

Single and Searching - How to Find Mister or Misses Right

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Before we get started, I want you to know I am serious about helping those who are single. I even went through the classifieds and brought some potential candidates for you to consider.

Guys: Here are some potential women for you.

- Attractive, degreed and financially secure 5'4" 112 pounds of giggles and wiggles. I enjoy dining, travel, yachting and dancing. If you are a SWM 45-55, tall, physically fit, financially secure, same interests, don't wait - call me!
- I'm a queen sized DWF age 40 who likes chess, museums, travel, the beach and is searching for SWM 50+ for LTR. Your looks are unimportant. Smoking is OK but no children.

Gals: Here are some guys for you.

- Ready for surprises? SWM looking for attractive lady, 35-50 who likes dining and lots of surprises. Don't miss your chance!
- SWM 34 looking for someone who likes NASCAR, camping, dining out and kids. I'm single and the father of 3.

As I said, if you are single and searching, I am serious about helping you find the right person for you to date and eventually marry. The reason I am so serious about this is because outside of your decision for Christ, the person you choose to marry will be the most important decision you will make in your life. You may think that *not* having a spouse is the worst thing that could happen to

you; that is not true! The worst thing that could happen is not being single wishing you were married but being married wishing you were still single.

The Bible backs this up. It warns of the consequences of making a poor choice in a marriage partner.

It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife. Proverbs 21:9 (ESV)

It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman. Proverbs 21:19 (ESV)

A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike. Proverbs 27:15 (ESV)

Guys, I take that to mean marrying the wrong woman is similar to Chinese water torture.

On the other hand, the Bible tells us marrying the right man or woman is one of the best things you can do.

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. Proverbs 31:10 (ESV)

An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones. Proverbs 12:4 (ESV)

The Bible tells us when it comes to the person we marry, we better make sure we make a good choice because outside of our decision about Christ, it is the most important choice we will make. This morning, I want to give you some helpful tools to help you make a good choice. They are called *The Five Questions of Compatibility*. They all wrap around the letter C.

Do they love Christ?

Let's start by turning to **what** may be the most frustrating verse in the Bible for singles. It is a verse that doesn't seem fair because it labels 9 out of 10 of your potential dates "out of bounds".

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 2 Corinthians 6:14–15 (ESV)

In other words, if you love Christ, don't date or marry someone who doesn't love Jesus. Having been a youth pastor, I have watched scores of Christian singles completely ignore this verse. They think they know better than God or they think they are the exception to the rule. They chose to date people who were not committed to Christ or who were just going through the spiritual motions.

Many times they tell me It just doesn't seem fair. Why is God so harsh? You look at your high school youth group and say, "Are these the only options?" Why doesn't God want his kids dating and marrying people who don't love Jesus?

You will build your relationship with different blueprints.

If you were to ask a builder, they would tell you how important it is to have one set of blueprints. Imagine what it would be like if you had two builders working on a house but they were working from different blueprints. Nothing they built would work. Parts of the house wouldn't tie together as they should. Nothing would fit. In short, the longer the work went on, the more frustrating the project would become. That is exactly what it is like when a Christian becomes

involved with a non-Christian. On the surface, they may feel they are compatible but what they are doing is building their relationship with different plans for where they are going in the future with their values, integrity, sexuality, and the role of God in their home.

The reason God doesn't want you dating or marrying someone who doesn't love him is because he wants to spare you incredible amounts of pain that will be yours when you become involved with someone who doesn't build their life like you do. I read an interesting statistic in Marriage and Divorce Magazine. The facts are that one out of every two and a half marriages end in divorce. According to their research, if a husband and wife are both growing Christians, which in their survey meant they attend church together, pray together and read the Bible together, the divorce rate drops to 1 in every 1,105 marriages. Building your relationship with the same blueprint is a big key to marital success.

What about missionary dating?

I have met lots of folks who believe in this. They tell me it isn't important for their date to be a Christian because they are witnessing to them. They remind me they are trying to bring them to church. They are hoping they will come to Christ. In fact, they usually promise me they won't marry the individual unless they become a Christian.

There are some major problems with missionary dating.

First, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 doesn't allow it. It says at the core a believer and a non-believer have nothing in common.

Second, it shows *you are more committed to meeting your needs under your terms than relying on God to meet your needs on his terms*. It shows you are not content to wait till God brings the right person into your life. It is really an issue of spiritual maturity. It is being willing to learn contentment in Jesus while you wait for God to bring the right person into your life.

Third, you are saying you desire to become your date's spiritual parent. That is not always a bad thing but it means you are taking spiritual responsibility for them, not just dating them. You don't have the freedom to just break up with them and not take responsibility for their growth in Jesus.

Fourth, instead of pulling the one who doesn't know Christ up, many times the Christian is drug down. In any relationship, both Christians are supposed to strengthen and encourage each other, not have one doing it alone. If you think this doesn't happen, look at Solomon. He was the smartest man in the world, but the Bible says his foreign wives turned his heart away from God. None of us are smarter than Solomon.

Fifth, it is a tragedy when you can't share the most important part of your life with the most important person of your life. There is a real frustration when you aren't dating somebody you can pray with and read the Bible with. You need to be able to support each other on a spiritual level.

So the most important thing you need to know about finding the right mate is that they need to be a growing Christian, not just somebody who is going thorough the spiritual motions. *God gives that as a command, not just a*

suggestion. Just because someone is right with God doesn't necessarily mean they are right for you. There are other things you need to consider.

Is their calling the same as yours?

This summer, Cindy and I went on vacation. What would happen if we pulled out of the driveway and Cindy said, "Honey, why are you turning right? We're not going east; we are going to California." I would say, "Honey, we can't do that. California is the opposite direction of where we are going." Unless we can agree to go on the same direction for vacation, we can't go on vacation together.

Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet? Amos 3:3 (ESV)

You can't expect to develop a satisfying relationship with someone unless you are traveling in the same direction they are heading. If God has given you the desire to be a teacher in the inner city of Los Angeles and your date has the desire to be a doctor in China, you better seriously consider if you have compatible callings. It is not just vocational callings that we should think about. Some people never want to move from their hometown, others look forward to traveling the world. Be careful about marrying somebody whose calling is incompatible with yours. There are many frustrated couples out there because as their relationship developed, they were never honest about seeing if their callings lined up.

Are they a person of character?

A relationship can begin with bad character but it can never succeed without good character. Without good character every relationship is doomed to

fail. Even though you may be very much in love with someone, if their character is poor, trust me; your heartfelt passion *will* turn to disgust. To demonstrate this let's play a word association game. I'll say a couple and you tell me how lack of character ruined the relationship.

- David + Bathsheba
- Samson and Delilah
- Monica and Bill

Honesty

Something you want to look for in a person's character is honesty. Don't marry a person you can't trust. You can't build a serious relationship with somebody who has a hard time telling the truth. I once counseled a teenage girl who told me how she found out her boyfriend was seeing somebody on the side while they were dating. Then she said, "We talked it through and worked it out." I asked her, "How long was he seeing somebody on the side?" She said, "I don't know. We didn't talk about how long it went on, what is important is that he is committed to me now." I told her, you better think about it again sister because if he is willing to see somebody behind your back now, you can expect it to only get worse later in the relationship, not better. You need to date and marry someone who is brutally honest with you and has a high degree of integrity. Red flags are: Subtle white lies, distortions, exaggerations and half truths. Those are warnings of character flaws that will come back to destroy the relationship.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Ephesians 4:25 (ESV)

Responsibility

This is something you have to look for. I have heard from many couples how they are thrilled with the new person they are dating because they are so spontaneous, unpredictable and carefree. They love the unexpected surprises in the relationship. Six months down the road, those surprises aren't exciting like they used to be. They drive you crazy. The new names for those characteristics are spacey, irresponsible and ditzzy. When you are making a choice to get involved with a person, don't date or marry an irresponsible person.

Evaluate a potential date's responsibility by seeing how they handle their schoolwork, their homework, their family and their job. How physically responsible are they? Do they take care of their body? Are they conscious of what they eat? You may be able to eat Doritos and Ding Dongs when you are 20, but it will catch up to you when you are 40. How spiritually responsible are they? Do they have the self-discipline to get up in the morning and read their Bible? How about financial responsibility? Do they go on buying sprees and max out their credit card, or are they careful with their money? What you see now is what you are choosing to join yourself with later. You don't date people to fix their bad character qualities, you date them because of their good character qualities.

Vitality

Things are exciting when you start dating because you eat at nice places, you go to the movies. You have fun together because everything is new. After a few years of being together, the routine of life settles in. You eat the same

breakfast. You come home tonight and do the exact same thing as every night. Unless the person you dating has enough depth of character to refuse to let the routine of life become boring, you will regret the relationship. One of the causes of affairs is boredom inside a marriage. Don't date or marry someone who allows life to become empty and routine.

A person with vitality is someone seeking to grow, mature and find new challenges. They find new challenges recreationally, intellectually and spiritually. They are willing to try new things rather than just being content with doing the same old things they have always done. When someone is creative in other areas of life, that means they will be creative romantically and relationally, which is what you want in your relationship.

Do you have good communication?

People who are newly in love say communication is never a problem. They talk and text all the time. As for nice things to say, you women are usually caught up in all the mushy words their boyfriend says on the phone. This doesn't mean you have good communication. What I am talking about is not the *quantity* of communication but the *quality* of communication. You can spend years with someone and talk about absolutely nothing meaningful.

Even as a pastor, who gets paid to talk, I have to remember this at home. I need to work on communication. In our house, the bad communication usually comes to a head on a Friday night. Cindy and I are curled up relaxing on the couch when she says to me, "Honey, I just don't feel close to you." I am thinking "We can't get much closer."

Over the years I have learned that is a coded phrase from my wife. She feels like we haven't talked. Of course we have talked during the week. We talked about the kids and getting them to practice. We talked about the groceries. We talked about many things, but we haven't connected on a deep heart-felt level.

You need to date, and ultimately marry, someone who is a good listener and who you can communicate with on a heart-felt level. You need to experience a depth of conversation with them that like no one else. You need to be able to talk about the deepest levels of your heart and passions.

The most powerful sexual organ of your body is your mind. If you can't connect in that area, you will not experience satisfying intimacy.

It always worries me when I see a girl and she is dating a guy that she calls, "The Strong-Silent Type." If he doesn't say much, the relationship won't be satisfying, because communication is the hinge upon which your intimacy turns.

Those of you who are married need to remember that how well you communicate *in your marriage* is directly correlated to the satisfaction *of your marriage*. Work on deep and meaningful communication with each other.

Do you have that chemical rush?

By this I mean there needs to be attraction between the two of you. This hormone attraction is the obvious part that nobody seems to have trouble with, but even with this part being so obvious, we can still get this wrong. You need to be attracted to the whole person - their personality, mannerisms, physical looks and their smile. Don't allow yourself to be attracted to just one specific part of a

person, while you ignore the rest of them. Your attraction to somebody needs to be something that is more than just sexual. It has to do with everything about a person, their mannerisms, their attitude, their response under pressure. You need to be attracted to all of them, not just part of them.

Conclusion

If you want to make a good choice in who you date and eventually marry, you need to ask these five questions. The answers will make or break your relationship.

Christ – Scripture is very specific about only dating and marrying someone who loves Jesus more than they love you. You can't build a relationship with a non-Christian. You are building your life together with different sets of blueprints; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 tells us that at the core we have nothing in common.

Calling – You shouldn't marry someone who has a life calling that is incompatible with yours. Christians can have different callings God placed upon their hearts by God. If God has called you in a different direction from your potential date, the relationship will not be able to grow together. It will grow apart.

Character – You need to date and marry somebody who has character. You may be very much in love with someone but if they don't have honesty, responsibility and vitality, your love will turn into disgust.

Communication – You need to be able to have have quality heart-felt conversation with someone who meets you on an intellectual level. What you want is quality, not just quantity of conversation.

Chemical – You need to have a hormone attack for the person. That attraction needs to be for more than just a part of the person but for all of the person. If there is a part of a person you can't stand, it will only get worse with age.

If you are single this morning my hope and prayer is that you make a good choice when it comes to dating and marriage. If this morning you are already married, I hope I was able to give you some help on what it will take to make your marriage a raging success.

Prayer:

Father, this morning as we close our time together, I want to thank you for your Word that gives us guidance when it comes to looking for a spouse. I know there are many singles in this room who are desperate to find somebody to love. Give them wisdom and purity as they look for a man or woman they can share their life with. Teach them to turn to you when they are lonely. When you are ready, in your time and not theirs, bring that special person into their life in a way they can't miss.

Amen



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