

Checklist for a Good Marriage Partner

Written by admin

Wednesday, 29 June 2011 12:17 -

So you want to get married? You must keep in mind that the choice you make will shape the rest of your life. This is because marriage is intended to be a faithful, exclusive, lifelong union of a man and a woman. A good choice will go a long way in ensuring your future happiness while a bad choice will suck out all the joy, peace, and life out of you. Marriage is therefore not to be taken lightly but advisedly and soberly.

Here are some questions you must ask yourself before you take that leap.

1. **Are you really ready for marriage?**

A lot of women decide to get married because of pressure from parents, relatives and peers. Others feel needy, unloved and lonely, and want someone to fill the gap. Many women also have a fantasy of a nice wedding, beautiful white wedding gown and veil, bridesmaids, wedding cake, and a lot of other trappings. Their romantic notions lead them to assume that they will leave happily ever after.

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Even if you are lonely, do not act desperately and marry anyone. Loneliness is a state of mind and one can be lonely even in a crowd. You would be even lonelier in a loveless marriage than alone. Before you get married, you need to work at being an emotionally healthy human being who is complete in all ways and dependant only on God's grace to meet your needs, heal your hurts, and resolve any questions and issues. Do not expect anybody else to complete you. You would be placing a big emotional burden on your future husband if you expect him to. Marriage is not a romance novel and the wedding is only a small part of it, so be realistic in your approach to marriage.

.It is also understood that some Christians tell members of the opposite sex that they had a revelation that they were meant to be their life partners. I do not know if there are many that fall for this, but make sure you have a similar revelation before committing yourself.

Your relatives and friends may also have a certain kind of man in mind for you. Your interests should prevail. However, you should think twice about their reservations of your choice if they are well meaning. It could save you a lot of heartache later.

1. What are your expectations for a life partner?

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People have a wide range of personal preferences on their expectations of the qualities of a life partner. Physical attributes are important because the physical part of marriage is important. There has to be some attraction that draws a couple together.

It is important however to be realistic in our expectations. The most handsome man may not also be the richest, most educated, and with the best sense of humour. You should also remember that some of these qualities may be superficial and that there are deeper qualities you should look out for.

One quality you should ensure is that you believe in the same things. He should therefore be a genuine Christian man of integrity - open, honest and trustworthy and with a good moral character. You need to talk and listen to your date or fiancée' so that you can know who he really is?

"A pretty (or handsome) face is an attraction, but oh how vain to be governed in such a serious undertaking by such a trifle. Earthly goods and social position have their value, yet how base and degrading to suffer them to control such a solemn undertaking. Oh, what watchfulness and prayerfulness is needed in the regulation of our affections."

(A.W. Pink)

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Few people meet their ideal. However, a successful marriage is not one in which two ideally matched people find each other and live happily ever after from day one. No matter how carefully one selects a partner, married life is not a perfect thing. The most godly couple have their failings, but two such people work on through the years to build that relationship that is aligned with the Biblical ideal. To create that ideal is the work of a life time.

1. Are you in love or infatuated?

The best basis for marriage is where two people love one another. However some people rush into marriage when they are only infatuated. Infatuation means, "to turn to folly and inspire with foolish passion." The person who is infatuated is deprived of judgment and reason.

There are four differences between love and infatuation.

a) Romantic infatuation is almost exclusively based on physical attraction. Romantic infatuation may happen suddenly and without warning, whereas love grows and produces a growing relationship between the couple.

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Secondly, the one infatuated knows only a few characteristics of that person. On the other hand, feelings of love grow out of a maturing relationship with the other person which appraises the whole personality, not merely a few characteristics.

Thirdly, an infatuated person sustains a fantasy of the object of infatuation based largely on idealization. The fantasy image will vanish when they learn about the other's faults, weaknesses and sinfulness; whereas one who truly loves another will constantly check their ideas of that person against the growing awareness of their whole character.

Fourthly, an infatuated person tends to have a false sense of security about the romance. It is based upon wishful thinking and there is a compulsive need for reassurance in the relationship. A person who knows true love on the other hand, tends to have a true sense of security in their relationship, based upon a growing trust, affection and mutual concern. True love between a man and a woman will stand the test of time and separation, whereas infatuation will not stand up to this test. All young people who feel that they may love someone need to give their relationship the test of time and preferably the test of separation so that they can find out if their love is really true.

1. Does he really love you?

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If your man is selfish, controlling, manipulative, and belittles you, he does not really love you. If he is only interested in your physical attributes without wanting to find out about the rest of you, he does not really love you.

Sometimes physical attraction is all that is there in some relationships. This love is born out of selfish desire, seeking only self- gratification. and for many marriages this is all that there is from the very outset.

You know that he loves you if he talks and listens to you, is truly interested in what you say, tells you the truth, wants to spend time with you, is considerate, adores you, faithful, loyal, willing to shoulder responsibilities, is sensitive to your emotions, is not jealous or possessive, not easily influenced by what others say about you, is romantic (gifts for no reason), encourages you, is kind and gentle, patient and not too demanding. "Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful and trusting." 1 Corinthians 13:7

Love sees you at your worst but never forgets your best; thinks you're a little bit more wonderful than you really are; will talk with you endlessly or just sit with you in silence; is happy about your success, cares about you enough to say what he really means; doesn't try to act smarter or be your constant teacher and listens, even when what you have to say is not particularly interesting. Why? Because love believes you're important!

We want our partner to love us as we are. We want to feel accepted no matter what we may say or do. When we make a mistake, we want to be forgiven. We want to be loved unconditionally. If he only loves you when you do what he says, that is not love. Love is like

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that one of Christ, sacrificial, tender, compassionate, and caring love which is prepared to give and ask nothing in return.

However, you need to know that nobody is perfect, even you, and to a certain extent you need to compromise some of your unrealistic expectations in order to get a future life partner. However you should never compromise on your faith just to get married.

1. Have you prayed about it?

Much watchfulness and prayer are essential in choosing a marriage partner. You need to pray for God's plans and purpose for your future and to provide a good man at his appointed time. God is all together trustworthy, faithful and loving.

Remember, also that one does not have to get married, especially when you have not met someone you can be happy with. Paul said, *"Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion (1 Corinthians 7:8-9).*

We need to pray to God for love well worth waiting for because we are his beloved daughters and we should not settle for anything but the best.

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A problem comes though when we do not reciprocate unconditional love. For example, there will never be genuine love expressed between two people if both individuals are seeking to have their needs met. How can two people make a relationship work if both define love as, "if you love me then you will do what I want"?

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ... Love rejoices with the truth. Love believes and endures all things. Love never fails."

Over and above the eros physical element, there will be longing for each other and for each other's company. There will be an emotional satisfaction derived merely from being in each other's company. If eros speaks of that physical and natural affinity, then phileo speaks of that emotional affinity and oneness.

A husband should love his wife like Christ loves us. A husband is to love his wife in spite of all her defects and failings. This is a vital message for our day when the divorce rate is so high. Secondly, Christ "gave himself for it." Such is His love for the Church that He laid down his life as a sacrifice for her. This agapao love is a sacrificial love which a husband should have

for his wife. The highest love that the world can know is this eros and phileo love. There can be natural, physical attraction for each other, and emotional affinity, but the world can go no higher than that. Only the Christian can rise to this agapao level, because it is a love which is based upon and flows out of Christ's love for the Church. When the World so glibly sings and talks about falling in love, it is usually referring to erotic and sensual attraction. On occasions it may go beyond that and encompass emotional attraction, but Christian couples

need to have far more than this. They will need the love which sanctifies the first two elements.

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1. Are you depending on other people's preferences?

A man may tell you that he has a revelation that you were meant to be his wife. You should wait until you have a similar revelation.

Sometimes deep, meaningful fellowship with the God of the universe is just sitting at His feet and deciding that "be still and know that I am God" is the path away from desperation, away from pressure, away from fear of being alone.

God's standard is very high for His beloved daughter

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