

Choosing
the
RIGHT
Companion

Reggie Stegmeier

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The Church of God, God's Acres
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I enjoy young people, and I have a deep love, concern, and respect for the time of life we call "youth." Having faithfully served God as a young person, I am aware of the pitfalls and dangers that await our precious young people. I am also convinced that if we will follow the advice of the wise man, and truly acknowledge God in everything we do, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:6).

One of the challenges facing our precious young people is deciding whom they will marry. Many years ago, God laid it upon my heart to preach two messages to our young people at our local congregation in Canby, Oregon, on the subject of "Choosing a Companion." A few years after that, when asked to hold a youth revival at The Church of God in Newark, Ohio, I felt impressed to preach on the same subject.

Sometime after that, the God's Acres Printing Press published these two messages as a four-part series in *The Gospel Trumpeter* (November 2019 through February 2020). Around that time, I was asked by a "seasoned saint" of God if I would consider putting these lessons into book form as a resource for our dear young people. Youth occupy a unique position in the body of Christ, and it is my desire that they make a successful transition into adulthood and marriage.

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Genesis 24:1 *And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.*

2 *And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:*

3 *And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:*

4 *But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.*

5 *And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?*

6 *And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.*

7 *The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.*

8 *And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.*

9 *And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.*

11 *And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.*

12 *And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.*

13 *Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:*

14 *And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac [The New International Version reads, 'Let her be the one you have chosen']; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.*

15 *And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.*

16 *And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.*

17 *And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.*

18 *And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink."*

61 *And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.*

62 *And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country.*

63 *And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.*

64 *And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel [respectfully].*

65 *For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?*

66 *And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself [a symbol of subjection to the man].*

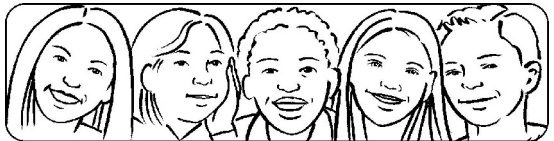
67 *And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

The Adolescent Years

Typically, boys and girls begin playing together at a very early age, and then they pass through a time when they want little to do with each other. A veteran second-grade teacher said: "My boys want to roughhouse, tackle one another, and roll around in the dirt. The girls prefer playing school, jump roping, or just walking around arm in arm. Once in a while, a boy will cross the playground and get in on the jump roping, and there is always that little powerhouse girl who is right in there with the boys, but these are the exceptions, definitely not the rule."

Did you know there are distinct behavioral differences between boys and girls? For example, a boy can go to his closet and say, "I have nothing to wear," and what he means is, "I have nothing clean to wear." A girl can go to her closet and say, "I have nothing to wear," but what she means is, "I have nothing that fits me in my closet." Way back at the dawn of creation, the Bible says God created male and female, and He put a difference between them.

In the middle school years, you might hear statements such as these: "She sat by me today at lunch!" or "She looked my way, so I'm sure she must like me!" or "He smells so good; I wonder what cologne he has on?" Keep in mind, these are the same individuals they once wanted nothing to do with. They now want to sit close to each other.



As boys transition into manhood and girls pass into womanhood, things change internally and externally, and they begin to look differently. Boys begin to ask for things like deodorant and cologne. Girls begin to ask for perfume and other things. From that point on, great care, consideration, concern, and prayer are needed to see that each young person successfully makes it through the challenging years that follow.

Young person, next to the decision of whether you will follow the Lord, choosing a companion is the most-important decision that you will ever make. This decision is so serious that it has the potential to have eternal consequences and repercussions. Many people have suffered tremen-

dously and have even lost out with God eternally because they chose the wrong companion.

Let us look at our Scripture reading. Abraham is a type of God the Father. Jesus referred to him as "Father Abraham." Eliezer, Abraham's eldest servant, is a type of the Holy Spirit, and he went to seek a companion for Isaac. The message came on camels, which is a type of God's ministry. Proverbs, Chapter 31, lets you know that God has a companion for you, and He knows who it is.

I want to give you some wisdom, counsel, and guidance about how to determine who that one companion is. God has not left us without some understanding or knowledge on this subject. The chapter we are looking at dwells upon this very thought. During this time, Abraham was one hundred forty years old, and Sarah had been dead for about three years. Isaac was forty years of age, and he was still living with his father. Young person, if you have saved parents, the best place for you is at home.

Did you know that God is vitally concerned about whom you marry? The same God who created this Universe created you and chose you to live in this day, and He has a companion for you. Often young people are closed-minded and think all they see now is all there will ever be. God has a companion for you, maybe in another congregation, that He is molding, making, and preparing for you. At the right time, He will show you who that person is.

I will give you a realistic picture of marriage. You will not find a true picture of a happy home in Hollywood. At the end of many books, you find that little, familiar clause, "And they lived happily ever after." It would be nice if it were that easy, but it is not. There are trials, struggles, and tribulations in marriage; however, God wants you to have a happy home, and it starts with choosing the right companion.

Bear in mind, young person, with the companion you choose, you will pass through sickness and the birthing and raising of your children together. You may encounter hard economic times and difficult decisions. Most important, you will spend the rest of your life with that individual. If God should permit you to live to a mature age, you will experience the joy of growing old together. All the serious and important stages of life will be dealt with and handled as husband and wife.



The companion you are interested in is the youngest that they will ever be right now. As you age, your body shape and your looks may change. From that point, the glory of the aging process goes forward. I want you to consider the wedding vows. When I got married, although we went through the vows, so many things took place on the day of marriage that it was difficult to take it all in. There was so much going on with all the arrangements, the family, the audience, and the excitement. Although the marriage vows can vary, basically they go like this: "I (*insert name*), take you (*the opposite sex's name*) to be my wife (*or husband*), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, from this day forward, till death do us part."

The companion you choose will be someone with whom you will live for the rest of your life. According to God's plan, you will remain together until you part in death (Matthew 22:30). This may result in fifty, sixty, or seventy years of dwelling together as husband and wife. Yes, it is wonderful! Are you beginning to see the importance of this once-in-a-lifetime decision? Getting married is not like getting a Cracker Jack box and pulling out some little surprise instructions. God has chosen one companion for you, and you must seek His face to ask Him who that individual is.

My desire is not to scare you away from marriage. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Marriage is wonderful! Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:14, "I will [or desire] therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." The Bible lets us know that it is God's will that the younger women marry.

Marriage is the oldest institution. It was in existence before the church began. God's church is no stronger than the homes that assemble in the house of worship. Homes ought to be at peace. The husband and the wife should dwell together in peace and harmony if God's presence is to be in the worship services. God created the institution of marriage back in the Garden of Eden when He took a rib out of Adam's side and then made Eve, which resulted in the man and his wife. The institution of marriage is awesome, and I would not discourage anyone from marrying in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39).

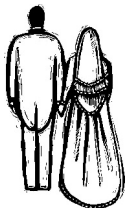
Young person, I simply want you to realize the seriousness of marriage, and I want to warn you of the importance of this decision, the many pitfalls and dangers that could come as a result of choosing the wrong companion. Perhaps you have heard it said that one thing worse than never getting married is getting married to the wrong one. Do you want a rough life? If you get in a house with an argumentative woman or a hard-to-live-with man, you will have a terrible life.

Proverbs 21:19 tells us, "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman." The *New Living Translation* reads, "It's better to live alone in the desert than with a quarrelsome, complaining wife." Living alone is better than dwelling in a home with a crabby, complaining wife or a confrontational husband. What an extreme comparison the wise man made!

We know through statistics in the United States alone that almost 50 percent of marriages today end in divorce or separation. This is not good, and God is against it (Matthew 19:6). The Bible teaches against divorce. Today many couples are avoiding marrying altogether by doing what is called "cohabitation," which is an arrangement where two people who are not married live together. The point is marriages in the world are not working.

The counsel for life and marriage is not found out in the world with Doctor "So-and-So" or with a worldly marriage counselor. The best counsel for life and marriage is provided in the Bible and with a God-called pastor. The world has nothing to offer the Christian.

If God's plan for choosing a companion for marriage is followed and both spouses remain true to God, divorce is never needed. God's plan for the home is 100 percent divorce proof. If marriage is entered into and followed according to the Word of God, it will remain intact for the duration of the couple's lives.



The Pharisees questioned Jesus concerning divorce. He took them back to the beginning, right to the blueprint. In Matthew 19:6 He said: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder [the Greek says, 'divide or put an end to']." In addition, the marriage union will be a beautiful picture of what God has instituted.

While choosing the right companion will not guarantee a problem-free marriage, it certainly will set you up for a successful one. You can be assured that if God places you together as husband and wife, He can keep you together. Knowing this will help sustain you when you go through difficult times together as husband and wife. The first few years of marriage can be quite challenging. I was twenty-seven years of age when I got married, and I was rather self-sufficient. When I got married, I had to make some adjustments because my wife did not do everything the way that I was used to. I did not realize how many pet peeves I had until I got married. My wife and I, however, quickly learned how to work together so that our home could be a peaceful place, as every Christian home should be.

A home should be a heaven on earth. It should be a place where children want to resort to, not a place where they want to run away from. It should be a place where children want to go, where they can see mom and dad getting along in unity and harmony. Sadly, fussing and fighting among married couples is all too prevalent today. Children are so innocent and pure minded, as God created them. A child has one childhood through which he will pass, and to think some parents ruin that by abuse, cursing, and swearing is tragic. Some children, who were raised that way, suffer the effects of those memories the rest of their lives. May God help our homes to be all that God would have them to be. Christian homes ought to be places of peace and harmony.

Disagreements can be worked out without raising your voice and yelling. You should work them out in a civilized way by sitting down and talking through things. Also, it is wise for the husband and wife to talk about these matters when the children are not around. The husband and wife ought to be careful of how they talk to each other. How parents speak to their children is important as well.

Marriage takes work. Getting married is just the beginning, but it is worth all the effort. Everything that has value costs something. Marriage is the oldest and most-valuable institution there is. A congregation is no greater than the homes that assemble there. If there is chaos and turmoil in the home, the worship services will not be acceptable to God.

Marriage is a God-ordained institution for companionship, for raising children, and for saving souls. It is a way to express God's love for humanity. The institution of marriage also shows God's plan for authority and leadership, and it is a metaphor of His love for the church. In a home, the

father is the head, as in a local congregation, the pastor is the head; also, in the church, as Christ is the Head. The Apostle Paul set that straight in Ephesians, Chapter 5.

Our Scripture reading has keys, or guidelines, to finding the right companion. This list is not in chronological order, but it is simply the way it appears in our Scripture reading. Genesis 24:1-4 states: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

First, young person, to find the right companion, you must look in the right place. I do not believe it is God's plan for the Christian to go to dating sites on the Internet to find a companion. I believe God's plan is still that you find your companion at church. This is the dating headquarters for the people of God. God chooses; God appoints, and God commands. The dating sites for the Church of God are youth gatherings, revivals, and camp meetings. That is where I found my companion. God can still do the same. You should not look to the world or worldly people.

If you found a companion somewhere else while you were away from God, but now you are serving God together, and your home is good and intact, God has been merciful to you. I am preaching the rule, not the exception. The rule is that you find a companion at church among the saints of God.

Today we see some young people going to theaters, rock concerts, ballrooms, and secular events, consequently, finding someone in a worldly crowd, and then running away and getting married. God might have mercy on them and keep their marriage together; however, finding a companion that way is not God's plan. Again, God's dating site should be the house of God.

Genesis 24:13-14 reads: "Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy

servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." This was a picture of the Holy Spirit; or, the drawing out of God's Spirit, His presence, from that well. She was drawing water and feasting on God's goodness.

Look where Isaac was and look at what he was doing when he met Rebekah, the wife God had chosen for him. Genesis 24:62-63 tells us: "And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." This is a far cry from what many young people are doing today. Youth should certainly enjoy some things, but there should also be a time of seriousness. The house of prayer should never be about funny business because it is a time when God operates on the souls of men and women.

Isaac went out to meditate and commune with God. He came from the well, or from spending time with God, Who is our Spring of Living Water. He was meditating in a quiet place out in a field when he saw the camels and Rebekah coming. Could you marry your companion in the place where you first met? Many people would be ashamed to go back to where they met their companions. A Christian has no business at a dance hall, a bar, or certain worldly activities. Again, the best place to meet a Godly companion is at church.

The second thing we find in the Scripture reading is that God laid out the plan for marriage. Marriage should be to someone of the same people that you are of, those of your own country, those of your own dwelling, and those of your own beliefs, which ought to be the Bible beliefs. We are to marry in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:29). Genesis 24:3-4 reads: "And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

Notice that the bride for Isaac could not be an outsider. Isaac's bride had to be one from the fold, or from the family of God. As a Christian, it is of utmost importance that you marry a saved individual. When you get married, there will be many decisions to make, and most of your decisions will fall right back on spiritual lines. It is hard to think about making any decisions in the course of a day without considering God. Before every

decision we make, we should consider this question, "What would God have us to do?"

If one spouse has a different god at home, there will be conflict, strife, and contention. Why would a young person want discord, contention, and a battle in the home? I am enjoying a happy home, but it is because I am married to a saved companion. Why would you want bickering, fussing, and fighting? This is what you will get if you marry outside the will of God!

CHAPTER TWO

Letting God Build the House

Genesis 24:14 "And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac [Let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac'; New International Version]; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

In the first chapter of this book on choosing the right companion, we found that the best place for a Christian to find a companion is at church, not out in the world. Again, I am discussing the rule, not the exception to the rule. The second thing we found was that God has laid out a plan for marriage.

We read in Genesis 6:1-3: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair [beautiful, or attractive]; and they took them wives of all which they chose [not of God's choosing]. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

We know that one reason God brought destruction on the antediluvian age was that the sons of God saw the daughters of men and married wives of their own choosing. The mere mention of this in Genesis, Chapter 6, lets us know how serious choosing a companion is.

God wants saved households, not just saved individuals. One way we win people is to bring them into our homes and let them see how we live. It is easy to go out in the public and look respectable, but in the home, we are a little more relaxed. I remember, while growing up, hearing people making favorable comments about our home when they saw the interaction and the love flowing there. Our witness and testimony at home can win people to the truth. If love is not flowing in our homes, it is hard to win the lost. I bring this to encourage you to keep living for God.

God spared Noah, his sons, and their wives. This lets us know that God was pleased with their marriages. God destroyed everyone else. Oh, how important this is! Noah's sons must have chosen companions with whom God was pleased. Again, we must marry in the Lord.

Deuteronomy 7:1-4 tells us: "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

Parents should counsel their children to marry in the Lord. If the one you are interested in is handsome or cute, but is not serving the Lord, you need to discontinue that relationship and pray for God's guidance. To think salvation automatically enters your home when you get married is a misconception; this is not necessarily true. Many times, it is much harder to see your spouse saved after you get married. We are God's chosen people, and God requires the same thing of us as He did back in Moses' day.



God's plan is still that you marry a saved companion, one who is walking in the light and is of the same persuasion that you are. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:15-16: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." This was the Apostle Paul's advice to the Church of God. Paul preached the same message Moses did some 1,500 years earlier.

Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 7:39, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." This is still God's plan.

You may marry under the following conditions: if you are single and looking for a companion, or if your spouse has passed away. While you are free to marry, you should follow the guidelines found in the Word of God if you want God to bless your home. You must marry in the Lord; in other words, you must marry a saved companion. If you are not saved, and you want to get married, you should get saved first. Then God will give you the best companion that you could ever ask for.

In the Old Testament, you can read about Samson and Solomon. What was their problem? They lusted after many strange women who were not of their own people. Those worldly women turned their hearts away from God. The Bible warns in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Your hearts must be mutually interested and invested in the same things. If not, this will stir up strife and contention in the marriage and in the home.

The third thing that we learn from our Scripture lesson is that you should not force the issue of marriage. Many young people set their sights and get their minds made up, much like Balaam. God talked to him three times. Twice God told Balaam not to go, and then when Balaam kept pressing the issue, God allowed him to go, but He told him to speak only what He told him to say. Balaam was forcing the issue, and that displeased the Lord.

Young person, I want to encourage you not to force the issue. If it is meant to be, it will work out. You may say: "Someone else likes him. Someone else is going to take him away, so I have to do it now." Maybe that person is not the right one for you.

Genesis 24:7-8 tells us: "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath."

If Rebekah would not have been willing to submit, Abraham's servant was not to take her. Young brother, God commands you to lay down the law in the home. God still holds the husband responsible for taking control of the home. Marriage is a union where both partners are equal and should work together, but the authority starts with the man. It starts with the head

of the home. In the Old Testament, when Eve had her problem, God did not call out to her. He called for Adam and asked, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:9).

A husband must take the leadership in the home. He should require Bible study, get the Word of God out at home, have prayer, and take the leadership when making important decisions. When my wife needs to make a decision, even in the smallest of matters, we talk about them. The wife should not say, "I will do this no matter what you say." The husband and wife ought to work together, but the husband should have the final say. If a young man or a young lady is the right one for you, you will know, and it will work itself out perfectly. Much heartache has come to those who have forced their way and married outside the well wishes of their parents, their pastor, and the Lord's consent. Again, do not force the issue.

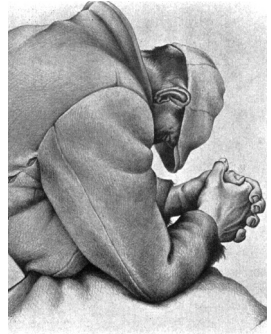
When Balaam saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, Numbers 22:34 tells us, "And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me." God was trying to prevent Balaam from going. Many times, God stands in the way of a marriage that is not His will; yet some people force it. Do you know what happens? The marriage ends in a shipwreck. They get married, and the husband may end up running out and cheating on his wife. Then she is left in bitter tears with a child on the way.

The decision of choosing a companion is very serious. Some people get in the way and actually hinder God. Others are in the way; they are in a position where God can lead them. Do you remember what the Bible says about Eliezer as he went out to seek a companion for Isaac? The Bible says in Genesis 24:27, "I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."



God has ways, thoughts, and plans far beyond your own reasoning and thinking ability. You may look at marriage and say, "There is no way," or "There is no one for me"; however, God can still "furnish a table in the wilderness." He can still make something out of nothing. God has that ability, so trust Him. God will lead you in the right path. The only way to ensure the right results is to travel the right path. Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Young person, do not get in a hurry. God has a period of time called waiting that is so extremely important. During this time of courting, do not rush anything. If the person you are courting wants to get married right away, there may be a problem. There is nothing wrong with waiting. During that time of courting, take time to learn about each other, talk a lot about life, about raising children, and about the truth. During that waiting period, God fashions you and works on you. If you do not have anyone in mind right now, that is okay. God is going to work on you, and He is working on your companion, wherever that person may be.



I read a poem that speaks about having to wait. It is entitled "Wait" by Russell Kelfer. It reads:

*Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried.
Quietly, patiently, lovingly, He replied.
I pleaded, and I wept for a clue to my fate,
And the Master so gently said, "Child, you must wait."*

*"Wait? You say wait?" my indignant reply.
"Lord, I need answers, I need to know why.
Is Your hand shortened? Or have You not heard?
By faith I have asked, and I'm claiming Your Word.*

*"My future, and all to which I can relate
Hangs in the balance, and You tell me 'wait'?
I'm needing a 'yes,' a go-ahead sign,
Or even a 'no,' to which I can resign.*

*"And Lord, You have promised that if we believe,
We need but ask, and we shall receive.
And Lord, I've been asking, and this is my cry:
"I'm weary of asking: I need a reply!"*

*Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate
As my Master replied once again, "You must wait."*

*So I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut,
And grumbled to God, "So I'm waiting, for what?"*

*He seemed then to kneel and His eyes met with mine
And He tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
I could shake the heavens, darken the sun,
Raise the dead, cause the mountains to run.*

*"All you see I could give, and pleased you would be.
You would have what you want, but you wouldn't know Me.
You'd not know the depth of love for each saint;
You'd not know the power that I give to the faint.*

*"You'd not learn to see through the clouds of despair;
You'd not learn to trust, just by knowing I'm there.
You'd not know the joy of resting in Me,
When darkness and silence was all you could see.*

*"You would never experience that fullness of love
As the peace of My Spirit descends like a dove.
You would know that I give, and I save, for a start,
But you'd not know the depth and the beat of My heart.*

*"The glow of My comfort late in the night;
The faith that I give when you walk without sight;
The depth that's beyond getting just what you ask
From an infinite God who makes what you have last.*

*"And you never would know, should your pain quickly flee,
What it means that 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'
Yes, your dreams for that loved one o'ernight could come true,
But the loss! if you lost what I'm doing in you!*

*"So be silent, my child, and in time you will see
That the greatest of gifts is to get to know Me.
And though oft' may My answers seem terribly late,
My most precious answer of all . . . is still . . . wait."*

Waiting is an important part of the courting process. There is nothing wrong with waiting. I repeat, do not force the issue. Precious young person, we want you to grow and prosper in this life and in the things of God. Next to salvation, choosing the right companion is the most important decision you will ever make. If you choose to go out, rejecting the message and choose a companion on your own without seeking God, you will pay dearly.

If you have not decided regarding this matter yet, I trust that this will serve as a warning to you to consider who you are dating right now or who you are interested in dating. Could you see yourself engaging in a lifelong relationship with that person?



Suppose someone said: "He is just fun to be with. We will date for a while, and then we plan to break it off. Then we will get serious about serving God." Let me tell you the problem with this scenario. Feelings can get intertwined, and then you become connected. The wise man said in Ecclesiastes 4:12 that "a threefold cord is not quickly [or easily] broken." When your thoughts and your emotions get intertwined, they are hard to break. When you get connected with an individual, you can be emotionally attached.

Young man, I do not believe it is right for you to get involved with many girls and then expect God to give you a perfect, chaste virgin for a wife someday. That is not moral. Young lady, it is not fair to mess around and do things you should not be doing and expect God to give you a chaste, saved, clean husband. God may do that, and that would be His mercy, but you should not overstep the Word of God and operate presumptuously. Young person, consider the one you are interested in or actively dating. Is he or she someone whom you would be willing to grow old with? Could you build a Godly home with that person?

I want to warn you again to be careful of a person who wants to rush through courtship and have a quick wedding. Wisdom would tell us that to postpone a wedding for a little while might be beneficial. You will know when it is the right time. When the minister pronounces you husband and wife, that is it. It is a final transaction that should not be overturned. Certainly, it is not God's plan that you overturn it.

Remember, when dating, you see that individual at his or her absolute best. Once you are married, watch out, unless he or she is a saved person. A person can dress his best, smell his best, and act his best, but that person may change after marriage. Precious young person, you need to take your time and be sure that the person you are getting close to is truly the one that God has chosen for you. If you are not interested in anyone right now, take this message to heart and store it away because someday you will be. You may say, "I'm never getting married." Someday someone will come along and sweep you off your feet, so to speak, and you will enter this realm of happiness, but only if God is in it.

I ask you to take heed to the message. You need to be careful of your conduct with that person whom you are interested in. God will send a companion when you are ready for that companion and when that companion is ready for you.

CHAPTER THREE

The Seriousness of This Decision

Many people in the world enter marriage flippantly, and they always have in their minds, "We can get out of it if we need to." I do not believe that God would have anyone enter the sacred marriage union that way. You should enter marriage with the mindset that it is for life. It is a joint companionship with two individuals who have married to enjoy each other's company, to procreate, and to be a blessing in the Kingdom of God for life.



You must realize that the Church of God teaches preventive theology, just as it appears in God's Eternal Word. Most of the religious world teaches remedial theology; they teach that you can do your own thing and God will patch up your life after you make a mess of it. God has a perfect plan for your life. Yes, God can repair your life, but He has a perfect plan for it. If you choose the perfect companion and remain in the center of His will, you never need to separate or get divorced. You can pillow your head each night and agree with each other.

I want to present marriage in a realistic way. At times, both of you may not completely agree on an issue. In such a case, you may decide to go to bed and just leave it. In other words, you should put it aside, continue to love each other, and come back to that issue at a later time. Give the matter much thought, prayer, and consideration; then, if God directs you to do so, discuss the problem again in humbleness of mind. This is a wise way to handle a disagreement in your home. Never should you go to bed at night fussing, bickering, and fighting with each other. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Again, God has a perfect plan. I like the song that says, "God's got a plan for my life."

Matthew Henry, who wrote a notable commentary, said this: "No concern in life is of greater importance to ourselves, to others, or to the church of God, than marriage. It therefore ought always to be undertaken with much care and prudence, especially regarding the will of God, and with prayer for His direction and blessing. Where good parents are not consult-

ed and regarded, the blessing of God cannot be expected. Parents, in disposing of their children, should carefully consult the welfare of their souls, and their furtherance in the way to heaven."

I have two reasons for writing this book on "Choosing the Right Companion." One purpose can be expressed in a beautiful poem entitled "The Bridge Builder" by Will Allen Dromgoole, which reads:

*An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.
Through which was flowing a sullen tide
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.*

*"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day,
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"*

*The builder lifted his old gray head;
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"*

Young person, if we were traveling on a long road together, which we are, and I was a little ahead of you and had just crossed a chasm, which I have (I am married), and did not warn you about the dangers and how to cross into marriage successfully, I would not be much of a friend to you.

The second intent for this study is we often tell young people to marry the right companion and to be careful not to marry the wrong one. However, to be fair, we need to tell you how to find the right person to marry. It is not enough to tell you to marry someone who is saved. Finding someone who is saved is an important requisite in choosing the right person to marry; however, other things must be considered. In choosing a spouse, one must look at many other qualities as well.

Salvation is the most essential and the most important attribute; however, there is much more involved in a marriage, such as different personalities and likes and dislikes. God wants you to find that perfect match. In Hosea 4:6 Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." You need to know what God has to say on this especially important subject. Next to getting saved, finding the right companion is the most important union that you can enter.

One primary reason for getting married is the innate desire for companionship. Every person, with few exceptions, has a desire for a lifelong companionship. This is a natural desire that God has placed there. Since you have this need, you should seek to marry an individual who has similar interests as yours.

Genesis 2:18 reads, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." It is not good that man should be alone. He needs to be with a wife. At the end of the workday, he needs to go home, not go out with the boys so to speak. When his work is over, he should go home. I believe Christian mothers should be in the home. When a couple gets married, they are united for life. This is a union, one that should remain with no unnecessary separations. When you are not together, the devil is given an opportunity to work. His motive is to destroy the marriage. Even in some prisons, they understand the importance of conjugal rights, which allow time for a man and his wife to be together. This is an inherent desire that God has placed there.

The Word of God is specific. Read 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7. The Bible says you can separate for a time for prayer and fasting, but "come together again, that Satan tempt you not" (verse 5). It is not good that a man be alone. Again, God said that He would make the man a helpmeet. A helpmeet is a wife who is suitable or right for the man. Another translation says someone who is adapted and complementary for him. Young

man, God has a young lady who is suitable, adapted, and complementary to you and your personality. God wants you to seek that individual.

Previously, I covered three points in our Scripture reading of Genesis, Chapter 24. The first is you have to look in the correct place to find the right companion. I wrote earlier about the importance of looking at church, revivals, and camp meetings. The second point is you need to marry in the Lord. The third point is you should not force the issue. Now I want to move onto three more points.

The fourth point that I want to bring out in our Scripture lesson is to pray much. In other words, you need to talk to God about this. At least six times in Genesis, Chapter 24, we find that the avenue of prayer was sought. One person said, "It is better to pray one down than to run one down." The Bible says that women are supposed to be "chaste" (Titus 2:5). Brother Emerson Wilson, a great man of God, once brought out that the Bible says "chaste," not "chased." There is a difference. The word "chaste" implies being modest and pure, whereas the word "chased" means to run after someone.

Nothing, small or great, in the Christian's life should be entered without spending much time in prayer. Certainly, about choosing the right companion, a matter of such great magnitude, much prayer must be offered. Genesis 24:63 tells us, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." *The Amplified Bible* says this: "And Isaac went out to meditate and bow down [in prayer] in the open country in the evening; and he looked up and saw that, behold, the camels were coming."

Part of meditation is prayer, and we find that Isaac was meditating. Young person, do not be afraid to talk to God and say: "God, help me! I want to know who the right companion is for me. This is an important decision to me. Help me know the person You have chosen for me." I believe that you should talk to your pastor and your parents about this important topic as well. A pastor knows his people better than anyone else knows them. In seeking companionship, you should ask your pastor, "Do you have any reservations about this person whom I am interested in marrying?" Also, you must pray and ask God.



Just because someone is the right one does not mean now is the right time to get married. Because something is good does not mean you should have it right now. Do you like dessert? No doubt, as a child, you were taught to eat dessert after your meal so you would not spoil your dinner. Just because dessert tastes good does not mean you should eat it first. Seeking a companion is much more serious, and just because it is God's will, does not mean you should get one now. God has a perfect time for every event in your life.

You should pray much about whom God has for you. Look at the beautiful prayer in Genesis 24:12 offered by Abraham's servant, Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit; Romans 8:26). He said, "O LORD . . . send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham." Another translation says, "Cause me to meet with good success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham." Philippians 4:6 states, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Marriage is not an exception to that rule. You may need to fast and pray about this important decision. Prayer should be made before and during courtship. You need to remember the seriousness of this decision. The more serious the matter, the more prayer that should be offered.

In Genesis 24:15 we find that God heard the prayer of Abraham's servant, because the Bible tells us, "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out." We see that God answered that prayer. Verse 45 tells us, "And before I had done speaking in mine heart [or praying], behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee." Faith will bring results. There is no use to pray if you do not believe God will answer your prayer.

God saw the heart of Abraham's servant. God knew for what intent he had come, and He knew for what purpose he was praying. Look at what Isaac was doing in the evening. I believe that a portion of our evenings should be spent in meditation. You should turn off all electronics and any outside sources that would interfere with you talking to God. Young person, you need to open your Bible and read a verse of Scripture every day. It is not so important how much you read, but rather how much you learn and understand from what you read. You can read a whole chapter or more and not get anything out of it. However, if you meditate on one verse

of Scripture, and properly understand it, your soul can be fed all day (Matthew 6:11). I encourage you to do that; because, when you read God's Word and meditate on it, you will learn about the nature of God. He will talk to you, and you will become more acquainted with Him.

Many young brethren pray for a young lady who has the ideal body, and that is all they are concerned about. The Bible tells us that when Abraham's servant had finished praying, his prayer had attracted "the damsel," which means she was unmarried and young. She "was very fair to look upon [beautiful and attractive], a virgin [chaste and modest], neither had any man known her [she was pure]: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher [she drank of the Spirit]" (Genesis 24:16). She was attractive, chaste, modest, and unmarried. This is the type of companion you should be praying for.

God has a way of making an individual attractive to you. You may see someone and comment, "There is no way I would ever marry her." You need to be careful of what you say because one of these days you might look over and declare: "My, she has changed so much. Where did she get that beautiful smile? She looks so different now." God will cause you to be attracted to the right one.

Marriage is beautiful. Young brother, are you praying for the right kind of young lady? How about you, young sister? You need to pray for a young man who is pure, innocent, modest, and most of all, saved. God is not asking you to marry someone to whom you are not attracted. However, those virtuous qualities should stand out to you. Is that person to whom you are interested in marrying kind and compassionate? Does he or she love children? Is that person obedient to his or her parents and the pastor? Is that one faithful to the house of God? These qualities are what you should seek most in a companion.

Is that person pure? Today, sad to say, the importance of purity in the lives of young people has been lost. God still values purity of body and mind. You should keep yourself pure for your companion. You should pray for one who has not been with another man or woman, one who has not cohabited, which we see so much of today. Also, pray for one who has enough self-respect to dress modestly. Most of all, you should want



someone who is saved and who loves the Lord. Proverbs 31:30 reads, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."

A Godly woman seldom considers her desires and wishes foremost, because she concerns herself with the desires and wishes of others. This becomes important in marriage when the wife is called upon to look after the affairs of a home while her husband is away. Some young ladies are too interested in themselves, and some young men are this way as well. Too often individuals focus on self. God wants you to sacrifice self.

As I grew up in a pastor's home, we learned how to sacrifice. I am glad we did because God can only use a servant who is willing to sacrifice his or her own personal time and desires. Many times, in my childhood, we sat down for our family dinner and visitors interrupted our evening meal, changing our plans. Other times, we set out to go somewhere, and those plans had to be changed because of the needs of the saints in the congregation. Every trip we took revolved around the church. I am glad for that because nothing is more important to me than the service of God, and nothing is more important to me than the work of God.

Young person, you need to learn to sacrifice for the cause of God. Learn to give of your money and time to the work of God and to sacrifice some of your own activities, giving yourself completely to God. As you seek a companion, you should look into that person for those qualities that I have covered in this book.

The fifth point we find in our Scripture reading is the importance of being an obedient servant. Oh, how you need to be an obedient servant! The Bible says that Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, obeyed Abraham. When Abraham asked him to go, he went. The Bible tells us in Genesis 24:9-10: "And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed."

Young person, you ought to be obedient. You can see the obedience in Rebekah as she followed the man:

Genesis 24:5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

Every young man should seek the character trait of obedience in the life of the young lady in whom he is interested, and vice versa. Notice the man did not follow the woman, but the woman followed the man. Our society has this backward.

I once read a quote that stated, "Many women have simply sold-out to the ungodly influences of the feminist movement and refuse to accept any such teaching." I overheard a woman once say, "I'm never going to get married; I'm not going to wait on any man hand and foot." The woman who said that never got married, and she is miserable. (These attitudes reflect the feminist organization.)

I do not believe that a man should be a tough taskmaster. He should love his wife, but God still commands the man to be in charge. A husband could make it easier on his wife to understand that authority starts with him if he would assist her in the home. The church is that way. God is the Head of the church. The church gets its message and direction from God, but God places a man over the local body—the mother, or the church. A pastor oversees the body of Christ. So, it is in the home. A husband must take the leading role. Servitude, or being a servant, should be taught to children from a young age on up. The Bible tells us in Lamentations 3:27, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth [or learn how to submit when he is young]." This applies to both boys and girls.

The sixth point that we see in our Scripture lesson is that in seeking a companion from the Lord, you should meditate daily. Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening. This is a good pattern to follow when seeking a companion. Obtaining the right companion takes much time

spent in personal devotion, meditation, prayer, and faithful attendance to the house of worship.

In Psalm, Chapter 1, we find a blessed man (or a righteous man) and an unrighteous man contrasted. Verses 1-2 state: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."



Anyone who has preached knows that you must meditate to get a message from God. If you have sought God's face concerning a decision in your life, you know that you must think about it for a while before you really feel confident of the matter. Likewise with marriage. You should seek God's face. First Timothy 4:15 instructs, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

CHAPTER FOUR

A Companion From God for You

In the previous three chapters, I covered six points dealing with how to choose the right companion. The first point was you must look in the right place to find the right companion. Second, you need to marry in the Lord. Third, you should not force the issue. Fourth, you need to talk to God about this important decision; pray much. Fifth, you need to be an obedient servant to Christ. Sixth, you should meditate daily. Finding the right companion takes much time spent in prayer, personal devotion, meditation, and faithful attendance to the house of worship.

The seventh point regarding getting the right companion is, you must be diligent about serving God. Genesis 24:40 tells us Abraham's message to his servant concerning God giving Isaac a wife was, "The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way." *The Amplified* version reads, "The Lord, in Whose presence I walk [habitually], will send His Angel with you and prosper your way."



Are you habitual about your service to God? Young person, habits are formed early in life. I want to encourage you to make serving God and getting to church a priority in your life. A necessary habit and key to obtaining the right companion for you is being in every service. If you are diligent about serving God, He will hear and answer your prayers. James wrote in James 1:6-7: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

The eighth point revealed in our Scripture text is, you must ask God. You should not seek a companion out in the world or on dating sites. Do you think God has someone in mind for you? Young person, finding the right companion starts with the simple belief that God has someone for you.

Genesis 24:2-3 tells us that Abraham (Isaac's father), who was a type of God the Father, was actively seeking a wife for Isaac. In essence (or in reality), Abraham was saying, "Go into the country where my people dwell

and get my son a wife." Abraham was actively seeking a companion for his son. He cared about his son, and he was concerned about him even though Isaac was forty years old. What about Isaac's mother? She had died. Had Sarah been alive at this juncture, no doubt, she would have been involved in this as well. Genesis 24:44 states, "Let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son."

Why should you seek God about this business of whom you should marry? You should look to God for many reasons, and one of those reasons is people can put on a facade. Often individuals make themselves look very pleasing to the eye and pretend to be something they are not. However, the Bible lets us know that God sees the heart. Only God knows if an individual is truly saved, and only God has the ability to see that individual twenty years from now. No man can see that, but God can; therefore, you need to ask God.

Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." You need God's help on this most precious and important issue. Young person, you need to keep asking God.

The Bible says to ask when you have a need in life. Matthew 7:7 in *The Amplified Bible* reads, "Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking and you will find; knock and keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you." You must be persistent in seeking God and keep asking Him. The same God who created the universe, Who hung the stars in space, Who numbered them and calls them by name, certainly can find a mate for you. Young person, God has someone for you.

The ninth and final point of this Scripture reading is, you need to trust God and believe His promises; rely on His Word. God has given many promises in His Word. Psalm 84:11 is a promise that you can hold on to. It says, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Proverbs 18:22 states, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." That is a promise of God, so trust God's promises. Truly He will fulfill every promise.

When should a young person seek a companion? When is the right time to date? Let me give you some thoughts to consider, and then you should talk to your pastor and the Lord about this. Courtship and marriage are very serious topics. In most states, you cannot obtain a driver's license

until you are sixteen years of age, and you are not legally an adult until you are eighteen years of age. Now, while we preach against consuming alcohol, the world says you are required to be twenty-one years old to buy it. Many rental companies will not allow you to rent a car until you are twenty-five years of age. Dating is far more important than any of these things.

This business of dating or courtship is not something to trifle with. You have affections. The Bible lets us know in Proverbs 6:27 that if you take fire into your bosom, you will get burned. Fleshly desires are strong, and without a strong knowledge of God and His Word, no matter how strong you are, when your physical senses get involved in dating, it is a slippery slope.

Dating is not a game. It is intended to lead to marriage. I would not recommend that someone get married at thirteen years of age. So, it is unwise to begin dating when you are around that age. Consider this, Jesus was thirty years of age when He began His earthly ministry, and the Bible lets us know that leading up to that time, He was subject to His parents. We do not have any record of His leaving home until He commenced His ministry as a thirty-year-old man. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah.

Personally, I do not believe that dating should be serious until you are out of high school. I have taught middle school students, and now I teach high school students. I can tell you from my personal experiences with teaching in the public sector for eleven years, there is a big difference between the age of thirteen and the age of eighteen. Your desires, your likes, and your interests are very different.



It is wise when dating to start in a group and to stay in a company of people. Dating and courtship should never commence with a couple being singled off alone by themselves.

Dating should begin as a friendship. Again, dating is designed to lead to marriage. In a marriage, next to Jesus Christ, your companion should be your best friend. It is advisable, when interested in dating someone, to be friends first, and to take your time getting to know that person. For no reason should you rush into a courtship and then into a marriage. Married

life is wonderful, and God ordained it to be for the rest of your life. You must not hurry into it. Marriage should be taken very seriously.

My parents were extremely strict about whom I dated. In high school I had some young ladies who were interested in me, and I was interested in them, but my parents very strongly stated, "She is not the right one." I am glad that my parents cared because I could be lost with an unsaved companion. My parents were incredibly careful, even after I entered college. I still lived at home, and they gave me Godly advice, even when I started dating my companion.

I was twenty-four years of age when my wife and I officially started courting. I was twenty-seven years of age when we married. I am not saying that you must be that age. You should talk to your pastor and talk to God.

Influences, peer pressures, desires, and fleshly appetites, if given the right scenario, can cause you to let down your guard and fall; therefore, you need to be careful. This business of dating is profoundly serious because of where it leads. In years past, many people got married young. If you were married young and you have a good home today, you are blessed.

However, there are many examples in God's Word where God led men and women to get married at a much older age than you might think. If you study the brain, you will find that mind and brain development is still occurring in the twenties. That is the reason studies show that alcohol consumption should be held off until the age of twenty-one. To be clear, the Church of God stands against consuming alcohol, but I bring that as a worldly example of stages of development. Young person, marriage will come, but you should not rush into it. Often a daughter will seek a young man like her father, and a son will seek a wife like his mother; so that behooves parents to take an inward look at their own lives.

Marriages generally abound most with love and faithfulness that are preceded by a long courtship. If you study Jacob and Rachel, you find that he labored and waited seven years for her, and he still did not get her. He had to labor seven more years. The Bible says it seemed as nothing to Jacob because he loved her so much. I wonder how many young men today would wait that long?

The right relationship will not distract you and draw you away from God. If the courtship is God ordained, it will not take you away from the

things of God. In this business of courting, there is safety in the company of the saints. The devil would love to get you off by yourself, but I am warning you to be careful.

Someone once said, "A good marriage is not a contract between two persons, but a sacred covenant between three [the man, the woman, and Christ]." Too often, Christ is never invited to the wedding and finds no room in their home.

When it comes to advice, young person, people who mean well may offer a lot of advice. Some may say: "Why not marry this one or that one? I think he or she is the right one." When it comes right down to it, you must seek God on your own, because you will be the one who lives with this person for the rest of your life. I am not saying that you should turn down Godly counsel. As far back as I can remember, I have made it a practice to take in every bit of Godly counsel that I could possibly get, store it in my mind, and then let God apply it to my life.

Some counsel may not be good for you or may not work for your situation. Maybe you do not feel that God is telling you to do a certain thing, but keep it in your mind and let God lead you. I would suggest that you look at the individual who is counseling you and see how his or her counsel worked for their lives. You should be hesitant to take counsel from someone who has been up and down in their walk with God and does not have a happy home. Now, someone may warn you and say, "Learn from my mistakes," and that is good, but I would rather take counsel from someone who has found success with their own counsel. You should look to your pastor and to older, Godly saints in the congregation. Often, they have much good that they would love to share with you, but so often people will not listen.

You have probably heard the statement that opposites attract. Do not be too alarmed if you handle things a little differently than the person you are courting, or if you find yourself with little differences. However, it is important that you agree along Biblical lines.

When it comes to innate qualities, some differences may attract you to each other. Often opposites do attract. For example, if you tend to be too frugal with your money, God may send someone along for you who has no problem spending it. If you tend to procrastinate, God might have someone for you who is proactive. If you are disorganized, God might have someone for you who knows how to organize things. If you are a hoarder,

God might send you someone who knows how to get rid of unnecessary things.

If you tend to respond to a situation too quickly, God might have someone for you who knows how to remain silent. If you tend to be a little argumentative, God might have someone for you who knows how to avoid confrontations. If you tend to be assertive, God might have a companion for you who is very meek. Can you imagine how bad it would be if both spouses were big spenders? A real problem would arise in that home. You see, you need not worry about these things if you will follow God's plan because He has it all planned out. God has someone appointed for you.

God really cares about you. You need to talk to God much about this decision before you decide to move forward with marriage. God will help you. When you are dating, you fix yourself up to win that one over with your cologne, and you buy her flowers. Do not forget to do these things in marriage. When you get married, young person, remember to keep the love flowing. Do not allow your love to become stagnant. This is important. A Christian, above all people, should have a happy home, so think back to when you first started courting and how you won him or her over to you.

It is the same way with serving God. When you were born again, think about the things that attracted you to Christianity and the way you got your start with God. Do not forget those things. As you go down the road awhile, you might have a tendency to become bored with the things of God. You need to keep God's presence fresh every day. Do you remember the excitement that you had when you first got saved? You should still be excited about serving God. It is a wonderful thing! I would not trade it for anything. Going to church is the best thing in the entire world! You should never lose that excitement.

Spouses should not lose their excitement in marriage. It is possible to still be in love after many, many years of marriage. Once you get married, keep doing the small, considerate things. You should plan little special occasions. For example, you could meet for a ten-minute coffee break or buy her a bouquet of flowers. Ladies like to get fresh flowers occasionally. That can help to



keep your home happy. These little things are important.

The final consideration is that in the home, the husband and wife should agree upon the truth. This starts in courting. In Matthew 12:25 Jesus said that a "house divided against itself shall not stand." It will not last. You must agree upon the things of God. Again, you must look in the right place to find the right companion and marry in the Lord. You should not force the issue. Instead, pray much, be an obedient servant, meditate daily, be diligent, seek God, and trust His promises. I want to encourage you to press on.

You may say: "Well, there is no one for me right now, and I am not seeing anyone. What should I do?" You need to keep serving God, be faithful, attend church, and be active in the work of God, whether you preach, pray, sing in the choir, sing specials, or teach. Look for ways to serve God. Waiting for a companion does not mean that you sit down and twiddle your thumbs.

When you are waiting for God to send you a companion, you should be active in the work of God. Through church activities, attending revivals, camp meetings, and other services, God will send the right one at the right time. God is no respecter of persons. What God did for Isaac, He will do for you.

You may come to a time in a courtship when you must acknowledge God's moving and directing and cut off a relationship. If you are in a relationship that you know is not right, do not hold out for your own way. It takes a real man or a real woman to say, "I will terminate this relationship." If God is telling you to end an involvement, you need to do that because it could mean your soul.

If you are unsaved, when are you going to get saved? When are you going to turn your life over to God? You do not know what the future holds or even if you will have a future beyond this day. You need to come to Jesus. If you will do that, you can experience the blessings of salvation and enjoy the benefits, one of which is having a saved companion.

BOOK REVIEW

To review, the nine points for choosing the right companion, as expounded on in this book, are as follows:

1. To find the right companion, you must look in the right place (e.g., at church, revivals, fellowship meetings, and youth activities).
2. You should marry in the Lord or marry someone who is saved.
3. Do not rush into marriage. Take your time and follow God's direction. If it is meant to be, it will happen in God's time.
4. Pray much. There is no greater decision that you will make in life than choosing whom you will marry. It is second only to accepting the Lord into your heart and life.
5. Obedience is the key! If you want God's direction, and you want to find the right companion for you, then you must follow His plan for your life.
6. Meditate daily. Finding the right companion takes time spent in personal devotion and meditation. Read the Word of God and meditate on what you read. Then, talk to God about His will for your life.
7. Be diligent about serving God! Make attending church and all church activities top priority in your life. Focus on this first and finding a companion second.
8. Ask God. This seems obvious; however, very few ask God who it is that they should marry.
9. Trust God. Who knows better than God who your helpmeet in life should be?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reggie Stegmeier is a Church of God author, minister, musician, and gospel songwriter. Reggie, the third son and sixth child of Pastor E. David and Millie Stegmeier, first felt God's touch when he was saved at an early age. He has maintained a seriousness and respectful attitude towards the things of God since then and has faithfully served his local congregation for many years where he directs the youth choir and sings in a men's quartet.

In 2009 Reggie graduated from Portland State University with a Master of Education Degree. He earned a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education. Upon graduation Reggie entered a career of public-school teaching. Beginning in 2003 Reggie spent ten seasons as the director of the Canby Community Orchestra.

Since the fall of 2013, Reggie has been the band and orchestra director at Tualatin High School in Tualatin, Oregon, where he directs close to three hundred students in several different musical ensembles. At Tualatin High School, Reggie also serves as the head of the Performing Arts Department.

For approximately the past seventeen years, Reggie has held revival meetings, ministered in rest home services, worked in prison ministries, and preached at his local house of worship. His desire has been to first be a servant of God and a servant of the body of Christ. In 2018 Reggie was ordained into the ministry.

In addition to Reggie's formal education responsibilities, he teaches voice and instrumental music lessons at Youth Music Project in West Linn, Oregon. Reggie has written over thirty gospel songs for the various musical groups in his local congregation. He also assists his father, a long-time Church of God pastor, in the ministry of the church. During his recesses from school, Reggie enjoys traveling to revivals and camp meetings with his wife and four children.



Did you know that God is vitally concerned about whom you marry? The same God who created this Universe created you, and He is molding, making, and preparing a companion for you. At the right time, He will show you who that person is. This book presents a realistic picture of marriage. There are trials, struggles, and tribulations in marriage; however, God wants you to have a happy home, and it starts with choosing the right companion.



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