

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR FINDING *GOD'S WILL* REGARDING A LIFE PARTNER¹

DECISION #1:

“I will only date and marry a true Christian.”

– 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor. 7:39; 9:5; 15:33 cf. Psalm 1:1; Deut. 7:1-6; 1 Kings 11:1-8; Neh. 13:23-27; etc.

Excuses for disobedience:

- “He/she is not a Christian, but he sure is a nice person.”
- “He/she has a lot of good qualities.” e.g. honest, friendly, good cook, polite, self-motivated, dependable, etc.
- “We have a lot in common.” e.g. sports, musical ability, similar backgrounds & interests, etc.
- “He wants our future children to go to my church.”
- “I hope to be able to witness to him/her during our times together.” – cf. **1 Sam. 15:22** - “*To obey is better than sacrifice*”
- “I told him he had to become a Christian, so he did!” (What a surprise! ☺ Beware of *fake* Christians who make a “decision” in order to get the girl!)

Problems which result from disobedience to God’s Word:

- **Incomplete marriage.** The most essential aspect of marriage (and life) is the *spiritual*-not the physical, emotional, etc.
- **Automatic “built in” arguments and disagreements.** Haddon Robinson calls it, “*Traveling together in opposite directions*”² i.e. you have two different value systems, two different views on what’s important in life, etc.

DECISION #2:

“I’ll only date & marry a Christian who is living for Christ & walking with God.”

– 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:24-27; 10:31; Eccles. 12:1; Mal. 1:8-14; 1 Thess. 5:10-11; etc.

Excuses for disobedience:

- “After we get married we’ll start living for God.” - cf. **James 4:17** - “*To one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.*”
- “He says he knows he isn’t living for God, but he plans to start soon.” Actually, if he isn’t doing so now when he’s trying to put his “best foot forward,” don’t hold your breath!
- “He/she says there are a lot of hypocrites in church.” (So why not come to church and show them how *not* to be one?!)
- “We’re only young once!” – cf. **Ecc. 12:1** - “*Remember now thy creator, in the days of thy youth.*”
- “There are a lot of things more important than going to church, reading the Bible, etc.” (Oh really? *Like what?*) - cf. **Matt. 22:36-38** - “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind*”; **Mal. 1:8-14**; etc.
- “Another Christian wronged him so he’s not active in church.” **Lame!**
- “I don’t want him/her to think I’m a fanatic.” - cf. **1 Tim. 4:12** - “*Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*”

Problems which result from disobedience to God’s Word:

- “Without clearly defined goals there is little basis for making important decisions in dating or marriage.”
- **Goal frustration.** If you and your spouse have different life goals, you will clash whenever you have to make an important decision. Christians fight too if they don’t have the same goals.

DECISION #3:

“I will not defraud* anyone that I am dating or am in a relationship with.”

***defraud:** to arouse in someone physical desires that cannot be righteously fulfilled.

– 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Gen. 26:9; 2 Pet. 2:18-19; Rom. 6:1-23; Prov. 27:20; 6:20-35; 5:21; 15:3; Job 31:1; etc.

Excuses for disobedience:

- “What’s wrong with proving we love each other?” cf. **1Cor. 13:4** - “*Love is patient.*” Lust isn’t!

¹ All the main points & the vast majority of the thoughts & statements contained here have been taken verbatim from material presented decades ago at a seminar in Detroit, Michigan in 1971 by an organization named the *Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts*. Over the years I’ve supplemented that material with additional quotes, Scripture verses (KJV & NASV) & comments. –Mike Edwards. Originally compiled 1975-76, Madison, Ohio, updated & made into a Word document, Nov., 2010, St. Vincent, West Indies, revised 9/15, 4/17 & 1/ 2021.

² “Traveling Together in Opposite Directions” by Haddon W. Robinson (reprinted by permission from the Good News Broadcaster, n.d.). I typed up an abridged version of the article & am happy to provide it to any who desire a copy. -mwe

- “He/she thinks some Christians are too strict.” - cf. **Phil. 2:1-11** (Christ is the supreme example of setting aside His own personal wishes & desires for the sake of others!)
- “This is the 21st century! We’re more progressive and enlightened than those people in the past.” – cf. **Gen. 26:9** – In this passage a heathen king had more sense than a lot of Christian young people do today!
- “Dating standards are different today.” – cf. **Rom. 14** where believers are told to go way out of their way in order to not put a stumbling-block in another person’s way.
- “I should break up, but I’m afraid of what he will do or say.” – cf. **1 Sam. 15:22** “*To obey is better than sacrifice*”

Problems which result from disobedience to God’s Word:

- **Guilt.** “Guilt & blame over wrong standards in dating carry over into marriage & cause conflicts.” The conscience isn’t clear, thus the Christian life is hindered. – cf. **Ps. 51:3, 8-12; 38:1-8; 32:3-4**; etc.
- **Seeds of distrust are planted in the marriage...Reaping often comes later!** – cf. **Gal. 6:7** - “*Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*”
- A relevant observation by internationally respected economist and writer Dr. Thomas Sowell: “*‘Women’s Liberation’ and the ‘sexual revolution’ have not liberated women. They have liberated the sort of man who is a ‘love em and leave em’ kind of guy, who lets the woman deal with the consequences, including pregnancy.*” (Sowell, “Random Thoughts” ca. 2008-2009)

DECISION #4:

“How does the person I’m interested in get along with other people, esp. those closest to him?”

Both should be in harmony at home. – Prov. 13:1; 15:5, 20; 19:26, 27; 20:20; 30:11-14, 17; etc.

Excuses for disobedience:

- “He says I’m the only one he can talk to.” That is definitely *NOT* a good sign! – cf. **Rom. 12:18** - “*As much as possible, be at peace with all men.*”
- “His parents are too strict.” – cf. **Prov. 21:1**(If they are truly unreasonable, God is able to change their hearts.)
- “He’s got a real temper but he holds it around me.” – cf. **Prov. 22:24-25; 25:28** - “*Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself... Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.*” (Guess who gets the brunt of the temper tantrums once he/she no longer has the usual people e.g. mom, dad, etc., to vent his spleen on? *You do!*)
- “When he moves out things will be better.” – cf. **Col. 3:20; James 1:3-8**. The problem is not his location. *It’s him!*

Problems which result from disobedience to God’s Word:

- **Conflict transference.** A well-known adage: “*The way a man treats his mother is the way he’ll treat his wife, and the way a girl treats her father is the way she’ll treat her husband.*” Another general truism: “*The way each person kept their room/apartment, is probably the way they’ll keep house.*”
- Relevant observation by Sowell: “*You can fall in love with an individual, but you marry into a whole family.*” (ibid)

DECISION #5:

“Am I getting God’s timing?”

– **Gen. 29:20** (Jacob & Rachel) – “*He served seven years but it seemed but a few days because of his love for her.*”

Excuses for disobedience:

- “My parents think we’re too young.” – cf. **Col. 3:20**
- “We’ll manage financially somehow.” – cf. **1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Thess. 3:10**.
- “We’ll accomplish our goals later and marry now.” – cf. **Deut. 24:5; Gen. 2:7-25; 24:1-67**.
 “Impatience is a sign of self-love or immaturity” (W.G.). Premature marriage can prevent the gaining of good spiritual experience. – cf. **1 Cor. 13:4** - “*Love is patient*”

DECISION #6:

“I will yield my right to date & marry for as long as God sees best.”

In the meantime...

...Give yourself to complete devotion to Christ and His work! Like Adam in the Garden of Eden, “go to sleep” in the will of God (Not with one eye open! ☺ – cf. Gen. 2). Did you notice that Adam wasn’t running around the Garden of Eden saying “God, where’s my wife?!” No, he was doing God’s will and God’s work. Then God brought that one into his life in God’s perfect timing!

cf. 1 Cor. 7:32; Matt. 6:33; Lam. 3:24-40; Gen. 2:21; 24:63; etc.

**WHEN GOD SEES THAT I CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE MARRIED THAN SINGLE,
HE WILL BRING THAT ONE INTO MY LIFE! – 1 Cor. 7:36**