

Things I Am Looking For In a Mate...

By Byron and Carla Weathersbee

Do you have a list of criteria for choosing your marriage partner? What if God's list is different from yours?

Even if you don't have a written list of what you're seeking in a marriage partner, chances are you have some very specific criteria in mind. It's natural to consider the type of person you might choose, perhaps noting his or her physical characteristics, interests, ambitions and the like. But we'd like to challenge you to take a closer look at that list.

Too often we tend to focus on more superficial qualities in a person, the outer "veneer" or packaging, thinking if we meet a person that matches those specifications we've found our mate. While it's certainly reasonable to want to spend our lives with someone who we feel could fulfill our greatest longings, what we're really asking is for that person to be rather super-human; to meet 100% of our needs. After all, in our *happily-ever-after-fairy-tale*, we can imagine our mate as having any number of wonderful characteristics, each designed with us in mind!

When it gets right down to choosing a mate, it's more important to focus on criteria closer to the heart like character, values, and shared purpose. It's not that you need to throw away your list all together, but be willing to edit your list and to add other considerations. God has a way of interrupting and re-writing our best-written life scripts, for He knows that what looks like a minor difference to us could mean major trouble in marriage.

One Foot in Both Worlds

Sometimes it's easy to get confused about just how "pure" our motives really are. For instance, you might be attracted to a potential mate's godliness while also noting their financial security or social status. While it's normal to consider "worldly" attributes, loving someone for who they really are at their core and loving someone for what they can give you are two very different things.

When you place your security in a human being instead of in Christ where it belongs, you create criteria for a potential mate that can lead to a poor choice and many years of unhappiness. If you lay aside your preconceived expectations and let God provide His list of criteria, you will make a much wiser and fulfilling choice. After all, God knows you better than anyone else and He knows what will ultimately be best for you.

Asking the Right Questions

Because each person is different and their needs are unique, it would be difficult to formulate a list of the most important questions to ask of your potential mate. However, we can advise you to look closely at the questions you may already have in mind. Are they merely questions about your partner's veneer or do your questions reveal his or her true nature and character?

Fortunately God encourages us to seek Him about which questions to ask! In James 1:5 of the New Testament God states, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."*

Once you earnestly begin to seek God's wisdom, you might be surprised at the insights you receive. What you originally thought might be just the perfect person for you could turn out to be quite the opposite. Be careful that you aren't clinging so tightly to your own list that you refuse God the right to make modifications.

When you begin to focus on your Creator and not your own created list, be prepared for many surprises...expect the unexpected!

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Byron and Carla Weathersbee co-founded Legacy Family Ministries (www.legacyfamily.org) in 1995 to prepare pre-engaged and engaged couples for marriage. In their new book *Before Forever*, available at www.theleadingedgepublishing.com, the authors offer inspirational and practical advice for making perhaps the most important decision of your life. The Weathersbees have counseled hundreds of couples over the years with incredible results!

