

I started dating when I was thirteen and continued to date until I was thirty-three. I took some time off from dating while I was involved in missionary work and in a brief, but disastrous marriage. So, what I am about to tell you is neither theological nor idealistic.

There is probably no variation on dating that I have not tried and I have only found one that worked. Let me skip all the history and gory details and jump to when I was in Austin.

I was recovering from the disappointment and emotional havoc of another failed relationship when I remembered something I had read out of the Bible a couple of years earlier. *“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.”*⁽¹⁾ I understood that this was the Bible’s standard for unmarried people. Paul also wrote to Timothy saying, *“Treat the younger women as sisters, with all purity”*.⁽²⁾

Later, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul reiterated this when he said, *“Flee from youthful lusts. But follow after righteousness, faith, charity and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*⁽³⁾ At the time the idea of not touching or having any romantic involvement with a woman until I was married to her seemed totally unrealistic and absurd. How would I ever find out if I liked someone well enough to marry them?

But then a couple of years and a few more scars later, I was willing to consider the idea again. Certainly it could not be any worse than

what I had been living through. So I tried it, the first part that is. I decided that I would not touch a woman again until I was married to her.

As you might imagine this did not go over very well with the women I met. The ones who did not think I was crazy, perceived this as rejection and did not want to have anything to do with me. As I thought about this it occurred to me that I had to give up the chase entirely.

What I was looking for, the Bible says cannot be found by searching for it. *“Who can find a virtuous woman? Her price is far above rubies.”*⁽⁴⁾ So even if I did find someone, I could not win or acquire her.

Solomon tried, he had a thousand wives. Here is what he said, *“This have I found, counting one by one to find out the account, and yet my soul is still seeking, but I cannot find out, One man among a thousand I have found. But a woman among all these I have not found.”*⁽⁵⁾ Think of it! Solomon had a thousand wives and he could not find one whom he could trust!

Now let’s see what he did find. *“I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets and her hands as shackles. Whoever pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.”*⁽⁶⁾ This is the same thing that I found.

For all my seeking, years and years wasted on it, I never did find one I could trust. Why? God said, *“A house and riches are the inheritance from a father, but a virtuous wife is from the Lord.”*⁽⁷⁾

Only God can give you a godly wife. You “find” her when God brings her across your path as you are following and pleasing him.⁽⁸⁾ *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things will be added to you.”*⁽⁹⁾

Instead of seeking God and serving Him as the primary objective of my life, I had been distracted by this futile pursuit. Those whom I knew had “succeeded” in the chase were divorced soon after (like myself). Man, did I feel like a fool! But now things were going to be different. I decided to implement the second half of 2 Timothy 2:22, *“..but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

I determined that I would not date a new believer or a girl who did not have a prior established relationship with God. Also, I would not go out with a girl unless I had reasons to believe that she was someone I would marry. Consequently, I did not go out very much. In fact, I did not go out at all, until I met my wife.

How would you recognize a virtuous woman? I was so worldly I had probably met or even known some and had not realized it. I had to completely revamp my ideas of what was attractive in a woman. I did a Bible Study of what God valued in a woman and discarded my old values. I’d be glad to share it with you if are interested.

Here are 4 things I learned. A godly woman will be:

Faithful to God. She will daily draw near to God through prayerfully reading, studying, memorizing and living God’s Word.

(1) 1 Cor 7:21

(2) 1 Tim 5:2

(3) 2 Tim 2:22

(4) Prov 31:10

(5) Eccl 7:27, 28

(6) Eccl 7:26

(7) Prov 19:14

(8) Prov 18:22

(9) Matt 6:33

You cannot know God if you do not know His word. You cannot obey God if you do not know what he said.

Faithful to fellowship, she will be part of and involved in fellowship with other godly women who can help support, encourage, and direct her. If you do get married, your wife will especially need this for dealing with you! Also, you cannot be her sole emotional support.

Faithful to ministry. A godly woman will be involved in glorifying Jesus through some form of ministry. That may be visiting the sick and elderly, evangelism, missionary work, etc. She will be actively involved in some ministry.

Faithful to modesty. Godly women do not draw attention to themselves by their dress, jewelry, behavior, speech, make-up, etc. They do not show up at church, or anywhere else, “dressed to kill”, i.e., causing men to lust and sin, committing adultery in their hearts resulting in death. *“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”*⁽¹⁰⁾ The Bible has a lot to say about this.

By this time you are probably getting the picture of just how impossible it would be to find a girl like this and how futile it would be to search for her. But just think, all of those things she is to be you are to be and more (except the make-up)! So, you have something to do between now and when you meet her.

Guess what, beside all this Jesus expects you to be able to support her and any children you may

have including even her relatives!! Yes! It says, *“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”*⁽¹¹⁾

Before you even think of getting married or going out with a girl you must be established in your career so you will have the income to take care of them. Why would the father of a virtuous daughter give her to you unless you are a godly man who can take care of her? A lot to do between now and then.

What do you do in the meantime so that you are not lonely? This is where *“following righteousness, faith, charity and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”*⁽¹²⁾ becomes important. It is inevitable that *“bad companions will corrupt good morals.”*⁽¹³⁾

This is why it is imperative to find Christian friends who have the same scriptural standards and who live by them. As you get involved in ministry projects, fellowship activities, prayer, Bible study and worship with friends like these you will not be lonely. With this and school and exploring career options through volunteer work there will not be time.

What do you do when you meet some one whom you believe God may want you to marry? Once you are spiritually prepared to be the priest of your home.... Wait. What does that mean? It means that you have an established foundation as a Christian man, ready to fulfil the duties of a husband and father.

As a Christian man you have studied and obeyed God’s word such that you are able to show and

teach out of the Bible why you believe what you believe. You have *“studied to show yourself approved by God”* such that you are *“always ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for the confidence (in Christ) that is in you.”*⁽¹⁴⁾

As a Christian husband your primary responsibility is to *“Love your wife, sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”*⁽¹⁵⁾ You must be able to answer questions she has about the Bible or know how to find the answers in the Bible.

Also, you must be able to make decisions based on the scriptures for the standards in your home. What things will you permit and what will you forbid in your home. You must be solid in your convictions from searching the scriptures because you will encounter questions.

As a Christian father you must be able to read and explain the Bible to your children. After all, the time will come when they will ask, “Why should I obey you”? Why should I do, or not do this?” Unless you can show them God’s standards in scripture and His judgements against those who disregard him, your answers will be merely opinion. Your children cannot build their lives on the foundation of your beliefs. It must be their beliefs out of the word.

Starting now to set your priorities on following Jesus and pursuing His purpose for your life as your primary goal will develop you into a man of God, as you allow His Spirit to shape your choices. For example, choosing a fellowship where others love and live the Word and will hold you accountable to do so. I gave up the large church with

(10) James 1:15

(11) 1 Tim 5:8

(12) 2 Tim 2:22

(13) 1 Cor 15:33

(14) 2 Tim 2:15, 1 Pt 3:15

(15) Eph 5:25,26

its big singles group and many social activities. I sought out a church where I had heard that the Bible was taught and obeyed and people knew each other's lives, difficulties, etc.

My social life changed also. I went to worship, prayer meetings and fellowship gatherings, but now my goal was no longer to meet a girl, but to meet with God and His people. I cannot tell you how important this is.

When you commit yourself to following Christ first and foremost, and fulfilling His plan for your life, not regarding your own needs and desires, then you are truly His disciple. You are losing your life to find His. *"And when he had called the people unto him with His disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."*⁽¹⁶⁾

Only when you are following Jesus wholly with no other desire but to do His will, only then can he lead you in the path that He has planned. And only as you are following the path of His will can He bring to you the one He has prepared for you. You cannot find her and you cannot meet her any other way.

The first night I walked into a small church where I had heard the people were devoted to the Word I saw two old friends whom I had known from a big church in another city. I walked over to sit with them thinking how unusual it was to see them there. I had come for no other purpose, but to get closer to God and

His people.

As I took my place in the pew next to them, I was amazed to see right beside me there was a girl in a body cast from her right ankle up to her armpits. I never could have dreamed that here was the woman whom God had chosen for me.

After the meeting we all went to a restaurant and sat at the same table since she was a friend of my two friends. I could not help but ask her what had happened. I was astonished to learn that a natural gas explosion had destroyed her second floor apartment and caused these extensive injuries. She had been blown out through a wall and into the parking lot below.

After dinner they invited me to a fellowship gathering at her sister's home that weekend. There as I had an opportunity to talk with her I was deeply impressed with her complete devotion to Christ. Having lost everything, she wanted nothing but to follow Jesus and do his will. I knew that this was a rare opportunity.

I had the overwhelming sense that this meeting was very important and that I must treat her with the respect and care befitting one of the King's daughters. I found every opportunity to visit with her; after church, at volleyball games, home gatherings, etc.

My attentions did not go unnoticed by her older sisters, one of whom directly asked me to declare my intentions. When I told them of my interest, I was awestruck to hear of their church's convictions on dating which were exactly the same as mine. I had not been able to find one person who agreed with my stand on dating and here was a

whole church full of them! Was this the hand of God or what?

I had determined long before this never to be alone or in private with a woman, even in a car or at a park. Furthermore, I had firmly resolved to not kiss or become physically involved with a woman before I was married to her. To implement this I had decided on a course of "environmental discipline" as I called it, to discipline my environment.

I had learned that the choice to sin was made not at the time when you sin, but at the time you choose to put yourself in a tempting situation. The choice to fall is not made when you slip off the cliff. It is made when you choose to walk next to the edge.

If you give your flesh nature an occasion to sin it will take it regardless of your best intentions. Do not allow yourself to be alone and in private with a girl for any reason, even to "read the Word". Flee from it. *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."*⁽¹⁷⁾

If you honor God and obey Him in your relationship, He will honor you and bless you with His presence. If you defile that relationship with sin, God will depart from it. There will be no way to hold it together or restore it apart from His intervention.

If you always stay in public or in groups you can easily avoid the pitfalls and temptations that destroy many relationships. You can learn a lot about a person just by talking to them and getting to know them at your church or fellowship. The four things that I mentioned to look for earlier you can learn in groups

(16) Mark 8:34,35

(17) 1 Thess 5:22

without ever going out together.

When you do meet someone whom you are interested in, you can have a wonderfully romantic time learning about each other's plans and dreams for the future. You can draw near to God together in his Word talking about what Jesus has been teaching you, confiding your feelings for one another, and so on.

All of this can happen in a restaurant, on a front porch, going for a walk or in a park where there are other people. You can have as private and personal a discussion as you like in these settings, with no temptation to sin. I would never drive in a car alone together, either. This is a set up for great temptation. Take separate cars and meet there instead.

This is what we and I did and God blessed it. This was the only successful relationship I ever had. I never kissed my wife until after we stood at the altar and said. "I do." This is no credit to me. It just shows how miraculously God will intervene and help you when you decide to obey Him. His grace is sufficient to enable us to obey Him in all things. *"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*⁽¹⁸⁾

Think about it, how can a relationship end? Either in marriage or in a break up. Why start a relationship that must end in breaking up? That is, one before you are ready to get married or one with someone whom you have no reason to believe you would marry.

Also, breaking up is the most emotionally devastating thing you can do to yourself or someone else.

It is like a mini-divorce and sometimes not so "mini". You will carry the emotional scars of breaking up for years.

In your heart it develops a protective reflex such that you are not able to totally give yourself emotionally to your wife as Christ requires. You reflexively hold back some, involuntarily as a result of having been hurt before. Also, it can take years to completely trust your wife as you should. This is not because of anything that she has done, but because of what others have done to you in the past.

You will find yourself being suspicious of her motives, misreading her intentions and assuming that she is manipulating you or scheming for something when that is not the case at all! You are just reacting to what has happened to you before in that setting. The more people you break up with the worse this gets until you are almost impossible to live with.

It took me over 3 years to trust my wife after we were married and she had done nothing but good to me the whole time. It was all because of my past errors. What's worse is that breaking up with people makes you so emotionally hardened and used to it that it is all the more easy to divorce your wife when things get difficult.

Beside this there is the inevitable comparative analysis that develops when you begin to compare your wife to other women you knew before. This always results in dissatisfaction because your memory is always better than reality. *"Better is what you can see with your eyes than the wandering of you de-*

sires." *"Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied."*⁽¹⁹⁾

You see, dating other women is grossly unfair to your wife!! Who can compete with your imagination? Ultimately she will lose hope of ever being able to please you, and then the bitterness of rejection sets in.

Well my son, I hope you can learn from this brief narrative not to date. Search the scriptures whether these things are so. Who in the Bible ever "dated"?!

No one. Why? It is not God's will. It is just the transitory pleasure of lust and sin that results in destruction and death. It is the way of the flesh, the devil and the world. Don't do it!!

Learn from what the Word says. Learn from what has happened to other people, like me. Learn from the divorces, abortions and single parent homes all around you. How do you think this all happened? That's right, dating for "fun" instead of forever. Broken hearts become hardened hearts. *"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall become cold."*⁽²⁰⁾

Whatever you do, do not learn by experience. You may not survive it. I almost did not.

As the Father wills, may the Lord Jesus bless you with a godly wife in his time as you follow him.

P.S. I was wrong about no one dating in the Bible. Samson did date Delilah. Look how great that worked out!

© R.M. Bond

All rights reserved

(18) 2 Cor 12:9

(19) Eccl 6:9, Prov 27:20

(20) Matt 24:12