

Seeking A Mate

1. This study is primarily for the benefit of single, available adult Christians.
2. Have questions or issues like this crossed your mind?:
 - A. Am I doomed to life-long single-living and celibacy?
 - B. Is there a God-ordained special someone for everyone?
 - C. How do I go about getting a mate?
 - D. How do I attract a mate?
 - E. What constitutes godly decorum in pre-marital relationships?
 - F. Should I have to sacrifice any of my ideals in order to be married?
 - G. Is marriage even for me?
 - H. The "pickings" in our church are pretty slim. Where does that leave me?
 - I. Is it a sin to marry someone who does not share my faith?
 - J. "Falling in love" ---- is that how it should work?
 - K. Could I stay single and celibate and be content?
 - L. Could I stay single and celibate and not violate the "Dominion Mandate?"
 - M. Does God even care whether or not I long to be married?
3. This study is not intended to deal with every possible question that this topic might generate or cover every scenario that individual believers face.
4. This study is not going to be a "silver bullet" or "Love Potion #9" to end the "misery" of single-living.
5. This study is designed to set forth some basic Biblical principles to help dispel faulty notions and encourage believers to exercise discernment.
 - A. This may mean the casting down of imaginations that are exalted against the knowledge of Christ. **2CO 10:5**.
 - B. This could include casting down Hollywood or American cultural imaginations about romance.
 - C. This could include casting down imaginations about what constitutes permissible behavior as a single or in unmarried relationships.
 - D. This could include casting down one's own imaginations about what constitutes a good mate.
 - E. This could include casting down imaginations about one's priorities or timetable.
 - F. This could include casting down imaginations about emotions and their reliability.
 - G. This could include casting down imaginations about "providential" leading.
 - H. This could include casting down imaginations about compatibility.
 - I. This could include casting down imaginations about a trouble-free relationship.
6. When all is said and done, the onus is on the believer to use their God-given ability to think, decide and act in a way that is in conformity with the wisdom and directives of the word of God.
 - A. As noted earlier, the believer is encouraged to exercise *discernment* and so also to have *discretion*.
 - (1) Discernment: "The act of discerning or perceiving by the intellect; intellectual perception or apprehension. b. The faculty of discerning; discrimination, judgement; keenness of intellectual perception; penetration, insight."
 - (2) Discretion: "Ability to discern or distinguish what is right, befitting, or advisable, esp. as regards one's own conduct or action; the quality of being discreet; discernment; prudence, sagacity, circumspection, sound judgment."
 - (3) Discernment and discretion springing from good knowledge are keys to a *guided* Christian walk delivered *from evil* as opposed to a *misguided* which is

delivered *to evil*. **PRO 1:1-4; 2:10-17; 3:21-26; 11:22; TIT 2:3-5.**

- (4) Many a saint has fallen into disrepair in the area of relationships for lack of knowledge (**HOS 4:6**) and sound judgment.
- B. Jesus Christ died to take away your sin, not your brain, judgment or responsibility.
- C. If acquiring a mate (spouse) would be for you a temporal salvation, mind that you are to "WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (**PHIL 2:12**).
- D. You will need to put effort in prayer, needed reform of thought, wise and godly conduct, and in patience.
- E. Very little about the Christian walk is easy (**MAT 7:14**) except Christ's yoke (**MAT 11:30**), so faith says,
 - (1) "...I esteem all thy precepts to be right..." (**PSA 119:128**), and
 - (2) "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (**PHIL 4:13**), and
 - (3) "...my God shall supply all [my] need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (**PHIL 4:19**), and
 - (4) "[I will] trust in the LORD with all [my] heart; and lean not unto [my] own understanding. In all [my] ways [I will] acknowledge him, and he shall direct [my] paths" (**PRO 3:5-6**), and therefore
 - (5) "Though he slay me ['Lord, this single-life is killing me'], yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain my ways before him" (**JOB 13:15**).

The First Priority

1. How important is your God and Savior to you? Is He your first love (**REV 2:4**) according to the greatest commandment? **MAT 22:36-37**.
 - A. Do you sincerely count all things loss for Him and the knowledge of Him? **PHIL 3:8**.
 - B. Mind that God is a Jealous God Who does not look with favor on feigned or divided admiration. **EXO 34:14; MAT 6:24; MAT 12:30**.
 - C. If we covet anything more than God we have made that an idol. **COL 3:5**.
 - (1) Do you covet a relationship more than God?
 - (2) Do you covet a particular person more than God?
 - (3) Do you covet a particular person's affection more than God?
 - (4) Do you covet satisfied emotions, desires or lusts more than God?
 - (5) Consider the folly of the statement, "He just idolizes that gal."
 - D. If the flesh be one's master, spiritual living is impossible. **GAL 5:17**.
 - E. Is God and His timetable to you worth waiting for? Or are you prone to run ahead of Him out of impatience or human reasoning and end up with a troubled outcome as did Abram and Sarai? **GEN 16:1-4, 12**.
 - (1) Mind that God sometimes grants the impatient, the insistent and the dissatisfied their requests as a judgment. **1SAM 12:12 c/w HOS 13:11; PSA 106:13-15**.
 - (2) Discipleship to Christ is largely a matter of patient waiting for Him. **LUK 12:35-36 c/w JAM 5:7**.
 - (3) **LAM 3:25-26**. "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."
2. How important is God's kingdom and righteousness to you? **MAT 6:33-34**.
 - A. What is your chief joy and how does it rate against God's venue in this world? **PSA 137:6**.
 - B. Is your place in the church and at the Lord's Table worth sacrificing for a present

need of the flesh which God would supply/add in due time? **HEB 12:15-16.**

- (1) Fornication has cost many a saint his/her *place* in the kingdom of God.
 - (2) Unwise relationships or marriages have cost many a saint his/her *peace* the kingdom of God and oftentimes also one's *place*.
- C. Are you willing to abandon or compromise His righteousness to get what you want? Mind that your God did not compromise His righteousness to give you what you needed. **PHIL 2:8; ROM 8:32.**
- D. Do you sincerely believe that God will add to you your needs (and a spouse may or may not be a need) if you seek FIRST His kingdom and righteousness? **1SAM 2:30.**

Prayer

1. It is not inappropriate to pray for a spouse. In fact, it would be inappropriate to NOT pray for a spouse if that is your desire. **GEN 24:12-14; PHIL 4:6-7.**
2. Effectual prayer is that which accords with the will of God (**1JO 5:14-15**). Compare these prayers:
 - A. "Lord, there is this woman that I have seen in XXXXX; now get her for me to wife, for she pleaseth me well." **JDG 14:2-3.**
 - B. "Lord, give me a spouse that satisfies my ego/lusts/flesh---I will settle for nothing less."
 - C. "Lord, give me a spouse that loves you greatly and who would be good for my soul."
3. Asking is good, when the asking is from a humble, obedient believer who abides in God's word. **JOH 15:7 c/w 1JO 3:21-22.**
4. Asking is not good when one's own will and lusts are paramount. **JAM 4:1-3.**
5. The desires of the (godly) heart are granted to those who delight themselves in the Lord. **PSA 37:4-5 c/w ISA 58:13-14.**

Is Marriage for Everyone?

1. This is a broad question which needs qualification.
 - A. "Everyone" may of necessity not extend to some because of restricting health conditions.
 - B. "Everyone" would not include someone who is single by man's definition but still legally bound in marriage by God's definition.
 - C. There may be other exceptions to "everyone."
 - D. For purposes of this study, "everyone" refers to capable (mentally, physically), single, available people of acceptable age.
2. Marriage is a good thing (when in accord with the Biblical model).
 - A. It mirrors the covenant relationship of Christ to His church. **EPH 5:31-32.**
 - B. It was ordained in sinless innocence and declared good. **GEN 1:26-31; 2:21-25 c/w MAT 19:4-6.**
 - C. It is honourable in all. **HEB 13:4 c/w ECC 9:9.**
 - D. The man who finds a (godly) wife is blessed of God. **PRO 19:14; 18:22.**
 - (1) He finds an help meet (suited) for his subduing of his world. **GEN 2:18; 1:27-28.**
 - (2) He finds the means to God's heritage and his own happiness. **PSA 127:3-5.**
 - (3) He finds something of inestimable value. **PRO 31:10.**
 - E. The woman who finds a (godly) husband is likewise blessed of God.
 - (1) She finds her head and lord. **1CO 11:3 c/w 1PE 3:5-6.**
 - (2) She finds the very thing for which she was created. **1CO 11:9.**

- (3) She finds her nourisher and cherisher. **EPH 5:28-29**.
- (4) She finds her savior and strength. **1PE 3:7 c/w EPH 5:25**.
- F. The inability to marry was considered a grief. **JDG 11:37-39 c/w PSA 78:62-63**.
- G. Marriage is God's antidote to fornication. **1CO 7:2, 8-9**.
 - (1) Fornication: "Voluntary sexual intercourse between a man (in restricted use, an unmarried man) and an unmarried woman. In Scripture, extended to adultery."
 - a. "Burn" as used in **1CO 7:9** refers to sexual passion.
c/w **ROM 1:27; PRO 6:27**.
 - b. Fire contained in the hearth is a good servant; fire started elsewhere becomes a merciless consuming master.
 - (2) Sexual attraction and passion are not of themselves sinful.
 - (3) Sexual arousal and release with someone of the opposite sex are God-ordained natural uses. **ROM 1:26-27**.
 - (4) It is sexual activity with someone outside of marriage that defiles a person.
HEB 13:4 ct/w GEN 34:1-2.
- 3. Although sexual purity is mandatory (**1TH 4:3-4**), marriage is not.
 - A. It was not sin that our example and apostle (Paul) was single. **1CO 7:8; 9:5**.
 - B. Jesus Christ never married in the flesh.
 - C. Therefore if there was intended to be a continual universal "Dominion Mandate" based upon texts like **GEN 1:28; 9:1, 7; PSA 127:3-5**, etc., it would seem that Jesus Christ and Paul were delinquent in that regard.
 - (1) We are under a New Testament which takes precedence over any previous laws or testaments.
 - (2) Where is the Dominion Mandate to fill and subdue the natural earth in the N.T.?
 - (3) A general pattern of Scripture is that things natural are/were precursors and models of things spiritual. **1CO 15:44-49**.
 - a. A spiritual "Dominion Mandate" was given to the Apostles.
MAT 28:18-20; MAR 16:15.
 - b. The Apostles were quite successful in filling (replenishing) the earth spiritually.
ACT 5:28; 17:6; COL 1:6, 23.
- 4. Paul advised about the possibility, legitimacy and advantages of celibate life.
1CO 7:7-9, 25-40.
 - A. Marriage comes with its own set of troubles in the flesh. **v.27**.
 - B. Marriage affects one's freedom to please God. **vs.32-35**.
 - C. Paul elsewhere advised young women to marry to prevent corruption. **1TI 5:14-15**.
 - D. Paul certainly wasn't by his advice forbidding marriage. **1TI 4:1-3; 1CO 9:5**.
 - E. Paul noted that celibacy is not a requirement but a gift of God only some are given. **vs.7, 37**.
 - (1) Some can contain. **LUK 2:36-37**.
 - (2) Some cannot contain. **vs.9, 36**.
 - (3) Some hot; some not.
- 5. Jesus Christ made an observation similar to Paul's in **MAT 19:10-12**.
 - A. Eunuch: "A castrated person of the male sex; also, such a person employed as a harem attendant, or in Oriental courts and under the Roman emperors, charged with important affairs of state."
 - B. The Greek word translated *eunuch* denoted "a castrated person (such being employed in Oriental bed chambers); by extension an impotent or unmarried man; by implication a chamberlain (state officer)." (Strong's Greek Dictionary).
 - C. The disciples were tweaked by Jesus' restriction on Mosaic divorce laws (**vs.4-8**) and so said,

"If the case be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

- (1) In response, Jesus said, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (**v.11**).
 - (2) The implication is that marriage is not the only estate for men but most men are not fitted for what he goes on to describe.
- D. Jesus speaks of three categories of eunuchs here; the first two are involuntary and the last voluntary.
- (1) Some are so born from their mothers' wombs. This could include genetic or birth defects or possibly damage during childbirth.
 - (2) Some are made eunuchs of men. This would involve castration and was no doubt the fate of some of the descendants of Hezekiah. **ISA 39:7**.
 - (3) Some made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.
 - a. Some have supposed that this is justification for self-castration to avoid sexual impurity.
 - b. Some have wondered, "Could Paul have done this to himself?" If so, how would that square with his statements that he had power to lead about a wife (**1CO 9:5**) and that a wife must be rendered conjugal love? **1CO 7:3**.
 - c. Paul flatly taught against the idea of ascetic, outward operations for purposes of sanctification. **ROM 2:28-29; COL 2:20-23**.
 - i. Israel and her priests were not to cut their flesh, a heathen practice. **LEV 19:28; 21:5; DEU 14:1 c/w 1KI 18:28; JER 41:5**.
 - ii. Self-mutilation is indicative of lunacy. **MAR 5:5**.
 - iii. In an age of confusion about sex, sexual identity, inverted morals and ideals, etc., a tragic Body Modification Cult has developed which even includes penectomy, orchidectomy (castration), mastectomy and clitorectomy.
 - iv. Clitorectomy is a not uncommon practice amongst Muslims to "help" keep women sexually pure.
 - d. Paul recommended marriage, not castration, to avoid fornication. **1CO 7:2**.
 - e. Paul emphasized conscious restraint through mortification of sin and self. **COL 3:5**.
 - i. He would "keep under [his] body and bring it into subjection" (**1CO 9:27**), not mutilate his body for lack of subjection.
 - ii. Sexual sins come from the heart (**MAT 15:19**), so if surgical amputation is to be a successful means to spiritual victory, it would seem that the source, not the outlet, is where the cutting must be done.
 - f. Paul was one who made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.
 - i. He was "able to receive it..." (**MAT 19:12**).
 - ii. He had the gift of containment. **1CO 7:7-9, 37**.
 - iii. He was a practical, not an anatomical eunuch.
 - iv. I have known people who had such a gift.

What to Seek

1. The assumption is that a seeker is desiring a good relationship / marriage. **ECC 9:9**.
 - A. No sensible godly person has a goal of a miserable marriage to a disappointment.
 - B. Yet sometimes sensible godly people end up in miserable marriages to disappointments.

- (1) This may be because a spouse did not show his/her colors before marriage.
 - (2) This may be because a spouse did show his/her colors before marriage but the seeker was blind to the obvious.
 - (3) This may be because a seeker saw the obvious but planned on reforming him/her after marriage. Watch out for this one!
 - a. Flaws seen before marriage tend to magnify after marriage.
 - b. Apply **LUK 13:6-9** *before* commitment.
 - (4) This may be because a spouse underwent a serious life-event after marriage which changed their character.
 - (5) This may be because a seeker was looking for the wrong thing to start with and got exactly what he/she desired. **PRO 20:17 c/w PSA 106:15.**
 - (6) Of these above five reasons, #2, #3, and #5 are problems with discretion. Remember how importantly discretion and discernment figure in a believer's life! **PRO 2:11 c/w LUK 14:28-33.**
 - a. Lot was a righteous, godly man who for lack of good judgment brought much misery upon himself. **2PE 2:7-8.**
 - b. Abram, in a moment of poor judgment, took Hagar as his wife and produced a troubling Ishmael. **GEN 16:4, 12.**
 - c. How often have believers voted for poor public leaders because of romantic emotion-led surrender to a candidate's supposed faith without due regard to his known character, policy and public record?
 - (7) One other reason that an otherwise sensible, godly person might end up in a miserable marriage to a disappointment is because they are deceived into the "easy in, easy out" divorce mentality which makes marriage as easy to get out of as a Wal-Mart purchase.
 - a. This thinking corrupts the seeking process since no discretion is needed.
 - b. Marriage is meant to be a commitment until death. **ROM 7:1-3.**
2. The seeking process is regulated by one's value-set.
- A. If someone is fleshly-oriented, flesh will be his/her goal. **ROM 8:5.**
- (1) Do you desire a mate that primarily will satisfy your carnal instincts (lusts, emotions, power)?
 - (2) Do you desire a mate that primarily satisfies your ego?
 - (3) Do you desire a mate who will primarily enrich you materially?
 - (4) Do you look for outward beauty more than inward beauty?
 - a. Would you down-play the value of inward beauty if your dream-boat lacked it?
 - b. Would you only be satisfied with someone that has both?
 - c. Would you only be satisfied with someone who has inward beauty AND rates a "10" outwardly?
 - d. Many years ago a brother in Christ was soliciting my thoughts and prayers about acquiring a wife. He thought his happiness depended on a Christian "Barbie" and the godly Christian women he knew didn't meet that standard. I asked him, "If you were blind, would a sub-Barbie Christian make you happy?" He said, "Yes." I told him that I would begin praying that God would make him blind so he could be happy. He got the point.
 - (5) Do you place little or no value on the faith (or lack of it) of a potential mate?
 - (6) Criteria such as these fall under the censure of **1JO 2:16** and **GAL 6:7-8.**
 - (7) A relationship entered into according to these values is not only displeasing to God but is virtually guaranteed to be a disappointing failure.
- B. A major and common error in judgment in seeking a mate is being led primarily by the sight

of the eyes.

- (1) This is particularly a problem with men who are by nature more aroused by sight.
- (2) God has put within man a natural desire stimulated by the sight of the eyes which itself is not wrong. **DEU 21:10-11.**
 - a. So much is this the case that Canticles bemoans the young woman whose physical endowments were limited. **CANT 8:8-10.**
 - b. A single man must be very judicious in governing the desire of the eyes so as to:
 - i. reserve the enjoyment of the female body for marriage.
 - ii. not be captured by the lusty, sensual beauty of the immodest woman. **PRO 6:23-26.**
 - iii. not be lead to forget that beauty may be only skin deep and if so, it is not worth much. **PRO 11:22; 31:30.**

- (3) Samson was one of the heroes of faith (**HEB 11:32**) but consider how his life was plagued by the consequences of decisions made according to the lust of the eyes.
 - a. He *saw* a Philistine woman of Timnath. **JDG 14:1-3.**
 - b. She pleased him well. She satisfied his carnal desires.
 - c. But she was of the idolatrous Philistines and should not have even been considered as a possible wife.
 - d. He sought not the counsel of his parents but rather told them what he had already decided upon. This is the arrogant pride of life in action.
 - e. She betrayed him in short order (**vs. 15-18**). She was hardly the character of a virtuous woman. **PRO 31:11-12.**
 - f. The rest of Samson's life was characterized by eye-oriented, sensual judgment until the Philistines put out his eyes. **JDG 16:21.**

C. Jacob preferred Rachel over Leah because of her looks. **GEN 29:17.**

- (1) Later developments indicated that Leah was God's preference.
- (2) Leah outlived Rachel.
- (3) Leah and her handmaid bore twice as many children as Rachel and her maid.
- (4) Leah bore Levi through whom the O.T. priesthood came. **GEN 29:34.**
- (5) Leah bore Judah through whom the Messiah came. **GEN 29:35.**
- (6) Leah was buried in the cave of Machpelah beside Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah (**GEN 49:30-31**) while Rachel was buried along the way to Bethlehem. **GEN 48:7.**

3. Character is infinitely more important than looks or any other false or weak standard. Virtuous character is durable and the lack of it becomes unendurable.

A. The most important character aspect to look for is an evident like precious faith. God, Christ, His church and the truth of Holy Scripture should figure highly in one's selection of a spouse.

- (1) A divided household is unlikely to thrive. **AMO 3:3; MAT 12:25.**
- (2) Scripture is prolific with warnings to believers to not become entangled with unbelievers.
 - a. Abraham rejected Canaanite women as possibilities for Isaac. **GEN 24:3-4.**
 - b. Israel was forbidden to marry Canaanites because they would turn the Israelites from God. **DEU 7:3-4 c/w JDG 3:6-7.**
 - c. All his wisdom did not save Solomon from being turned away from God through marrying unbelievers. **1KI 11:1-8 c/w NEH 13:26.**
 - d. The preceding O.T. verses are written for our learning (**ROM 15:4**) but will we learn the obvious lessons from them?
 - e. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (**1CO 15:33**).

- f. The principle of avoiding an "unequal yoke" is seen in **2CO 6:14-18**.
 - i. This is not strictly addressing marriage.
 - ii. The context here is church-related. The church is not to pollute the membership with unbelievers or the service with the elements of false religion.
 - iii. To not qualify the "unequal yoking" by its context would also forbid a believer from working with an unbeliever in the world.
1TI 6:1 c/w 1CO 5:9-11.
- g. **1CO 7:39** is not an absolute forbidding of believers marrying unbelievers.
 - i. It does not say, "she is at liberty to be married to whom she will only if he is of like precious faith."
 - ii. **EPH 6:1**. Are children only to obey their parents if their parents are believers?
 - AA. Or, are children to obey "in the Lord" their parents whether they are believers or not?
 - BB. "Sit up straight and be quiet" should be obeyed by children of believers or unbelievers.
 - CC. Submission and service to human authority should be in general rendered in the Lord, or as to the Lord. **vs.5-8.**
 - iii. **COL 3:18**. Is a wife only supposed to submit to her husband if he shares her faith?
 - AA. Believing wives are to submit even to unbelieving husbands. **1PE 3:1.**
 - BB. As long as her submission to her husband does not demand her disobedience to God, she is doing so "in the Lord."
 - iv. A widow who is a believer (**1CO 7:39**) may remarry.
 - AA. She must do so "in the Lord."
 - BB. She may not abandon her faith to get married. c/w **1TI 5:11-15.**
 - CC. She may not marry someone who is still legally bound in marriage to another woman. This would be adultery which is certainly not "in the Lord."
- h. That a believer *may* marry an unbeliever is one thing. That a believer *should* marry an unbeliever is entirely a different story.
 - i. Not everything that is lawful is expedient (conducive to advantage in general, or to a definite purpose; fit, proper, or suitable to the circumstances of the case). **1CO 10:23.**
 - ii. Liberty is not to be used for an occasion to the flesh. **GAL 5:13.**
 - iii. The many O.T. proscriptions against marrying unbelievers have valid principles that should not be lightly discarded.
 - iv. The many O.T. and N.T. warnings about the corrupting nature of companionship and communication with an unbelieving world should not be lightly discarded.
 - v. The many O.T. and N.T. warnings about the likelihood of a divided house's fall should not be lightly discarded.
 - vi. The many known personal examples of troubled or failed marriages where there is not a shared precious faith should not be lightly discarded.
 - vii. The many known personal examples of a believer abandoning Christ for the sake of an unbelieving mate should not be lightly discarded.
 - viii. *Licitus perimus omnes*----Lawful things undo us.

- ix. Discretion preserves (**PRO 2:11**) but the lack of it destroys. **PRO 13:23**.
 - x. Prudence and circumspection are as critical in the area of mate-seeking or marriage as in any other. **PRO 22:3; EPH 5:15**.
 - i. A common faith is not a guarantee of marital compatibility.
 - i. If such were the case there would be no need for a rule of separation and reconciliation. **1CO 7:10-11**.
 - ii. The likelihood of someone being a good match for a believer is also much dependent on whether that person's personal character is a positive concomitant to their faith.
 - iii. A common vision for work, family, church responsibility, etc. is important.
 - iv. Sometimes even believers who are the closest of committed acquaintances may end up separating because of differences over something like duty. **ACT 15:36-40**.
 - v. Remember **AMO 3:3**.
- B. Singles should be mindful of the fact that outward attractions are a poor basis for seeking or snagging a long-term mate.
- (1) Ladies: if the driving force of your attraction to a man is his looks, consider:
 - a. His looks may not get him a good job but some smarts and diligence will.
 - b. He won't look very good to you for long if he lacks good character. Absalom was a "hunk" (**2SAM 14:25**) but his morals were junk. **2SAM 12:11; 16:22**.
 - c. His looks may not last. If there wasn't much else about him that attracted you to him, then where will you be?
 - d. Similar observations may be made about a man's wealth, fame, occupation, etc. (**PRO 15:16-17; 17:1**). Abigail had a wealthy, influential husband but a bitter marriage. **1SAM 25:2-3**.
 - (2) Ladies: if your main method of attracting a man is by your looks or sensuality, consider:
 - a. Looks or sensuality will not keep him long if you lack character.
 - b. If you are dressing in an overtly sensual manner to catch his eye, you are also catching the eye of every unprincipled lout imaginable.
 - c. If looks or sensuality are what he is primarily looking for, what do you think the chances are that he will not at some point be looking at someone else?
 - d. The quality of the mate depends on the quality of the bait.
 - e. It is for your own well-being and happiness that modest apparel (**1TI 2:9**) and the inward beauty of a meek and quiet spirit (**1PE 3:3-4**) are commanded.
 - (3) Men: if you are primarily looking for a woman who turns you on sensually, consider:
 - a. How long will your relationship last if she is disfigured in an accident, or if she gets fat or age takes away her beauty?
 - b. How long will your relationship last if she is clueless about keeping a house, or cannot be trusted with a checkbook or if she is an incessant nagger or fighter? **PRO 12:4; 21:9, 19; 27:15**.
 - (4) Men: if your looks, wealth or athleticism are the best that you have to offer a mate, consider:
 - a. Are you attracting a shallow woman whose interest in you will disappear if your looks or health go away or your wealth grows wings? **PRO 23:5**.
 - b. If you lack good character, how long do you think you will love her? How long do you think you will keep her?
 - (5) Men and women alike should be wary of the "deer hunting syndrome," where someone

is only wearing camouflage until the game is bagged. Keep your eyes open for signs of serious character flaws.

- a. A person's countenance (bearing, demeanour, comportment; behaviour, conduct) can reveal what clever words and camouflage will not.
ISA 3:9; GEN 31:1-2; PRO 6:17; 24:30-32.
- b. "When people show you who they are, BELIEVE THEM." (Maya Angelou)
- c. How does he/she react to being crossed? Does the countenance default to dark brooding, furrowed eyebrows, red face, sharp rejoinder, etc.?
- d. How does he/she react to disappointment, frustration or pressure? Do they resort to anger, excess food or drink or other addictive behaviors?
- e. How does he/she relate to authority? Do they have no respect for rules of the road or police? Do they diss their boss? Do they honor parents or not?
- f. Is his favorite topic himself?
- g. How does he treat his sisters or a waitress---respectfully or not?
- h. What does their yard look like? their room? their car? See **PRO 24:30-32.**
- i. How much does pleasure figure in his/her routine? Is work or duty an agonizing interference to be endured? **1TI 5:6; 2TI 3:4.**
- j. How do they treat animals in their care (**PRO 12:10**)? Are they neglected or treated inhumanely?
- k. Does he/she compromise principle to avoid discomfort or gain advantage?
- l. Does he/she handle money wisely or just spend it (**PRO 21:20**)? or worse, borrow it for personal purchases (**PRO 22:7**)? Do they have to have the fanciest vehicle or all of the latest techno-gadgets?
- m. Does she dress alluringly for other men or flirt with them while courted by you?
- n. Does he/she tend to have an excuse for avoiding duty? **PRO 26:13, 16; 20:4.**
- o. Does she make it obvious that her career must come first or that being a home-maker is demeaning?
- p. Does he/she ever spend time in God's word or in prayer?
- q. How does he/she dress?
 - i. One's apparel can send a message as to the state of one's heart and mind.
 - ii. Bad or sinful character actually may have a uniform. **PRO 7:10.**
 - iii. Immodest apparel is indicative of carnality or rebellion. **1TI 2:9.**

C. The following are some characteristics of a fool. Someone who matches up with too many of these descriptors would be a poor choice for a mate (unless you are wanting a fool for a mate). If you are too much like this, what are your chances of attracting a sensible, godly mate?

- (1) **PRO 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- (2) **PRO 10:18** He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.
- (3) **PRO 10:23** It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.
- (4) **PRO 12:1** Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.
- (5) **PRO 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.
- (6) **PRO 12:16** A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.
- (7) **PRO 13:1** A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

- (8) **PRO 14:3** In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
 - (9) **PRO 17:24** Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.
 - (10) **PRO 18:2** A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.
 - (11) **PRO 18:6** A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.
 - (12) **PRO 18:7** A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.
 - (13) **PRO 18:13** He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.
 - (14) **PRO 19:1** Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.
 - (15) **PRO 28:26** He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
 - (16) **PRO 29:11** A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.
- D. Here is a partial list of positive character traits that would speak well of a potential mate:
- (1) *Fear of God.* If that person has no fear of God, what is he/she going to do when out of the sight of other's eyes or your eyes? Is that person even regenerate? **ROM 3:18.**
 - (2) *Love of God.* Does that person love the Lord Jesus Christ with lips only (**MAR 7:6**) or by dedication also (**JOH 14:21**)? If not by dedication, then how can you be sure of the love they profess for you?
 - (3) *Faith.* Does that person believe the testimony of Scripture (**ROM 10:17**)? Do they even believe that there is a preserved Scripture? How can they trust the promises of Scripture if they are not settled on whether they even have it? Is their faith a proven faith? **JAM 2:17.**
 - (4) *Hope.* Does he/she cling to an expectation of a better future? Does that expectation transcend the present troubles and corruptions? **ROM 8:24-25.**
 - (5) *Charity.* Does he/she accord with true charity as described in **1CO 13:4-7**?
 - (6) *Integrity* (The condition of having no part or element taken away or wanting....3. In moral sense, a. Unimpaired moral state; freedom from moral corruption; innocence, sinlessness. b. Soundness of moral principle; the character of virtue, esp. in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty, sincerity). Is he/she a person of principle like Job (**JOB 2:3; 27:5**) or a folder like Esau (**HEB 12:16**) or the stony ground or thorny-ground hearer of the word (**MAT 13:20-22**)? See **PRO 19:1.**
 - (7) *Respect.* Does he/she respect others' persons, liberties, consciences and property? Does he/she have the respect of others?
 - (8) *Chaste* (Pure from unlawful sexual intercourse; continent, virtuous). Does that person strive to maintain personal purity? And if not, when do you think that is going to end? Note **TIT 2:5; 1PE 3:2.**
 - (9) *Discreet.* Does he/she have sense enough to make sound judgments in areas of morality or liberty? Can they restrain speech when appropriate to do so?
 - (10) *Submission to Authority.* If she scorns parental rule or civil rule or Scripture's rule, who do you think, O man, is going to end up being the head of the household? If he scorns parental rule, civil rule or an employer's rule, what are the chances, O woman, that he will limit himself in the way he treats you? If he is so unruly he is likely to lead you and your children into trouble.
 - (11) *Decisiveness.* Particularly important with men, the positive practice of this trait gives a woman a sense of security. It stands in contrast to the instability of double-

mindedness. **JAM 1:8.**

- (12) *Diligence*. Is he/she a good worker, self-motivated, etc., or do they constantly need to be pushed, watched or chastened? **PRO 10:4; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 21:5; 22:29.**
- (13) *Good Report*. Does he/she have a good reputation and if not, how is that going to help you? **PRO 22:1; ECC 7:1.**
- E. Character traits that should flash warnings to a sensible Christian would include: Wrath, Fierceness, Sloth, Materialism, Carnality, Immaturity, Unrepentance, Unbelief, Complaining/Whining, Nagging, Addictions, Intemperance, Drunkenness, Procrastination, Instability, Pride, Boasting, Self-Centered, Self-Willed, Conceit, Arrogance, Deceitfulness, Hardheartedness, Lack of Natural Affection, Unjust, Unmerciful, Disrespectful, Ingratitude, Covetousness, Incontinence, Envy, Recklessness, etc.
- F. It is unrealistic to expect that a potential mate score 100% in character traits. But it is equally unrealistic to ignore the potential of bad character traits, and especially dangerous character traits.
 - (1) Someone can be a good mate even with some character flaws but choose wisely.
 - (2) Someone can be a good mate without being your ideal mate. Set the bar too high and expect the pickin's to be few. What of your personal preferences, dreams, hobbies, etc. would you be willing to set aside for a good marriage to a good person?
 - (3) Men especially should remember that Jesus Christ did not choose His bride and love her because she was perfect. **EPH 5:25-27.**

Where to Seek

1. This section treats of seeking in action and assumes this to be primarily done by the man.
 - A. Abraham ordered his servant to seek a wife for Isaac. **GEN 24:4.**
 - B. Jacob sought a wife amongst the daughters of Laban. **GEN 28:2; 29:1-20.**
 - C. **PRO 18:22** and **1CO 7:27** assume that the man is doing the seeking.
 - D. Yet, virtuous Ruth was also quite pro-active. **RUT 3:1-11.**
 - (1) There is a difference between Ruth's circumstances and those of Rebekah or Rachel and Leah.
 - (2) Ruth was a stranger in Israel and a widow and therefore not under the family headship of a man.
 - (3) Rebekah, Rachel and Leah were living under their fathers' respective care and headship when they were "found."
 - (4) Saints today may want to explore the merits of Rebekah's, Rachel's and Leah's condition over against Dinah's "liberated" lifestyle. **GEN 34:1-2.**
2. Consider the circumstances under which Rebekah was found for Isaac. **GEN 24:1-28.**
 - A. There was a place NOT to look for a good wife for Isaac. **v.3.**
 - B. There was contrarily a place to look for a wife for Isaac where there would be a more reasonable expectation of a positive outcome. **v.4.**
 - C. Abraham was adhering by faith to the order of God for his own situation and therefore could expect that God would direct and attend the search. **v.7.**
 - D. The woman would have a say in the matter! **v.8 c/w NUM 36:6; 1CO 7:39.**
 - E. There was appropriate prayer for guidance that flowed out of faith and obedience. **vs.12-14 c/w PSA 37:4-5; PRO 3:5-6.**
 - F. Abraham's servant looked for a virtuous woman in a place of duty, not a place of idleness, carnality, materialism or rebellion (**vs.13-14**). Many ill-fated relationships have begun by

someone *looking for love in all the wrong places*.

- (1) Think twice before spouse-shopping in a bar, club or whorehouse.
 - (2) Think twice before spouse-shopping in a glossy magazine.
 - (3) Think twice (maybe thrice) before spouse-shopping in a wild charismatic church.
 - (4) Don't even think about spouse-shopping amongst married people.
- G. Rebekah was found as one who was chaste, dutiful, diligent, honoring her father and a model of charity by virtue of **1CO 13:5**.
- H. This venture was successful for one who was "...in the way..." (**GEN 24:27**), and so was led "in the right way..." (**GEN 24:48**).
- I. Further comments about providential leading are to follow later in this series.
3. With "like precious faith" (**2PE 1:1**) being a top priority in seeking a mate, single believers may consider the following options (any of which should be pursued while walking faithfully and prayerfully).
- A. Look around oneself in one's own church family. Any availables? Any potential future availables worth waiting for?
 - B. Look into the possibilities in another church of like precious faith.
 - C. In the everyday course of living, be watchful for someone with good character and work towards their conversion.
 - (1) Caution is the byword here since emotions of the heart may deceive the heart of either person and overrule good judgment. Less-than-genuine conversions can result.
 - (2) Remember that the course of everyday living generated Samson's misguided attraction to a woman of Timnath (**JDG 14:1**) and Delilah (**JDG 16:4**). *Samsonite relationships come with a lot of baggage*.
 - D. One could even (WITH EXTREME CAUTION) consider online matchmaking services such as *eharmony.com* or others with a Biblical/Christian basis.
4. A seeker (especially a younger one) would do well to consider the counsel or recommendation of a godly parent, minister, etc. **PRO 15:22**.
- A. A good portion of the Book of Proverbs is Solomon's counsel to his son as to what to look for in a spouse, what kind of woman to avoid, and where NOT to look.
 - B. The voice of age and experience (**JOB 12:12**) is worth considering.

Falling in Love?

1. This section seeks to strike a balance between the extremes of a mechanical, feelingless approach to marriage and that of a foolish emotion-led surrender to the desires of one's untrustworthy heart.
2. Countless songs, poems, plays, books and movies have been devoted to the seemingly overwhelming compulsion of sensual attraction or romantic "love."
 - A. Humans have genuine emotional needs that distinguish them from the brute creation. It is futile to pretend that sensual love is not one of those needs. Normal people want to love and be loved in this sense.
 - B. It is a compelling force and the Bible recognizes this.
 - (1) The Song of Solomon is a (sometimes candid) treatise on the deep emotional and sensual love that Solomon and his wife shared (which wife out of hundreds is somewhat of a mystery). **SON 8:6**.
 - (2) Jacob's love of Rachel made seven years seem like a few days. **GEN 29:20**.
 - (3) The attraction generated by outward attributes is undeniable.
 - a. Men naturally are attracted to beautiful women. **DEU 21:11**.

- b. Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes. **EZE 24:16.**
 - c. David and Solomon had ruddy good looks. **1SAM 16:12; SON 5:10.**
 - (4) The compulsion of natural attraction can easily overwhelm good sense and manners and is therefore to be governed as cautiously as fire. **PRO 6:27.**
 - (5) Sensual compulsion is "love" that can easily degenerate into unhealthy obsession if not abandoned vigorously (**2SAM 13:1-2, 11-14 c/w 2TI 2:22**). This is animal lust masquerading as love and it is characteristic of a culture ruled by its loins.
 - C. Knowing that emotional and sensual attraction are natural compulsions is not a license to yield oneself entirely to their forces.
 - (1) Believers are to rule their desires, not to be ruled by them. This is the spiritual gift of temperance. **GAL 5:23.**
 - (2) Temperance: "The practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, passion, desire, etc.; rational self-restraint."
 - (3) Wise believers will walk in liberty and mastery, not in slavery to natural inclinations. **1CO 9:27.**
 - (4) "Falling in love" sounds romantic and certainly appeals to the flesh.
 - a. The cautious will consider that *falling* accords with *stumbling* and *injury*. Many who *fall* into a relationship end up injured emotionally, physically and/or sometimes spiritually.
 - b. Marriage is a relationship to be entered into with eyes wide open and afterwards is preserved by keeping them half-shut.
3. The heart is the seat of emotions (**LEV 26:16; DEU 28:47; 6:5**) and the fount of thoughts and intents. **HEB 4:12.**
- A. The heart is deceivable, deceitful and wicked by nature (**ISA 44:20; JER 17:9**) and therefore is not to be trusted as an accurate gauge of what is best. **PRO 28:26.**
 - B. The world says, "Follow your heart."
 - C. God says, "Guide your heart" (**PRO 23:19**).
 - D. Considering that the course of our life is impacted and determined by our thoughts, intents and emotions, it is apparent why Solomon says that out of the *heart* are the "issues of life" (**PRO 4:23**).
 - (1) When our heart is properly guided, Christ is dwelling therein and the issues of our life will be determined by Him.
 - (2) When our heart is leading us, we are its slave, not Christ's servants.
 - (3) Our heart's direction is according to our treasure. **LUK 12:34.**
 - (4) How much of you is led by Christ through His word and how much of you is led by emotions?
 - (5) How much of you is led by emotions which masquerade as the leadings of Christ?

Providential Leading

- 1. This section treats of the believer being led by God to the fulfillment of good desires and intents.
- 2. **PRO 3:5-6** "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
- 3. We have already considered the account of Abraham's servant who prayed for guidance and a sign and was led of the Lord to the house of Abraham's brethren to seek a wife for Isaac. **GEN 24.**
 - A. This account is sometimes appealed to as a valid way for believers today to decide upon a mate.

- B. The well-intended single person therefore prays for a mate (good!) and God's guidance according to **PRO 3:5-6** (good!), trusts God to do so (good!), maybe seeks a sign (not good!), and then assumes that whatever occurs is God's decreed answer (not good!).
 - C. Feelings, impressions, circumstances and coincidences are often relied upon as the leadings of the Lord in making decisions. This is not a Biblical approach to being led of the Lord.
4. We understand that God's will for believers is revealed in the Scriptures. **MAT 4:4 c/w ISA 8:20**
- A. Consider that feelings certainly have no bearing on interpreting Scripture, which reveals the will of God.
 - B. If feelings have no authority in interpreting the will of God expressed in Scripture, why should they have authority in deciding the will of God not expressed in Scripture?
5. Relying on circumstances to determine good or evil can be very misleading. In fact, it is downright pagan. **ACT 28:3-6.**
- A. Among circumstances are open doors, opportunities to do things.
 - B. Do open doors indicate what God specifically wants done? Or are open doors opportunities that God permits leaving us to decide whether we avail ourselves of them or not?
 - C. Not all open doors are pathways to good things.
 - (1) The door was open to Jonah to go to Tarshish when God commanded him to go to Nineveh. **JON 1:1-3.**
 - (2) Lot happened to be in the rich area of Sodom and Gomorrah when he needed to make a decision as to where to live. What an opportunity! **GEN 13:8-13 c/w 2PE 2:7-8.**
 - (3) Some open doors lead to elevator shafts. Beware!
 - D. Rather than circumstances being messengers telling us the will of God, they are rather factors to be weighed in making decisions.
 - (1) They do not determine right or wrong, good choices v. bad choices. Scripture alone does that.
 - (2) It is not a matter of determining the will of God from circumstances. It is rather a matter of applying the will of God revealed in Scripture to our circumstances.
6. Is it appropriate for believers today to ask God for a sign in seeking His leading and direction in a decision concerning anything, including a mate?
- A. Note: the seeking of signs is not necessarily indicative of someone who is humbly seeking God's mind for direction. **MAT 12:38-39.**
 - B. Consider that account of Abraham's servant's quest for a wife for Isaac. **GEN 24.**
 - (1) The sign Abraham's servant gave to God was this: the woman who would not only give drink to the servant when he asked for it, but who would also give drink to the camels, would be the one God had appointed for Isaac. **vs. 12-14.**
 - (2) This experience is not the norm for believers. After all, who sends out servants to seek brides for their sons?
 - (3) God made a covenant promise to Abraham to multiply his seed through Isaac. This promise *required* that Isaac have a wife!
 - a. Observe how the account refers back to God's covenant with Abraham, which formed the basis for the success of the mission. **GEN 24:7, 27, 60.**
 - b. God does not make such a promise to every believer.
 - c. Remember, in **1CO 7** Paul clearly shows that there may be advantages to believers not marrying at all.
 - d. When Paul gave instructions in **1CO 7** regarding marriage, he did not teach them to invoke such a sign as this in seeking an *appointed* mate.
 - (4) Even when the woman complied with the sign the servant had given, the matter was not concluded in his mind (**GEN 24:21**). He still inquired further to determine if she met

Abraham's requirements. **GEN 24:7, 23.**

- (5) Even when it was determined that the woman's background was acceptable, the matter was still not concluded until her father, brother, and ultimately she agreed to the marriage. **GEN 24:49, 57-59.**
 - (6) Therefore, the servant apparently viewed the giving of this sign as a highly unusual thing, especially since that alone did not decide the matter.
 - (7) God fulfilling a covenant promise to Abraham regarding Isaac is not the same as a single person in our church seeking for and deciding upon someone to marry.
 1. No person in our church is being used to produce the Messianic seed line culminating in the generation of Jesus Christ. **MAT 1:1.**
 2. *Things different are not the same.*
7. What about Ruth's "hap?" **RUT 2:1-3.**
- A. Ruth's story is a good example of God's providential direction of the faithful and meek.
 - B. Ruth experienced the promise of **PRO 3:5-6.**
 - (1) She was indeed a woman of faith, trusting God and acknowledging Him. **RUT 1:16-17.**
 - (2) She was a virtuous woman (**RUT 3:11**): identifying with the true God at all costs, humble, industrious, submissive to a parent, and "stedfastly minded" (**RUT 1:18**) in things which were right and good.
 - (3) She was in the path of righteousness and so led of the Lord. **PSA 23:3; PRO 8:20.**
 - C. Even with such wonderful providence for her help, there were still qualifying factors which were in play.
 - (1) Ruth was not "rolling dice" in prayer beforehand and then naively concluding that whoever she happened to end up working for that day would be automatically her destined future spouse.
 - (2) That Boaz was a very eligible candidate was only later confirmed by Naomi. **RUT 2:19-20.**
 - (3) Ruth attended to the counsel of her immediate parent. **RUT 2:22-3:6.**
 - (4) The law of God concerning the qualification of a kinsman-redeemer was factored in. **RUT 3:9-13.**
 - (5) Thus, the circumstance was made available by God's leading but there was still a responsibility to exercise discretion in consideration of wise counsel and the law of God.
 - D. God's providential leading towards good things is in accord with the honored instruction of His law. **PSA 25:8-9; 32:8; ISA 48:17.**
 - E. Those who reject the knowledge of God's law in favor of their own ideas will be led of the Lord to delusions. **2TH 2:10-12.**

Walking Purely and Chastely

1. A study like this would be incomplete without addressing the sexual aspect.
 - A. Next to the instinct for survival, the sex drive is the most powerful force of human nature. It is part of life with which Christians must deal and it is best that they do so from a Biblical perspective.
 - B. Scripture has much to say about the topic, both positively and negatively.
 - C. The Law of Moses has numerous graphic references to sex, body parts and bodily functions.
 - (1) Besides routine Levitical instruction from that law, it was to be read in the hearing of all Israel every seven years. **DEU 31:9-13.**
 - (2) This would have been what was read before all the people in Nehemiah's day and

expounded distinctly with primary definitions. **NEH 8:8.**

(3) All scripture is profitable. **2TI 3:16.**

D. Paul did not shun to declare "...all the counsel of God" (**ACT 20:27**).

2. Clearly, the Bible teaches that fornication is forbidden. **GAL 5:19; EPH 5:3.**

A. The importance of proper understanding on this is evident.

(1) An informal survey at Kent State University asked college students their impressions about the word "immorality." Frequent answers were "Vietnam War," "air pollution," etc.

a. When asked, "What is sexual immorality?," answers like "having sex with someone you don't love," or "having more than one boyfriend at a time," or "one-night stands" were offered.

b. None of the respondents said, "sex before marriage."

(2) A few years ago a survey conducted by eight denominations polled 1438 'evangelical' teens.

a. Nearly half of them had already been sexually active.

b. Only one-third of them would brand sex outside of marriage as morally unacceptable.

B. **Fornication:** "Voluntary sexual intercourse between a man (in restricted use, an unmarried man) and an unmarried woman. In Scripture, extended to adultery."

(1) **Intercourse:** "Sexual connexion."

(2) **Connexion / connection:** "The action of connecting or joining together."

(3) These definitions forbid all sexual interplay between unmarried people; fornication cannot be limited to penile-vaginal penetration.

C. To deny that Scripture proscribes against unmarried sexual intercourse is to deny the plain definition of "fornication." The importance of a non-subjective word should stand out here.

D. In Scripture, fornication also extends to sodomy, adultery and incest. **JUDE 1:7; 1CO 5:1.**

E. In the law of Moses, a penalty was assigned to a man who had sex with a woman before marriage. **DEU 22:28-29.**

(1) Betroth: "To engage (a woman) in a contract of marriage."

(2) Note the contractual nature of the relationship. It speaks of being bound by covenant and commitment.

(3) Those who engaged in premarital sex were obliged to marry until death separated them.

(4) If a woman whose virginity had been voluntarily violated chose to marry another man and the latter discovered that she was not a virgin, serious penalties applied.

DEU 22:13-21.

a. Such promiscuity was considered whoredom and punishable by death.

b. "To play the whore" means "to commit fornication or adultery."

F. Even before Moses' law, premarital sexual intercourse was deemed wrong. The man who deflowered a virgin was considered to have defiled her.

(1) Defile: "To render morally foul or polluted; to destroy the ideal purity of; to corrupt, taint, sully."

(2) This is what happened to Jacob's daughter, Dinah. **GEN 34:1-2.**

(3) Mark how premarital "defilement" contrasts with liberated sexual expression within marriage. **HEB 13:4.**

(4) Sexual activity is not the problem. Bad timing and the wrong partners are where the law is violated.

(5) Mark how the Holy Spirit makes it plain that what Shechem did with Dinah was

wrong. **GEN 34:6-7.**

- G. If premarital sex was permissible, then what sense could be made of Paul's words in **1CO 7:1-2, 8-9.**
- (1) Note that God does NOT prescribe premarital sex as the solution to overwhelming sexual attraction between man and woman, but MARRIAGE!
 - (2) See this again in **1CO 7:36.**
 - a. For sexual companionship, Paul says "let him do what he will...let them MARRY."
 - b. He does not say, "let him do what he will and go ahead and lie with her, and later let them marry."
3. From early adolescence the thoughts and desires of the average person will be very much preoccupied with the idea of having sexual relations with someone. This is not new nor unique to our current sexually overcharged culture.
- A. As the body grows, physical and chemical changes naturally increase this desire and having such desire should not be considered dirty or sinful. In the absence of some form of release, the tension of sexual desire can be emotionally and psychologically troubling.
 - B. As already proven, believers must wait for marriage to experience sexual intercourse so what relief from sexual tension, if any, is available?
 - (1) God has put within humans a mechanism of *involuntary* release through things like nocturnal emissions.
 - (2) Not everyone experiences these things but God has not left them without a sinless form of sexual relief.
4. Masturbation (sometimes called *autoeroticism* or *self-pleasuring*) is the only form of *voluntary* sexual release other than marriage that is not condemned in Scripture.
- A. The Argument from Silence applies.
 - B. If the Bible does not condemn it, it is not condemned. **ROM 4:15.**
 - C. Men, even godly men, have stood and do stand in condemnation of masturbation but they do so based upon their own biases, not Scripture.
 - D. However, whereas the Scripture does not condemn masturbation, it also does not directly prescribe it nor deal much with the topic. Therefore, my teaching on this topic is not intended to push anyone contrary to their conscience nor into a total preoccupation with the practice.
5. Masturbation is not, contrary to unfounded opinions, medically harmful.
- A. "Despite terrifying warnings given to young people historically, it does not cause blindness, weakness, mental retardation or any other physical problem. If it did, the entire male population and about half of females would be blind, weak, simpleminded and sick. Between 95 and 98 percent of all boys engage in this practice — and the rest have been known to lie. It is as close to being a universal behavior as is likely to occur. A lesser but still significant percentage of girls also engage in what was once called "self-gratification," or worse, "self-abuse." (Dr. James Dobson, Focus on the Family web response)
 - B. See: <http://www.focusonyourchild.com/develop/art1/A0000553.html>
6. Masturbation in and of itself is not sinful.
- A. If it is willfully done outside of a private context for erotic purposes, then it becomes an occasion to sin since Scripture limits the public exhibition of the "privy member" (**DEU 23:1**) for sexual reasons to marriage.
 - B. If it is done with unclean (morally impure or defiled, unchaste) thoughts (e.g. bestiality, sodomy, rape, incest, pedophilia, adultery), it becomes an occasion to sin because Scripture condemns such actions.
 - C. If it is done to the defrauding of a spouse's sexual due (**1CO 7:4-5**), it becomes an occasion to

sin since Scripture forbids defrauding a spouse of sexual favors.

D. If it is done without a clear conscience, it is sin inasmuch as "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (**ROM 14:22-23**).

7. Consider some texts which are misused to condemn masturbation.

A. **GEN 38:8-10.**

(1) Mark that the thing which displeased God involved the motive for Onan's spilling of seed, i.e., "lest he should give seed to his brother."

(2) The law later codified this principle that a man should raise up seed to his childless, deceased brother in **DEU 25:5-10**.

a. This shows that Judah was apparently on the right track in what he ordered Onan to do.

b. It was Onan's failure to do this that displeased the Lord.

(3) Also note that the text does not specify HOW Onan spilled his seed on the ground. It may have been masturbation or it may have been *coitus interruptus*.

(4) **LEV 15:16-18** accounts for the seed of copulation being spilled elsewhere than in a woman's vagina.

B. **1CO 6:9.** "Abusers of themselves with mankind" refers to sodomy, not masturbation. See **LEV 18:22**.

C. **MAT 5:28.** This text is sometimes brought up relative to fantasizing while masturbating.

(1) This text is expressly dealing with adultery.

(2) Adultery: "Violation of the marriage bed; the voluntary sexual intercourse of a married person with one of the opposite sex, whether unmarried, or married to another (the former being technically designated *single*, the latter *double adultery*."

(3) An unmarried person who deliberately looks and lusts after someone known to be married is thus condemned in God's eyes as an adulterer whether or not his lusting is found out or whether or not he commits the physical act of adultery.

(4) A married person who deliberately fantasizes sexually about someone other than their spouse would also fall under this censure.

(5) The issue of the violation of the marriage covenant is at stake here.

(6) Mark the nature of the marriage covenant: it is a covenant of the eyes. **Job 31:1**.

(7) Mark also the specific nature of the censure here, "whosoever looketh on A woman..."
a. Such "a" woman in context is someone with whom a sexual relationship would be adulterous.

b. This is not a warning against desire for the female form in general.

(8) It is natural for desire to be stirred by the sight of the eyes. **DEU 21:11**.

(9) The stirring of desire via the sight of the eyes may be wholesome or errant, depending upon the circumstances. **PRO 6:24-25**.

a. Nakedness is to be covered. **GEN 3:21**.

b. Uncovered nakedness is a shame. **ISA 47:2-3; REV 3:18**.

c. The following passages define the nakedness that is to be covered:

ISA 20:4; 1SAM 5:9 c/w PSA 78:66; HAB 2:15-16; DEU 23:1; 25:11-12; LEV 20:11, 18; EZE 23:3, 18-21; PRO 5:19-20.

d. The above passages and numerous other similar passages (such as are found in **LEV 18-20**) censuring the uncovering of nakedness (in a sexual sense) outside of marriage demand a conclusion that nakedness of another is not to be viewed outside of marriage.

e. These facts censure the exposure or exploitation of another's nakedness for sexual gratification outside of marriage.

- f. This censure would include the (sexual) viewing of *images* of nakedness outside of marriage.
 - i. **EZE 23:14** in context denounces graphic images.
 - ii. **1CO 11:27** shows that abuse of the image of something is as the abuse of the thing itself.
- g. Fantasizing is going to happen. Pretending that it will not is not going to help matters.
 - i. Avoid fantasizing about someone who is specifically “off-limits” (a married person, for example, would be so for a single).
 - ii. A suggestion: Let any fantasizing for sexual arousal be somewhat vague if you are single. If married, one's spouse is the God-given and holy object of dreams and fantasies. Read the Song of Solomon with an open mind!