

Dating and Courtship

Gen. 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Rick Phillips:

1. Commitment, leaving and cleaving, dying to self
2. Faithfulness
3. Interdependence

The bible only lists one absolute prohibition and that is a believer marrying an unbeliever –

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Wrong desires, wrong means of meeting them.

Who will fulfill all our needs, make us worthwhile, significant, etc.

Only God. Too often marriages collapse precisely because the husband or the wife expected their spouse to be a God replacement.

We are called to love our spouse as an act of piety to God rather than using one another to meet needs or desires. That *alone* should lead us to avoid being unequally yoked.

Rick Phillips: Complete the following line -

Gen. 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Larry Crabb - Manipulation to Ministry

Manipulation - Early dating: Idol feeding. Compliments feeding vanity. Doing what it takes to *meet my desires* – for instance romance as the key to a sexual relationship prior to marriage.
Idols never satisfy. Law of diminishing returns – this kills relationships.

Col. 3:12-17

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Basic Considerations:

The Male leads the relationship – ensuring that it *honors God, and protects, blesses the woman* – this includes protecting her from his own sinful desires!

Desire is to Sanctify the woman - MINISTRY

Become knowledgeable about one another.

Men – be the spiritual leader

Women – help him to become that

REMEMBER – THE PERSON YOU MARRY WILL:

Think Long term - Lead your household, spend your money, raise your children, make decisions for both of you – is this an EPH 5 man or a PROV 31 woman?

Women –

Help and Respect

Allow him to initiate without making it impossible

Dress Attractively but modestly

Be HONEST

Be aware of HIS sexual temptations

Speak respectfully about him, if you CAN'T Respect him, don't court or marry him

Remember He is your Brother in Christ

Men – Only a fool dates a woman who *only* has looks on her side

Sadly most Christian men have the SAME value system as the world

Godliness has to be the #1 virtue for both individuals

1 Peter 3:3-4

3 Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel --

4 rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Prov. 12:4 An excellent wife *is* the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame *is* like rotteness in his bones.

Think LONG TERM, are you simply building a divorce?

Find a KINDHEARTED woman, a woman who empathizes, not a woman who only cares about herself.

Women – he must be more than just charming and confident, think character, not personality
 Seek a man who loves the God, loves His word, and loves His worship
 He should be industrious (prov. 10:4)
 He should have integrity (Prov. 10:9)
 He should have self-control (Prov. 11:12)
 He should have kindness (Prov. 11:25)
 Remember - you are looking for a BOAZ NOT A SAMSON
 Also, remember you are not perfect either.

Men – approach the FATHER for consent to court his daughter – acknowledge she is under his protection and headship (you would and will want this consideration yourself)
 Avoid Tempting situations
 Don't meet incognito

Can you ask HIM out, let him know you are interested, but let him ask you
 Don't HANG OUT with friends of the opposite sex
 How Far can we go: not far at all
 How close to holiness can we stay!
 Don't put yourself into a situation you would disapprove of your pastor being in!
 Get married, don't spend an inordinate time dating!
 When you are sure your partner meets the criteria – act!

Inter-racial dating and marriage:

There have been many reasons listed for opposing a marriage:

It used to be the case that parents refused to allow children to marry beneath their class, that is still the case in some nations such as India.

The blood line of Jesus includes 3 Non-Jewish (Semetic) women:
Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth.

Moses a Semite, married an unnamed “Cushite” an Ethiopian, who was almost certainly a black woman, Numbers 12:1

The bible even notes the different color of the Cushite or Ethiopian's skin “***Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.***”

The problem with Solomon's foreign wives was not only their number but the fact that they were unbelieving:

1 Kings 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites --

2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

We are all descended from one blood, and one family (Noah) –
 Acts 17:26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth

Ken Hamm of answers in Genesis notes: *“Sadly, there are some Christian homes where the parents are more concerned about their children not marrying someone from another ‘race’ than whether or not they are marrying a Christian. When Christians marry non-Christians, it negates the spiritual (not the physical) oneness in marriage, resulting in negative consequences for the couple and their children.”*

Example of John and Sunny...

Bob Jones U. didn't admit blacks till 1971, and then only married ones, and then in 1975 promulgated a "no-interracial dating" policy till 2000

KING: You are a private institution, you don't get the tax benefit because -- but you are entitled to the thing -- I'm trying to find out why you have the rule.

JONES: Yes. We have the rule, because it was a part of a bigger -- it was a -- it wasn't the rule itself. We can't point to a verse in the Bible that says you shouldn't date or marry inter-racial.

KING: You can't back it up?

JONES: No, we can't back it up with a verse from the Bible. We never have tried to, we have never tried to do that. But we have said there is a principle here, an overriding principle of the one world government. But let me tell you how insignificant this is. Students never hear it preached. There have been four, five, six generations of students that graduated from there have never heard this preached in our chapel or taught in our school. To us...

1. All Races Have One Ancestor in the Image of God, and All Humans Are in God's Image

The Bible portrays the human race as coming from one pair of human ancestors who were created in God's image unlike all the animals and that this image of God is passed on to all humans. Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Again in Genesis 5:1-3, “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image.” In other words, the magnificent image of God goes on from generation to generation.

Then Paul makes the sweeping statement in Acts 17:26, “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.” In other words, Adam, who was created in God's image, is the father of all human beings in all ethnic groups. Therefore all of them are dignified above the animals in this absolutely unique and glorious way: humans are created in the image of God. With all the beautiful, God-designed ethnic and cultural diversity in the world, that truth is paramount. That truth is decisive in setting priorities for how we respect and relate to each other.

2. The Bible Forbids Intermarriage Between Unbeliever and Believer, But Not Between Races

The Bible forbids intermarriage between believer and unbeliever but not between members of different ethnic groups. 1 Corinthians 7:39, “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” “Whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” One biblical restriction on the man she marries: he must be in the Lord. He must be a believer in Jesus Christ.

This was the main point of the Old Testament warnings about marrying those among the pagan nations. The point was not to protect racial purity. The point was to protect religious purity. For example, Deuteronomy 7:3-4:

You shall not intermarry with [the nations]; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you.

The issue is not color mixing, or customs mixing, or clan identity. The issue is: will there be one common allegiance to the true God in this marriage or will there be divided affections? The prohibition in God's word is not against interracial marriage, but against marriage between the true Israel, the church (from every people, tribe, and nation) and those who are not part of the true Israel, the church. That is, the Bible prohibits marriage between those who believe in Christ (the Messiah) and those who don't (see 2 Corinthians 6:14).

This is exactly what we would expect if the great ground of our identity is not our ethnic differences but our common humanity in the image of God and especially our new humanity in Christ. That leads to the third biblical observation.

3. In Christ Our Oneness Is Profound and Transforms Racial and Social Differences from Barriers to Blessings

In Christ ethnic and social differences cease to be obstacles to deep, personal, intimate fellowship. Colossians 3:9-11, "You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all."

This does not mean that every minority culture gets swallowed up by the majority culture in the name of unity. God does not obliterate all ethnic and cultural differences in Christ. He redeems them and refines them and enriches them in the togetherness of his kingdom. The final image of heaven is "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 7:9; 5:9). God values the differences that reflect more fully his glory in man.

The point of Colossians 3:11 is not that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences have no significance; they do. The point is that that they are no barrier to profound, personal, intimate fellowship. Singing alto is different from singing bass. It's a significant difference. But that difference is no barrier to being in the choir. It's an asset.

When Christ is all and in all, differences take an important but subordinate place to fellowship—and, I will argue, marriage.

4. Criticizing One Interracial Marriage Was Severely Disciplined by God

The fourth observation is that Moses, a Jew, apparently married a black African and was approved by God. Numbers 12:1, "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman." Cushite means a woman from Cush, a region south of Ethiopia, and known for their black skin. We know this because of Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian [the very same Hebrew word translated "Cushite" in Numbers 12:1] change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil." So attention is drawn to the difference of the skin of the Cushite people.

J. Daniel Hays writes in his book, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), that Cush “is used regularly to refer to the area south of Egypt, and above the cataracts on the Nile, where a Black African civilization flourished for over two thousand years. Thus it is quite clear that Moses marries a Black African woman” (p. 71).

What is most significant about this context is that God does not get angry at Moses; he gets angry at Miriam for criticizing Moses. The criticism has to do with Moses’s marriage and Moses’s authority. The most explicit statement relates to the marriage: “Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.” Then consider this possibility. In God’s anger at Miriam, Moses’s sister, God says in effect, “You like being light-skinned Miriam? I’ll make you light-skinned.” Numbers 12:10: “When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow.”

God says not a critical word against Moses for marrying a black, Cushite woman. But when Miriam criticizes God’s chosen leader for this marriage God strikes her skin with white leprosy. If you ever thought black was a biblical symbol for uncleanness, be careful; a worse white uncleanness could come upon you.

Those are my four biblical observations. 1) All races have one ancestor in the image of God and all humans are in God’s image. 2) The Bible forbids intermarriage between unbeliever and believer, but not between races. 3) In Christ our oneness is profound and transforms racial and social differences from barriers to blessings. 4) Criticizing one interracial marriage was severely disciplined by God.

First, instructing your children to marry within ethnic lines inevitably communicates strong disapproval for failing to do so, and a sense that the people outside of our ethnicity, no matter how good a Christian they might be, are in some sense not quite as good. Non-discriminatory ethnic pride, while a nice idea just doesn't occur in a fallen world. And my experience has been that whichever group adopts it, be they White, Black, or Asian ends up practically discriminating against other ethnicities. Indeed to favor one thing or person over another is to discriminate between them. If we apply the teaching to the bible, it makes Miriam and Aaron right in some sense to disapprove not only of Moses' marriage to the Cushite (Ethiopian) as they did in Numbers 12:1, but also they would have been right if they had objected to his marrying Zipporah a believing Midianite (Exodus 2:21). It also would have meant the townsfolk and kin of Ruth, far from blessing her (Ruth 4:14), would have strongly disapproved of Boaz's decision to marry her and would have encouraged him instead to choose an eligible female from good Jewish stock. Indeed, she would have been an unsuitable marriage partner for any of the men of Bethlehem. Naomi would have had to answer her speech (Ruth 1:16) with something along the lines of, "Well that's a nice idea, but the my people/your people thing isn't going to work out. We Jews have a certain ethnic pride and don't approve of marriage and such to Moabites." Thus she would never have become an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:5), or even have been fully integrated into Jewish society and a means of blessing Naomi. Actually, the example itself is moot, as Boaz wouldn't have existed. His father Salmon, being properly instructed by his parents, would have known Rahab would have been an unsuitable wife as well (Matthew 1:5). So that union wouldn't have taken place.

Also, trying to instill a sense of absolute fellowship, so that your children eagerly play with, eat with, have sleep-overs with, and do everything with Christian children from other ethnic backgrounds and then telling them you should not court, date, or marry them will inevitably break down. Show them they are one in Christ and let them live that out, and they will realize that their fellow Christians are suitable marriage partners regardless of skin color, accent, or eye shape. The only way you'll manage to keep the "we don't marry them" barrier up in the modern world, is if you eliminate or sharply limit their access to ethnically different Christian children and do all you can to instill a sense that ethnicity comes first and Christianity second.

Further, theologically the ethnic pride argument undermines the essential oneness of the Covenant community, it forgets that we are sojourners and pilgrims here on earth, that our citizenship is in heaven, not a particular

earthly country, and that the real division is between believers and unbelievers. For instance, in reminding Christians that they were sojourners "just passing through" earth on the way to heaven, Peter states:

"having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12)

Those, "gentiles" would have been their fellow countrymen, and yet he separates Christians from them. The church is the primary bond.

To see proof that we really are one in every sense with our fellow believers, regardless of ethnicity, just read the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:11-22. The middle wall of separation is gone, God has built one man from the two, they were aliens, but now they are fellow citizens of the same country and one holy temple without gaps, dividing walls, and separations:

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands --

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Frankly, also I'd say in our country, finding a strong, godly, orthodox Christian mate is hard enough. Further limiting that dwindling field for the sake of racial pride is self-destructive. Would you really rather your child married a marginally pious antinomian Pentecostal because they were American Caucasian than a strong godly Reformed Asian? I know I wouldn't.

Personally, I had the heartbreaking experience of watching a beautiful sister in Christ marry an unbelieving State Trooper, because her Christian mother liked him, knew his family, and because as she put it, "I just haven't met any strong Christian black men and I'm tired of waiting." I said to her, "But you KNOW and FELLOWSHIP with strong Christian single men who work at this company!" Her answer was, "But they're all white, my church and my family, would never approve of that." She took the marriage "they approved of" telling herself that he sometimes went to church and might become a Christian, and after the honeymoon period faded found herself treated poorly and cheated on by the person her people approved of. So much for the fruits of obeying the dictates of "ethnic pride".

1968 RPCES report:

"I Corinthians 6:15-16; 7:16, 39. These verses relate to the subject of intermarriage, especially the last verse, and the last clause: "only in the Lord." It is striking that in all of Paul's discussion of marriage this is the one principle that is stressed in regard to whom one should marry. This is not to say that marriage to any Christian is necessarily expedient, but the only marriage clearly prohibited is that of a believer to an unbeliever. The Bible does not teach that interracial marriage of believers is morally wrong. We do recognize that children of a mixed marriage born into a prejudiced society face a serious problem of identity. This problem of identity is largely overcome, however, where the commitment to Christ is uppermost and where the church welcomes all who are in covenant relationship to the Lord into its fellowship. Although marriage between the races should be approached with caution because of the serious nature of the difficulties involved, nevertheless we are persuaded that God's blessing is promised to all who marry "in the Lord."

Now I want to be fair, I've seen exactly the same thing in the Korean community, in using biblical pretexts as an excuse for why their children should not marry non-Koreans, and I've also seen hostility in the black community towards marriages to whites (and whites adopting black children). And just as the Greeks considered non-Greeks to be "Barbarians", Asians have historically viewed non-Asians as inferior or simply uncivilized. But generally speaking the real issue is simple racism, and just as we are very good at coming up with supposedly biblical reasons to justify divorce, we are also good at finding reasons to justify things like slavery or feelings of racial superiority. This is common to fallen man. I myself will admit that while I wouldn't have a problem with my daughters marrying godly Asian or Black men, I'd have more difficulty getting over them marrying believing French or Irish men because of an ingrained racial hostility towards those races. If any of us think we've escaped the ravages of the fall in regard to our neighbors, we'd better think again.

So, while Spurgeon could support abolition and write praises for mixed-race marriage in the bible, and the unity of all races in Christ:

Quote:

We note that two women are mentioned in this fifth verse: a Canaanite and a Moabitess. Thus Gentile blood mingled with the Hebrew strain. Our King has come to break down the partition wall. As Gentiles we rejoice in this. Jesus is heir of a line in which flows the blood of the harlot Rahab, and of the rustic Ruth; he is akin to the fallen and to the lowly, and he will show his love even to the poorest and most obscure. I, too, may have part and lot in him. – Spurgeon

I'm not certain that he would have been happy if one of his own sons had married a godly black woman, even though his own words could frequently be used in support of the decision.

The problem is often that we make theology the bond-servant of our innate inclinations, or that we fail to let the theology we confess guide our thoughts, feelings, and actions. So even more often than we have people creating a theology that excuses their detestation of other races, we have people simply acting out of accord with the theology they profess to believe. Sure I believe we are all one in Jesus Christ and confess that the believing African is my brother, I'm just not going to have him over is all. I'm not even going to realize I'm doing it.