

MARRIAGE & DATING

Thesis: If you cannot maintain an intimate relationship in a non-erotic relationship - what makes you think you can in a marriage?

Criteria for Marriage:

1. Able to successfully relate to others.
2. Body Life & Witness -
Meaningful fellowship within Body of Christ
Does the Body of Christ witness the relationship as glorifying to God? This is not a decision-making but a witness. Is the couple willing to listen to everyone?
3. Before marriage - should have established ministry.
 - a. Is it concrete? Specific people and tasks.
 - b. Is it personal? Not just fixing cars or cooking meals, etc.

Do you minister separately as well as together? (A good question to ask when considering marriage - "Can we serve the Lord more effectively together?") The inability to minister together means you do not take ministry as a priority - or have problems in communication or submitting to each other - or a mental disharmony between spiritual and romance.

4. Do they have spiritual habits in their relationship with each other? Prayer, study, fellowship in Body together, regularly.
5. Sexual (1 Thess. 4:3-5) Immorality - lustful passion condemned. We are to hold our bodies in honor. Watch out for situations where passions are uncontrollable. Problem will only increase. Take decisive steps to overcome. Quickly resolve or quit dating. To enter marriage with sexual defeat is going to lead to various problems.
6. Past Problems -
Sexual - rape, incest, molestation, bitterness, anger, hate
Promiscuity - is it being resolved? Pure in dating or lust?
What is your view of the opposite sex?
Homosexuality - sin, difficult habit. There must be evidence of victory. Confident that it will not be a problem in the future. Takes time.

- Have you:
1. learned to love and discipline mother?
 2. learned to deal with nasty females?
 3. learned to communicate love to others?
 4. resolved masculine identity? aggressive and emotional.

Relational Failures - divorce, unresolved bitterness,
blame shifting not occurring, understand why failed.
Unsuccessful Dating - problem within, choosing wrong partner
fear commitment and unable to express emotions,
emotionally dependent.
Drug & Alcohol Abuse - addiction, how long have you abstained?
Do you use drugs at all? Must be eliminated altogether.
Materialism, an idol
Parental Problems - why? Do you consider their criticism?
Have you forgiven? Can you initiate love toward them?
Emotional Disorders - phobias, breakdowns, etc. medication?

7. Spiritual Maturity
How much time in spent in actual spiritual growth -
Fellowship, Prayer, Ministry, Discipline of Holy Spirit,
Bible Study.
Does spiritual growth continue in adverse circumstances?
8. Chronological Age - the age to marry depends on maturity.
Choice is forever and significant.

If you are into the Lord, you are into waiting.

Love can always wait to give, but lust can never wait to take.

There is no such thing as a desire that can overrule God.
(Col. 3:25)