

Biblical Principles of Marriage (Part 1) – Ps 15

Ps 15; We're starting a new series this weekend on marriage; Always a need, and often a desire – something people *want* to hear about
But instead of focusing solely on *post*-wedding dynamics, I'm going to begin with being single; B/c if you get *that* wrong, chances are you'll get marriage wrong
IOW if you fail to build your life on the rock solid truths of God's Word as a *single*, you'll probably do the same as a couple; It's true
Resulting in a house that crashes instead of a house built to last

And when I say single in these messages, I'm talking about that stage of life as an adult, when you're unmarried
It could be that you've *never* been married; It could be that you're *previously* married
It could be that you're a *young* adult; And it could be that you're much older
There are many different looks to being single these days

But when it comes to being married, the biblical principles are the same; They apply to everybody; And the first that we need to embrace, single *or* married, is that . . .

Principle #1 – Single doesn't mean second class (Gal 3:28)

And let's face it, that's often a problem

- (A) B/c singles *feel* it – whether that's the intent of people or not; They feel like they're second class
- (B) They tend to wallow in it – this 2nd class feeling; Kind of like an ongoing pity party
- (C) Marrieds *think* it – maybe not in these terms, but the gist is the same
- (D) Marrieds unknowingly give that impression – that singles are “also-rans;” That they haven't yet arrived; That they don't really know

And that fact is, if they've never been married, they don't; They *don't* know the refining fire that marriage is; They *don't* know the joy of marriage
They *don't* know the ups and downs and twists and turns

But that doesn't mean they haven't arrived; That doesn't mean they're “also rans;” That doesn't mean they're second class
Which far too often, it's the unstated perspective of both marrieds *and* singles

And that results in a stigma where singles see themselves for less than who they are, and marrieds overlook them altogether
“There must be something wrong with me” they think; Or, “There must be something wrong with them” we think

- So let's just set the record straight from the get-go – single does not mean second-class
We're all made in God's image; The ground at the foot of the cross is level; And in Christ there's no distinction – not in terms of value and worth

That's what the Apostle Paul is getting at in **Gal 3:28**

Referring to the family of God, he says . . .

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. There's no division, and no difference
And while it doesn't mention singles and marrieds per se, they're certainly included

If *social* status doesn't matter when it comes to the family of God, *neither slave nor free* as Paul says it, then neither does *marital* status

If *ethnicity* doesn't matter, *neither Jew nor Greek*, then neither does singleness

If gender has no bearing, neither does marriage*****

- Not only that, but some of the most influential people in the *world* have been single
Like Beethoven for instance – one of the most brilliant composers of all time
Or Sir Isaac Newton – the father of modern science
Alfred Nobel – the inventor of dynamite
Queen Elizabeth I – who was instrumental in shaping the Great Britain we know today
Susan B. Anthony – the famous social reformer of the 19th century
Joan of Arc – who led the French in victory
Single doesn't mean second class

And then there's *church* history with the likes of . . .

Amy Carmichael and Rachael Saint – dedicated missionaries
Dietrich Bonhoeffer – the German martyr who opposed Hitler
C.S. Lewis – who was single until 57; Only to have his wife die 4 years later
John Stott – the famous theologian; Mother Theresa; And the list goes on and on

And that doesn't even include the likes of . . .

Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul, and of course, Jesus

- The point being – single does not mean second-class, sub-par, or anything of the like
And if you feel the cloud of that in your life, or tend to wallow in self-pity b/c of it – be free; See yourself like God does, and take your thoughts captive
See yourself like he does, and care *less* what people think
Rest and revel in the fact, that you are a full-fledged child of God like anybody else, with all the rights and *privileges* of anybody else

And if you're married, you too should take your thoughts captive regarding those who aren't; And be careful of giving the wrong impression; We are *one* in Christ
And need to treat one another accordingly
That's Principle #1 – Single doesn't mean second class

2nd, as it relates to marriage . . .

Principle #2 – If you're single, don't settle (Ps 15)

If you want to be married, no matter how badly, don't settle

Don't lower your standards, don't compromise your convictions, don't rationalize your concerns, don't pass go – don't settle

- And just to make sure we're talking about the same thing – when I say marriage, I mean the life-long union, of one man and one woman, based on their gender at birth . . .
Who are joined in a ceremony, that's sanctioned by the state
IOW living together doesn't constitute a marriage, common law or not
And neither does the union of 2 men or 2 women, state *sanctioned* or not
I'm talking about *biblical* marriage in this series

That said, if you have yet to experience it, don't settle; It's a bad plan
Better to be single and lonely, than married and miserable

Better to wait for the *right* person than just any person

- The question is, what does that right person look like? Or *what* are they like?
What kind of a person should they be? Who should you be *looking* for?

And the answer, at least a good portion of it, is found in Ps 15

[1] *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?*

[2] *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart;*

[3] *who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

[4] *in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*

[5] *who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.*

That's the kind of person you want to marry; And while we won't get to all the criteria *this* weekend, I do want to cover 3 of them

- Look at v1 again; David starts with a question stated 2 different ways – *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?* And – *Who shall dwell on your holy hill?*
IOW who are your *people*, God? Who's going to be with you in the end? Who's going to rule and reign with you? Who's a part of your family, your *tent*?
It's Old Testament verbiage, for "Who's saved?" And leads us to the first criteria

• **Look for someone who's saved (v1)**

If you're single and want to be married, look for someone who's saved

Someone who knows Jesus; Someone who professes him as Lord and Savior

Someone who's realized they're a sinner, and acknowledged it before God

Someone who believes that Jesus died for their sins, and rose again to guarantee their life; Someone who actually *lives* for the Lord, under the authority of his Word

Look for someone like that; Someone who's saved

Especially so, b/c believers aren't *supposed* to be yoked with unbelievers

That's what **2 Cor 6:14** says – *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers*. Pretty clear

And while that doesn't *just* apply to marriage, it certainly includes it

B/c marriage is the tightest bond you can possibly *have*; A *one-flesh* union; A one-flesh yoking; In which case, you need to look for someone who's saved*****

- And I'm not talking about somebody who suddenly starts going to church the minute they start dating you; That's called missionary dating – you *date* them to reach them
And it's rarely a recipe for success; In fact, most of the time it's a disaster in the making

Nor am I talking about somebody who pays *lip* service to Jesus; With little to no fruit in their life to back it *up*

B/c you don't know with any reasonable certainty that they're really saved; You don't

And even if they are, their lack of maturity in the Lord, is *also* cause for concern

- You want someone who's *passionate* for Christ

You want someone for whom Jesus is the *constant* companion of their thoughts

Someone whose life is *consumed* with knowing and following him

"Give me one pure and holy passion . . ."

That's the kind of person you want to marry (**2 Cor 6:14-15**)

For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? None

Look for someone who's saved, and last here – don't wait until you're *in* a relationship to determine it; Or whether it's really important to you; Do that, and it's too late

Your feelings of affection and your physical desires will take over, and you'll rationalize it away every time*****

You have to decide *ahead* of time; Before you ever *think* about getting into a relationship; And then resolve not to settle; Ever; Look for someone who's saved

2nd . . .

• **Look for someone with integrity (v2)**

After *asking* the questions, in v1, David starts *answering* them in v2

Giving us insight into the *qualities* of someone who's saved

And as we work through this passage . . .

It's important to realize that these qualities are as much about *you*, as they are about a potential spouse

If *you* don't measure up, don't look for someone who *does*; Or anybody for that matter
B/c chances are, you'll drag them down; Get *your* life and heart right, *first*

- And then take v2 into account

Who shall dwell on your holy hill? Who's a part of God's family?

[2] *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart*

IOW he who's filled with integrity; That's who you're looking for

A person who conducts their life and affairs above reproach; In such a way they can't legitimately be accused of wrongdoing; That's what it means to walk *blamelessly*

It's not perfection, but sanctification, Christlikeness; Look for that

If you're looking for perfection, you'll be looking a long time; And reveal a fundamental lack of grace in your own life

Look for someone who's blameless – who lives above reproach

2nd, look for someone who *does what is right* like the verse says

Who takes the high road instead of the low one

Who *resists* temptation, instead of succumbs to it; Who lives according to *God's* Word instead of the world's; Who knows the good they ought to do, and *does* it

Look for that

And 3rd here, look for someone who *speaks truth in their heart*; In their heart

No rationalizing to justify questionable behavior; No self-justification to avoid the truth; No excuses to reject feedback

Just a rock solid conviction to be all about the truth

A straightforward honesty on the inside, that overflows to the outside

Look for that; Look for someone full of integrity

Someone who's the same person no matter *where* they are; Or *what* they're doing; Or who they're talking to; There's no double life, and no façade

➤ The question is, how do you know? How do you *know* if they're a person of integrity?
And the answer comes down to 5 things
Time, Transparency, Variety, Proximity, and History; That's how you *know*

It takes **time** to determine genuine integrity; Don't rush things; Be patient in your relationship
Integrity requires quality time, and quality time requires quantity time

2nd, it requires **transparency**; A person of integrity, is transparent; With everything
If they withhold information you *know* about, chances are they're withholding information you *don't* know about; And that's a problem

3rd, is **variety**; You need to interact with them in a *variety* of different situations, and *among* a variety of different people
To see if they're different; To see if they act one way with one group, and another with another group

4th, is **proximity**; If you're going to determine genuine integrity, you need to be around them; Dating from afar is okay for a time, but FaceTime only shows so much
You need to be with them

And then 5th, you need to know their **history**; What were they like 5 *years* ago? Or 5 months ago?
Who did they hang out with? What were they involved in? Why? How long?

Time, transparency, variety, proximity, and history (**Summary**)
5 keys to determine genuine integrity, and not settle

And then last . . .

• **Look for someone who's kind (v3)**

And not just to you, but everybody; Look at v3

Who's a part of God's family? He *who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend*

If you find someone who *slanders with their tongue*, attacking people instead of problems
– stay away; B/c you're next
If you find someone who hurts people, who does *evil* to their neighbor, whether physically, emotionally, or otherwise – stay away; B/c you're next
If you find someone who's quick to turn on their friends; Quick to criticize; Quick to take up a *reproach*, an accusation – stay away; B/c you're next

➤ Instead, look for someone who builds people up; Who puts wind in their sails
Who *holds* their tongue more than they loose it
Who finds ways to *bless* people, rather than *hurt* them
Who *empathizes* with the hurts of others, rather than shrugging them off
Who's *loyal* to their friends, instead of abandoning them (**Summary**)

If you're single and want to be married, look for somebody like that
Someone who's saved, someone with integrity, and someone who's kind
B/c settling will be one of the biggest regrets of your life

Pray – Lord, forgive us for second-class thinking, second-class treatment, and second-class pity; Forgive us, and help us; And for those who want to be married, solidify their convictions, and keep them strong
We give now, b/c you gave; And your heart, is ours