

The call to be single. **Mat. 19:12** speaks of eunuchs (persons that prefer to be single rather than married). Jesus commented that there are various reasons why people want to stay single, and one of them is because they have dedicated themselves to the Lord's service. This is a high calling that each person should consider before they start the process of looking for a life's mate and marrying. **1 Cor. 7:32-35** notes that a married person is distracted from their service to God by obligations to their mate and family. The point here is not to cause us a problem but to consider honestly dedicating our lives to the Lord's service as a single servant (although all should serve whether they are married or not.) In **7:36** Paul clarifies that it is not a sin to marry, but it is better to control one's desires, life, and heart so that they may serve God without distraction. This is the best Paul says.

The Problem of our Flesh – We all have problems with our flesh. It influences us for the worse. This temptation is at times very strong, but God always provides a way of escaping every temptation. **1 Cor 10:13** *“God... will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* The reason why one should marry is because they feel it is the will of God, and because they seek spiritual purity, and not just to enjoy their sexual lusts. **1 Thess. 4:3-4** *“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (wife) in sanctification and honour.”* Fornication is a grave sin against our own bodies (**1 Cor 6:18**). Without peace and holiness nobody will see the Lord (**Heb. 12:14**). **Psalms 84:11** *“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”* So holiness is the key to getting what we want from God and receiving the blessing of God.

Now the provision of God for sexual temptations is that we marry with a spiritual Christian partner. **1 Cor 7:1-2**... *It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.* In other words, the first line of defense is contentment with what God has commanded you, *“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk”* **1 Cor 7:17**. After that if we still have problems, you should marry. There is no sin in marrying. But we should understand from the start that we have to learn to restrain our sinful flesh and the urges that beset us, and not to let the flesh reign over us. **Exo. 20:17** *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife... nor any thing that is thy neighbour's”.* **Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conversation (conduct) be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”.* Nobody can complain that their situation is special, different, or that God is not there for them.

Our lives have to be controlled by God, because we obey (this is our part) the will of God (this is our plan). We cannot allow lust to reign over us. To find a Christian mate (obedient to God) is only part of the solution. The other part is that one is subject to God (controlled by God).

Why not married? The time isn't right

From the Christian point of view, we already know that God has a plan for our lives. We should make it the goal of our lives to wait and rejoice in what God has for us. In other words, to be content. **Phil. 4:11** *“for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”* At times we disturb the plan of God in our lives, and at times we obey and work within the plan of God. But our hope and goal should always be focused on that whatever happens in our lives (if we walk in the spirit) is God's good will for us (**Romans 8:28**). So some ask, *“Why am I not*

married then?” Besides the fact that God may be calling you to a life of single service for the Lord (even though many will not accept this and comply), it could be that either you are not spiritually ready, or the mate God has for you is not spiritually ready either. **Ecclesiastes 3:1** *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.* You should seek to prepare yourself spiritually as God wants.

Being a pastor, I have to say that the majority of marital problems can be reduced to one single problem that is pervasive, and that is either one or both are immature. So many times 30 to 80 year old adults are walking around with the maturity of a 6 year old. To marry like this is only to spread the damage your immaturity causes to others. **2 Cor. 7:1** *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting (making ourselves mature) holiness in the fear of the Lord.* We have to take seriously the exhortation to maturity (perfection). Being mature is not to be offended even though the aggravation is great. Maturity is to remain stable, calm, polite, courteous, and reserved even when everybody else is going crazy around you.

Requirements in a Mate

Now we are ready to talk about finding a mate. I am going to be frank. Unless you are actively and energetically seeking the will of God¹, anybody you marry will end in disaster no matter who they are. The unsaved, unconverted, and unspiritual marry and get divorces like crazy in our day. You don't want to join them. They never find peace,

¹ The will of God is the work of God, which is that all hear the gospel and accept the Savior, and enter the work of God. Also within the work of God is the edification of the saints by the means God has appointed, which are the Word of God, and the preaching of the Word of God by holy men of God in the context of a local church. Anything else simply is a corruption of God's will and work.

happiness, nor tranquility. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* **Romans 8:9, 14.** Not to seek to live in the Spirit is a sure sign that you are not saved!

Then the goal of every single Christian is to encounter that other single Christian just like they are, saved and earnestly seeking the good will of God, serving God with all their heart and soul. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, This is the first and great commandment."* **Mat 22:37-38.** It is crazy to think that you will find that other person anyplace else except in the work of God, which is your local church. The first place a single Christian should be looking is in their local church. We should note that perhaps while you are looking there, some good prospect is also looking there, and they see how unstable, unfaithful, immature, spiritually useless, and problematic you act in the church, and this person will wisely cross you off their list! How well do you fill out the idea of a good Christian servant? You can always find somebody outside of a good local church, but without a doubt you will only be jumping from the frying pan into the fire for yoking yourself up with an unsaved or unspiritual person. What follows is disaster and divorce. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"* **2 Cor 6:14.**

A Man of God

For the girls, their goal should be a Christian man that is a spiritual leader. Read carefully **Genesis 3**, and notice that Adam caused himself many problems because he did not take the leadership, but capitulated to Eve. God's curse on him is because he listened and obeyed his wife. God places a great value on a man like Abraham that *"will command his children and his household*

after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" **Gen 18:19.** Equally we see a great example in **Joshua 24:15** *"but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"*. Moreover we should say that Adam apparently did not explain (teach) exactly what God had said, and because of it all suffered. Apparently Adam wasn't interested enough in spiritually teaching his own family. Every godly man studies the word of God and teaches it to his wife and family (**1 Cor 14:35**). He has a craving to grow spiritually, he is attentive and present in church services, and he is participating in church activities and ministries. God commanded Adam to work hard² and in **1 Tim 5:8** it says that a man that doesn't provide for his own has negated the faith and is worse than an infidel. He should know how to love and treat a Christian woman (**Col 3:19; Eph 5:25, 28, 30, 33; 1 Peter 3:7**).

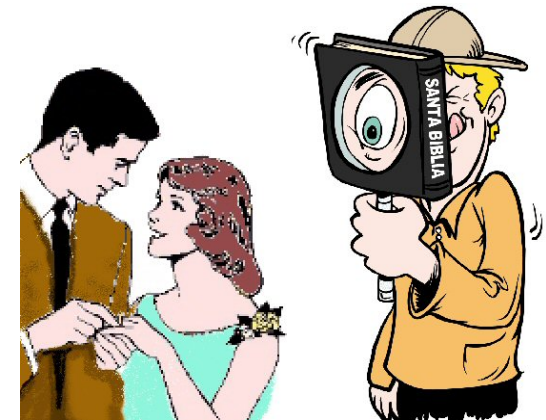
A Virtuous Woman

For the men, the Bible paints a picture in **Gen. 2-3** of a woman that has fallen into sin and dragged her family with her. The virtuous woman is one that recognizes her biblical obligation to be subject to her husband (**Gen 3:16; 1 Tim 2:11-12; 1 Cor 14:34-35**) and dedicates herself to spiritual beauty (internal **1 Peter 3:1-5**) and her obligations to her husband and family (**Titus 2:3-5; Eph 5:22; 1 Tim 5:14; Prov 31:10-31**). *Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised* **Prov 31:30. 1 Peter 3:1-4.** The woman of our goals should be someone who does not focus on external beauty but interior spiritual character, devotion to God and humility.

² Génesis 2:15; 2 Tes. 3:10-11; 1 Tes. 4:11-12; Ef. 4:28.

Seeking a Christian Mate

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Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

The Perfect Will of God – We know that God has a perfect will for each of us. We also understand that at times this perfect will of God does not quite go always as we would like it to go. We want to be happily married, but it appears that God "is not cooperating." We begin to understand things when we start with the will of God. If a person is not subject to the will of God, they will never encounter peace and tranquility in their life. One has to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and understand that they must daily seek God's will, or their lives will be nothing more than a great big mess, problem after problem. The key to being happy is to first be saved, then serve God with all your heart and life, and seek after God. Without this, whatever happiness they may think they find is hollow and deceptive. This is the foundation of everything including marriage.