Proactively Pursuing Marriage

Most of us are called to marriage. It's the natural design for fulfilling our drive for companionship and sexuality. If you aren't called to celibate service (1 Corinthians 7), then a significant priority for this season of your life is preparing for and moving toward a biblical marriage. An intentional path to finding a mate recognizes God is at work. But we also have a responsibility to be faithful in our part of the process. So, how does a person who hopes to marry become intentional?

STEP ONE: Seek direction within Christian community

We live in a day of hyper-individualism where people feel very little sense of obligation to others. God calls us, however, to vibrant community within our families and within the body of Christ. That community is the source for much of our growth as Christians, and it's one of the best means for meeting a potential spouse and receiving guidance and support toward marriage. Even in a day of online dating, marriage experts still consider matches made by friends, family and churches to be among the best.

STEP TWO: Move beyond recreational relationships

One of the clearest messages for singles in the Bible is the call to sexual purity (1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5). That is proving to be a difficult challenge in a day when only a quarter of Christians are virgins when they marry. Sexual purity, however, is the primary means for intentionally moving toward marriage in a recreational relationship culture. Couples who stay sexually pure not only honor God but they avoid much of the confusion that plagues many of today's relationships and can push good marriages out of reach.

STEP THREE: Seek the right kind of soul mate

A study by the National Marriage Project found that 94% of young adults believe the person they marry should be their soul mate first and foremost. That pursuit leaves many looking in vain for the perfect person who is specially designed to complete them. Both the Bible and marriage research, however, show that the more important "soul" mate to seek out is someone who shares your spiritual commitment. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians that a potential spouse "must belong to the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39). One pastor put it nicely when he said singles should seek someone with whom they are able to serve God better together than apart. Christians seeking a mate who shares his or her biblical values know that "all have fallen short" so there's no sense in holding out for a perfect person. Further, they know that instead of seeking someone to complete them, they are called to lay down their life for another. That makes for a much more realistic path to finding a good fit for marriage.

STEP FOUR: Be Proactive

Living in purity and Christian community makes it easier to find a mate who shares your spiritual values, but there's more you can do as a steward of your future marriage (Matthew 25:14-27). Titus 2 strongly encourages young men and women to learn from older men and women. In addition to Christian discipleship, you also can ask mentors for candid feedback about how you can improve in a variety of areas to be more prepared for marriage. Additionally, there's nothing wrong with asking mentors to keep you in mind as they become aware of other singles seeking a godly spouse. Some of your best opportunities to be proactive will grow out of faithful prayer. As you pray—about your role in finding a mate, for the single men and women in your life, for the help of parents and mentors, and for God's glory in your path to the altar—he will open your eyes to opportunities you may have missed to take proactive steps toward marriage.

It's important to note that men have a distinct responsibility in proactively finding a mate. Genesis 2:24 says that a man will leave his parents and cleave to his wife. Proverbs 18:22 says, "He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." Notice it doesn't say "he who stumbles over a wife" as if it is a happenstance occurrence. God calls men to do their part in seeking out women of character and showing leadership in pursuing a woman for marriage. Specifically, men should be willing to take the risk of rejection. No one likes to hear "no," but it's a risk men of faith and leadership should be willing to face.

© 2008 Inkling Innovations

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Websites:

MarryWell.org is a relationship service that goes beyond providing a list of matches through coaching resources for those serious about pursuing a Christian marriage.

Boundless.org is a webzine for young adults. Its most popular articles are those about finding a godly spouse and dating according to biblical principles.

Print Date: 22-Dec-16

Hope To Marry

Proactively Pursuing Marriage