

Should we look for a spouse, or wait for God to send one?

by Denver Cheddie

Someone once asked me, “Do you believe that God has a spouse for each person?” My response was a resounding NO. Absolutely not! Yet there are many Christians who believe that God has a spouse for each person. Romance novels and songs like “*I wonder what God was thinking when He created you*” all contribute to this notion. Personally I am disinclined to accept this view primarily because there is not a shred of evidence for it from scripture. In fact, there is much evidence from scripture for the opposing view, that we must go out and find ourselves a spouse.

Now this is by no means false doctrine. No one’s going to burn in hell for believing that God has a perfect spouse for them. But it may keep them single all their life. I’ve seen it. A young lady keeps turning down potential husbands because she has not “heard from God” or someone told her “he is not God’s will for you”. Years go by and she’s not so young anymore, and still waiting for God to “bring someone into her life”. Of course, there is nothing wrong with remaining single – if that is what you want. However, if you are interested in being married, I would like to dispel the myth that God has a specific spouse prepared for each person.

Biblical Precedent

Adam was the only person who ever just woke up and saw the perfect woman next to him. God has not done that for anyone else. The bible uses language like “Abraham took a wife”, “Judah took a wife”. See Gen 25:1; 38:2. There is no record in the bible, New or Old Testament, of

anyone sitting on their butt expecting God to send that perfect person into their life. The precedent that the bible sets is that of men going out and finding their wives.

There are only two examples of God telling people whom to marry – Hosea and Joseph. God told Hosea to marry Gomer, and Joseph to marry Mary. The first was because He wanted to get a point across to Israel, the second to facilitate his plan of redemption. And note that Joseph was already betrothed to Mary, so they had actually already met and fallen in love, before God spoke to him. These are exceptions, not the norm. This is NOT how God normally works concerning marriage.

God does not have an ordained spouse for everyone

LOGICAL REASONS

There are other reasons why I don't believe God has a spouse ordained for everyone. For one, it makes no logical sense. Think about it. Suppose God predestined that John will marry Jane, and suppose John marries someone else or never gets saved. Then what is Jane supposed to do? Marry outside of "God's will"?

Now suppose things did in fact work out for John and Jane, and they got married, lived happily ever after. Then John dies. Is Jane allowed to remarry? According to the bible, yes. But according to the view that God has a spouse prepared for each one, no. Who is she going to remarry? God's perfect spouse for her already died. Does God have two spouses prepared for her?

THE TEACHINGS OF PAUL

Why didn't Paul get married? He said that he could have if he wanted to, but chose not to (1 Cor 9:5,12; 1 Cor 7:1-8). Now let's examine that claim. Did God have a wife prepared for Paul? If so, Paul was not co-operating by choosing to remain single. Was God's will for Paul to remain single? Then Paul had no right, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to claim that he could have taken a wife if he wanted to. Which is it? But there is a third option. God gave Paul the liberty and the wisdom to choose whether or not he wanted to marry. Paul decided that given his ministry – traveling all the time and the possibility of being killed at any moment – it was better to remain single.

Paul seems to teach that whether someone marries is a matter of circumstance rather than design. In 1 Cor. 7:25-38, he discourages young people from marrying because of the “present distress”. In 1 Tim. 5:14, on the other hand, he encourages the young widows to remarry, again because of individual circumstances. Never in his discussion, was there any hint that God may have a fore-ordained plan concerning marriage and we need to get in tune with it.

God has given us the choice

God has left it entirely up to us to choose our spouse. He gives us wisdom and liberty to make that choice. He has only set one condition for us – that believers marry fellow believers (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Cor 7:39). That's it. As far as God is concerned, it does not matter whether you marry someone who is fat or thin, short or tall, brown eyed or blue eyed. It doesn't matter to God.

God also does not care one bit whether you marry for ministry or not. It is OK if a preacher gets married to a caterer. That's fine with God. There is nothing in the bible that says your ministries have to "complement each other". There are some people who believe that (I used to). The bible clearly teaches that although we have a diversity of ministries, it's all one Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-6). In other words, any form of Christian ministry will automatically complement each other, you don't have to fret over that.

Any condition beyond the one God stipulated is really a personal and individual matter. For example, one man may decide he wants to marry someone who doesn't work. That's entirely up to his discretion. Neither the bible nor God requires this. The idea that we need God to decide who we marry is absurd. Yes God brings people in and out of our lives, but ultimately it is we who decide, not God. If I may be so bold, God does not care who you marry (providing it's a fellow Christian) or whether you marry. As far as God is concerned, life is short and those with spouses are just as those without (1 Cor 7:29). And as far as God is concerned, marriage is solely for our earthly enjoyment and has no eternal significance (Matt 22:30). If you want to get married, then YOU have to find a spouse.

God's will concerning marriage is what I call post-determined as opposed to pre-determined. God does not decide in advance who gets married to whom. Of course He knows what will happen, but let's not confuse ourselves trying to figure out what God knows. Let's go solely on what He reveals / has revealed to us. It is after two people get married that God puts his stamp of approval on it and says "This is now my will. You are now one flesh, and whatever I join, let no one separate." That's how God

works. Whoever you choose to marry becomes God's will after you get married. Note that this is true even if a believer marries an unbeliever. It still becomes God's will. I know persons who got married then later decided, "You know what? This was never God's will, I'm getting out." This is grossly unscriptural. It's a product of this misguided view that God predetermines people for marriage.

The right attitude in relationships

The belief that God has a perfect spouse out there results in a passive attitude toward finding a spouse, and even after you do get married it creates a passive attitude in handling marital issues. In this day of 50% divorce rates, a passive attitude is detrimental to the relationship. If deep down inside you believe that there is such a thing as a perfect spouse, you're going to set your expectations so high, that everyone will disappoint you. You will always find some flaw in the other person that you don't like.

Secondly, if you believe that God predestined both of you to be together, then you are likely to believe that the relationship will "just work out". You don't have to do too much, God will work it out. Wrong! It is YOUR job to work it out. It is a couple's job to handle the problems that come up in a relationship. A couple must decide that whatever comes their way, they are staying together. This requires an aggressive and pro-active attitude toward the relationship. Please rid your mind of this disease that it is God's job to handle your marital business. It's yours. 1 Tim 3:4 holds men responsible when their families go astray, not God.

GOD'S ROLE VS OUR ROLE

Now is God totally detached from our choices? No. God is very much involved in our day to day lives, especially important decisions like who we marry. But we need to properly understand God's role and our role. What exactly does it mean to trust God? Does it mean to sit on our butt on hope that God's will falls into our laps? No, but that's what so many people do. Faith is an active word. Just to illustrate, how do you trust God to supply your needs? Not by hoping money will grow on a tree in your front yard, but by trusting God to prosper your work. Similarly, marital faith is not trusting God to just give you a spouse – that one day a stranger will knock on your door with roses and a ring. That's not faith. That's romance novel drivel. Faith is trusting that as you go looking for a spouse, meeting new people etc, that God will guide you and help you make good decisions so you can find a good spouse.

Note that I didn't say RIGHT spouse. There is no right spouse. Every relationship will have problems and everyone will have qualities that drive you insane. But you can find a GOOD spouse. There are many people who can be good spouses. The more you meet, the better your chances of finding a good one. A good spouse is someone with whom you can have a happy relationship and with whom you can resolve many of the problems that arise. But brace yourself for a really bumpy road. Relationships are hard, especially for people who have known only singleness all their life. Relationships require A LOT of work. But the happiest marriages I know are between people who've decided that whatever comes their way, it will not separate them. These people don't wait for happiness to happen to them. They make it happen.

The Biblical model

Whenever you get a chance, read Genesis 24:1-67. It narrates the story of Isaac and Rebekah. In it you'll find the perfect model of how to find a mate.

1) Seek a mate.

Abraham sent his servant to look for a mate for Isaac.

2) Know what you want.

Abraham had a very precise list of things he was looking for. The problem with many folks is that they don't know what they want. Here's a test. If it takes you longer than 3 months to know whether or not you would like to marry a particular person, then you don't know what you want. You need to find yourself first.

3) Trust God to guide you.

As the servant went, God led him straight to Rebekah who was everything Abraham wanted and more. God worked it out so beautifully that even her parents had to acknowledge that this was God's will. The bible says that the steps of a righteous man are ordered by God (Ps 37:23). As he walks, God directs him. The steps of a man standing still cannot be directed. Know what you need to trust God for. Know what's your role and what's God's role.

Conclusion

Finally, we should not only focus on what traits the other person should have, but we should also consider whether we are the kind of person that person would want. Everyone has flaws. Character development and self improvement should be a way of life. There are some things we can

control and some things we can't. We can't control other people, but we can control our own personal development.

If you're single and searching, I pray that what I've written has helped you in some way. Please don't trust God for something He did not promise. If you're already married, I pray that God will give you the strength and endurance to work on your marriage, and build a rock solid family that will do wonders for the kingdom of God.

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