

Before the Rib

There was Adam. All alone in the garden. Even though God was present - God Himself understood it wasn't good for Adam to be alone. Yes ladies . . . it's a hard existence without you for most men. For most women it's a hard existence to be alone. This isn't good. Having said that - those who remain single are not second class citizens in the Kingdom. Paul was single and considered it a gift! (1 Cor. 7:7). However, as you know, God will take Adam's rib and make woman from him. God knew what He wanted for Adam. A perfect match for him. This is probably a good time to pause for a moment to deal with two realities:

- Good parents want what is good for their children. God did. So, we want to be praying for them now. We want to help and guide. I've enjoyed how Abraham took care of Isaac. He told his servant to find a wife from a trusted source. Where to look and where not to look (**Genesis 24:1-8**). Some people were "out of bounds" for his son. God bless parents like this who care for and love their children.
- Even a match made in heaven could go wrong if both parties don't keep their eyes on the Lord. So, remember, we do the best we can and then we have to let go. Everyone must answer to God themselves.

I. Remember Solomon: What are you wanting? **1 Kings 11:1-4**

- A. If you're wanting to feed the spirit it will have certain results.
- B. If you're wanting to please the flesh it produces something else. (**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**)
 - 1. Solomon fed the flesh. These women were "out of bounds" to God's people, but he didn't listen. Even though he was the wisest man walking the earth & old . . . he was pulled away from serving God (**1 Kings 11:1-4**).
 - a) **2 Corinthians 6:14-18** No, this passage isn't about marriage. I agree 100%. So, think about it - if God doesn't want Christians yoked to unbelievers in general . . . how much more does He not want us **married** to unbelievers?
- C. Our wants are revealing where we're at - not always easy to hear - but true.
 - 1. **1 John 2:15-17**.
- D. So, before we move on we need to understand: God didn't give Eve to Adam so he could simply have a good friend for the rest of his life. Someone who has the same sense of humor. Someone to watch movies with at night, etc. He gave Eve to Adam for spiritual reasons - someone to help him spiritually. Adam was to be a spiritual leader to Eve. Marriage is much deeper - it's spiritual.

II. 10 Most Common Reasons for Divorce (updated Oct. 29, 2019). <https://www.marriage.com/advice/divorce/10-most-common-reasons-for-divorce/>

- A. Infidelity, Money, Lack of communication, Constant arguing, Weight gain, Unrealistic expectations, Lack of intimacy, Lack of equality, Not being prepared for marriage, Abuse

III. What to look for:

- A. **A real person.** For example - many times Proverbs 31 makes women feel guilty. They read everything this woman does and feel they fall short. That's sad, because that's not the point of the passage. It's an oracle from a King's mother. She's trying to help her son by counseling to find a godly woman. This is an ideal woman. Listen, we all fall short. So, keep in mind, that as we go through this you're not looking for Mr. or Mrs. Perfect right now. They won't be Mr. or

Mrs. Perfect ever. But, with keeping the spirit of Proverbs 31, we're talking about general truths. What we're looking for.

1. Having said that - there are basic traits you need to be looking for in a future spouse. Women, if you're looking at a man who isn't prepared to lead you spiritually - it should be a deal breaker. Men, what may seem cute or spunky when you're dating (*but is actually a "don't tell me how to live my life" kind of attitude*) is not so cute anymore when you're actually trying to lead. If she's not prepared to follow it should probably be a deal breaker. Argumentative, selfish, angry, close-minded individuals will kill marriages. These are serious red flags.
- B. **Lack of equality.** Proverbs 31:13-16. That proverbial woman sure is working hard, isn't she ladies? How do you think she'd feel if her husband was sitting around playing games all day? Brothers & Sister - pick someone with some drive. No, they don't have to own their own company, but laziness is what I'm talking about. A boyfriend that lets you do all the work now and pay all his meals now may do it long-term. It's not so funny after a while. One of the reasons women are struggling in their roles today is because men won't rise to the occasion and lead. Men, if your girlfriend can't keep a job that may be a red flag. She has a major role to play in the home and her help is needed as well. We're to work hard because that's what the Lord did. We are to take care of our own and be ready to take care of others. Laziness won't get the job done and it can cause stress in the future.
- C. **Money.** This woman is working hard, isn't she? However, she's not working so hard so she can have everything she wants and a big house. Not to say that riches are bad, but many times it brings problems. I like the instruction in **Proverbs 30:7-9**. So, you need to have some kind of an idea. Is the one you love in love with money? Do they seek contentment or riches? Money can bring security, but not necessarily character. Ladies, imagine if the husband was never home. Imagine having children with an absentee father. So, make sure the one you're considering isn't in love with the world and the things in it, but the Lord and His Kingdom.
- D. **Communication.** This is major. **Proverbs 31:28**. I watched a show about a couple who had been married for 7 years. They couldn't remember the last time either had done anything for one another. They were both afraid the other one didn't love them. The husband finally confessed his love for his wife and she the same. He sobbed like a child - holding on to that fear for so long. I love it: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." He communicates with his wife! I know you don't like it when others get on facebook/twitter or whatever and brag about their spouses like they're the best in the world. I think there's something to be said about doing it so publicly, but the idea of praising your spouse like they're the only one is kind of supported (haha!). There may be something important or difficult to discuss. If you don't know how to talk to one another now, the good and the bad, then you need to pump the brakes. This is KEY to a marriage. Learning TO talk and HOW to talk is critical. **1 Peter 5:8**. We are to communicate with each other. It's not something we can't do - we're commanded to! How can you understand your wife without talking?
- E. **Attraction.** Brethren, I don't want to push this too far either direction. Look, **Proverbs 31:30** says, "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Yes, picking someone solely on their looks is a problem. I've seen it work in both directions. I've seen young men and women in the body fall away because they went after a pretty face but ugly heart. But, to be honest, I've also seen the youth pressured into marriage with someone they're not into. This too, in my judgment, is a danger. Listen, Abraham was

attracted to Sarah. Isaac thought Rebecca was a cutie. Remember Jacob, Leah & Rachel? It is true that Jacob had a deep respect for Leah, but brethren, let's face it - it was a struggle for him. **Genesis 29:30-31**, "So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven year. When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren." Listen, call me crazy, but you don't want to get to the point where you'd say, "You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." Gen. 30:14. Not exactly the most romantic passage in the bible. Not exactly the most romantic relationship. Wisdom would tell you that if you have an opportunity, then choose someone you're attracted to. You're not gonna read Song of Solomon and say, "Well, he married her for her heart only." Nope. They were attracted to each other. Listen, the Bible tells us that sex is a gift from God and it's to be enjoyed. We're not to keep it from each other unless it's an agreed short amount of time for prayer (**1 Cor. 7:5**). I recently met a man who struggles with homosexuality. He was engaged twice. He didn't go through with it because he believed he couldn't give these women what the Lord expected. Did he do wrong? Listen, as time goes on and we mature we find beauty where others do not. You may need to wait until it's time. There is wisdom in realizing you're not mature enough! This isn't a bad thing. There have been many men and women, who at first glance, were not attracted to the other person. But over time, not pressured time, they truly became attracted to one another. This, I think, is a good thing.

- F. **Anger.** This is to both parties, but to ladies in particular. If you are to submit yourself to a man - then think it through. He needs to have a cool head. Husbands are to "live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." **1 Peter 3:7**. Ladies, if he doesn't understand you in this way, as the weaker vessel who should be honored - RUN. Men, take note of **Proverbs 21:19;30:21-23**. Listen, both men and women - know who you're looking to marry. They're past doesn't automatically rule them out, but you need to understand the baggage they're bringing to the table and how they've dealt with it. Women, men with anger issues can't lead. They dictate. Brothers, women with anger issues don't know how to follow. It's not your responsibility to FIX someone - it's to serve the truth. Don't bring this into a marriage - get away. I've learned in my study of anger that it stems from pride most of the time. Marriage requires humility. Listen, if the person isn't able to hear what you have to say without making them angry then they're just not ready for marriage. Also, generally speaking, take note of what your parents are saying. If they're not approving there's more than likely a good reason.
- G. **Committed.** Proverbs 31:11-12. A key reason to find such a person. My dad said he heard the best definition of commitment when he was younger: "The elimination of all other options." Yes, they need to be committed to you. This is what God had in mind in **Genesis 2:22-24**. They need to learn how to put someone else first. This was a principle found in **Philippians 2:4-8**. If you aren't confident in their commitment to you - distance yourself. Adultery is no joke. It breaks the heart like nothing else. It rips families apart. But, brethren, you want a person to be more committed to Christ more than anything. If they're committed to Christ they will be committed to you (Philippians 2:4-8). This is the kind of person you want to be looking at when at the altar. Someone who looks like Christ. So much will fall into place if that's true. This will allow you to fully love someone who will fully love you!

So remember, before the rib is taken and you two become one - imagine your someone looking into your eyes as you no doubt will hear the passage being read, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." **1 Corinthians 13:4-7.** Can you love this person? Will this person love you?