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Christian Courtship, Part III **Court With The Parents' Blessing in Mind**

The Word of God is explicit in the command not to be wed to an unbeliever. II Corinthians 6:14 says, *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"*

I have said in the past few weeks that not only should the believer not marry the unbeliever, they should not court if they or the person they are interested in are not in close relationship with our Lord. *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners"* (I Corinthians 15:33). The Greek word for communications is *homilia*, which means *companionship*. We also observe the Greek word translated *manners* is *ethos*. This is where we receive our English word, ethics. This pertains to morals and character. According to the Bible, hanging around a guy or girl without character and morals will affect our character.

One of the great blessings in life is the gift of Christian parents. As a rule, you cannot be right with God and wrong with your Mom and Dad. The Bible says, *"Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"* (Deuteronomy 5:16). It is re-iterated in the New Testament when Paul said, *"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"* (Ephesians 6:2,3). The Scriptures point out that the blessing is two-fold in honoring our parents. First, the life is prolonged and secondly, it goes well with us. You cannot make your life a blessed one if it runs contrary to the biblical pattern of blessing.

We see in Scripture that God wants to send a generational blessing to the progeny of the righteous. Please notice, *"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth"* (Malachi 2:15).

We see the pattern of blessing was prominent with the patriarchs, *"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"* (Genesis 22:17). *"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them"* (Genesis 49:28). What a beautiful transaction! As one generation passes, the patriarchal blessing is handed down. We see the impact upon Esau who, in the weakness of a moment sold his birthright. The Bible says, *"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"* (Hebrews 12:17). Living without the blessing of the parents affected the rest of his life.

You may ask where in the Scriptures we find the principle of parental authority over the youth until marriage. Please notice the Bible says, *"So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better"* (I Corinthians 7:38). We see God intends for the father to give his daughter away. This is more than symbolism. This is an appointment made by God, not man. The Lord Jesus said, *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Mark 10:7-9). Jesus said **"leave"** not **"flee."**

We see by biblical principle, the young man is under the same obligation as the young lady to secure the blessing of the parents. *“And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac”* (Genesis 24:2-4).

There are repercussions that can come from courting and marrying outside the blessings of the parents. A person can become:

I. The Proud Prodigal

When a child goes away from the upbringing of his godly youth and willfully chooses to stay in the “far country” there will eventually become the “want” that hopefully will encourage him to come back. *“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want”* (Luke 15:13, 14). If the prodigal does not repent then he or she may find themselves living in a prolonged state of “want.” The word *want* comes to us from a Greek word, *hustero*, which means inferior in power, influence or rank or to lack excellence.

The person outside the blessing of the parents may find themselves living in:

II. Projected Personhood

This is a very sad thing that can happen. The parent holds an almost mystical influence over them. Even though deceased, many a parent’s memory has become lethal to their child because the child felt cut off and outside the blessing. The offspring in turn begins to project the perceived past feelings of the parent. For instance, if the parent strongly voiced unhappiness with your choice of a mate, the marriage did not bring the resolution you desired. When the spouse and you come to a place of disagreement (which can come even in the happiest of marriages) you may find yourself going into an exaggerated tirade of anger toward your unsuspecting partner. You may be projecting a perceived attitude. A common discovery in family counseling is that often the more a child doesn’t want to be like a certain parent, the more like that parent they become. *“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation”* (Exodus 34:7).

Finally, the person outside the parent’s blessing may become involved in:

III. Perpetual Penance

This happens when the “I’m sorry” was not quite said to the parent and regret sets in which becomes emotionally crippling. This often surfaces as self-punishment. Every time something interpreted as “bad” comes along, you write it off to the fact that you are a “bad boy” or “bad girl.” And the reason you are placing yourself in this category is because you are so inwardly ashamed at the disrespect given to your parental authority when younger. One piece of evidence that a person develops this lifestyle of perpetual or continued penance is that whenever life begins to become enjoyable, you sabotage this happiness in some form or another. For instance, many a person feels unworthy of their family’s love and will pick a fight to help bring the uncomfortable conflict into their world—much in the same way a Templar Knight of old would put sharp thorns beneath their heavy belt worn under their amour to give themselves discomfort with every move.

In all three of these categories, the Christian may find comfort in Christ. When we confess any past wrongdoing, *“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9).

When a person obediently follows the path of securing the parents' blessing over their most important decisions in life, the opposite of the former things happen. A person who secures the blessing of their parents enjoys having:

A Clear Conscience

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Proverbs 6:20-22).

A Calm Coordination

"Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land...Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psalm 37:34,37).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

A Clean Corridor (Path)

"I have finished my course...." (II Timothy 4:7).

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" Proverbs 3:5,6).

- Pastor Pope -

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