

# VIGIL



*“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

*~ I Peter 5:8*

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**Marriage**

## **WHO SHOULD I DATE?**

**Ashley Kizer**

It is customary in our day and time for one who is seeking a mate to enter into a process which we commonly refer to as dating. During this process, two people, who have a certain degree of attraction for one another, spend time together in order to find out if their friendship will develop into a loving relationship. People of all ages and walks of life decide to take up dating because the need for companionship is so strong. Unfortunately, the worldly view for the pattern date that has permeated our society can be dangerous for the Christian soul and diminish the happiness of what otherwise could have been an abundant life.

According to a poll done by a web site called TopDatingTips.com, nineteen percent of the people surveyed said that, to them, dating was mainly about sex. Sixteen percent said that they were not interested in marriage, and forty percent said that they were not sure if they wanted to be married or not. This represents a large portion of the dating pool that are only interested in satisfying their fleshly lusts, which Peter warned us to abstain from

because they “war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

Do you believe in love at first sight? If not, you are in the minority. In April of 2006, CupidBay.com surveyed over one million people of which seventy-seven percent stated, “first-sight love is not a myth.” This mentality reflects the judge Samson’s criteria for choosing a wife, which became obvious when he told his father, “Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well” (Judges 14:3). He had only seen this Philistine woman and could only judge her by her looks (v. 1). Yet, in the foolishness of his youth, he thought he knew what he needed. Only a loving God could have known what tragedy would befall this hero of Israel because of the decision he made in his ignorance and pride (v 4).

Samson made a poor decision, though he benefited from the wise counsel of his parents who said to him, “*Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?*” (Judges 14:3). The wisdom of Manoah and his wife had been handed down to them by their

descendants who had heard the commandment of the Lord from the mouth of Joshua not to intermarry with the pagan nations that surrounded them (Joshua 23:12). The great commander warned of these foreign wives, “...they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes...” (v. 13). How chilling it is to read this warning with the knowledge that Samson would later have his eyes gouged out by his enemies due to the deception of a tantalizing Philistine woman named Delilah (Judges 16:21).

In Samson’s day, fathers were generally responsible for finding brides for their sons. That is why Samson commanded his father, “Get her for me...” (Judges 14:3). In Genesis 24, we read of Abraham sending his servant to find a bride for his son Isaac. The parents had an active role in helping their children decide, “Who should I date?” As a matter of fact, the daughters seem to have had no choice whatsoever. Samson’s first wife was given to his best man after the judge had left in a fit of rage (Judges 14:20). It seems that she had no say in the matter.

## EDITORIAL

### WHAT GOD WANTS IN MARRIAGE

Ronnie Hayes

Too often I think what God wants in marriage is overlooked. Our society seems more interested in how to get out of marriages than how to maintain them. If we spent more time on cultivating marriages and less time on finding ways to get out of them, we would be much better off. Let's see what God wants in a marriage. First let us consider two passages for reading that will give us a clear understanding of God's plan for marriage. Genesis 2:18-25 and Matthew 19:3-9

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:18-25).

"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:3-9).

God recognized from the beginning that it wasn't good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). God could see the value of a helpmeet. His solution: one man for one woman for life (cf. Genesis 2:24). The covenant of marriage as set forth in scripture is for a man and a woman; not for two men or two women. Homosexuality is a sin and disgrace before God (cf. Genesis 19; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9). These scriptures are not teaching there is only one person who is right for an individual to marry. This is saying when we choose one that they are the one for life. Divorce only enters the scenario when sin enters the picture.

Marriage is designed to help couples maintain their purity (cf. Genesis 2:24,25). The Hebrew writer states, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews

Continued on page 16  
13:4). Our sexual relationships are limited to marriage. To do otherwise, is a violation of God's Word. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Corinthians 7:2-4).

God knows and wants marriage to be a life-changing experience. Before marriage it is "I" and "mine," after marriage it is "ours." We start as a man and a woman, but when united we become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). We should have the same goals in life. There is nothing better in life than sweet harmony. Amos asked the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). On the other hand, there is nothing more miserable than to live in constant bickering. Solomon wrote, "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman" (Proverbs 21:19). Yes, I know that contention can go both ways. Our marriages are to alter our lives for good not for bad. Marriage will alter our perspective on many things. When we have that "help meet" we will have someone who will help us stay on track toward heaven, someone who is honest, loving, and fair, someone who will tell us when we have gotten off course, someone that we owe our greatest respect and admiration. Peter wrote, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

May we be wise enough to use the blueprint that God has given us.

# THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND IN THE HOME

James E. Rogers

The Scriptures say a great deal about the responsibility of the husband in the home. The husband is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. This is stressed three times in the Scriptures: (1) at the creation of the home (Genesis 2:24); at the confirmation of the home (Matthew 19:5); and at the comparison of the home with the church (Ephesians 5:31). When the Bible says something one time it is important and when it stresses a point we need to pay particular attention. If this one principle was given the attention it needs, many problems in the home would be solved.

The husband is to be the spiritual leader in the home. Jehovah knew that Abraham would “command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice” (Genesis 18:19). Would it not be wonderful if he could know this about me? There was no doubt that Joshua was leading his home (Joshua 24:15. “. . . as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”). Paul stressed this point when he emphasized, “For the husband is the head of the wife” (Ephesians 5:23). The Holy Spirit recorded concerning an elder that he must be “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Timothy 3:4,5). The husband should be the one who leads the family in Bible understanding. What a wonderful thing it is when a family leaves Bible study and worship, the husband reviews what was learned at that opportunity and reinforces the teaching done.

The husband is to rejoice in his wife. Solomon wrote: “Let thy fountain be blessed; And rejoice in

the wife of thy youth” (Proverbs 5:18,19) and “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing” (18:22). He further observed, “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life of vanity” (Ecclesiastes 9:9). Malachi admonished Judah, “Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth” (Malachi 2:15,16). In a world where men are tempted on every hand to be happy with someone other than his wife, these words help tremendously if heeded.

The husband is to be faithful to his wife. He is not to put her away without Scriptural cause (Matthew 5:32; 19:1-9). He is to have “his own wife” and “render unto the wife her due” (1 Corinthians 7:2,3). It is interesting that in giving the qualifications of elders and deacons Paul stated the matter concerning the husband aspect as follows: “the husband of one wife . . . husbands of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2,12). No husband is faultless, but every husband can be faithful. In a Bible class, the teacher asked, “Does anyone here know of a faultless husband?” One man raised his hand. Thinking the man had misunderstood, the teacher repeated the question. The man’s hand remained raised. The teacher then asked, “And who is that husband?” The man replied, “My wife’s first husband.” Try as we may, reality says there is no faultless husband!

The husband is to love his wife (Ephesians 5:25-31). He is to love her sacrificially: “. . .and gave himself up for it” (5:25). “The word for ‘love’ here is *agapao*, . . . This is a self-sacrificial love, a love that impels the one loving to give himself in self-sacrifice for the well-being of the one who is loved” (Wuest, 1:131). He is to love her with purifying love, with a love that encourages her to be pure and holy

(5:26,27). He is to love her with enduring love, which will keep her as Christ intended for the church to be kept (5:27). He is to love her with selfish love: . . . “as their own bodies . . .as himself” (5:28,33). He is “to love his wife as being his body” (Wuest, 133). He is to love her with providing love: . . . “nourisheth and cherisheth” (5:29). He is to love her with uninterrupted love: . . . “leave . . . cleave . . . become one flesh” (5:31). The husband would do well to read the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and ask himself, “do I love my wife like this?” An application of this principle alone would enhance every home. Paul instructed husbands to “love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Colossians 3:19). Peter instructed, “Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).

A cartoon in Pulpit Helps, (29:6:12) shows a man opening his Bible to find a note which read, “Bob, Help Your Wife With The Dishes. Now.” To which the husband replies, “You’re right, Hon. I never realized the Bible’s message was so relevant.” There needs to be a practical application of the principles taught concerning the husband. Let us read the principles and really concentrate on how to use them in daily life. Our homes will be better!

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## THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

### Sam Willcut

It is very sad when our modern media cultivates the role of a wife in the minds of many. When we think of famous wives, of whom do we think—Edith Bunker, June Cleaver, Estelle Constanza or Marge Simpson? Rather, should we not think of Eve, Sarah, Ruth, Abigail, Esther, Mary (wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus) or Priscilla? The Bible has much to say about the role of wives.

First, the wife has the role of helping. God created a helper custom-designed for the needs of Adam—a wife! As a preacher, I can attest to the helpfulness of my wife in fulfilling the work of the Lord. Yet, this is not only true of preachers—this ought to be so in every godly family. Wives help their husbands by living godly lives and securing a permanent position with the husband in the home (Titus 2:5). A godly wife can even help her husband “win” or gain spiritual blessings from God by her godly demeanor (cf. I Peter 3:1-5). A godly wife is an asset without which Christian husbands cannot do. In contrast, an ungodly wife can really hurt a marriage: “...the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping” (Proverbs 19:13). Thus, Solomon wrote, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord...House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22; 19:14). In the closing chapter of Proverbs, King Lemuel records the great words relating to “a virtuous woman,” and in describing her in the role of wife, he says, “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil” (Proverbs 31:11). Thus, the godly wife plays a vital role in the plans of God within the marriage. Above all, the wife is to help her

husband attain the spiritual goals they set on their mutual journey to heaven. Do we remember Jezebel?

“Second, the wife has the role of loving.”

While she thought she was helping her husband, Ahab, she was actually making a bad situation worse (1 Kings 21). Wives should not hurt their husbands, but they are to be helpers.

Second, the wife has the role of loving. Paul gave instructions to the young man Titus concerning the “aged women” in teaching the younger wives “to love their husbands” (Titus 2:3-4). Look at the love Ruth gave to Boaz. Consider the love that Sarah gave to her husband, Abraham. Among other things, when Paul pointed to Adam and Eve in illustrating the role between husband and wife, he stated, “she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in...charity” (1 Timothy 2:15). To the church in Corinth, Paul described the role of the wife requiring love when he wrote, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife” (I Corinthians 7:3-4). Therefore, the wife who understands what God demands in the home is the wife who loves her husband!

Third, the wife has the role of submitting. With respect to wives, God created their role to be subordinate. To explain why women in the church are not to usurp authority, the inspired apostle Paul describes that God created men first, and the first woman Eve was deceived first. Thus, women have a

different role than men (1 Timothy 2:11-15). To carry this further, he gives the hierarchy of responsibility: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Marriage is not to be an everlasting battle in the home over who wears the pants in the family, because God has already decided that problem long ago. Thus, this helps to clarify why wives are taught not just to love their husbands, but also to submit to them (Ephesians 5:22-24). God must feel that this is important, because it is the most repeated command for wives (also in Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1-6). In fact, there is no doubt as to what this means, for the apostle Paul illustrates this submission: “...as unto the Lord...Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:22). There cannot be any doubt that wives are to submit to their husbands just as all Christians are to submit to Christ—unequivocal surrender of our will. While it may be difficult to practice, there must always be a source of authority. While wives are superior to their husbands in many ways, and equal to them in Christ (Galatians 3:28), they must accept the subordinate role in the home and church. Thus, she recognizes the responsibility in the home falls squarely upon the shoulders of her loving, godly husband, and lovingly complies with such an arrangement.

Therefore, the role of wives is in helping, loving and submitting. May God continue to bless all who are godly wives, and may God bless our sons in finding godly wives to marry.

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## DANGERS TO MY MARRIAGE

Dale Hubbert

Marriage is designed by God to be the most intimate and fulfilling of human relationships. Man was created for woman and woman was created for man. This union glows with the fingerprints of God's care and concern for our happiness. When we follow the blueprint for marriage we are able to reach the pinnacle of God's design for the best of life upon this earth.

If God planned for marriage to be good and bless our lives, then surely Satan in his evil desires would provide temptations to harm and destroy this companionship. Satan is cunning (Genesis 3:1) and crafty in planting minefields for marriage. We must be on guard or we will fall prey to temptation (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Some dangers to marriage are very obvious. Adultery would be a very recognizable danger to a marriage and the only fault in marriage that could provide for the termination of that marriage with the right to marry another (Matthew 19:9). Divorce is not required in the case of adultery and many Christians have been able to work past this grievous sin with forgiveness and renewed commitment and dedication to each other.

Sinful habits and addictions can be obvious danger points to a marriage. Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco have caused immeasurable damage to many marriages. The destruction of the physical body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) as well as harm to the mind often place a severe strain on a marriage. Addictions to hobbies or even work can do damage to the union of a man and a woman.

There are other dangers to a marriage that may not be as noticeable or as recognized. These dangers can be very real and very detrimental. Divided loyalty can be a real danger to marriage. When a child of God is married to a child of the devil it is unwise to expect that

marriage to reach its potential. With two masters (Matthew 12:30) that are fierce enemies it is no wonder that their servants may have problems with compatibility. Only one thing can be first in life. Trouble is sure to arrive when that one thing is different for the husband and the wife. It is then no wonder that we highly encourage our children to marry someone with a like precious faith (Amos 3:3).

A failure to provide sincere and regular honor plants seeds of frustration and aggravation in a marriage. Romans 12:10 includes our spouse as well as others in reference to affection and honor. Honor needs to be done regularly to have the desired affect. Honor needs to occur privately and publicly. It sometimes happens that compliments and honor happen less after the marriage ceremony than in the courtship. This ought not to be.

Care should be given in being critical of our mate in the presence of others. This may happen in a light hearted manner but may be more hurtful than we realize. While we know our mate better than anyone else, extreme caution should be used in sharing their shortcomings when we are around other people (Matthew 7:12). Though we may not mean any harm by what we say; the fact that our intent is not bad will not change the pain and/or damage to our spouse.

Romance and courtship should continue after the marriage ceremony. One of the dangers to marriage is the cessation of romance and courtship after the vows are exchanged. Song of Solomon is a beautiful dialogue of how a man and his wife are to feel about and act toward each other. Sadly this book has been largely neglected in our teachings. Marriage avoids danger when romance and courtship are pursued regularly.

Money often provides a danger to a marriage. Those who have done much research on the family reveal that money problems often top the list of things that strain a marriage. Good stewardship (Luke 12:42) is a command of the Master and a blessing to the marriage. Deciding what to buy, how much to save, and how much to give to the church are just a few of the decisions that husband and wife must make.

Satan knows that one of the greatest enemies of marriage is selfishness. When we exchange vows we make a commitment for two to become one (Genesis 2:24). There is no room in that oneness for a selfish spirit that is not inclusive of the well being of the new union. The words of Philippians 2:4 have a broader application but certainly apply to the marriage communion as we are instructed not to merely look out for our own interests but for the well being of others. No marriage can be strong if either or both parties are self-centered.

Dangers to marriage can come in a form as innocent as the backgrounds from which we come. No two people were raised exactly alike or in exactly the same environment. Even in Christian homes there are differences in customs and traditions. When do we open Christmas presents? When do we get together for Thanksgiving? These and other things have to be worked out with at least two families and often compromise is necessary.

Satan has made sure there are many dangers to marriage. He wants to weaken and destroy what God intended to be strong and fulfilling. God has provided warning and an escape route for every danger. May we always seek to avoid and overcome dangers that our marriages may be all that they can be.

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## DIVORCE-PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE

Tom Larkin

Many of us grew up in a time when no one gave much thought to “divorce-proofing” a marriage. Unlike today, divorce was a rare thing then. While a divorce-proofed marriage may not be a certainty, it is possible to strengthen marriages and make them less likely to end in divorce. A multitude of books and articles are available on the subject, and while many of these are worthwhile, the best advice comes from that One who established marriage in the beginning. Any worthwhile advice concerning marriage will have its origin in the Bible and will harmonize with its principles. Equally true, if man’s advice on marriage contradicts Biblical teaching, it cannot be worthwhile and will most likely be detrimental to one’s marriage.

Those still preparing for marriage have an advantage when it comes to divorce-proofing marriage. A few years ago, David Sain delivered a lecture at Freed-Hardeman entitled, “The Time to Get a Divorce.” His answer was **before the marriage takes place**. If two people are not planning to stay together “till death do us part,” they need to separate before they get married. This same idea applies to divorce-proofing a marriage – the best time to prevent a divorce is before saying “I do.”

One fundamental step that a person can take to divorce-proof marriage is to choose wisely whom to marry. Selection of a mate based on purely physical considerations may leave one vulnerable to divorce. Repeatedly – and rightly so – we encourage young people to marry a Christian. While this is good advice, we really should go one step further and encourage them to marry a **faithful** Christian. One can claim to be a Christian without living by the principles of the gospel, but it is that one who truly is striving to be faithful to the Lord who will make the best spouse. And when both husband and

wife are faithful Christians, when difficulties arise, they can be successfully dealt with by applying those Christian principles by which they are guided.

One must also be certain that he is ready for marriage. In his book, “Restoring God’s Pattern For The Home,” Winford Claiborne included four chapters entitled, “Marriage is for Adults Only.” (One who is serious about divorce-proofing his marriage would be well served by a serious reading of this fine book by brother Claiborne.) To say that marriage is for adults only speaks to more than physical age. Every state has minimum age requirements for marriage, but these address only physical maturity. A far more critical factor in the success of a marriage is emotional maturity. The words of Genesis two quoted by Jesus impress the need to grow up and be an adult when one marries:... “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother ...” (Matthew 19:9). Leaving father and mother implies that one is ready to be an adult – not just physically, but in all other areas as well. It means, among other things, that one is ready to accept responsibility and live unselfishly. Many marriages end in divorce because of immaturity and often this is the underlying cause of other problems – usually labeled as “irreconcilable differences” – that bring a marriage into divorce court.

While these principles have been directed toward the unmarried, it should be evident how those who are already married can benefit from this discussion. Obviously, the married can no longer choose their mate – but each one of us can choose whether we will live a faithful Christian life. If you want to improve and divorce-proof your marriage, determine that you will be faithful to God and be the kind of Christian that He expects. In addition, if an honest examination of your life shows that you are immature,

grow up and act like an adult! These two steps will greatly improve the chances of making your marriage endure!

One final thought on divorce-proofing your marriage – never, never, never allow divorce to be an option. “Till death do us part” means just what it says – God designed marriage to last until death. The only exception is sexual infidelity which allows the innocent spouse to put away the guilty (Matthew 19:9), but even then, divorce is not required – reconciliation may well be possible, and under such circumstances it would be preferred.

Two phrases in Matthew 19 insist on this determination. First, when a man leaves father and mother, he shall “cleave to his wife” (v. 5). Thayer defines the word cleave as “to glue upon ... to join one’s self to closely” (p. 547). Adam Clarke wrote concerning this word, “A beautiful metaphor, which most forcibly intimates that nothing but death can separate them: as a well-glued board will break sooner in the whole wood, than in the glued joint.”

The second phrase is Jesus’ conclusion based on what God said in Genesis two. We often quote it at weddings – “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (v. 6). While we often apply this to everyone besides the married couple, it is indeed that couple who needs to heed these words the most. For those who seek a divorce-proof marriage, every day should bring a renewed determination to make marriage all that God intended.

The greatest likelihood that a marriage will be divorce-proof is that it takes place between two Christians who daily strive to be faithful to their Lord and to one another.

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# HOW MARRIAGE CAN HELP YOU GO TO HEAVEN

Mel Futrell

Every Bible-believing, right thinking person wants to go to heaven (Colossians 1:5). Surely we can agree on this. And since the obvious and only alternative is hell (Matthew 10:28), surely we will agree on this. However, that being said, let it be understood that this article is not dealing with a description of heaven, the blessings of heaven, or why I personally want to go to heaven. But it is dealing with how marriage can help you go to heaven. Naturally our title assumes a God-ordained marriage — not just one that is recognized in a civil sense (Mark 6:16-18). Only those marriages that meet God's criteria for marriage are marriages that would aid one in going to heaven. Perhaps one last thought would be that we are not suggesting that one must be married in order to go to heaven. But rather how God's marriage arrangement may assist one in going there.

First, one way that marriage can help you go to heaven has to do with the age old principle of **companionship**. At the very beginning of time God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18 — KJV). A better rendering and thus a better understanding of the last part of that verse can be found in the translation of the English Standard Version, "a helper fit for him." So the first thing spoken of in Scripture as not being good is being alone. Therefore we conclude that the companionship and partnership of marriage is a good and helpful thing. Who would deny then that the companionship of marriage is likewise good and helpful in attaining heaven? As Edwin Jones has written, "Men and women are made to be at their best together" [*Studies in Genesis*, 1996, p.21]. This concept of companionship that stresses its value is also articulated in Ecclesiastes 4:9 with these words, "Two are better

than one; because they have a good reward for their labor." The wise man Solomon goes on in the next three verses to suggest earthly scenarios in which this would certainly be the case. But the principle is equally valid in the spiritual realm. When husband and wife labor together as faithful Christians for the reward of heaven (Matthew 25:34; 1 Peter 1:4), this companionship in life and love makes the journey easier. Two are indeed stronger than one in facing down the temptations to sin that confront us all. Whether those temptations are sexual, material, or egotistical the partnership of marriage is a weapon in that fight. However, the loneliness of the single state can, I believe, make the journey to heaven more difficult. But the blessings of a suitable helper, a Christian spouse, in helping one to heaven can hardly be overstated.

Second, another way that marriage can help you go to heaven is through the privilege that you now have as a married couple to build a God fearing **family**. The teaching of Genesis 4:1 rings loud and clear for all to hear:

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord."

Note that Adam had sexual relations with his wife, not his girlfriend. And it was only within the confines of this marriage union that they had a right to engage in sexual activity and thus for children to be born to them. The Bible says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). We today, like Adam and Eve of old, add to our families through the blessing of children (Psalm 127:3). Family is indeed the cornerstone of every society. So naturally, we strongly oppose the homosexual communities' attempts to redefine the Biblical

concept of family. Now that children form part of our immediate family there are responsibilities that come with the territory. Of the many duties that are now ours, heading the list would have to be our duty to provide sound Biblical/spiritual education, instruction, and training. Even a quick consultation of such passages as Deuteronomy 6:6-7 and Ephesians 6:1-4 would bear this out. Our point in saying all this is that family constitutes our first field of evangelism. My part, and yours, in helping to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), it begins in my own backyard. Please think about like this:

- Marriage provides me the legitimate and Scriptural opportunity to have children.
- My children now can and must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- Training my children in the Lord is a feature of personal evangelism.
- Evangelism is essential to salvation.
- The end of salvation is a home in heaven.
- Thus, marriage can help me go to heaven.

And brethren I dare say it doesn't get much sweeter than that.

I am faithfully and fully determined to go to heaven where my Father and Lord are (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 3:22). That being the case, I would be foolish not to realize the benefits and blessings of marriage that can help me get there. So, I borrow the words of Robert Browning and say to my spouse:

"Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be..."

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## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Who Should I Date? By Ashley Kizer -----continued from page 9

These days, it does not seem as though parents are helping their children answer the question about whom they should date. If great men like Samson made terrible mistakes with the aid of wise counsel, what will become of our children who are making decisions based on advice from the Internet? God created marriage, and He has given us instructions as to who we should date so that we can choose the right mate.

Who should I date? First of all, I should date someone that shares a mutual attraction with me. In Genesis 24, when Abraham was giving his servant instructions for finding Isaac's wife, the servant posed an excellent question: "Peradventure the

woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land...?" (v. 5). Abraham's answer came swiftly, and without wavering: if the woman was unwilling to leave her homeland and marry Isaac, the servant was to abort the mission. It is okay for those who date to share an attraction for one another. Is there any doubt that King Solomon was attracted to the young woman that he wrote about in the first chapter of his Song of Songs? She described herself as "black, but comely," yet he called her "fairest among women" (vv. 5, 8).

When I realize that I share a mutual attraction with someone, I should ask myself these questions about the individual: Does he or she

have a good reputation (Song of Solomon 1:3)? Is he or she interested in remaining pure (1:7b; 2:7)? Does he or she respect me (2:1-4)? Does he or she share a common spiritual goal with me (2 Corinthians 6:14)? If I am a young person, I should follow these questions with a consultation from my parents or the elders of the church because no one cares more about the destiny of my soul. Who should I date? It is an important question. For, the one that I marry will be one that I dated.

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