

# Character and Courtship

## SIMPLE TRUTHS

**The Bible does not endorse what today is called “dating“.**

*House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is **from the Lord**. Proverbs 19:14.*

Note: It says 'prudent' and not 'pretty'. Let God rule in your life and let Him present you with a likeminded mate. You can't handle it yourself. You need God's grace and leading.

*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. Proverbs 18:22.*

Study Genesis 24. Here you see how God provided a bride for Isaac. How does God lead and direct in our lives today?

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**It is not for everyone to be married. God calls some to stay single for His service just like He did the apostle Paul.**

*All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Matthew 19:11,12.*

*For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore, to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 1.*

*Corinthians 7:7,8.*

How has God gifted you?

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**The only legitimate object of courtship is holy matrimony. Casual dating leads to sin.**

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. Col. 3:5,6.*

Don't choose to be in a position where you bring the wrath of God upon you. First of all, **define** what these sins are that are listed in the verse above and explain **what you must do** to avoid them.

FORNICATION

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UNCLEANNES

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**INORDINATE AFFECTION**

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**EVIL CONCUPISCENCE**

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**COVETOUSNESS**

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**Worldly and carnal people look only for physical attraction and visible, outside qualities. The Christian knows that God works inside out. In salvation God renews us inwardly first and then salvation works its way out. God cleans the inside first and then the outside. At first, the spirit is justified, then the soul sanctified, and finally the body changed. Even so in Christian courtship the Christian looks first for inward values.**

*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Proverbs 31:30.*

**During courtship, avoid physical contact. Courtship really serves to help you find out whether you agree with**

**your mate spiritually and intellectually.**

*It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 1. Corinthians 7:1.*

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3.*

**Remember God's way of dealing is "inside out". Before you ever agree physically (touching or kissing) you need to be agreed on spiritual and intellectual issues.**

**Mark: Are you marrying in the Lord? Christians marry only Christians.**

*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to marry whom she will; only in the Lord. 1. Corinthians 7:39.*

Study also 2. Corinthians 6:14-18. How can you avoid the unequal yoke? You need to pull together in the same direction. Give examples:

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**Mark: Is the future wife willing to be obedient to her future husband and follow him as the spiritual leader of the home? If not, the courtship ought to be terminated.**

You need to be able to pray together, study the Bible together, praise the Lord together, attend the same church, give together. The wife is to be a helpmeet. Not a hindrance. Will your future wife help you serve the Lord? Never allow a

woman to hinder you from serving the Lord.

*And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. Genesis 2:18.*

You need a fellowhelper. Not a hindrance. What the Bible calls a “whorish woman“ will definitely be a hindrance. The Bible contains many warnings against certain character traits that you should avoid. We will list them later on in this study.

**Mark: Even in marriage, God always comes first.**

What mistake did Adam make:

*And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Genesis 3:17.*

Adam chose to listen to his deceived wife rather than to obey God's commandment. Since the woman was deceived there are consequences and they are listed in 1 Timothy 11-15. That is why in Bible-believing churches women are not teaching, but learning under the husband in silence and submission. That is also explained in 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. Read this scripture and write down where and how women are to learn the Bible.

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Adam sinned, however, because he obeyed his wife rather than God's commandment. What do we learn from this? We need to eliminate all influences that distract us from obeying God. Can you think of a situation where your future spouse can distract you from obeying the word of the Lord?

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Have you both agreed that you will help each other in obeying God first?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If you both cannot agree to put God first, then the courtship ought to be terminated. Save yourself future heartache from potential disagreements and contentions. Your spiritual vision needs to be Psalm 34:3.

*O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Your future spouse needs to be with you when it comes to the things of God. You need to serve God together. No unequal yoke! You can't walk together if you are not agreed! The husband leads! No distractions!

That's why the Bible says:

*And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. 1. Corinthians 7:35.*

What exactly does Paul teach for our

profit?

The entire chapter deals with questions about courtship, marriage or remaining unmarried.

Please study the entire chapter (1. Corinthians 7). What have you discovered?

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**Mark : Honor the Scriptures.**

Before you ever think about courtship & marriage, you need to know by heart what the Bible says about these things. This is for your profit to help you avoid wasting the time of your life in an unhappy relationship. Honoring the Scriptures will save you from future regrets and mistakes. It is for your profit!

**What does Jesus say about marriage in Matthew 19?**

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**What advice does Proverbs 31:3,10-31 give you?**

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A godly man needs a virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10). Get a dictionary and a concordance and define what virtuous means:

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The virtuous woman will be a reliable and helpful person This is the main lesson you need to get from Proverbs 31.

**Do you understand that marriage is a type of the relationship between Christ and the church?**

Study Ephesians 5:22-33.

How does the husband show this kind of Christ-like, giving love?

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How does the wife show reverence?

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Which duties does the wife owe to her husband according to 1. Peter 3:1-6? Give practical examples from everyday life.

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Which duties does the husband owe to his wife according to 1. Peter 3:1-7? Give practical examples from everyday life.

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Which character trait is the husband to avoid according to Col. 3:19?

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Which character trait is fit in the Lord for the Christian wife?

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Which character trait pleases the Lord in children? What are parents responsible to teach their children according to Colossians 3:20?

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Which character trait does the father have to avoid when dealing with his children according to Colossians 3:21?

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Finding a godly mate for your life requires patience because you live according to God's timing. Jacob was willing to serve and wait 7 years to get his wife Rachel. Study Genesis 29 & 30. What can you learn from Jacob's patience

and love from Genesis 29:20? Are you willing to be patient? Will you wait on the Lord? Are you praying for God to present you the person that He meant for you? Don't act presumptuously.

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The previous questions dealt a lot with character traits. **Courtship & marriage do require a maturity of character.** If you do not possess that maturity, do not pursue courtship & marriage. It requires virtue. It requires lifelong commitment. It requires honoring a vow or promise to each other.

When people get married at a very young age, many times that maturity of character is not present and these relationships will have their extra share of “trouble in the flesh“, which God wants you to be spared from according to 1. Corinthians 7:28.

Many times it is wise to put off marriage to a later time. Here's why:

*Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterward build thine house. Proverbs 24:27.*

Before you ever think about courtship and marriage you need to make sure that you can provide for your future family. The man needs to provide for his own or he is worse than an infidel according to 1. Timothy 5:8. If you can't be a provider, remain unmarried.

Let me ask you 3 questions:

**1. Who is the Lord of your life?**

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**2. What is the labour of your life?**

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**3. Who is the love of your life?**

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Please note the order in which I asked the questions. It is a descending importance. If Jesus is not the Lord of your life, you are going to fail when it comes to the labour and love of your life. If you think you have the love of your life, but don't know about your labour, you will have problems. The Bible says:

*He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. Proverbs 16:26.*

**Without financial stability there will trouble in the flesh.**

If you are financially unstable or are not able to handle money well, you might want to remain unmarried. Money requires maturity. The love of money is the root of all evil. Money challenges our character. You need to be agreed spiritually, intellectually and also financially. Remember Amos 3:3. Are you and your potential spouse able to answer these questions:

- What is your income?
- Are you able to live below your means?

- Are you able to deny yourself?
- Where are your savings?
- Where are your investments?
- Where is your tithe?
- What does giving to the Lord's work mean to you?
- How will you teach your children the Biblical principles of using money?
- Do you understand that the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the homekeeper?
- Are you ready, willing and able to live on one income and to refuse to live like a greedy, godless materialist?
- How will you manage your budget, your bank accounts and communicate about your expenditures?
- Is the person you are courting truthful, honest, reliable?
- Can you imagine living a simple life without malls, big homes, eating out, big cars, vacations, etc.? Are you really unselfish enough to live way below your means?
- Do you know how interest/compound interest can either work for you or against you?

Beside financial stability there are housekeeping skills required to guarantee a happy home in the future.

- Do you possess those skills? Or have you discovered certain annoying habits?
- If your character is spoiled rotten,

you might want to remain unmarried because all you know is catering to yourSELF. You are not unselfish enough to seek **one another's** wealth. 1. Cor. 10:24.

- If you are spoiled rotten you are too incompetent to be a wife, to be a husband, to raise children, to manage money, etc.

It goes without saying that the wife is to be the keeper at home (Titus 2:5) and to guide the house (1. Tim. 5:14). Is there a sense of cleanliness? Nobody can enjoy living in a dirty house. Is there a homemaker? There is work at home. Clothes and dishes need to be washed. A house needs to be cleaned. Meals need to be prepared. You will not be happy, if you cannot get agreed on the Biblical role of each spouse. Are you organized?

If one of these questions is answered in the negative and you can't get it clarified, you might be better off unmarried. God wants to spare you from trouble in the flesh. These issues need to be clarified before you go to the marriage altar.

**Courtship is to clarify whether you are agreed.** Once you are married, you can't go it alone. Then you have the duty to render due benevolence to each other and you no longer have power of your own body. You need consent in order to be content. The Bible says:

*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be*

*reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 1. Corinthians 7:10,11.*

### **Practical Cautions and Warnings for Courtship**

In the Bible we find a lot of good counsel for those who seek a godly spouse under the Lord's leading. The book of **Proverbs** in particular teaches a healthy realism that is not misled by flattering emotions, infatuation or lust. You should prayerfully and repeatedly study the entire book of Proverbs to get that amount of wisdom. We want to cover some verses that you need to know **before** you enter into a marriage relationship, so that you spare yourself from future trouble in the flesh. I plead with you to honor these Scriptures.

*A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh*

*As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion.*

*Proverbs 11:22.*

Is that verse plain and clear enough for you? Can you get a dictionary and define discretion?

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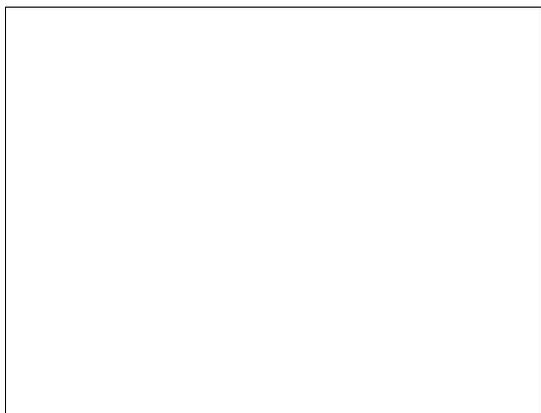
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**Task: Draw a swine with a jewel of gold in her snout in this box.**



Is this your “date“, your “future wife“?

Does Titus 2:5 teach discretion? Look it up!

*It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. Proverbs 21:9.*

*It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. Proverbs 21:19.*

*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. Proverbs 25:24.*

This is a triple warning. You need to pay special attention when God repeats himself. Don't waste your life on a contentious person. Don't marry a loudmouth. In fact, a Christian wife needs to be the opposite:

- Meek & quiet spirit (1. Peter 3:4).
- Shamefacedness & sobriety (1. Tim. 2:9).
- Silence (1. Tim. 2:12). Avoid the character traits of the widows in 1. Timothy 5:13.

Beside this triple warning, there is another double warning against a contentious wife in the book of Proverbs.

*A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. Proverbs 19:13.*

*A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.*

*Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself. Proverbs 27:15,16.*

**TASK: Turn on a water faucet and let it drip for awhile. Does that continual dropping get on your nerves? Do you see what God is saying in His word?**

In Proverbs chapters 2 to 7 you find warnings about the “strange woman“ (Proverbs 2:16), the “whorish woman“ (Proverbs 6:26), the “harlot“ (Proverbs 2:10). Please study all these chapters and do a character study on this kind of woman.

What do you find out?

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List some of the character problems of that type of woman?

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Do you see the parallels between the character of the whorish woman in Proverbs and the type of woman in today's society? What are your practical conclusions?

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Heed the ultimate warning:

**Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Proverbs 7:25-27.**

The Bible also says in Proverbs 23:28:  
**For a whore is a deep ditch: and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.**

Trashy women increase the transgressors among men. Avoid those people and places. Don't repeat the mistake Solomon made in Nehemia 13:26.

**Who** caused him to sin?

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**Why** and **how**?

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Have you studied the book of Ruth? What can you learn about her relationship to Boas? Do a character study on Ruth and Boas. What do you find out?

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The book of Song of Solomon is a description of marital love. Have you studied it? What do you find out?

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One of the most wicked marriages in the Bible is the relationship of Ahab and Jezebel. Study 1. Kings 16 to 22. How does God deal with Ahab's house and esp. His wife? Study 2. Kings 9, 10, 11. What can you say about Ahab's daughter Athaliah and her wicked influence? What kind of Jezebel is mentioned in Rev. 2:20? What personal conclusions do you draw from studying this evil marriage?

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What does Hebrews 13:4 teach you?

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How does the dictionary or a concordance define adulterer?

whoremonger?

What does the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment teach you?

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What does the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment teach you?

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What does Jesus teach you in Matthew 5:27,28?

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How does the teaching in Matthew 5:27,28 affect your behavior in a check-out line at a supermarket? Can you ask management to remove those magazines?

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Which character traits is the man supposed to have according to Titus 2:6-8?

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When you study Titus 2:1-10 you will find out that a certain conduct, certain habits or a certain lack of character will make us guilty of blaspheming the word of God. **Not only do we blaspheme in word but also in deed.** Moreover, we are commanded to conduct ourselves in such a manner that we will **adorn the doctrine** of God in all things.

According to Titus 2:1-10, how can a person become guilty of blaspheming the word of God?

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Are we guilty of blaspheming the word of God, if we say we are saved, love the Bible, but refuse to walk according to its teachings?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

How can we make sure that our words and actions, our conduct, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? What specific actions do we have to initiate when it comes to character, courtship and marriage? Are you adorning the doctrine of the Bible?

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Take a dictionary and define the word 'adorn'.

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Give a word that would express the opposite of 'adorn':

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If you have studied the above material faithfully, you will have noticed by now that the Biblical worldview conflicts with the way's of modern society. If you want to honor the scriptures, you will have to go against the grain of society.

If your concept of marriage relationships or “dating“ are influenced by soap operas, magazines, fashion, peers at school, dead churches, modern culture, media, etc., then you are basically **UNFIT** for marriage. Before you ever consider it, you need to unlearn everything you have learned about it and then relearn from the word of God.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an **adulterous generation** (Pr. 30:20, Mt. 12:39, Mt. 16:4, Mk. 8:38). This materialistic age is reeking with social problems. Many countries are plagued with adultery, easy divorce, custody battles, welfare cows, deserting fathers, gender mainstreaming,

feminism, the effeminization of men, perversion, pornography, illegitimacy. A lot of socialized western countries are plagued with the asocial single-mom cult, the attack on parental rights and the abolition of the traditional Christian, Biblical family concept. Many times the law of the land sides with the morally wrong and justifieth the wicked while condemning the just. That is abomination in the sight of the Lord according to Proverbs 17:15. Don't be guilty of praising the wicked. But contend with them according to Proverbs 28:4 & 29:27. Don't compromise or give any slack to such a filthy, deviant culture. The Christian lives counterculture. Let us shine as lights in a crooked and perverse nation. Phil. 2:12-16.

When Jesus finished teaching on marriage in Matthew 19, his disciples responded in verse 10, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. What will your response be in light of the scriptures you have just studied?

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We hope and pray that the Lord will reveal His will to you through this Bible study.