons for dancing close to one another is that it can be sexually stimulating to one or both parties. Parking the car and "petting" or "fondling" one another can certain lead to overt fornication being committed. This kind of activity can progress so far that even moral restraints can be lost in the rush of emotions. While boys are more easily stimulated than girls, girls have more to loose if it goes too far. The emotional strain becomes greater as such activity is engaged in more often. In these situations, it is very easy to confuse passion with love. The more the pleasure grows less, the more the desire to do more. The girl gets the reputation of becoming a "play-toy" for boys. How do you feel that the following passages deal with sexual immorality?

Matt. 15:19-20 _____

Eph. 5:3 _____

There are other dangers that a person is exposed to in dating such as: Lying, Cheating, Profanity, etc. But one of the big dangers is the pressure of others or the crowd to get us to become involved in things that are not right or help to cause us to do the wrong things. How do you feel that the following passes deal with these things?

2 Cor. 6:14-18 _____

Rom. 12:1-2 _____

Dating can be fun, enjoyable, and valuable if done with a correct view and based on good moral principles; but, it has its dangers and such must be clearly understood and guarded against!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW**True or False**

- 1. There is no real distinction between Dating and Courtship.
- 2. Marriage failures are in reality Dating failures.
- 3. Engagements should be relatively brief.
- 4. The earlier the couple marry, the greater will be the danger of over-emphasis upon sex and physical attraction.
- 5. Listing desirable qualities in a mate may help a couple to marry with their head as well as with their heart.
- 6. Children who have a happy childhood are more likely to have a happy marriage.
- 7. Bad pre-marital sexual relations does not prove either one unfit as a future husband.
- 8. Puberty of the female is usually 1-2 years ahead of the male.
- 9. Adolescence is where we see many changes in children that can be hard to deal with by parents.
- 10. Dating should not begin until a person is at least 16.
- 11. Dating is an indication that a child is growing up.
- 12. Dating just one person can have its drawbacks.
- 13. Some of the problem areas that teens face is usually during the dating years.

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Lesson Two

The Value of Courtship and Engagement

We believe that a distinction needs to be made between Dating and Courtship! Obviously, Dating can end up becoming Courtship; but, we believe that the one should lead into the other. You may date several people before you have found someone that you really are interested in as a life's mate. Once you have found that person, you narrow your dating to one person and strive to win him or her as a life's mate.

Courtship will not only involve dating this person, but an effort is made to limit dating to only that person. There will be limited acts of affection offered to the other, telephone calls, note writing, and flirtatious gestures (winking, prolonged smiling, frequent glances, gestures with hands, etc.). The prize in the courtship is the girl. She is pursued and the man is the pursuer. The man pursues her until she catches him! It is a time where the two should be strongly evaluating the character and attitudes of the other person. For this reason, romance should be de-emphasized and friendship accentuated. It is a time to discover the attributes, traits, and major life's interests and values of the other person. It is a time to get to know one another's families because you not only marry the person, but their family as well. It needs to be thoroughly understood that reform after marriage is almost impossible. So be sure you like the person!

When the courtship has been successful to the point where the man is ready to "pop the question," and she says "yes!"--then, it is the time to become Engaged. An engagement ring is appropriate, along with a public announcement of the intentions of the couple to be married in the future. Following are some good reasons and value of an Engagement period:

- 1. It is a time to begin serious planning of their lives together.** Such questions need to be asked as to job or jobs for one or both in order to have sufficient to live on; where they will live; and possibly even talk about long-time future plans. The question of whether to have children, when to have children, and how they will care for them.
- 2. It is a final testing time before the couple is actually married.** In order to really get to know the person, they need to be in a relax situation with friends and families so all can get better acquainted and see how they fit in with each other's friends and family. Remember, you are not only married the person, but her friends and family goes

along with her too in most instances.

2. **It is a time to more seriously learn to get along with each other.** You need to talk about a lot of things. *May we recommend that you go through the latter part of this study book (entitled Predicting Marital Success) together!* This material is purposefully designed to help you in your getting to know one another more intimately, as well as, in an over-all area of each other's lives. You need to know how you still feel about the other person when you disagree on some basic issues of life. It probably would help if you got in an argument to see how you would deal with strong disagreement.
3. **It is a time to see one another more as they really are.** Usually in dating there is an effort to put on your best "airs!" (Your best self!). You need to see your potential marriage partner "behind the scene" (down to earth—the real person). Many have married too quick before they really knew the person and found out to their sorrow that they had married the wrong person. Try to plan situations where the real person will come out so that you can evaluate whether you want to live with the person the rest of your life. This can be a real important issue for the girl, because she is to be in a submissive role in the home.
4. **It is a time to get better acquainted with family and friends.** Yes, it is great to be with that person that you feel that you love dearly, but you also need to be around his or her friends and family. Make plans where this will happen often. Evaluate each other's friends and family by asking question:
 - (1) Do I like their lifestyle?
 - (2) Do I feel comfortable around them?
 - (3) Do they accept me readily?
 - (4) Do I like them just like I like my own friends and family?
 - (5) etc.?????
6. **It is important to realize that caution is necessary so as not to cause shame or regret.** During this period of time, conduct yourselves well, do not take chances of being alone too much or too often that allows strong temptations. A mistake in judgment can be forgiven, but it will require greater effort to regain the trust—not only from your future mate, but from friends and family also.
7. **It is also a time, if one or both realize it is a mistake, it can be called off.** The engagement period is a testing period! You are not married! You should not act and conduct your associations as though you are married! If after sufficient time elapses, one or both feel it is a mistake—there is no shame in calling off the wedding plans!

The seriousness of what we call the engagement period is illustrated in the life of Mary and Joseph in the following passage:

Matt. 1:18-20 _____

Luke 1:26-27 _____

However, their engagement concept was about the same as our marriage ceremony—they seem to have had a short period before they began to live together as husband and wife. Our engagement is not that strong, but it is a serious time for strong and needed evaluations of each other.

The next lesson (#3) will be looking at "**Marrying a Non-Christian.**" This is one of the critical issues that needs to be strongly evaluated before committing to marriage. We urge you to study through this next lesson before you make your final decision about marriage.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- 1. The Law of the land requires people to be married if they desire certain rights and privileges.
- 2. Differences in social position is a man-made distinction and should not be a consideration in marrying someone.
- 3. Sexual looseness before marriage can disqualify a person for consideration as a mate.
- 4. Courtship and engagement go hand in hand and cannot be separated the one from the other.
- 5. Even though you may be engaged that does not mean that you cannot date other people.
- 6. The man pursues the woman until she catches him.
- 7. Engagement is a time to discover the attributes, traits, and major life's interests and values of the other person.
- 8. Reform after marriage is usually very easy for a couple to deal with.
- 9. An engagement ring is not only appropriate, but a necessity.
- 10. It is a shame to get engaged and then break it off.

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Lesson Three

Marrying a Non-Christian

Marriage, obviously, is not just for a day, but for a lifetime; and, therefore should be taken very seriously! The question as to whether to marry a non-Christian is just one of the possible ways that marriages can be called "mixed!" Let's look at the various ways that marriages can be looked upon as mixed:

1. **Socially mixed.** This to a marriage between persons of different social standing. Where there is maturity and true love between the two, the distinction is not as much of a problem. However, parents can be a problem if they are what used to be called "social climbers." If both are concerned about their social standing, their marriage could be put into a secondary place and end in divorce or separation. As one writer puts it: *"The Smiths need to be more interested in keeping faith with each other than in keeping up with the Joneses!"*
2. **Intellectually mixed.** As a general rule, the scholar would not want to marry an illiterate person, but in the case of true love the barrier can be removed by the illiterate attending school or being taught sufficiently. It is obvious that no person would want to marry a moron, an imbecile, or an idiot. Even though they may be capable of mating, but they would not be capable of bearing up under the responsibilities of marriage.
3. **Financially mixed.** Very few poor "Cinderellas" marry rich "Princes." However, rich "in-laws" may again be the culprit that may affect the marriage. Also, the poor person may not be able to handle the newly acquired riches. To marry someone because they are rich as the motive for marriage could bring much unhappiness.

Lk. 6:43-45 _____

Matt. 13:22 _____

Rev. 3:17-18 _____

1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17 _____

Prov. 11:28 _____

4. **Racially mixed.** All men come from a common ancestry: Adam and Eve! To my knowledge, the Bible does not forbid inter-racial marriages. However, there are factors that need to be considered before one makes such a decision.

- a) Differences in habits of life, standard of living, ideals, religion, color of skin, language, traditions, or climatic adjustments can be potential points of friction.
 - b) The offspring to the union may complicate matters.
 - c) How society accepts or rejects such marriages can be a major factor for consideration.
5. **Religiously mixed.** This refers to a couple who are members of different religious groups, even though they may call themselves believers in Christ. Marriage is not only for the Christian but also for all peoples—whatever their religious views might be. But since religious views are held so strongly by some, a mixed religious marriage could be one on a shaky foundation. It is important that certain things be discussed thoroughly before marriage because of their potential for undermining the marriage later on. The Bible does talk about such marriages in the following passages:

- a. 1 Cor. 7:14 _____
- b. 1 Cor. 7:12-13 _____
- c. 1 Cor. 7:15 _____
- d. 1 Cor. 7:16 _____
- e. 1 Peter 3:1-2 _____

Let's look at two important considerations in choosing a mate:

1. Be sure he is the kind of man you can render duties of a wife to as given in the Scriptures:

- a) Eph. 5:22 _____
- b) Eph. 5:33 _____
- c) 1 Pet. 3:6 _____
- d) 1 Cor. 7:3-4 _____
- e) 1 Tim. 5:14 _____

f) Tit. 2:4-5 _____

2. Be sure she is the kind of woman you can render duties of a husband to as given in the Scriptures:

f) Eph. 5:25 _____

g) Eph 5:28-29 _____

h) 1 Tim. 5:8 _____

i) 1 Pet. 3:7 _____

j) Mk. 10:7 _____

k) 1 Cor. 7:3-4 _____

l) Eph. 5:23 _____

m) Col. 3:19 _____
_____**Questions to ask in choosing a mate:**

1. Does he or she have real character?
2. Does he or she have good health?
3. Are each about the same age?
4. What about each other's family?
5. Does he or she have common sense?
6. Are you compatible?
7. Are you both in love with each other?
8. Are you both old enough: in years? physically? mentally? vocationally? sexually? emotionally?

Personal preparation for marriage:

1. Keep a healthy body and avoid bad habits.
2. Develop your mind to maturity. Marriage is for men and women, not children.
3. Keep yourself morally pure.
4. Keep good company and a good reputation—thereby preserving your good name.
5. Be a good Christian.
6. Study books, people, marriages, and pray for God's help to be the right mate.
7. Be determined you will be the right mate first and then look for the right mate.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW**True or False**

- 1. The man or the woman can be complete without marriage.
- 2. A "mixed-marriage" has a lesser percentage of hope of a successful marriage.
- 3. There is no such thing as a socially mixed marriage.
- 4. Racially mixed marriages are almost doomed from the beginning to succeed.
- 5. God forbids marrying people of a different race.
- 6. Religiously mixed marriages has reference to one who is religious and the other is not religious.
- 7. God condemns marrying someone outside the church.
- 8. For marriage to be acceptable in the sight of God, they both must be Christians.
- 9. A woman who is a Christian does not have to be submissive to a non-Christian husband.
- 10. The man has the right to decide what religion both will follow.

Lesson Four

The Wedding

In our society, we have weddings that are either private or public, before a magistrate or before a minister in a public assembly. But usually, in either case, there is some kind of a ceremony in which admonitions are given, vows are said, and pronouncements are made. For your viewing, I have added in this lesson the marriage ceremony that I have used with couples getting married. Along with the admonitions from Scripture of the responsibilities of husbands to wives and wives to husbands, there are the vows that are made to each other. Some choose to work up their own vows that they want to say to each other. In most cases, these have been excellent. The basic vows that are usually said to each other are as follows:

There are some considerations to attend to before the marriage that should be taken care of as soon as the engagement is announced. See the following:

1. Seek to know the legal requirements of marriage in the state where you intend to be married.
2. Find out what is involved in securing a marriage license.
3. Pre-marital counseling from a minister would be advisable.
4. Be sure you request a certified copy of your marriage license from the state—you will need such later.

A MARRIAGE CEREMONY

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

Friends, we have come together before God and these witnesses for the happy occasion of uniting in marriage **Andy Dutka** and **Marie Kowal**. Both **Andy & Marie** are happy that you can be with them on this important occasion. (**Who gives this woman to this man?**)

Marriage Originated with God in the beginning and He is the one who joins the man and the woman together as husband and wife. But marriage also involves a Decision on the part of the man and woman to get married, as well as, a commitment to stay married.

Sometimes, however, a Marriage breaks up and is dissolved either by death or divorce. God's original intentions were for Marriage to be for life. If death occurs, the living mate has a right to remarry if they so desire.

Jesus did give an exception to the breaking of a Marriage contract through divorce when He said, "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery: and whoso marries her which is put away commits adultery.*" Thus, on the basis of unfaithfulness to one's partner, the marriage bond can be broken and remarriage is allowed to the innocent party. We have been assured that this is the case with **Andy** and **Marie**. This ceremony is a public way for **Andy** and **Marie** to openly commit themselves to each other as husband and wife. We now turn to instructions that God gives to help regulate your marriage.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HUSBANDS & WIVES

Andy, God wants you to recognize and accept the following responsibilities as the husband of **Marie**:

1. To love your wife & show it:
 - a) By caring for her as you would yourself;
 - b) By leaving father & mother and putting her fir in your life—after God;
 - c) By being considerate of your wife's needs & wishes;
 - d) By respecting, esteeming & honoring her.
2. He has given you the grave responsibility of being the leader in your new home.
 - a) Assume that role as head in an honorable, loving, and considerate way.
 - b) Lead the way that your family ought to go.
3. God warns you about not being bitter towards her.
4. Prov. 18:22—“Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the Lord.”

Marie, God wants you to recognize & accept the following responsibilities as the wife of **Andy**:

1. To love your husband & show it:
 - a) By seeking to do him good al his days;
 - b) By being responsive to his needs & wishes;
 - c) By living a chaste, discreet, and high-principled life;
 - d) By the adornment of a meek & gentle spirit.
2. God wants you to:
 - a) Be submissive to your new head in all things.
 - b) Respect him as the leader in the home.
3. Prov. 12:4—“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: But she that makes ashame is as rottenness in his bones.”

THE MARRIAGE VOWS

Andy and **Marie**, upon recognizing these basic responsibilities, you are now called upon to make your vows to one another; indicating that you will make a sincere effort to fulfill your part of the marriage bond. May God be allowed to help you to always respect and reverence these vows to each other.

Will you join right hands. Now, will you listen carefully and indicate at the end of these vows your acceptance of the seriousness of your responsibilities to each other by saying, "**I do!**"

Andy: Do you take **Marie Kowal** to be your lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love, honor, and cherish as long as you both shall live? Would you indicate your intent by saying, "**I do!**"

Marie: Do you take **Andy Dutka** to be your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love, honor, and obey as long as you both shall live? Would you indicate your intent by saying, "**I do!**"

EXCHANGE OF RINGS & VOWS

Andy and **Marie** have both brought rings to serve as continual reminders of their vows & obligations to one another. May they be accepted with love, worn in sincerity, and be a true representation of the unendingness of their marital relationship.

Andy will you place the ring on **Marie's** left hand and repeat the vow of the ring:

**This ring I give thee, in token and pledge, of our constant
faith and abiding love. With this ring, I thee wed, and with all my
earthly goods, I thee endow.**

Marie will you place the ring of **Andy's** left hand and repeat the vow of the ring:

**This ring I give thee, in token and pledge, of our constant
faith and abiding love. With this ring, I thee wed, and with all my
earthly goods, I thee endow.**

CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

(If Desired)

Marie and **Andy**, you have chosen the unity candle as a symbol of your love and life to come, and the lighting of it signifies that you two are now to become one. The center candle you are about to light is a candle of marriage. Its fire is special because it represents the light of two people in love. It is a candle of unity because both must come together, giving a spark of themselves to create the new light. This candle is also a candle of commitment because it takes two people working together to keep it aflame.

Marie and **Andy**, would you please light the candle to symbolize this union of your lives together by God. May the radiance of this one light truly be a testimony of your oneness! May this candle burn brightly as a symbol of your commitment to each other. May it give you strength and joy in your bodies, minds, and spirits. From now on, you will grow together as unique persons becoming a light to bless others about you. May your union be forever blessed.

FORMAL PRONOUNCEMENT**Andy & Marie, In as much as:**

1. You have each consented and vowed to each other of your intentions to live together as husband & wife;
2. And, have sealed it with the giving & receiving of rings;
3. And, in conformity to the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.....
4. And, most of all in accordance with the Laws of God....You are from this moment on to be recognized as **Husband & Wife**. "*What God joins together, let not man put asunder.*"
5. Let us Pray
6. You may now kiss the bride.
7. May I introduce to you: **Mr. & Mrs. Andy Dutka!**

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW**True or False**

- 1. The marriage ceremony serves as a public way of committing the couple to the marital relationship.
- 2. A marriage before a magistrate is not acceptable for a Christian.
- 3. It is not acceptable for a couple to work up their own vows— that is a job for the minister or magistrate to do.
- 4. Just anyone is allowed to perform a marriage ceremony.
- 5. Pre-marital counseling is a must for anyone getting married.
- 6. God has only given instructions to the husband, not to the wife, as to what the responsibilities are in marriage.
- 7. To break one's marriage vow is to render the marriage over.
- 8. Rings are required for people who get married.
- 9. Marriage is a sacrament and should only be performed by a minister of the Gospel.
- 10. A marriage ceremony is a requirement in order to be acceptable to God.

Lesson Five

Predicting Marital Success

Marital Success or failure cannot be absolutely predicted. However, sufficient progress has been made in research in the field of marriage and family life that one can be reasonably sure about his proposed marriage. Strength and weakness can be detected at the outset and evaluated if the couple is willing to take time for study, testing, and counseling. The following material will help you make a start in discovering important matters concerning your marriage.

I. WHY PEOPLE MARRY

(Please circle the number that best describes your feelings in each)

- 1 – Important**
- 2 – Rather Important**
- 3 – Of Little Importance**
- 4 – Not a Consideration**

1 2 3 4 a) **The Need for Companionship.** After one has left his family he feels the need of establishing a home of his own in which there will be sharing of thought, play, work, and relationships of love.

1 2 3 4 b) **Home Life and Children.** One wants a home in which children will be born and reared, and where a community of love can be established.

1 2 3 4 c) **Economic Reasons.** A girl may want financial security in life and being married will help her attain this. A man is more desirable to an employer and may be advanced more rapidly if he is married.

1 2 3 4 d) **Social Status.** Married life increases one's social status in the community and makes him more acceptable.

1 2 3 4 e) **Escape.** Some marry to escape an unhappy situation in home life; an unfortunate romance, a failure in school, a failure in a job, etc.

1 2 3 4 f) **Social Expectancy.** There may be a feeling that single life is not socially acceptable in your community. Parents may want you to be married.

1 2 3 4 g) **Conquest and Achievement.** The prospective mate is desired by many others and getting him or her is quite a feather in one's cap.

1 2 3 4 h) **Physical Attraction.**

1 2 3 4 i) **Infatuation.**

II. AREAS THAT MAINLY AFFECT MARITAL HAPPINESS

(Please answer YES or NO in the following blanks and make whatever notes you care to in the margin)

A. Background and Home Life:

- 1. Are your cultural backgrounds the same or similar?
- 2. Were your parents happily married?
- 3. Were your parents kind and understanding, but consistent in discipline, and firm but not overly strict or severe?
- 4. Was your childhood happy?
- 5. Was it free from conflict with father and mother?
- 6. Do your parents think it is a mature love and approve of your upcoming marriage?

B. Personality:

- 1. Is your disposition one of happiness?
- 2. Are you emotionally as well as physically mature?
- 3. Do you have a capacity for love?
- 4. Are there qualities that make you easy to love?
- 5. Do people like you and have you made many friends?
- 6. Do your personalities blend rather than clash?

C. Educational and Cultural Level and Mental Capacity:

- 1. Are you reasonably close together in amount of education?
- 2. Do you think and talk about the same things?
- 3. Are you somewhere near the same level of mental ability?
- 4. Do you have many major interests in common?
- 5. Do you enjoy doing a great variety of things together?

D. Sex Education and Attitude:

- 1. Did your parents teach sex frankly and naturally?
- 2. Is there a wholesome attitude towards sex, free from fear, disgust, or aversion?
- 3. Have you read good books on sex education?
- 4. Have you had a normal development of sexual maturity?

E. Understanding of and preparation for marriage:

- 1. Have you attended a course in marriage and the family?
- 2. Has your background been a good example for your marriage and home?
- 3. Have you read a good book on preparing for marriage?
- 4. Will there be counseling with a doctor and a physical examination before marriage?

F. Ideals about Home Life:

- 1. Is the establishment of a home that will be a community of love and creative living of greatest importance to you?
- 2. Is there a desire for children?
- 3. Do you enjoy working around the home to make it more attractive and enjoyable?
- 4. Will you work hard to bring economic security to the family?
- 5. Is there agreement about family planning?
- 6. Can you accept the standard of living which you are likely to have?

G. Religious Faith and Practice:

- 1. Have you had religious training in Sunday School?
- 2. Is your church attendance regular?
- 3. Do you have real religious interest?
- 4. Do you have a deep religious faith that will sustain you in times of difficulty or trouble?
- 5. Do you possess qualities of responsibility, honesty, loyalty, trust worthiness, high ideals?
- 6. Are you appreciative rather than critical, ready to forgive and not hold grudges, and more eager to give happiness than to seek it in a selfish spirit?

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Lesson Six

The Blessing of a Godly Home

We hope that one of your major reasons for dating, courting, getting engaged, and finally getting married is to establish a Godly Home! There is no greater challenge than this and none that will bless mankind more! We truly believe that homes made up of dedicated Christians has greater value to mankind than homes that do not have Christians in them.

The Superiority of a "Godly Home"

We are not suggesting that "non-Christian" homes do not have value for God would not have begun such if it did not have value to human-kind! The home is vital to society and its very existence. Both Russia and China tried to undermine the home in their societies by making divorce easy, encouraging sexual permissiveness, taking mothers out of the home and placing them in labor camps, and putting children in places as wards of the state. They found out very quickly that such actions endangered even the State. We have also noticed the attempts in our own society to undermine the home, such as: Women's Liberation Movement, ERA, Unisex, Gay Liberation Movement, Frequency and encouragement for easy divorce, sexual permissiveness, living together, Articles, TV programs, etc. We need to wake up to what these groups are doing?

We believe that Christianity has the answer to so many of our deep troubles in this country. The following thoughts are a few of the reasons why we believe in "Godly" Homes!

1. God gave mankind marriage and the home (Gen. 2-3). His book is filled with rules, regulations, admonitions, and principles that, if followed, would make the home the very best it can be. The blessings of the Christian life come upon the home that is "Christian." The hope of the Christian becomes the hope of the home, as well.

2. The success and failure record! If more "Christian" homes succeed and are productive for good in society, it is obviously of greater value. If broken homes (divorce, separation, etc.) are found more numerous among "non-Christian" homes, it should be obvious which is of more value.

3. Christ's teachings help to produce more mature, unselfish people. Selfishness and immaturity is at the root of most problems in the home. Committed Christians are continually trying to improve their lives by making

themselves more likeable and easier to live with. If we believe and follow the teachings of the Word of God, it will make us perfect (mature or complete) and prepared for all kinds of good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). His teachings stressed self-control, unselfishness, and loving and serving others (Matt. 16:26; Phil. 2:3-4; Matt. 20:28). His teachings help to unite the home rather than divide it. It brings it into common beliefs and practices that are productive of good. (1 Cor. 1:10-13). He gives principles that help to make the lives of those in the home the very best they can be. Such will keep down financial problems (Matt. 6:33); help people to be honest, trustworthy, and dependable. He commands that jealousy, envy, hatred, etc., must be put away because they destroy the home.

These and possibly other reasons could be given as to why "Godly" homes are a great blessing..

The Blessing of Families Worshipping Together

Prov. 1:20-33

What does Wisdom have to say to get our attention? How long will man love simplicity, foolishness, rather than Wisdom? How long will men reject reproof and counsel of Wisdom? And because we choose not to listen, we will have calamities, fears, desolations, distresses, destruction to come upon us. When these things come it will be too late to avoid the consequences of not listening to wisdom. The wisdom we needed to meet the crisis is not there because we refused to listen. God's way of Wisdom is available to be read, meditated upon, and understood. Books have been written to help us grasp and make application. Preachers and teachers are set before us to admonish us from God's Wisdom! What do we do with these opportunities?

Christians have a great advantage over non-Christians—we can worship the God of heaven together, in harmony—both public and private! It is a beautiful sight to see families worshipping together. It has great benefits when done out of desire and sincerity (Jn. 4:24).

Requirements of harmonious worship together:

- 1. There needs to be a proper understanding of what true worship is and its purpose.**

1 Cor. 10:31

Matt. 15:7-9

2. There needs to be a training process that brings about this harmony in worship.

The Influence of Godly Families

Matt. 5:16 _____

If only ten righteous people could have been found in Sodom and Gomorrah, God said He would have spared those cities—but they couldn't be found! (Gen. 18:31-33). We know that there was one righteous family, but not ten. One family may not affect the community greatly, but multiply that one by many and the effect begins to be felt! The small beginning of Christianity finally turned the world "upside down!"

Christian families offer stability to a community! In the first place, they usually stay together and are very dependable people (1 Cor. 7:11; 1 Tim. 5:8). They do not become a liability to the community.

Christian families follow teachings that bring about a positive influence for good! These teachings deal with the husband-wife relationship (Eph. 5:22-33), but as well the parent-child relationship (Eph. 6:1-4). They are made better, and are encouraged to be kind and forgiving to others (Eph. 4:31-32). All good qualities for a person's life are encouraged to be developed.

Christian families are valuable because they are law-abiding citizens!

Rom. 13:1-7 _____

They lend their influence to others about them to be the same! A community becomes an undesirable place to live when there is not law and obedience to it. Christian parents influence their children and hopefully others to be good citizens.

Christian families are valuable because of their SPIRITUAL impact upon a community. They are constantly striving to point lost souls to Jesus, the Savior and Redeemer (Rom. 1:16). We do count and we can make a difference for good. We may never fully know just how much good we have done by our influence towards spirituality.

Concluding Thoughts: Jesus said that His disciples were not of the world, but they were in the world to have an impact for good upon the world (Jn. 17:14-18). We have seen enough of the things that destroy not only our homes, but our nation. It is time that we get back to those God-given principles of commitment, sacrifice, purity, love, and responsibility—things that not only build Christian Homes, but our nation as well.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- 1. "Christian" homes have less divorce, but often have less happiness.
- 2. A purpose of Christ's teachings is to help selfish people to become unselfish.
- 3. People can worship God even if they are not Christians.
- 4. Children can be made to go to Bible Classes and Worship, but Christianity cannot be forced upon them.
- 5. The influence of Christian families is limited by their willingness to live godly lives.
- 6. Sodom and Gomorrrha could have been saved from God's destruction if there had been enough righteous people in the cities.
- 7. God has a right to expect us to use our homes for His glory.
- 8. Our homes need to be used for benevolent purposes whenever we have opportunity.
- 9. Love must be expressed in the home if relationships are to become close.
- 10. Discipline in both the home and the church requires punishment for wrongs.

