



THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING THE RIGHT MATE

Ruth 3

- *“One day Naomi said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, it’s time that I found a permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for.’” (Ruth 3:1)*
- **In Old Testament times women were dependent on their husband for provision and protection, and so being a single woman was not a favorable position to be in.**
- **In our day we can know that God has a special place in His heart and special plan for His people who are single.**
- Jesus - *“Some choose not to marry for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 19:12)*
- Paul - *“An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord’s work and thinking how to please Him. But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. His interests are divided.” (1 Corinthians 7:32-34)*
- **Some Christians choose to stay single so they can better serve the Lord, while others plan to be “single for a season” until they find the right mate.**
- ***What steps can and should a single Christian take when they sense the Lord leading them to begin to search for the right person to date and/or marry?***

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

PRIORITIZING THE LORD IN OUR LIVES

- Ruth to Naomi - *“Your God will be my God.” (Ruth 1:16)*
- **Putting anyone or any desire before the Lord is making them the “god” of our lives (Exodus 20:3).**
- Jesus – *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)*
- **We need to demonstrate our love for and prioritization of the Lord by constantly:**
1) pursuing Him (“all your heart”), **2) surrendering to Him** (“all your soul”), **3) thinking about Him** (“all your mind”), and **4) serving Him** (“all your strength”).
- Jesus - *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.” (Matthew 6:33)*

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

PROCESSING THROUGH OUR HURTS AND LOSSES

- *“When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. ‘Is it really Naomi?’ the women asked. ‘Don’t call me Naomi,’ she responded. ‘Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me.’”* (Ruth 1:19-20)
- **While the loss of Ruth’s husband had to be devastating, we don’t find any record of her struggling with anger, bitterness or self-pity like Naomi was doing.**
- *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”* (Ephesians 4:31-32)
- *“Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.”* (Colossians 3:15)
- **We need to have “peace” in our hearts and minds before we get involved in a dating relationship, and we shouldn’t date anyone who has anger, bitterness, ingratitude, pride, self-centeredness, self-pity or unforgiveness issues.**

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

WORKING HARD TO PROVIDE FOR OURSELVES

- *“Ruth . . . said to Naomi, ‘Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.’ Naomi replied, ‘All right, my daughter.’ So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters.”* (Ruth 2:1-3)
- **We shouldn’t get involved in a dating relationship if we or the other person doesn’t have a job or is in financial bondage.**
- *“Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.”* (Proverbs 13:4)
- **Oftentimes people meet the person they’re to marry while working in a career.**
- *“And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.”* (Ruth 2:3)

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

KEEPING UP OUR APPEARANCE

- *“Boaz asked his foreman, ‘Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?’ And the foreman replied, ‘She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi.’”* (Ruth 2:5-6)
- **Emotional and spiritual compatibility are greater concerns in regards to finding the right mate, but physical compatibility is also a consideration when dating.**
- *“Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you . . .? So you must honor God with your body.”* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

DEMONSTRATING COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

- *“Boaz said to Ruth, . . . ‘See which part of the field the young women are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well.’ Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. ‘What have I done to deserve such kindness?’ she asked. ‘I am only a foreigner.’ ‘Yes, I know,’ Boaz replied. ‘But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. . . . May the Lord, the God of Israel . . . reward you fully for what you have done.’” (Ruth 2:8-12)*
- **The Lord always expects us to be kind and compassionate towards others.**
- *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)*
- **The Lord will reward the kindness and compassion we demonstrate to others.**
- *“The Lord will not forget how hard you have worked for Him and how you have shown your love to Him by caring for other Christians.” (Hebrews 6:10)*

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

FOLLOWING WISE COUNSEL

- *“Naomi said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, it’s time that I found a permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for. . . . ‘I will do everything you say’ Ruth replied.” (Ruth 3:1, 5)*
- **One of the biggest problems in dating relationships today is that most people won’t seek out and listen to “wise counsel.”**
- *“Plans succeed through good counsel; don’t go to war without wise advice.” (Proverbs 20:18)*
- *“Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.” (Proverbs 28:26)*

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

LIVING A VIRTUOUS LIFE

- Boaz to Ruth - *“You have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. Now don’t worry about a thing . . . I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman.” (Ruth 3:10-11)*
- **Before pursuing a relationship with someone we should establish the right “basis” for our relationship.**
 - Naomi thought Boaz would be a good match for Ruth because of his devotion to God, because he could provide for her, and because he was kind.
 - We should only date and marry other Christians who share our values (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- **Before pursuing a relationship with someone we should establish the right “barometers” for our relationship.**
 - Prior to dating we need to determine the kind of person we want to date and marry (i.e. we need a “Must Have List” and a “Can’t Stand List”).
- **Before pursuing a relationship with someone we should establish the right “boundaries” for our relationship.**

- **To have successful relationships we must have emotional, environmental, spiritual and physical boundaries.**
- *“Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people.”* (Ephesians 5:3)
- **When we are living a “virtuous life” we will have a godly reputation, that will cause us to be desired by godly and healthy individuals.**
- *“Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart’s desires.”* (Psalm 37:3-4)

We Can Best Prepare For Marriage By:

TRUSTING THE LORD FOR OUR PROVISION

- Boaz to Ruth - *“It’s true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another man who is more closely related to you than I am. . . . In the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing, then as surely as the Lord lives, I will redeem you myself!”* (Ruth 3:12-13)
- **The Lord is committed to providing for our material, physical and relational needs, if we are committed to trusting Him and living for Him.**
- Paul - *“This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19)
- **When we are fully trusting in the Lord, He will guide us in our decisions and provide for us everything and everyone that we need.**
- *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.”* (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- **Many people move from singleness to marriage because they are: 1) Thinking they are in love (which usually is infatuation), 2) Struggling with lust, 3) Traumatized by loneliness, and/or 4) Struggling with life issues.**
- **The foremost reason for a Christian to enter a serious dating relationship or marriage is because they sense that the Lord has ordained that relationship.**
- **We can discern God’s will by: 1) Studying the Scriptures (Psalm 119:105), 2) Receiving godly counsel from mature Christians (Proverbs 11:14), and 3) Listening to the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:27-29, 13:2).**

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