

## ***Proactively Pursuing Marriage***

Many of us are called to marriage. It's the natural design for fulfilling your drive for companionship and God's calling upon your life. If you aren't called to celibate service (1 Corinthians 7) then a significant priority for this season of your life is preparing for and moving toward a Biblical marriage. An intentional path to finding a mate recognizes that God is at work. But we also have a responsibility be faithful in our part of the process. So, how does a person who hopes to marry become intentional?

### **STEP ONE: Seek Christ as your completeness**

True contentment cannot be found in a relationship of any person other than Jesus Christ. One must understand that no dating or marriage relationship can complete you, only Christ completes.

### **STEP TWO: Seek godly community**

We live in a day of hyper individualism where people feel very little sense of obligation to others. God calls us, however, to vibrant community within our families and within the body of Christ. That community is the source for much of our growth as Christians including receiving guidance and support toward marriage.

### **STEP THREE: Move beyond recreational relationships**

One of the clearest messages for singles in the Bible is the call to sexual purity (1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5). That is proving to be a difficult challenge in today's culture. Sexual purity, however, is the primary means for intentionally moving toward marriage. People who stay sexually pure not only honor God but they avoid much of the confusion that plagues many of today's relationships and can push good marriages out of reach.

### **STEP FOUR: Seek a right mate**

Often times a person is looking for a mate specially designed to complete them. Both the Bible and marriage research shows it is important to seek out someone who shares your spiritual commitment.

Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians that a potential spouse "must belong to the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39). Singles should seek someone with whom they are able to serve God better together than apart. Christians seeking a mate who shares his or her Biblical values know that "all have fallen short" so there's no sense in holding out for a perfect person. Further, they know that instead of seeking someone to complete and satisfy them, they are called to lay down their life for another. That makes for a much more realistic path to finding a good fit for marriage, for only in Christ can we find completeness.

### **STEP FIVE: Be Proactive**

Living in purity and Christian community makes it easier to find a mate who shares your spiritual values, but there's more you can do as a steward of your future marriage (Matthew 25:14-27). Titus 2 strongly encourages young men and women to learn from older men and women. In addition to Christian discipleship, you also can ask mentors for candid feedback about how you can improve in a variety of areas to be more prepared for marriage. Some of your best opportunities to be proactive will grow out of faithful prayer.

## **GOING FURTHER - Resources**

### **Recommended Books:**

***The Meaning of Marriage*** (by Timothy Keller) an extraordinarily insightful look at the keys to happiness in marriage. Using the Bible principals and commentary from his wife, the author shows that God created marriage to bring us closer to him and to bring us more joy in our lives.

***Get Married: What Women Can Do to Help it Happen*** (by Candice Watters) explains why marriage is an honorable pursuit and shows how women can live like they are planning to marry.

***A Guy's Guide to Marrying Well*** - Boundless.org has put together a short, practical guide for men to help them become proactive about whether, how and who to marry. (Available as a free download at [www.boundless.org/guys](http://www.boundless.org/guys).)

### **Recommended Websites:**

***Boundless.org*** is a webzine for young adults. Its most popular articles are those about finding a Godly spouse and dating according to Biblical principles.

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