

Dating: A couple's perspective

Mark and Lyn Weise (1991)

Mark: To Men

Thoughts of dating and marriage probably occupy the thoughts of young men more than any other subject. That's not surprising, considering the decisions made in this area will affect the rest of our lives. What I can contribute to those not yet married are the lessons I have learned along the way. Some I learned the hard way; others I was taught by faithful brothers.

The first question you must ask yourself when considering marriage is whether you have "The Gift" of being single. How do you know? If you are attracted to women, you don't. If you feel you cannot do without a woman for the rest of your life, emotionally or physically, you don't. If you do have that gift, however, these things will not be a problem for you, and you should seriously consider making the "better" choice, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 7.

If you've decided that you don't have the gift, what next? "How do I know the will of God?" you ask. I will say this about God's will: Don't play with fire. Don't even let the thought of dating an unbeliever

cross your mind. Satan used this tactic successfully at the field of Moab with the Israelites, with Solomon, during Ezra's and Nehemiah's day—and he still uses it today. Don't even think it! What fellowship has Christ with Satan? "But I wouldn't marry her unless she got saved." Famous last words. Seek fellowship with believers, and good friendships on which to build a relationship will develop.

So, you've found a great Christian girl but are asking, "How do I know she's the one?" Remember, the Word is a lamp and a light for every step. Follow Scripture submissively and prayerfully, and God will guide you rightly. He did not create you with preferences and desires and then ask you to forget them when making this decision. Do you love her? Can you commit your life to her? Are her goals in life, spiritual and otherwise, compatible with yours? Are you attracted to her? Yes? Then what are you waiting for?

Read the Song of Solomon if you want to understand the love relationship. The bride wanted the bridegroom to draw her, to be in love with her and to let her and everyone else know it, to be strong and consistent, to be a Real Man. Romance is spiritual. Do your best to win her. Send flowers,

cards, letters, call her often; let her know she's important. Don't waver if she cools down a little. The end of the Song has the bride and bridegroom fully in love with each other. Be a man. It works!

Finally, remember you are dealing with a sister in the Lord, one for whom Christ died. Be careful that you don't hurt or offend or use her. All scriptures having to do with our relationships to other believers apply, such as, "Be kind one to another" (Ephesians 4:32), and, "Let each esteem the other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3). Beware of dating just casually and for fun; this eventually may lead to hurting one of Christ's sheep, and that's serious business.

Lyn: To Women

I am not writing as a counselor or an authority; I am simply writing to review what you know to be true and perhaps to encourage you as a lady on this popular topic. The dating-and-waiting game can be one of the most frustrating, heart-breaking, discouraging games as we reach a certain age and become an automatic player! Then we are faced with many dilemmas, such as: Is it God's will that I stay single? Why

can't I get a date—am I too picky? Why can't people ask me something besides when I'm getting married? The list goes on and on.

Being close to the Lord will enable you to face this situation, as well as any others, victoriously. When one is close to Christ, one cannot help but be reminded of His great love and faithfulness and the abundant life He has promised to give His people. Those are just a few of His wonderful characteristics, but applying even those few to our lives will strengthen our confidence in knowing He will meet this need.

Don't be frustrated over His will to be single or married. As you serve Him, you may be content to do it alone. That indeed is a special gift which only God can give. But if you desire to be married, then pray for God to give you that partner and believe that He will. Our loving Father will meet every longing desire in your life, including this seemingly impossible one. Nothing is impossible with God.

As a lady, you have that wonderful, frustrating privilege of waiting to be asked out. Be patient during this time, and be picky! You can change your job, change your hair style, change your address; but your partner

must be for life. Don't even entertain the thought of dating an unbeliever with the goal of getting him saved. God very clearly tells us there can be no fellowship between light and darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14).

As for a believer, you will naturally be attracted to certain personal characteristics, but be sure he desires to walk with God and please Him above all. If someone does show interest but you have none, don't lead him on just for the sake of having a date. Remember, he is your brother, and you have a responsibility to be honest with him. You will never miss your opportunity for marriage by being picky. God will honor you for your stand.

Finally, if someone has started to show interest and you've already been interested, remember a few things. Pray for him, and pray for God to clearly direct. Get to know him as a friend; if he is the one, he will eventually become your best friend. Do not pressure him. Let him lead, but by all means respond to his leading. We may call it flirting, but it can be done tastefully and will encourage him by showing that you're interested. When God has brought both of you together and is the center of your relationship, you will look back with a heart that is thankful you allowed God's

timing to take place. And you will find yourself testifying to that famous saying: "It was worth the wait!"