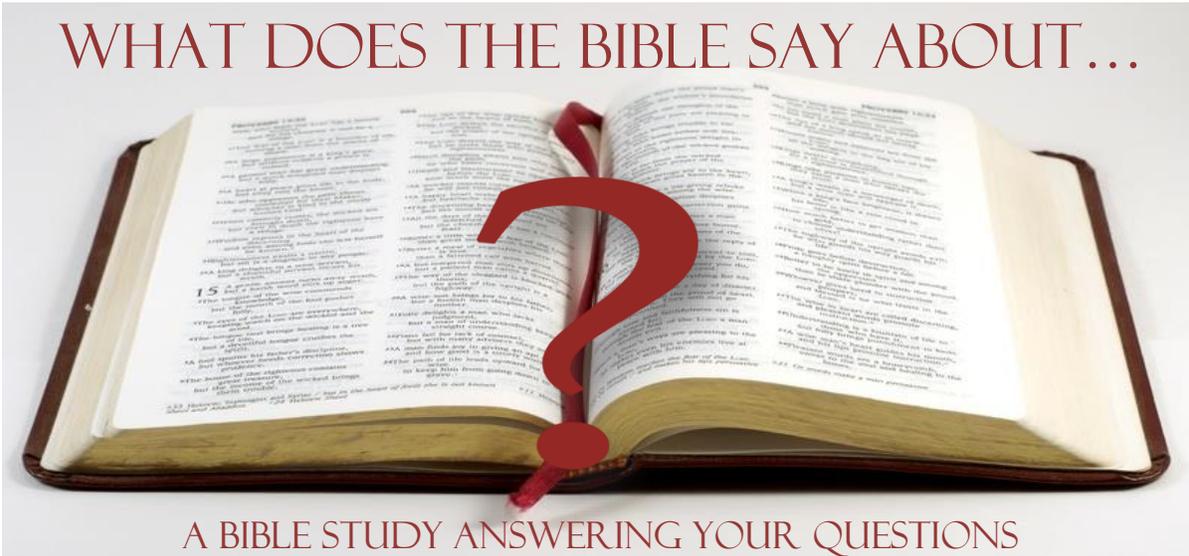


WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT...



A BIBLE STUDY ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

Lesson 5

Courting verses dating.

Marriage - the role of the wife and the husband.

Is marriage important? In other words, is living together OK?

How should we treat each other, abuse, manipulation, family etc...?

Courting verses Dating:

In New Testament times, 2000 years ago and more, the Jewish custom was for a couple to espouse, or to "get engaged". The couple would then wait until the groom was ready... Matt. 25:1-13

- A. After the engagement, he would often prepare a home for his bride. Most of the time, this involved building a house or a room on his parent's house.
- B. The courting would often involve family gatherings etc., much different than today.
- C. Even though the "marriage ceremony" had not yet taken place and the relationship was not consummated, they were considered married, in the sense that they were to remain faithful to each other.
- D. It was a disgrace if the woman got pregnant out of wedlock, or had sex and was no longer a virgin. She was considered an adulterous and often stoned to death.

Today, whether you call it courting or dating is not very important. Although, I believe the word courting is more respectful.

Here are my recommendations and thoughts:

1. Don't even think of dating until you have at least some idea that this person could be a good spouse.
2. Get to know the person in group settings first. Get to know their family if you can. Avoid circumstances where your relationship can turn sexual.
3. Time is important here... Most people who jump into a relationship too fast end up divorced.
4. Manipulation: If the person is manipulative, gets mad if you spend time with your family (don't put them first) – Run!
5. If the person is pushing you for sex – Run!
6. If the person is abusive – Run!
7. If you're married and your spouse is doing this, hit them with a cast iron frying pan... (No, don't do that)
8. It is unlikely that you will be able to "fix" the person after marriage, so, if there are real issues before marriage, they will get worse after marriage.
9. The "try it before you buy it philosophy" is against the Word of God.

Recommendations:

Discuss issues like jobs, roles in the family, working together so that both families are included, kids etc...

Pre-marital counseling is good.

Get parental blessings... and Pastoral Blessing!

If you are a child of God, don't look outside of the church for a spouse. If the person isn't interested in serving the Lord before you're married, they probably won't after.

If you can't afford to get married without living with your parents, you are not ready. This is not a good idea.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

When should a couple get publically "engaged"?

1. After you are ready to get married; when everything for the most part, is in place.

2. I don't believe in long engagements. It's not scripturally wrong, but my experience tells me, long engagements are not good. I suggest, 6 months prior to marriage, maybe up to one year, no longer.

How do you know you are ready to begin courting/dating?

1. If you are at least somewhat able to support yourself.
2. At least 18, preferably older.
3. Pray and ask the Lord, He will show you.

Marriage:

Marriage - the role of the wife and the husband.

Ephesians 5:21-23 ²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

The marriage relationship is to be revered and respected. It's more than just a piece of paper. It's a lifelong commitment to God and your spouse.

Our society has "cheapened" marriage to the point of totally missing God's intentions.

The church is a type and an example of marriage. The bridegroom is Jesus and the bride is the church.

He laid down His life for her... She needs to be faithful to Him.

Jacob served/worked 14 years for the right to marry Rachael. Gen. 29:30

Isaac loved Rebekah... Gen. 24:67

For any marriage to work, it needs to have a foundation of being committed to God first and committed to love and respect of each other.

Marriage is literally a covenant with God.

The role of the husband:

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

He is to be the provider, the leader (spiritually as well), the protector, he is the head of the family.

The Bible says, "Love your wife". Eph. 5:25

If you fulfill your God given role, she will feel loved, protected, honored and cherished. Not neglected, abused, disrespected and unappreciated.

Leading doesn't necessarily mean doing everything... She may be better with the finances etc...

Husbands: if you shrink back from your leadership role, and if your wife takes the lead, God's blessings will not be on your family.

Role of the wife:

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

Reverence (respect) her husband.

Wife: if you respect your husband you will submit to his leadership, you will treat him well, and you will not be disrespectful to his leadership.

If you respect your husband you will make him cookies.

The wife needs to help her husband make good decisions, but if she disagrees, she needs to let him make the final decision.

You work together; you are not the door mat.

Is marriage important? In other words, is living together OK?

Marriage goes all the way back to the first couple Adam and Eve.

Since marriage is a covenant, living together outside of a legal married relationship is not. It's not a commitment. It is fornication.

How should we treat each other, abuse, manipulation, family etc...?

Physical or mental abuse is wrong and should not happen in a marriage. The abused partner doesn't have to put up with it.

That is not sanction for divorce, maybe separation, not divorce.

I have no respect for a man that hits a woman.

Although many couples have disagreements, and even arguments, they should not end up in shouting matches, pushing, threats, or worse.

What can you do to fix arguments and the constant battle in the home? Get right with God. Pray, study the word, get Christian counseling etc...

Marriage is supposed to be awesome not perfect, but it ought to be a loving, friendly, enjoyable experience. You ought to be good for and to each other.

Marriage and extended family:

When you marry someone you also inherit their family.

There is specific direction in the Word that says, when a man marries he is to "leave and cleave" to his wife. Sorry, momma's boys...

Parents and extended family need to respect that the new couple is a family. Give help when asked but let them have the space they need.

Couples need to let each other spend time with their families, in fact should do so ourselves.

Sometimes people have good reason for "staying away" from their family. Abuse, neglect, incest; all kinds of evil behaviors have happened in some families. There are "good reasons" for distancing oneself from people who have hurt them or may hurt them.

But, family is family and they are the only ones you've got. Do your best to forgive and respect your family and involve them in your life if you can.

Favoritism...

Jacob favored Joseph more than his other children, Gen. 37:3

David favored Absalom.

It seems to me that when someone "favors" another, it brings pain to those who are not treated the same. Especially, within the family, this causes disunity and harm.

I'd like to say that this should not happen. But, we are human, and for whatever reasons we do not treat everyone equally and fairly.

If we are Christians, we ought to do our best to treat everyone right.