

It Matters Whom You Marry

Introduction. To all the young, unmarried Christian men and women out there, listen up: who you marry matters. Unless someone married is very frank with you, you cannot understand how much a husband or wife will impact your entire life. Next to salvation there is no other long-term event that will change so many areas of your life so deeply. Careful evaluation in a number of areas will save you a lifetime of frustration. Right now, you might think she is pretty or playful, or that he is nice to you. It is not enough. Are you ready to see some of the ways dating and marriage can change your life?

I. *It Will Impact Your Spirituality*

- A. If the young man or woman is not a Christian, you need to think. Christ bought you with a price and it should not be an option to give away that blood-bought heart to someone who does not know and love your Lord. It can cripple your spiritual development, open up a host of temptations, stifle your prayers, make regular worship attendance difficult, and cause massive parenting conflict if you have children.
- B. If the guy is a Christian, is he a strong one? Will he lead you in prayer, Bible reading, family devotions, and public worship, or will you be on your own? Is he going to make spiritual growth a priority or will something else come first (Genesis 12:7-8; 13:4, 18)? Many women have married spiritually immature men, thinking that it will not be a big issue, or that the man would change, and they were wrong.
- C. If she is a Christian, is she growing or stagnant? Does she love God and commune with Him on her own? Is she eager to learn from His word, or more excited about shopping and friends? Will she support and encourage your initiative in leading family worship, or will she hinder it (Ephesians 6:4)? Just because you are the leader in the relationship does not mean you will be able to pull her along (1 Peter 3:7). She will either be a drag on your holiness, or a pleasant encouragement for your personal, spiritual development.

II. *It Will Impact Your Emotions*

- A. Is your guy going to encourage, love, be kind, and seek to understand you, or will he want to go out with the guys when you are having a hard night? Will he listen when you are struggling with something or will he be preoccupied with a video game? Is he going to go to understand that you are probably more sensitive to issues and comments, or is he regularly going to run rough shod over your feelings? Any guy who is uncaring about your feelings is selfish and should be left alone (2 Samuel 12:20-24; Ephesians 5:28-29).

- B. Is the man you are dating going to be a source of worry or will he help you deal with your worries? Is he going to help you manage stress so that your mind is not burdened that way, or is he going to let you struggle through issues alone? You might think that the intellectual or mental side of a marriage is small, but it is bigger than you think.

III. ***It Will Impact Your Physicality***

- A. Is the guy you are with going to provide for your basic needs? Will he be able to shelter, clothe, and feed you? Will he do whatever it takes to provide for the family, regardless of his training? You might have to help ease the financial burden, but you should not have to carry it yourself (1 Timothy 5:8).
- B. Is he going to care for and protect your body or will he hurt it? If he gives you little smacks, kicks, etc., when you are dating, get away. It is almost guaranteed that he will abuse you after marriage, and statistics show that is especially true when you are pregnant. How many wives or girlfriends are covering up bruises?
- C. Is he going to honor the marriage bed in physical and mental faithfulness to you or will he flirt, feed his pornography addiction, or even leave you for another woman (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; Hebrews 13:4)? You cannot always predict these issues, but if the seeds or practices are already there, watch out.

IV. ***It Will Impact Your Service***

- A. Is the girl that you are dating excited about your involvement in the local church? Is she going to encourage you to serve the congregation with your talents, or is she going to complain that you are not helping her do laundry instead? Is she going to be a Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28) or a Michal (2 Samuel 6:16-22)?
- B. Ordinary, faithful men shine with a steady, loving, wise, and supportive wife. If you think this will be an issue, look elsewhere for a helpmeet -- you will have to answer to God for picking a woman who prevents you from serving Christ.

V. ***It Will Impact Your Finances***

- A. Is your girlfriend excited about the work you do, or does she not care? Is she able to help you where possible, or does she not want to be involved? Although the sort of work a wife does depends on her husband's vocation, the support should always be there (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 12).
- B. What will she do with the money you earn through your work? Go shopping all the time, or wisely budget? Will she ask your advice about financial decisions, or make big changes without considering you? Will

she be reckless with money, or enable you to live within your means? Is she greedy for money (1 Timothy 6:10), or eager find ways to bless others in need (Galatians 6:10)?

VI. *It Will Impact Your Relationships*

- A. How is your relationship with your mother or father? Do you love them? Does your boyfriend or girlfriend? Fast forward ten years: you tell your husband that your mother is coming for the weekend. Is he excited or angry? Does he make snide jokes with his friends? Of course, a husband should come first in your priority of relationships, but parents are still a big part of the picture because they love you and raised you (Genesis 33:5; Psalm 127). The same is true of siblings and friends. The people who know you best and love you most right now could be cut out of the picture by a husband who hates them and is jealous of them.
- B. What does your mother think of your girlfriend? Does she think that this woman will take care of her son? Be a good mother? Does your girlfriend respect your parents? Is she happy to have them as grandparents for your children? Will your girlfriend's parents dominate your marriage? Will they dictate "advice" or allow you to be the head of your own household? You do have to leave your father and mother and cleave to your wife, but you still need to consider what effect they will have on your marriage (Genesis 2:24).
- C. Do not sacrifice many good relationships for the sake of one guy or girl who cannot value the people who love you.

VII. *It Will Impact Your Reputation*

- A. Do you know what your girlfriend says about you to her friends? Her mother? Her Facebook account and Twitter feed? Will the girl you are with build up your reputation or tear it down? Will she teach the children to respect you, or will your own family think little of you? Will she broadcast every failure that you have, or will she, in love, hide them from the world and help you fight them in private?
- B. While it is your responsibility to behave in a respectable way, it is your wife's responsibility to speak of you in a way that preserves and builds up your reputation, instead of revealing your shortcomings and faults to the world (Ephesians 5:33). This does not mean that a wife should hide her husband's sins from people who need to know, but the Proverbs 31 woman behaved and spoke in a way that enabled her husband to trust her fully (vs. 11). She did him good, not harm (vs. 12), partly with her words.

VIII. ***It Will Impact Your Health***

- A. Scripture gives us many warnings about nagging, pestering, quick-tempered wives (Genesis 30:1-2; Proverbs 21:9, 19; 25:24). Will the girl you are with be careful to not pester and nag, and mentally wear you down, or will she prevent frustration where she can by expressing her opinion and being content with your leadership? Is she going to respect you and tell you so, or will she treat you like one of the children?
- B. Is she going to complain about the time and effort it takes to domestically support and raise a family? Is she going to be available, within reason, sexually, or will she use her body as a tool of manipulation to get you to do what she wants? Is she going to begrudgingly approach the marriage bed, or will she treat it as a good gift, an expression of love and delight, that God has given the two of you to enjoy (1 Corinthians 7:4-5)?

Conclusion. As I have said many times, the vast majority of your life boils down to decisions, and this is a big one. How will your boyfriend or girlfriend do after the vows? Because this is just a sampling of the ways that a husband or wife can bless or curse the spouse. The effects are far-reaching and long-lasting. True, there are no perfect men or women out there, but there are great ones; and it is better to be single for life than to marry someone who will make your life a burden. Marriage to the wrong person is a nightmare. Do not put yourself in a bad situation when it is 100% avoidable. Marry someone who demonstrates the love of Christ.