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# **PART ONE**

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# **GOD'S PLAN FOR SEXUALITY & MARRIAGE**

# CHAPTER 1

## GOD'S 4-FOLD PURPOSE FOR SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

### **Why do so many marriages end in sadness?**

The scary thing is that no one gets married thinking that it will not work, but statistics in most parts of the world state that 50% of marriages end in divorce, and out of the remaining 50% many marriages are not satisfying. What's going on? How on earth can most people on earth be making such a mess of things? I mean, the incompetence of mankind with marriage is massive! Are we just a bunch of imbeciles or is something else going on that we might not know about?

*What's going on is this: there is a **massive satanic attack** on both marriage and sexuality.*

### **God adores marriage. Satan hates marriage.**

Anything that God likes the devil hates...and God loves marriage. God invented marriage in the opening verses of the bible. He put marriage in place before putting the church in place, and before putting governments in place. And not only does history begin with a marriage, but it will end with The Great Marriage of Jesus to his Church! And the clincher – Jesus chose to do his first miracle at a wedding in Cana (remember, the one where he turned water into wine just to save the bridegroom embarrassment on his wedding day). God is wild about marriage!

***Here are 4 reasons to account for God's extreme passion for sexuality and marriage, and conversely, Satan's extreme loathing of marriage.....***

**Firstly, because sexuality and marriage reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5v25).** The Church is the collective name for all the Christians on earth now, and that have ever lived, and will live in the future before Jesus returns. And remember, God's ultimate purpose of creation is to reveal himself to all people that they might repent of their sin and join God's family – the Church. So because this is God's ultimate goal....

*God invented marriage to act as an advert, a visual aid, a kind of mirror to reflect and reveal something of the marriage-like relationship that he desires with every person.*

When I was 18 year old, I had some good friends called Pete and Caroline who had recently got married....and I envied their amazing relationship. I was chatting this through with an older pastor called John Bell saying, "...they are so lucky that they can spend 24/7 with each other as best friends!" And John replied, "Yes. Isn't marriage amazing? But it is not as amazing as the relationship that you and Jesus have. He is not only with you 24/7, but he is the perfect partner and friend, loving you unconditionally forever!" I am now 34 years old and remember this conversation like it was yesterday because a good marriage had taught me something about Jesus' amazing love for me. What a great advert marriage can be for Christianity!

Now then, please put on your fake horns and pretend that you are the devil: you exist to prevent people from becoming Christians, so this marriage business is a major problem for you! You want to do everything in your power to mess-up the advertising campaign of the opposition, don't you? So, you try to turn it around so marriage is actually a bad advert for a relationship with God.

**Secondly, because sexuality and marriage reflects the character of God (Gen 1v27).** Male and female are both made in the image of God, and a child in a good marriage experiences firsthand the beauty and benefits of manly and womanly impact on his or her life. Therefore, good Mums and Dads teach us something of the parental nature of God.

Back on with those horns again: you are not well pleased, are you? In the Gulf War the Iraqi's were fond of violating posters of President Bush. So too, you want to violate this 'poster' of your arch enemy: God. I remember the scene in the James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun* when the bad guy is in a Hall of Mirrors, and in every mirror he sees the image of his archenemy 007. And in a psychotic frenzy he opens fire on every mirror he can see. And Satan is just like that: he maintains a constant barrage of bullets against every *marriage mirror* that he can see.

**Thirdly, marriage is the basic building block of society (Gen 1v28).**

God instructed Adam and Eve to fill the earth through having children and to rule over the earth. God set up marriage and *children from marriage* as the means to a stable, godly rule in the earth. Marriage is the basic building block of a structured, peaceful society. When marriage breaks down, raising of children breaks down, disobedience, disrespect, disorder, destruction all increase and godless anarchy ensues. Why are kids in the USA carrying guns to school? Because single parents and no-parent homes are producing chaotic kids. And if you are the devil your favorite three hobbies are stealing, killing and destroying (Jn 10v10), so you like the thought of an anarchist society very much indeed, don't you? If you can disrupt marriage, then you can disrupt society, and a world in anarchy is not a good environment for people to submit to God and become Christians.

**And fourthly, God intends marriage to be a Christian Producing**

**Machine.** Malachi 2v14-15 says that God's specific intent of marriage is "to produce godly off-spring". Healthy, God-centred marriages are the best environment to produce children that adore God and his ways. So if you are the devil, this possibility is a complete nightmare for you. The very thing that you want to stop is happening via marriage!

***Oh no! Red Alert! Defcon 5! Instruct your demons to put most other jobs on hold and to direct the bulk of their fiendish energies to the destruction of marriages and the perversion of male and female sexuality!***

## CHAPTER 2

# SINGLE AND ROCKING

The first chapter has helped us to see the wonderful plan of God for male and female sexuality and marriage. But before coming back to marriage later in the book, I want to talk now about the issue of singleness. This is not a book just for married people, or hope-to-be-married-before-too-long people. Single people are also sexual people and have an equal role in declaring God's glory through their own sexuality and godly living in the whole realm of sexuality. So let's turn to see what the bible says about being single:

### **Which is better: marriage or singleness?**

The bible teaches that they are both good. Chapter 1 listed four spectacularly good things about marriage. God is the inventor of marriage and the one who said that it is *not good for man to be alone*<sup>1</sup>. And then Paul writes to the Corinthians that it is also *good for a man not to marry*.<sup>2</sup> Both are good.

### **What is the 'gift of singleness'?**

Paul speaks of both the marriage state and the single state as a *gift from God*.<sup>3</sup> This is not referring to a gift in the same vein as prophecy and other 'traditional' gifts of the Holy Spirit, but more to divine enablement from God to cope with the state that you find yourself in. When the disciples reasoned with Jesus that there might actually be significant benefits to being single, Jesus answered saying that not everyone would agree with them, *but only those to whom it has been given*.<sup>4</sup> God *gives* enablement to single people to be single. Being single is not about slugging it out all your days in despondent loneliness. No! You have God at work within you! Wonderful!

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 2v18

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor 7v1-7, 25-35

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 7v7

<sup>4</sup> Mt 19v10-11

## Some biblical reasons for being single

Here are some biblical reasons for being single that we find in Mt 19v10-12 and 1 Cor 7v25-35:

1. *Because you were born that way.* This refers to those who, for a variety of reasons, you just don't want to get married. That is fine.
2. *Because you have been made that way by men.* This seems to be a reference to the barbaric ancient practice of forced castration. Maybe the application for us today is that you find yourself in such unique manmade circumstances (e.g. in prison, or in a war-ravaged environment, or with an extremely debilitating sickness) that marriage for you is not an option.
3. *For the sake of the kingdom of God.* Here, you would choose singleness because that state enables you to better fulfill a calling that you have. An example of this might be a ministry that requires excessive travel. Paul uses the phrase 'free from concern' and says that a married man is concerned how he can please his wife whereas an unmarried person does not have that concern. But please note that this is not to make married people feel like they have chosen a less godly option! The bible is teaching that it is *right for a man to be concerned for his wife*, but by so doing he will be better suited to certain callings over others.

## Temptations that singles may face

In his great book *The Single Issue*, Al Hsu<sup>5</sup> unpacks the following list of temptations that single people may face:

- **Tempted to put life on hold:** don't fall for the lie that proper life will start at marriage. Crack on with life now in all its fullness.
- **Tempted to be over-committed:** singles don't have the escape line of 'sorry, but I need to spend time with the family'. Singles must beware of busyness, workaholism and burnout.
- **Tempted to be self-centered:** John Stott says, "*Apart from sexual temptation, the greatest temptation we face is that of self-centredness ... if we are not careful, we may find the whole world revolving round ourselves*".
- **Tempted to be unaccountable:** a marriage partner holds you accountable for your lifestyle. Singles should have other people who help fulfill this role to a degree.

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<sup>5</sup> The Single Issue, Al Hsu, IVP, 1997. Chapter 9.

- **Tempted to have awful holidays:** get into groups to go out on Valentine's Day and on holidays, or go with other families.
- **Tempted to live a life of regret:** don't drive along with your eyes glued to the rear-view mirror.

### **The benefits of being single**

Henry Thoreau said, "A man who goes alone can start today. But he who travels with another must wait until the other is ready"<sup>6</sup>. Singles have such freedom and mobility that they can use for God's glory. Singleness is a gift, a blessing that should be seized with gratitude and exploited for the kingdom of God. Neither Jesus nor Paul were married, and look what they accomplished for God! Go for it!

### **Single and honouring God**

Whether single or married, we must honour God with our sexuality and live according to God's will. Single people should honour marriage by loving holy as single people, and by supporting the institution of marriage. Avoid jealousy and regret. Lean into God. Remember that ultimate satisfaction only comes from God.

***I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation  
(Phil 4v11)***

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<sup>6</sup> The Single Issue, Al Hsu, IVP, 1997. Pg 195

# PART TWO

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## SATANIC COUNTER-ATTACKS

### 1-3

*Remember that Satan is committed to trying to violate every good thing that God has made. Male and female are good. Sex is good. Marriage is good. And the devil is out to mess it all up!*

*In World War 2, General Montgomery was fighting against General Rommel in North Africa. In Monty's Head Quarters there was a picture on the wall of Rommel. Apparently Monty would stare at it trying to work out what that "scheming desert fox" was up to. We too have a scheming enemy, but the wonderful promise of God is that we need not be unaware of the devil's schemes<sup>7</sup>.*

*The next few chapters expose his primary schemes to destroy marriage and sexuality, and will enable us to live alert and vigilant lives<sup>8</sup> to help nullify his evil attacks.*

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor 2v11. Eph 6v11.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Peter 5v7

## CHAPTER 3

# HOMOSEXUALITY

### **Why make such a big deal about this gay business?**

Because of the four Godly purposes of marriage laid out in Chapter 1, that's why! Male and female sexuality and heterosexual marriage are designed to reflect the glory of God, and so provoke people to long for God. The issue of homosexuality is a huge one – it is not simply about a person's sexual preferences, it is about the creatorship and personality of God. Homosexuality is the most blatant distortion of sexuality. If sucked into the lies it can undermine all that God said is 'good' about sexuality and marriage and leave us with questions such as: What is female? What is male? What is true sex? What is marriage?

### **Speaking the truth in love**

Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery with the perfect combination of truth and love; he told her that he was not condemning her but that she should stop sinning. This is what we should strive for in our dealings with gay people. Love without truth is weak. Truth without love is harsh.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Heterosexual:** a person with 'natural' sexual orientation towards the opposite sex.

**Homosexual:** someone who experiences sexual or excessive physical or emotional attraction towards someone of the same sex. This word can cover both males and females. Obviously there is a line that is crossed when moving from *inclination* to *practice*.

**Lesbian:** a term sometimes used to describe a female homosexual.

**Gay:** a contemporary phrase that covers both male and female homosexuality.

### **What does the bible teach about being gay?**

Let me start off with what I believe is the summary of the biblical teaching on homosexuality:

1. **God loves homosexuals.** God loves all people equally. His love is not conditional upon race, gender, age, class or sexual orientation.
2. **But homosexuality is a sin.**

Now let us see what the bible says in greater detail:

## Genesis 1 & 2

I believe that the biblical case that homosexuality is a sin is won conclusively in these opening chapters of the bible. God's response to Adam's need for physical & emotional companionship was a woman, not a man. The 'one flesh' is only given to man and wife. And then we can't ignore creation, can we? God has made the male and female and sex organs complementary. George W. Bush made a helpful statement, saying,

*"I am mindful that we're all sinners, and I caution those who may try to take the speck out of their neighbour's eye when they have got a log in their own. I think it's very important for our society to respect each individual, to welcome those with good hearts, to be a welcoming country. On the other hand, that does not mean that somebody like me needs to compromise on issues such as marriage. And that's really where the issue is headed here in Washington, and that is the definition of marriage. I believe **marriage is between a man and a woman**, and I believe we ought to codify that one way or the other and we have lawyers looking at the best way to do that."* (President Bush on the 31st July 2003)

Prior to The Fall, there was only the male / female relationship. Then, like all life on earth, natural, godly human heterosexual pairing was affected and distorted, and all sorts of sexual sins emerged:

- Polygamy (Gen 4v19)
- Adultery (Gen 12v27)
- Incest (Gen 19v33)
- Prostitution (Gen 38v15)
- Rape (Gen 34v2)
- Homosexuality (Gen 19v4-7; Lev 18v22 & 20v13)

## Gen 19v4-8. Sodom and Gomorrah

*Before they had gone to bed, all the men (even the men – KJV) from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." (Gen 19v4-8)*

A tricky passage, I know. But my read is that Lot, when confronted with an impossible mob situation, chose the lesser of two evils and opted for giving his girls, because at least that would be 'natural' sexual immorality'.

But whatever your interpretation, this passage speaks of homosexuality as 'wicked', and homosexual sin was part of the reason for the dramatic judgment of God on these two cities.

### **Lev 18v22 & 20v13**

*"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; it is detestable" (Lev 18v22)*

*If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. (Lev 20v13)*

### **The Gospels**

Homosexuality is only referred to indirectly where Jesus unholds the Genesis principle of heterosexual marriage.<sup>9</sup>

### **Romans 1v18-32**

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their **thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened**. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. **They exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over **to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion**. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, **he gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do what ought not to be done (Rms 1v18-31)*

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<sup>9</sup> Mk 10

The key things to note from this passage are:

- (a) Homosexuality is a deception. It is based on a lie. I have Christian friends who are practicing homosexuals and their inability to see the plain truth in scripture plainly evidences this deception to me.
- (b) Homosexuality is unnatural. It is worse than adultery and fornication because at least those sins are not violating the natural laws of creation.
- (c) It is the practice of homosexuality that is condemned, not the inclination.

### **But aren't homosexuals born that way?**

The question that usually underlies this question is, *"if this is the case, is it not then a God-given orientation, and therefore OK?"* Well, without getting into any nature / nurture debate, we are certain that homosexuality is not okay, because the bible says it is not. And the bible is God's word. But let's pursue this a little further: even if I was born with homosexual inclination that does not legitimize homosexuality. Sadly, in this imperfect age that we live in, people do get born with diseases and conditions, but that does not mean that this is God's design.

Also, the fact that we 'feel' something does not legitimize the feeling. A mass-murderer might say in court, 'Well, Judge, the thing is that as long as I can remember I have got angry and hence violent with people. But these are my feelings so they can't be wrong.' Just because we think or feel something is right, it does not mean that it is right! The bible is clear on this: *"There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death"<sup>10</sup>, and "The heart is deceitful above all things. Who can understand it?"<sup>11</sup>*

### **So is it 'learned' behaviour?**

This nature / nurture question has been argued long and hard, and will be in the future I am sure. All that I will say at this point is that there is no compelling evidence that one is born with a homosexual bias, and there is plenty of evidence that it is state that is learned and developed. I refer you to a summary of the nature/nurture debate written by my father that is at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>10</sup> Prov 14v12

<sup>11</sup> Jer 17v9

## **How do we relate to a person who is living in a homosexual situation?**

1. We pray against the spirit of deception that is holding them in bondage. It is clearly wrong from scripture. It is clearly wrong from nature. It clearly bears bad fruit – gay society does not work. Do not entertain liberal ‘theology’ that tries to justify their position. Remember, it starts with the lie that it is okay, and then they just build on that, but however good the argument may sound remember that it is built on a lie.
2. We show them love and acceptance following the principle of loving the sinner but not condoning the sin.
3. We speak the truth to them in love. Try to persuade them and get them to the place where they acknowledge it as sin and are willing to fight it. Then help them and work with them.

## **How should the church behave?**

We must not ‘gay-bash’. Preachers should avoid going for cheap laughs such as ‘Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve’. We must teach and preach into this arena at least once a year in order to keep the church clear on these issues. Encourage Christians to befriend homosexuals because Christian friendships play a vital role in modeling godly sexuality and helping people get free from homosexuality. However, it is not possible to accept a practicing homosexual into membership.<sup>12</sup> Those Christians who struggle with the inclination need to be supported as they walk the heroic road of avoiding temptation.

## **Here is an action plan for a practicing gay person:**

- **Admit that it is sin, & repent.** Repentance is always a pre-requisite to healing and restoration.
- **Take action in keeping with repentance.**<sup>13</sup> Ruthlessly & totally break all homosexual relationships. Destroy all pornography, letters, mementos etc. If applicable, get rid of all effeminate/masculine clothes & mannerisms and speech.
- **Get accountable.** Much of the power of sin lies in secrecy. Confess your sin to one another.<sup>14</sup> Meet regularly with a mature believer to talk and pray. Read appropriate books to strengthen you.

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor 5

<sup>13</sup> Mt 3v8. Mt 12v33.

<sup>14</sup> James 5

- **Be prepared for a long road.** Sometimes God ‘heals’ a person miraculously and immediately and all the inclination disappears. But for others it is conquered by daily discipline and living a sanctified life. You will need to daily draw on God for patience and determination. Over come disappointments. Keep your eyes on the goal, which is to become more like Jesus!

If you would describe yourself as a person with a homosexual inclination (but who does not practice) then whilst the inclination is not sin, the rest of above-mentioned action plan would apply to you also.

### **Summing Up the Nature/Nurture Debate (By John Smyth Q.C.)**

I am of course not qualified in any way as an expert in these matters. But as a lawyer I spent 20 years in practice as an advocate and 6 years as a part-time judge. Analysing evidence, distilling it, and presenting a summary to a jury in digestible form was part of the job.

Let me for a moment put on my wig and gown again and attempt to do that with this issue. I suggest the evidence shows:

1. No scientific research has come anywhere near proving even on a balance of probabilities that homosexuality is caused by ‘brain architecture’, or biological genetic traits.
2. Such research as there has been suggests that environmental factors are of much greater significance.
3. All reputable scientists agree that homosexuality is multifactorial, and many scientists consider it better to speak of ‘homosexualities’, rather than using the term in the singular.
4. It is vital to remember that correlation does not imply causation, so that a genetic correlation may have developed primarily as a result of the practice of a life-style rather than being the cause of the lifestyle. A person born with a combination of height and athleticism is not genetically programmed to become a basketball player. But if he chooses to make that choice, we may say ‘that choice clearly has a genetic component.’ What is more, the more he plays basketball, the more he will develop an athleticism that is genetically appropriate for a basketball player. But in no way was he ever forced to play basketball. Alcoholism is generally thought to have a genetic component, but nobody ever contends that an alcoholic has no choice as to whether he drinks. (Alcoholism is estimated to be between 50% and 60% inheritable.)

5. Very few people are created with one hundred percent heterosexual inclinations. Most have genes that place them somewhere along a fairly broad spectrum; many have some homosexual inclinations that may surface at some stage in life, if only for a short time in adolescence. Sometimes environmental or social factors, such as child-abuse or a mismatch relationship with one or both parents, will increase the tendency for these inclinations to surface.
6. However, experience tells us that very few people will indulge in homosexual behaviour unless their inclination or appetite is aroused at some stage by an external human agency; it may be a group of peers at school, or some older man or woman either in the teens or even middle-age. In other words, although some people have a greater inclination than others, an appetite for homosexuality is almost always caught, not inherited.
7. Some people have a greater susceptibility to certain diseases than others. This is part of genetic make-up. But there will be no manifestation of the disease without infection from someone else. So it is with the practice of homosexuality; there may be inclination, even orientation, but the practice or behaviour does not begin without a human catalyst. That is the story I have heard over and over again for forty years both in the criminal courts and during my Christian ministry with teenagers and students. Hence there is always an opportunity to make a choice and exercise the God-given gift of free-will.

Let me conclude with one final 'jury' point that I believe to be devastating. Since homosexuals, as a matter of practice and common sense, procreate to only a very limited degree, **if homosexuality were significantly genetic or hereditary, its presence in the population would progressively fall.** Indeed unless it were continuously 'redeveloped' by environmental causes it would eventually disappear. Gay-activists stress, rightly, that the incidence of homosexuality in the population is not declining, and this argument in itself is an argument against homosexuality being directly genetically determined.

## CHAPTER 4

# PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is another primary weapon of the devil to pervert sexuality and marriage. Because porn degrades sexuality and marriage, those involved with it find it virtually impossible to live a healthy and joyful life in the realm of sexuality and marriage.

### **The worst case scenario....**

Some years ago I watched a gripping video interview that James Dobson was privileged to do with the infamous rapist and serial killer, Ted Bundy. Ted had got born again in prison and wanted a chance to speak out some truth before going to the electric chair. Ted told how he was a normal guy with good friends, living a normal life....except in this one area: pornography. Ted said, *"Pornography can reach in and snatch any kid, Christian or not!"* It was porn that got Ted on the road to rape and murder.

If you are involved with porn, the worst case scenario is that you become a Ted Bundy. However, because the percentage of people who jump from *watching to doing* is small, it will be more likely that you will merely end up with a messed-up personal life and marriage.

### **Main scripture: Mt 5v27-30**

*You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

This verse from Jesus does three things:

- **It defines pornography**
- **It emphasizes the seriousness of pornography**
- **It offers instruction on how to get free**

We will now use these three points as our headings:

## 1. Defining pornography - What is it?

*Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it  
(DH Lawrence 1885-1930)*

*Writings, pictures, films etc designed to stimulate sexual excitement  
(The Collins Dictionary)*

**It is adultery.** From the teaching of Jesus in Mt 5v27 we understand that looking at lust-inducing images is akin to fornication and adultery. When you combine your senses (usually eyes, ears and your mind) with naked bodies on a screen or paper or telephone, then you get, says Jesus, the equivalent of adultery (sexual action outside marriage). In God's view sex is much more than the physical act of intercourse, so involvement with porn to God is the same as intercourse. Serious stuff.

**It attacks everyone.** It can attack Christians & Non-Christians. It can attack boys and girls and men and women of all ages.

**It is addictive & progressive.** It can be more addictive than drugs. Like any addiction, to start with a little bit goes a long way, but you soon get bored and need more to maintain the excitement level, hence the progression from magazines to movies to internet and worse.

## 2. Pornography is very, very serious

A common defence of being involved with pornography is "but what harm can it do me – it isn't real life". Let us allow several scriptures of God's Word to set the record straight:

***Jesus said that it is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell (Mt 5v27f).*** Like any sin, pornography can have serious consequences.

***Paul wrote, "...do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life (Gal 6v6-7).*** God would be mocked if we were able to dabble in sin and not get burnt. This verse is telling us that if you sow ungodly stuff into your life, you will experience ungodly fruit in your life.

***When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death (Jms 1v13-15).*** The American writer Susan Sontag correctly wrote, *"What pornography is really about, ultimately, isn't sex but death".*

### **In what areas might you reap 'death'?**

**A. In your relationship with yourself.** Exposure to pornography will mess-up your inner peace and thought life. Guilt and shame will reign.

**B. In your marriage and sex life.** Saying 'I do' at the marriage altar does not remove bad stuff from the past. You take into marriage who you are before you got married. And porn will not help spice-up your marriage, it will just create tension and disappointment. You will pressurize her. She will not want that. You will feel rejected and frustrated. Sex is all about unselfishness. Porn is all about lust. Pornography trains you to be selfish and lusting. Porn does not increase desire, it decreases it.

*"Pornographers subvert this last, vital privacy; they do our imagining for us. They take away the words that were of the night and shout them over the roof tops, making them hollow" (George Steiner, American Scholar & critic).*

**C. In your relationship with the opposite sex.** The British writer Angela Carter wrote, "Pornographers are the enemies of women..." True. Porn will help you see the opposite sex as sexual objects rather than precious creations of God.

**D. In your relationship with God.** Although God loves you the same, your relationship with him will be constantly strained with feelings of guilt and shame that you will inevitably feel.

### **3. Instruction on how to get free....and stay free**

This is vitally important. I refer you to Appendix A, "12 defenses for victory over temptation" which expounds 12 excellent ways to get free and stay free from any kind of sin.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **MISERABLE MARRIAGE, ADULTERY & EVEN DIVORCE**

I suppose that miserable marriages, adultery and ultimately divorce are the most obvious counter-attacks of the devil against marriage. He loves nothing more than to bring such despair and pain to the beautiful creation of marriage, has to end in tears. Or, the marriage carries on.....but in misery.

### **How does the devil try mess-up a marriage?**

He has several options. He can sometimes find a foothold in some of the big sexuality issues that we are addressing in this book, such as:

- homosexual tendencies, or
- pornography, or
- unbroken soul-ties from previous relationships.

Or he can use capitalize on less glamorous but equally deadly weaknesses such as:

- Boredom
- Selfishness
- Stress

### **How can a marriage resist his attacks and grow stronger and stronger?**

Here are my top 10 tips to a strong marriage:

**1. Take great courage because God is on your side.** God is for you! You are not swimming upstream. He is faithful to see your marriage a great success. Remember those 4 wonderful reasons why God loves marriage that were listed in Chapter 1? God adore marriage! But may I say this to you: if you are not a Christian, if you do not know the power of God in your life, then you are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to marriage! I urge you to commit your life to Christ and join a local church that will help you get established and growing in your new relationship with God. And then a wonderful by-product will be that you have access to God's supernatural love with which you can love your spouse.

## **2. Realize that a great marriage involves hard work**

*A young boy had a passion for gardening. He soon turned the front lawn into a place of beauty. A man walks by and says "Who grew these flowers, son?" "I did" the boy says. "No, it was not you, son. God made this garden beautiful", replied the man. The boy replied, "Yes, that's true, but you should have seen this place when God had it all to Himself!"* Marriage is team work between you, your spouse and God. The more you put in, the more you get out.

## **3. Pay attention to pace of life**

Busy lives and demanding work schedules inevitably puts pressure on a marriage. There is no solution to this other than to take a firm grip on your life! Stop blaming other people and situations and make a plan! Your life is not going to get less busy in the future. Act now. Change jobs if necessary. Take a salary cut if necessary, but make sure that the pace of life does not corrode your marriage.

## **4. Pay attention to finances**

Finances can place significant strain on a marriage. Usually it is financial lack that brings the most strain, although too much money can lead to other types of strain ('bring it on' I can hear some of you say!). If you are under financial strain, you have two options: (1) Decrease expenditure, and / or (2) Increase income. In my experience, the way out of financial strain is to make immediate and radical slashes to expenditure to get back within budget. This may mean a drop in your standard of living but living within your means is always less stressful than living beyond your means. Then, you can gradually work to increase income over the coming months and years.

## **5. Pay attention to sex**

There is an old saying that *the devil does everything possible to get you into bed before you are married and everything possible to keep you out of it once you are married.* Keep working at it. Keep being unselfish. Keep enjoying.

## **6. Pay attention to communication**

Many conversations today are the dialogues of the deaf, merely about setting forth our viewpoint, rather than a deliberate attempt to understand the other. We have 2 ears 1 mouth. You can close your mouth not your ears....take the hint! Even when Ashleigh and I are going through a tricky patch, if we are taking time to talk things through then we remain feeling safe and in love.

**7. Do regular marriage enrichments events**

We try and go on at least one marriage enrichment event per year, usually run by our church. Prevention is better than cure.

**8. Be part of a church**

Be part of a lively church that has an excellent culture of strong marriages that will be a positive influence on your marriage.

**9. Husbands love and lead, and wives submit (Eph 5v22f)**

In my experience this is the key piece of biblical advice to couples. **He** must not be a passive wimp – he must lead loving and strong. And **she** must not be controlling and domineering. This is how God has made us to function. **He** must lead in a sympathetic, understanding and considerate way....but lead he must. And **she** must know that she is 100% equal in worth but that her role in the marriage is not that of ultimate headship.

**10. Be expert forgivers**

The best example of forgiveness is a 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Forgiveness is giving love when there is no reason to. Jesus said: *'Love one another as I have loved you'*. Stop for a moment and think about how God loves you.....wow.....imitate that kind of love with your spouse.

## **PART THREE**

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# **SATANIC COUNTER-ATTACKS**

**4-6**

## CHAPTER 6

# ATTACK IN THE PRE-MARRIED YEARS

Probably the most devious and effective counter-attack that the devil has is *attacking a marriage long before it even begins*. God has a progression to prepare us for marriage, and the devil assaults this progression....

### How does God intend to prepare me for marriage?

*“At the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man will **leave** his father and mother and **cleave** to his wife, and the two will become **one flesh**, so they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together let man not separate” (Mk 10v7).*

These verses present 3 stages in a godly progression to marriage, and note that *the order* of these stages is critical in order to have a godly preparation for marriage:

**Stage 1 - Leaving:** It is simple. Jesus is saying that you must not start to cleave (get emotionally and romantically involved with someone) until you are ready to *leave your father and mother*. This means that you will be emotionally, spiritually, practically and financially ready for marriage before you start getting involved with someone. You need to be mature enough in every way to live as an adult who can cope without all the assists that your parents have given. So, what age can I have my first boyfriend / girlfriend? You do the math!

**Stage 2 - Cleaving:** Cleaving means *getting entwined with and joined to* another person - you know, emotionally and romantically involved. We have already established that you must not cleave until you are ready to leave, but Jesus is also teaching that you should *only cleave to your future spouse*. He doesn't say “a man shall cleave around until he finds a potential wife and then really cleave to her”. He says that a man shall cleave to *his wife*.

Two questions now spring to mind: (a) how do I find out if she will be my wife without any cleaving at all? And, (b) what is involved with cleaving *i.e. how far can I go?* Both questions will be answered in the following chapters. But for now, it is enough to simply acknowledge what Jesus is teaching, even if we can't yet fully understand the complete wisdom of it.

**Stage 3 – Becoming one flesh:** This is biblical language for having sex, which in addition to being a lot of fun, represents the complete joining of a man and a woman in marriage. This refers to the marriage day and marriage night. This is not rocket science - sex is reserved only for you and your spouse.

So that is God's progression into marriage: ***you don't cleave until you are leaving or have left your Mum and Dad, and you try to only cleave with your future wife / husband, and you don't one flesh until you are married.***

### **How does the devil attack the foundation progression into marriage?**

When I lived in Harare in Zimbabwe, close to our flat was the most enormous hole in the ground about the size of half a football field, and at least 40 meters deep. It was the foundation for a huge sky-scraper office block. The bizarre thing was that during the pause in the work between digging the hole and starting to build, the site was totally unguarded for a few weeks. If I had the desire I could have got down into the bottom of the hole without much difficulty. Why were there no guards? Because there was nothing to protect, of course! But let's imagine that for some reason I wanted to destroy the building. Rather than take a wrecking ball to it once it was up, I would be cunning to sneak down into the unguarded foundation, dig a couple of grave-size holes, lay some explosives that I set on three year fuse, cover them over, climb out, walk away and relax for three years! And the beauty of it would be that they would probably never suspect that it was me!

The foundation of your marriage is your pre-marriage years. If Satan can sneak in and mess you up during those foundational years, then he is well on the way to destroying your marriage in the future.

***The master stroke of Satanic genius is to make you believe that marriage only begins when you say "I do".***

***Have you ever wondered why there is such pressure to sleep around etc during pre-married years? It is because pre-married years might even be a more ferocious battleground than married years!***

## **2 main ways that he attacks your foundation**

### **1. He tries to mix up God's order of leave *then* cleave *then* one flesh.**

His first prize is to get you one-fleshing before even cleaving let alone leaving! So a one-night-stand is his bulls eye. And he uses arguments like, "*Well, it is best to check up front whether or not you are sexually compatible*". His second prize would be to get you cleaving as many times as possible with as many people as possible before you are ready to leave. His top arguments to legitimize this are: "*But it is all good experience, and anyway, how can you find your life-partner without looking around? And also, it is good to sow your wild oats so that you get it all out of your system so that you can settle down when the time is right*". Yuck! What a load of lies! Do you see how the worldly dating model is designed to facilitate the reversal of God's order?

**2. Cleaving here and there weakens your bonding power:** God has created you with a soul that is like Velcro. Velcro is that material that sticks to itself and is often used for watch straps and shoes and sometimes pockets. This is good news! God has given you equipment to love and keep loving your wife or husband all of your days. But your soul can't distinguish between who is the future marriage partner and who is just a delicious person! It will stick to whoever you allow it to! Furthermore, the more that Velcro is '*sticked and ripped*', the weaker it actually bonds.

When I was at university, I bought a ball game where a tennis ball sticks to a Velcro target, but after a week off intensive use I had to chuck the whole thing away because the ball and target's stick-ability had weakened to the point where the ball just bounced off! The more you bond and break-up, the more practiced you are getting at cleaving to someone then breaking up. You are getting in some excellent practice for relationships of *conditional love that don't last*. Soon you will be an expert at mini-divorces! And listen to me, when you say 'I do' at the altar, all those bad habits and soul-ties with others do not miraculously disappear. Your last decade or more of experience is not that easily washed away! Your soul is in the habit of making up then breaking up .....let's face it, if you are the devil, this is pretty good preparation for a tricky marriage and hopefully even divorce.

## CHAPTER 7

# FORNICATION....AND HOW FAR IS TOO FAR?

### **Fornication means sex outside marriage**

God has reserved sex for marriage.<sup>15</sup> Simple as that. No exceptions. When a married person is involved in sex outside their marriage it is called adultery. When two unmarried people have sex it is called fornication. So, the big question is.....

### **When does sex start?**

The bible is crystal clear that sex is reserved exclusively for marriage between a man and a woman<sup>16</sup>. No debate. No argument. No grey area. But the big question for unmarried people is this: *when does sex start?* Good question. To get your mind moving, try these two questions for size: When does life start? When does drunkenness start? I am not absolutely sure when sex actually starts, but we all know that there is a great deal more to sex than the final bit at the end! It is a process, isn't it?

### **So how far can I go?**

More like '*how safe can I stay?*' Come on! Let's have a renewed fear of God in this area! We are a new generation radically sold out to God. We ask not "how far can we go?" but rather "how safe can we stay?" Our battle cries include:

*"Flee sexual immorality!" (1 Cor 6v18)*

*"Let there not be even a hint of sexual immorality amongst us" (Eph 5v3)*

### **What does the bible say about how far I can go?**

Here are some verses from the bible and comments from me that I think give us some clear guidelines: *"Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (1 Tim 5v1-2).*

Mmm! Interesting. So guys, imagine you are at the movies with your girl. In the back row. And it is a chick-flick. *Where can you touch her? Can you kiss her? How can you kiss her?* The answer is simple, like you would your Mum or your sister. Ouch. So girls, you are home alone with a nice smelling, close-shaven (or ruggedly stubbled guy – you choose), the candles are burning and the music is soft, and he is acting so delicious!

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<sup>15</sup> Mk 10v7; Heb 13v4

<sup>16</sup> Mk 10v6-9; 1 Cor 7; Heb 13v4

It makes you just wanna ..... treat him like your Dad or your brother! If you are not convinced of my theory, look at the final three words in the verse above.

### **What about touching?**

*“There were two sisters who became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed” (Ez 23v2-3)*

Although this verse is a metaphor describing Israel’s unfaithfulness to God, the principles are helpful to us. Prostitution describes sex outside marriage, doesn’t it? And the details of the action here are that these sisters had their breast touched. So guys, take this one like a man: hands off those holy hills. As you sit reading this book, please place your right hand over your heart and repeat out loud: *“I solemnly swear that this is the only chest that I will touch until I am married.”*<sup>17</sup> Well done guys! Go for it!

### **What about french-kissing?**

Aka *deep-kissing, smooching or snoggin’*. Well I don’t have a verse for this one, although 1 Tim 5v1-2 probably covers it. But pretending that it doesn’t, we know that it is highly arousing and intimate. We also know that the bible says *“do not awake passion before it’s time”*<sup>18</sup>. You do the math.

### **Can I show off my body by the way that I dress?**

1 Thess 4v1-8, in the context of sexual purity, speaks about not taking advantage of your brother (or sister). And here’s the thing: what they see seriously affects guys. So girls, please dress nice but beware of really tight or really short outfits. When girls see a guy in a tight T-shirt they might think something sensible like, “I guess he’s an athlete or something”; but when a guy sees a girl in tight stuff he just thinks “Fresh Meat” or “Hubba Hubba” or something equally primal.

You are probably familiar with the story of how King David first fell in lust with Bathsheba. David usually takes a lot of stick for idly wondering around the roof of his palace when he should have been out at war, but equally guilty was Bathsheba who was merrily bathing naked on her rooftop, presumably aware that the palace overlooked it. Ladies, choose your bathing venues carefully!

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<sup>17</sup> Prov 5v18-19

<sup>18</sup> Song of Solomon 2v7

**And let's get our language accurate...**

Girlfriends and boyfriends don't *make love*, they fornicate. Ladies, if he puts on his best Italian accent and asks to *make love* to you, ask him to rephrase to "*My darling, will you fornicate with me?*" Kind of takes the romance out of it, doesn't it? Then slap him and stomp off.

**Guard your virginity**

Ladies, your virginity is not a trophy to be won by some guy on the hunt. Men, your virginity is not a prize to be surrendered to some women's seductive powers. Virginity is not an old-fashioned and embarrassing thing – no, it is highly prized in God's eyes. Hold on to it. Reserve it for marriage.

**What if you have already blown it?**

I have good news for you, dear friend. Bring it to God. Come humbly and with a repentant heart, and he will forgive you and make you brand new! Don't delay. Come to him now and allow him to wash you whiter than snow. No guilt or shame. Thank you Jesus.

## CHAPTER 8

### SOUL TIES....*I WANT TO BREAK FREE!*

And now to the devil's final attack: he wants to get you mysteriously 'tied' to other people so that you have reduced 'tying' ability for your marriage partner. I feel that some Christians have taken the concept of Soul Ties a bit too far, and got rather spooky-spiritual about it. I hope that this chapter presents a simple biblical teaching complimented by some pastoral experience and advice.

#### **What is your soul?**

We are commanded to love God with all our heart and soul and strength<sup>19</sup>....so we definitely have a soul!

The soul is obviously different from our bodies<sup>20</sup> that are our temporary house on earth (we will get a new body in heaven). And then we have a spirit that is the part of us that gets reborn. So by exclusion, your soul must be all the other bits! A well-used definition of a soul is *mind, will and emotions*.

**The emotions of a soul:** After a recent whiz through all the references to soul in the NIV translation of the bible, it seems that the major element of the soul is the emotional element. Here are just a few references to souls: your soul can love (Dt 5v6), be in anguish (Ps 6v3), be bitter (1 Sam 1v10 and often in Job), be restored (Ps 23), and be downcast or hopeful (Ps 42).

**The mind and will of a soul:** But the soul is not just this emotional gooey thing, because with it we can either obey or disobey God (Dt 26v16), and praise God (Ps 103).

#### **The joining / cleaving element of a soul**

Then there are some instances in the bible that show that the soul is the bit that joins us emotionally to other people. Here are four examples:

**Jacob and Joseph:** "...his life is bound up in the lad's life and his soul is knit with the lad's soul" (Gen 44v30 Amp). This speaks of a wonderfully close relationship between a father and his son.

**Jonathan and David:** "The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David" (1 Sam 18v1, KJV, Amp, NAS). So this is a good and godly soul-tie between friends. It is simple not spooky: God has made our souls with the capacity to cling to others in friendship love.

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<sup>19</sup> Dt 6v5. See also Heb 4v12.

<sup>20</sup> Mt 10v28

**Shechem and Dina:** *“He lay with her by force...and he longed for and clung to her...craved for her” (Gen 34v1-8).* Here we see that the soul can cling to someone in romantic and sexual love. We also see that sexual relations can strengthen a soul tie. This is an example of an ungodly soul-tie.

**Godly marriage:** God’s intent is that a man and woman *cleave* to each other and actual become one flesh (Mk 10v7)

### **A bonding weapon for good or harm**

But here is the key thing to note: *your soul cannot distinguish between good bonding and bad bonding. It is like super-glue – it will cleave to whoever you allow it to cleave to....*and it doesn’t easily let go. Your soul’s tenacity in bonding is actually good news. Isn’t it great that God has given you equipment to love and keep loving your wife or husband all of your days, and to help you love your friends and family unconditionally as well? But your soul can’t distinguish between who is the future marriage partner and who is just a delicious person. It will stick to whoever you allow it to.

### **How do soul-ties get formed?**

Remember, we are talking about good soul ties and bad soul ties – the principles of joining are the same. Two souls get tied through shared experiences and time spent together. So a mother is emotionally tied to her child by nature of the fetus being inside her. Friendships formed on the battlefield or in crises are often deep and lasting ones.

*But let’s talk about romantic and sexual soul ties:* apparently innocent relationships even in early teens can form ties that may remain for decades to come, because a soul tie can form when you share yourself emotionally or physically with another person, not just through sex. Spending time alone together, talking about deep and personal and emotional things, keeping each other’s secrets, love letters, thinking about, kissing, touching, hugging, and sex all deepen soul-ties.

**Are you now beginning to see the wisdom in Jesus’ instruction in Mk 10v7 that a man should ONLY cleave (develop a romantic soul-tie) with his wife? Your soul is designed to stick to someone and stick forever. So if you go sticking your soul to several partners, don’t be surprised when (a) you have painful break-ups, and (b) you find that you can’t quite let go of them.**

**John Sanford writes,** *“If a woman has sexual relations with several men, her soul seeks out everyone of them. Her spirit is scattered and torn apart. A man's spirit is so built that each woman he enters, his soul is built to find, protect, bless, nurture and provide for that woman. God has created us that way like Jesus and the Church”<sup>21</sup>*

#### **4 steps to freedom**

If you find yourself trapped in an ungodly soul-tie, I suggest the following action plan:

- 1. Repent.** Bar the unlikely event of you having not done anything wrong in the development of the soul-tie, you need to repent before God of getting cleaved to the wrong person.
- 2. Get prayed for by others:** you need to declare an end to the soul-tie. Pray that it is ‘cut-off’ and that you are totally released from it.
- 3. Take appropriate action<sup>22</sup>:** If applicable and wise, make contact with the person that you had the soul-tie with and say sorry for getting them caught up in that situation with you. A phone call or letter might do, but beware a lengthy and intimate chat that actually strengthens the very thing you are trying to break. This contact can be a helpful ‘signing off’ and a sense of closure is the usual result. Another thing is that from now on you will need to avoid alone time with the person. Due to the variations of each situation, I can only give broad principles here, but talk it through with a leader in your church to work out what is appropriate for your situation.
- 4. Get accountable.** You need someone (probably one of those who has prayed with you for the soul-tie to be cut) to walk along side you to help you not slip back into the soul-tie.

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<sup>21</sup> The Transformation of the Inner Man, John and Paula Sandford, Victory House, 1982

<sup>22</sup> Mt 3v8. Mt 12v33.

## **PART FOUR**

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# **A GODLY ROUTE TO MARRIAGE**

## CHAPTER 9

# GETTING MYSELF READY FOR MARRIAGE

In the light of all we have looked at in recent chapters, here are 12 ways to best spend your pre-married years:

**First, become whole-souled.** In the previous chapter we looked at soul-ties, but it is important here to say a couple more things about them. Remember, God has made you with the ability to cleave romantically to another. Sadly, many people find themselves stuck or cleaved to several different people whom they cleaved to sometime in the past and have never quite 'got over'. What is going on? Why do you still think about and even pine after them even though it is now many years on and you may now be in love with another person? Here's what is going on: portions of your soul are still emotionally or romantically tied to those people. If you don't get free, it means that when you come to marry 'Mr or Mrs Right' you will not be able to max-out the sticky area of your soul to cleave to your marriage partner. It is like you left little bits of your soul here and there! Our pre-marriage years are the time to stay whole-souled, and repair your soul if it has been shattered.

One of the worst songs ever is one by Lou Bega. It goes "*I got a girl in Paris, and a girl in Rome....*" And he proceeds to boast of having a girl in every port around the world. May I give some advice to any women reading this book: DO NOT MARRY LOU BEGA. His stickability is spread so far and wide that I doubt he has much left for you, girl!

The writer of Proverbs uses the analogy of drinking water from your own well and not letting others drink from you, so that you keep your loving potential maxed-out, and so that your marriage partner satisfies you always, unhindered by memories and longings of past conquests:

*Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the street, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer, may her breasts satisfy you always, may you be ever captivated by her love" (Prov 5v15-19)*

**Second, become complete in Christ.** For a marriage to work it needs to have two complete and secure people coming together. The bible teaches that ultimately only Jesus can satisfy us. As wonderful as a spouse is, as friends are, as money and a career can be, none of these people or things can ultimately give you satisfaction and fulfillment. This can only be found in God. So, pin your ears back and develop your own personal, deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus. When an immature Christian (and how much more a non-Christian) enter marriage, they will try to draw things from their spouse that they should be drawing from God...that their spouse cannot obviously not provide. The result is frustration and strain.

**Third, build solid character.** For a marriage to work, both parties need to have a good level of maturity and strength of character, and the more self-improvement that can be done before 'I do', the better! So if you have a problem with lust, or anger, or jealousy, I promise you that these character weaknesses will not disappear with those magic words 'I do'! On the contrary, in the intimate scenario of a marriage we find that our faults actually get exaggerated! And now the stakes are raised – before you just got into a rage with your boss or friends, but now it is with your precious spouse! This leads us into the next one....

**Fourth, learn self-control.** We could talk about self-control in several relevant areas, but allow me to hone in on the realm of sexual self-control. Some time ago I was asked to give a talk to teenagers on 'Coping with hormones'. I cried out to God asking him to help me understand why he has made us to have seriously active hormones and sexual desires for many years before we can get married and find an outlet for satisfaction. I felt God nudge my mind to the phrase, *'so that you can learn self-control whilst the stakes are low'*.

Once again, let me stress that when you say the words 'I do', you are not then exempt from sexual temptation towards other men or women. I once heard someone say, *'The devil does all that he can to get you into bed before you are married, and all he can to keep you out of your marriage bed once you are married'*. And there is truth in this: the devil works hard to get you to fornicate (sex involving an unmarried person) before you are married, and then he tries to get you to adulterate (sex outside marriage involving a married person) once you are married yourself. So learn to control your urges before you get married, because if you fall in this area once you are married then the damage in your life and other lives can be enormous.

**Fifth, avoid pornography and fantasy.** Avoid books, movies and thought patterns that establish soulish strongholds that will dilute your passion with your future spouse.

**Sixth, learn to understand and respect the opposite sex.** I think that this point is especially relevant to those who have been brought up in a culture or situation where meaningful contact with the opposite sex was minimal. Going into marriage as a sexist is not good! Learn to appreciate and respect them before marriage.

**Seventh, build many friendships.** Once you are married you will both still need lots of friends. If you have isolated yourself in your pre-marriage years through a very clingy and exclusive relationship with a girl/boyfriend then you will have work hard as a couple to make good friends.

**Eighth, get skilled in agape love.** Eros is the Greek word for sexual love, Phileo the Greek word for friendship love, and agape is the Greek word for unconditional love. Without downplaying the importance of the other forms of love, agape is definitely the one that keeps a marriage together for the long haul. So practice loving and serving people whom you don't actually like very much! Don't only hang around with a crowd that you easily like, because there will be times in your marriage that you find your spouse not so easy to love. Get some training in now!

**Ninth, protect the opposite sex from yourself.** For example girls, dress in such a manner that doesn't easily provoke the guys to temptation. Remember, guys are easily aroused by what they see. And guys, don't lead girls on and casually throw around phrases such as 'I love you'. Girls are more fragile than guys are in this regard. A wise man once said, *"Don't say 'I love you' unless the next words out of your mouth will be, 'Will you marry me?'"*

**Tenth, seek first God's kingdom.** Jesus said that if we pursue his things first, then he will organize these other good things to come and find us!<sup>23</sup> Throw yourself into serving God and trust him to lead you into marriage in due course.

**Eleventh, pray and have faith for your marriage partner.** Ask God to protect him/her and grow him/her in all these areas we have just mentioned. Trust God to bring you together when the time is right.

**Twelfth, stay pure and uncleaved.** If you have your hands full with Mr Wrong, it doesn't leave much room for Mr Right, does it?

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<sup>23</sup> Mt 6v33

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **CHOOSING RIGHT: PRINCIPLES FROM GEN 24**

#### **Tiny & Titanic decisions**

I wonder how many decisions we make every day. What clothes shall I wear? What shall I have for breakfast? What time shall I leave the house? And on it goes all day. I reckon we make close to a thousand decisions every day. But some decisions are bigger than others – think of the person who gets paid a huge salary just to make the right decision every now and again for the future of the corporation, because one decision can win or lose a million dollars. And here's the punch line: choosing a marriage partner is a massive decision that can make or break a life.

#### **Marriage is forever...**

....which is why choosing a marriage partner is such a titanic decision. Marriage is for life. It affects every day emotions and happiness, your career, and your children and their children. Are you getting it? The stakes of marriage are really, really high. And if you choose wrong, divorce is not an option. You have got to live with the mistake.

#### **Is it possible to choose right?**

Yes. I am sure that it is. I believe that we should look to God to alert us to the right person, but in the end we still make the choice, not God, if you see what I mean? I feel that it is right and responsible for us to try to get educated in God as to the kind of spouse that we should be looking for. In some cultures the parents are mostly responsible for choosing a spouse for their son or daughter, and the same principles would apply to them also.

*“Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5v17 Amplified version)*

## Principles from Genesis 24 – Isaac and Rebekah

I would ask the reader to now read Genesis 24. I am now going to draw some principles from this story:

### Principles from V1-9

**The timing will be right.** Remember that God's order is leave, cleave, one flesh. Abraham felt that Isaac was ready (at age 40 I would hope he jolly well was!).

**He/she will be a Believer (V3-9).** Abraham would only consider a wife for his son of the same religion. He made his servant swear not to choose a wife for his son who was not spiritually compatible with him. The application for you is that if you are a Christian then only consider marrying a Christian. Missionary dating seldom works. If you don't marry someone who is spiritually compatible with you, at best you will have an unfulfilled marriage and stunted ministry, and at worst your marriage will be a nightmare. Just don't do it. Like Abraham, settle this one up front and stick to it.

One of most wonderful benefits of marrying someone who is a serious believer is that they will have a love for, and a fear of God, which means that they will be motivated to be faithful to you not just by their commitment to you, but also by their commitment to God. Also, as a believer they have access to the supernatural agape love of God with which to love you.

**There will be a sense that God is joining together (V7).** Abraham was confident of God's direct leading in choosing a wife, believing that God would send an angel to pave the way. Jesus reiterated this belief when he said "What *God* has joined let man not separate" (Mk 10v9). There are three great marriage stories in the bible (Adam and Eve, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jesus and the Church) and in all three God brings the couples together in a miraculous and sovereign way. Interestingly, in Proverbs 18v22 it says, "*He who finds a wife finds a good thing*", the word *find* means to happen upon along the way'. So, we need to rest in God confident that he is at work in bringing us together.

**You will both be keen (V8).** Although God is sovereignly involved, he will never usurp your decision. Don't be pressured or deceived by a Christian saying to you, "*But God has told me that I will marry you.*" If you don't want to, then don't!

## Principles from V10-14

**Prayer is vital (V12).** The first step is prayer, and then keep the process bathed in prayer.

**Character is the thing to look for (V13-14).** ‘Courtship’ means “to test” or to ‘take to court’. As you are looking for a marriage partner, you mostly want to test his/her character. The servant of Abraham wanted a girl who would offer to water all the camels. He wanted a girl that had a servant heart. This was a character test. It is important to see him/her in real life in testing circumstances in order to assess their character. Proverbs 31 is commending a woman of character not physical beauty. It is about character!

## Principles from V15 onwards

**V15:** Remember that you are marrying into a family!

**V20:** She was seeking God's Kingdom! She was just being faithful, not dressed to kill and out flirting. Do not try and attract a marriage partner based on your good looks...because your looks will not last, and there will always be someone better looking than you. Just as bricks not paint hold up a wall, so character and not looks hold up a marriage.

**V21:** Don't shoot your mouth off. Test and test again. Courtship is about slow and steady testing. Confer with God.

**V23:** He wasn't scared of the potential in-laws. He was up-front and open.

**V28:** What fun! Lots of excited girl-talk.

**V33:** He declares his intentions. He is up-front and open rather than drawing her aside into the shadows.

**V49-50:** Involving others: here we have the principle of *courtship* again. He takes the matter to a council of witnesses. He takes the evidence that he has accumulated so far and takes it to court saying, "*please help me judge whether God is bringing these two young people together*". What safety! What wisdom!

**V53:** This dowry was proof of his serious intentions. Only proceed if you are really serious.

**V57-58:** Notice that once her parents had consented, it was ultimately her decision, and she was obviously bursting with excitement and had the witness of the Spirit, confirmation by her parents and friends, and said "I will go". The scriptures don't record much of Rebekah's end of things, but God had obviously prepared her for this incredible series of events.

**V60:** Notice that they spoke life into her marriage. They did not say she was too young. And notice the multi-generational vision. *"May you, through your home, conquer the gates of hell"*. Wonderful!

## MODERN DAY APPLICATION

God works uniquely in each situation, but I thought that it might be helpful if I shared a 7 step process that I have seen help many couples stay safe on the exciting journey towards marriage. I stress that this is not a formula! Also, I am going to write it from the position of the guy:

### **Stage 1: Is this the one?**

She gets your attention by character or perfume or nice legs – whatever, but you find yourself wondering, just wondering, could this be the one? At this moment you must understand that the courtship has begun. The time of testing has begun. You are trying to get to know her to see if she is the 'one', but you are careful to cleave as little as possible until you are sure. This way you are protecting herself and yourself.

**Action:** Only pray. Commit to God. Pray for protection. Thy will be done.

**Guidance:** It is probably too early for counsel from others, but be open for the inner witness of peace from God's spirit, and be open to guidance via the bible and prophecy.

### **Stage 2: The Stake-out**

Unless you got a red light in Stage 1, then move into stake-out mode. This is a time of general observation, but you want to stay largely undetected so that (a) she acts herself, and (b) so that you can sneak away unnoticed if you find that she is not the 'one'.

**Action:** Observe the person in the stresses of inter-personal relationships and observe them as they really are. You will see the real 'them' because there is no pressure, no make-up, and they don't know that you are even keen! What is her temper like? Is she kind to annoying people? Does she really love God?

**Guidance:** Probably still too early for counsel of others, but stay open for guidance from the bible and through prophecy, and of course the witness of God inside you.

### **Stage 3: Closer but not cleaved**

Unless you got a red light in Stage 2, then move into this stage.

**Action:** Form friendship with the person. Check her out close-up. You need to see if you click. Test the waters for a reciprocal response. Guys take a hint!

N.B. Do all that you can to avoid a romantic soul tie. You are still testing and this is not the time to get cleaved.

**Guidance:** During this stage, whilst you must stay alert to all signposts of guidance, it is high time that you share the situation with selected others so they can pray and support and protect and listen to God with you. Also, be alert to common sense: i.e. are you compatible?

### **Stage 4: Declare intentions**

Anything from now on will form an emotional attachment. Don't take it past the stage of FRIENDS without declaring intentions. Protect yourselves! Say something like "I would love to see more of you, if that would be ok, and I am excited to see if God might have more for us".

If you & your council both feel the peace of God, then you need to move into this stage in a prayerful manner.

**Guidance:** Now that you have stepped out in faith, God will give you either a peaceful or awkward feeling inside. If he/she 'blocks' you then whilst you may feel a sense of rejection, you have protected the other completely. If you both have the witness of the spirit, then proceed to the next stage.

### **Stage 5: Up-close-and personal and PEC (pre-engagement counseling)**

Assuming you both have the peace of God, and assuming that signposts continue to line-up, then you need to move quickly into PEC. PEC is the final piece of confirmation. God will use it to ASSURE you that you have made the right choice, or show you otherwise. God will use PEC to give you one of 3 answers; YES, NO, or NOT YET. Arrange to do PEC confidentially with your Pastor. Tell no one else except those who are in your small circle of advisors. Remember, three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead! Also, if you decide that marriage is not an option, you are able to part company without the embarrassment of everyone else knowing.

**Stage 6: Going Public**

PEC usually takes 4-6 weeks, but usually after the first 3 or 4 weeks you will know and can either break up quietly and peaceably, or you can get engaged, and tell people, or keep it all quiet for a bit longer depending on your timetable. After the public announcement and move towards the wedding day, cleaving **but without eros**. Even during the courtship period it is not legal to arouse passions. On the day you get married it is! Oh boy it is!

**Stage 7: Getting Married**

Hallelujah!

## CHAPTER 11

# CHOOSING RIGHT: A HELPFUL CHECKLIST

I want to stress that I not trying to reduce this exciting process of finding a marriage partner to some checklist or formula. I appreciate that God works uniquely in each situation, and that they may be factors in your situation that are unusual. However, my concern is to help you be wise and cautious in making this massive, life-impacting decision. And I also know that in matters of love we can easily be blind to reality. So here is a bit of a summary checklist of principles drawn from the previous chapter: (I have written this checklist from the girl's perspective):

**You will both be ready to leave.** You will be at a marriageable place in terms of maturity and finances.

**He will be a believer.** Do not be unequally yoked. He will have a fear of God/ hunger for God.

**The whole situation will line-up with God's word.** For example, he cannot already be married, nor is a gay marriage permissible.

**You will have seen his inner character.** Dating is trial and error. Dating is about hiding the real me behind make-up and dancing. Courtship is about testing the character of the man and rightness of the relationship before God and man.

**Your team of advisors will confirm.** This would usually include parents, trusted friends and church leaders.

**Common sense will confirm.** Are you compatible? Are you financial viable? Are you happy with the other's career path projection?

**The inner witness of the Holy Spirit will confirm.** You will have a sense that God is joining you.

**Pre-engagement counseling will confirm.** See the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 12

# PRE-ENGAGEMENT COUNSELING

### **Sincerity is not enough!**

There is a Charlie Brown cartoon in which Charlie Brown is walking home dejectedly with his baseball bat over his shoulder saying, “*We lost 143 to nothing! How could we lose like that when we were so sincere?*” In marriage, like in most areas of life, sincerity is not enough! Sadly, for many it works like this: things are **ideal** before marriage, an **ordeal** after marriage, and soon they are looking for a **new deal**. But this need not be the case...

### **What is Pre-Engagement Counseling?**

It is a short course that our church encourages couples to do before they get engaged. If they miss that opportunity, then we encourage them to do the same course whilst they are engaged, although it is then called Pre-Marriage Counseling.

### **Why is it a very good idea?**

No wise person would commit himself to living in a strange land without knowing something about what to expect and the difficulties he would inevitably face. No one foolishly commits himself to building a house without checking he has the resources to complete it. *Yet most young men and women take these same unbelievable risks when it comes to marriage!* Look at these great scriptures:

***For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it (Lk 14v28).***

This course will assist you in assessing whether you are making the correct decision.

***Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established (Pr 24v3).*** This course will feed you with wisdom and understanding.

***A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment (Pr 18v1). Where there is no counsel the people fall; but in a multitude of counsellors there is safety (Pr 11v14).*** This course prevents you from isolating yourself because you think you know better.

***The simple believe every word. But the prudent man considers well his steps (Pr 14v15).*** This course will destroy some of the myths of marriage, and help you to consider very carefully whether you are doing the right thing.

***Jesus spoke of building a life on either rock or sand (Mt 7v24).*** This course will help you build on a solid foundation that will last.

***Unless the Lord builds the house those who labour do so in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchmen stay awake in vain (Ps 127v1-2).*** Do you want the Lord to guard your marriage? Then allow Him to build it, because He always protects that which He builds. This course will allow the Lord to lay some foundations for your marriage.

***The horse is made ready for the day of battle but victory rest with the Lord (Prov 21v31).*** Whilst it is true that only God can give you victory in your marriage, this course will help you fulfill your responsibility of preparing your 'horse' for marriage.

### **What are the 2 main goals of Pre-Engagement Counseling?**

Firstly, there is a testing or protectionist element to it. As the sessions go by the rightness and timing of the proposed marriage is confirmed (hopefully!). In our experience, 1 in 10 couples who do the course decide to part ways rather than get married, and about 3 in 10 adjust their time-schedule to some degree.

Secondly, the course helps the couple to work through issues that need to be sorted out before getting into marriage. It is great fun, and so exciting to get to know each other and get in unity and agreement!

### **Our course looks like this:**

Session 1: Why am I getting married?

Session 2: Roles & Responsibilities

Session 3: Needs & Expectations

Session 4: Love languages & Temperament types

Session 5: Finance & Sex

The usual pattern for the course is that the couple spends 1½ hours per week with a seasoned married couple in the church, doing one session per week. The time together is mostly spent listening to feedback from the homework that the couple has done that week.

### **Why is it best to do the course before getting engaged?**

Because then you avoid the pain of a public break-up or delay if you realize that you are barking up the wrong tree.

# APPENDIX A

## 12 DEFENSES FOR VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

### 1. Take radical action

Jesus said that if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away (Mt 5v27f). Imagine the aggression required to gouge your own eye out! Jesus is telling you to take radical action. To get desperate. To get on the attack against this sin. You can do this by doing the following:

### 2. You must really want to be free

*“Hate what is evil, cling to what is good” (Rms 12v9).* If you are not convinced that it is serious sin which God hates, then I don’t bother to read on.

### 3. Be self-controlled

*“Be **self-controlled** and **alert**. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5v8-9)*

**Self-control** is vital. You see, although Satan can tempt you to sin, for temptation to be converted to actual sin, it needs to **borrow a part of your body**. For example, when you are tempted to think jealous or proud or lustful or angry thoughts, sin can only actually happen if you surrender the instrument of your mind to sin to use. Also, don’t let sin borrow your eyes to look at things that you shouldn’t. Don’t do that! Be self-controlled! Look what Paul wrote to the church in Rome:

*“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness ... but rather offer the parts of your body to God as instruments of righteousness” (Rms 6v13)*

*So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; **he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear**. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (2 Cor 10v12).*

It is therefore never an excuse to say, ‘But I couldn’t help myself’. You could have. Just stop it.

#### 4. Be alert

Two weeks before writing this I was visiting Johannesburg Zoo. When we were at the lion enclosure, my friend Hugh told me of how in some parts of Africa, people attach human-looking face masks to the backs of their heads as a deterrent to a lion-attack. Apparently, a lion prefers to attack an unsuspecting victim from behind, but with the mask on, the person looks alert from the front and the back! Let us be similarly vigilant knowing that Satan is ready to pounce if we let our guard down. And he never plays fair - standard military tactics are to attack the enemy between 3am and 5am, because this is when the human 'body clock' is in its slowest mode. Satan will almost always attack you with temptation when you are in a weak and vulnerable state.

#### 5. Learn how to run

And although Potiphar's wife spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. One day he **went into the house** to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants were inside. She caught him by his cloak and said "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and **ran out of the house** (Gen 39v11-12)

Joseph did one thing wrong and one thing right. The right thing was that he ran away right at the start of the temptation before it got a hold of him. When you battle temptation, unlike military warfare or sport, if you run away you win! Don't try to be a hero, just run. If you run, in this battle you are a hero!

#### 6. Avoid places of temptation

The wrong thing Joseph did was to foolishly go into the house alone with Potiphar's wife. Interestingly, Proverbs 7v6-9 tells a similar story of a young man who walked passed the house of a prostitute, and the writer is quick to call this young man foolish! If you are tempted to steal jewellery, don't go near jewellery shops! The best drivers are not the ones who show off how clever they are by driving fast near the edge of the cliff, but rather those who avoid the cliff by many metres. Don't even hang around people or places that may tempt you to sin.

#### 7. Starve the flesh and feed the spirit

Once a man had two dogs that he fought against each other on every Saturday in the market place. He would take bets as to whether the black dog or the brown dog would win. Each week a different dog won and the man made much money because he always seemed to know which of his dogs would win. One day a friend asked him "how do you always know

which dog will win on Saturday?” The dog owner replied “The dog I feed the most during that week always wins on Saturday.”

Feed the “Spirit dog” in you by prayer, bible reading and fellowship with other Christians. Starve the “flesh dog” in you by only reading and watching things that are good for you.

### **8. Stay busy for God**

King David was a great warrior for much of his life, but there was one year when he got lazy and instead of leading his army on a campaign, he delegated that to a general, and David stayed at home, no doubt lazy and bored around the palace. It was then that he got tempted and committed adultery with Bathsheba. What can we learn from this? That a committed lifestyle of serving God will keep you occupied (both in your time and your affections) with godly, exciting things. Righteousness will be more attractive to you than sin! Someone once said, “Some temptations attack the busy person, but all attack the idle person”.

### **9. Be ruthless with little sins**

Oliver Cromwell once went to the circus and witnessed a tragedy: one act included a huge python which wrapped itself around a standing man, and then uncoiled itself and slithered back to its box. That night it all went wrong: instead of releasing the man, the snake crushed him to death in front of a shocked audience. This python had been trained from birth – when it was a small, weak baby snake, but it grew into a monster. James 1v13-15 speaks of the subtle growth of small temptations into mighty sins that can destroy you. Little, cuddly lions become big lions and big lions eat people! Ruthlessly put to death small sins in your life or else they will quickly grow to become habits that entangle you.

### **10. Know some key verses of the bible**

When Satan tempted Jesus in the desert<sup>24</sup>, it is interesting that Jesus responded to each temptation by quoting verses from the bible, saying “It is written...” The psalmist believed in the same defence strategy because he said “*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*”<sup>25</sup>. Being familiar with some of the things that the mighty word of God says about certain sins is a mighty defence against attacks of temptation. Here are a couple of my favourite anti-temptation-defence-scripture-missiles:

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<sup>24</sup> Luke Chapter 4

<sup>25</sup> Ps 119v11

**Against stinking thinking:** *“Finally brothers, whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praise-worthy, think on such things” (Phil 4v8). “Set your mind on things above and not on earthly things” (Col 3v2). “And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10v5)*

**Against worrying:** *“My God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4v19)*

## 11. Stay accountable to others

Paul wanted his friends in Corinth to understand that “no temptation had seized them except that which was common to man”<sup>26</sup>, and James encourages us to talk to other suitable Christians about sins that we are struggling with<sup>27</sup>. What a relief to know that others experience the same battles, and that we can confess our failings and struggles to others who can sympathise (not criticise!) and then spur us on to righteousness! It is good for each of us to have at least one other mature Christian that we can regularly chat to about our struggles.

## 12. When you fail run to God immediately

Here is one of my favourite scriptures: *We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in everyway just as we are, yet was without sin. Therefore, let us boldly approach the throne of grace to find help in our time of need (Heb 4v15).*

Jesus understands your struggles. He has been there, done that, and won through! He is qualified to help you out! So, if you give in to temptation, turn straight to Jesus and say, “Jesus, I am so sorry to have sinned. I ask now that you would forgive me and wash me of this sin. Thank you that you never stop loving me even when I mess up. Amen.” And **do not, repeat not, repeat not** listen to any condemning accusations from Satan, because he always wants to use Weapon Number 1 (guilt) against you whenever you mess up. Remember that on the cross Jesus took the guilt and shame and punishment of death – he took all God’s wrath – for every sin that you have committed and that you will commit. It has all been paid for! Tell the devil, “Satan, although I sinned, I am still 100% holy before God. I am holy, without blemish and free from accusation<sup>28</sup>. You have nothing to accuse me of because Jesus was already accused for that sin I just committed.”

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<sup>26</sup> 1 Cor 10v13. See also 1 Peter 5v9.

<sup>27</sup> James 5v16

<sup>28</sup> Col 1v22

## **Stronghold sins**

The final thing to say about temptation is that the bible mentions 'stronghold sins'<sup>29</sup>. Most Christians find that there are one or two areas of temptation that seem stronger for them than others. For some people it might be fear or jealousy, for others addictions of some sort, and maybe for others pornography. These are called "stronghold sins" simply because they seem to have an extra strong hold on you. Strongholds develop in different ways. Sometimes they develop by doing a certain sin so much for so long, or sometimes they develop simply because you seem especially weak in that area.

My experience with dealing with stronghold sins is that it is important to get one or two trusted friends to pray with you into this area. Matthew 18v18-19 tells us that prayers have special power when they are prayed in agreement with another Christian. Combined prayer is very powerful! To overcome most sins we can pray by ourselves, but to tear down stronghold sins we need to pray with someone else.

Once you have prayed together for special strength to combat this sin, you must then live a disciplined and alert lifestyle to stay free from it. And your trusted friends should keep you in their prayers, and from time to time ask you how you are doing in this area (see point 11 above).

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<sup>29</sup> 2 Cor 10v4

## **APPENDIX B**

### **WHAT ABOUT BRIDE PRICE?**

Bride Price is common in many cultures. It is when the husband has to pay *cash or kind* to the parents and family of the bride. In much of Africa it is called *lobola*.

#### **It can be helpful when:**

- It is a small amount that doesn't put pressure on the husband-to-be.
- When the negotiations serve as a helpful mechanism for the husband-to-be to interact with and get to know his bride's family.
- When it is a symbol of serious intent and honour on the part of the husband-to-be.

#### **It can be unhelpful when:**

- It puts unreasonable financial pressure on the young couple, even causing them to delay the marriage until they have raised the funds to pay the bride price.
- It is a means of profiteering on the part of the bride's parents.

#### **How can the church help young couples in the grip of unreasonable bride price?**

The pastors can visit the parents and try to persuade them to reduce it. Failing that, the church can club together to help pay the bride price.

#### **Is the couple married when they have paid the bride price? If not, then when?**

The bigger question here is what constitutes biblical marriage? The bible doesn't talk about white dresses etc, but scripture does seem to present marriage as a 'moment' that is acknowledged by the community. For example, although Adam and Eve didn't there were wedding feasts in the bible that everyone knew about. That signaled the beginning of the marriage. Also, because the bible so clearly prohibits sex outside marriage, then there must be a moment of actual marriage to draw the line between fornication and legal, wonderful married sex.

I believe that you are married when there is some kind of event declaring to the witnesses of heaven and earth that says 'we are now married'. And this event can take many different valid forms. But however you play it, act in a way that upholds the biblical ideal of marriage.

You can be married in your home village, or in court, or in a church building. But I feel that the important issue is that there be a **declared** nature to it, so that there is no confusion and a stand is made for '*one moment you are not married, and the next you are*'.

So, if you are going to have two ceremonies, one at the time that the bride price is paid, and then another one a few months later with your church family, then either can be valid for the start of your marriage, SO LONG AS EVERYONE KNOWS WHICH ONE IS *THE ONE!*

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## APPENDIX C

### A WOMAN'S TEST

**Here is a superb story entitled 'A Woman's Test'<sup>30</sup>**

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose. His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name, Miss Hollis Maynell. With time and effort he located her address. She lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II. During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A romance was budding. Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like.

When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting - 7:00 PM at the Grand Central Station in New York. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel". So at 7 o'clock he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen. I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened:

*"A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blonde hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured. Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. I felt as though I was split in two, so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own.*

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<sup>30</sup> Source unknown

*And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful. I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me; may I take you to dinner?"*

*The woman's face broadened into a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is about, son," she answered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!"*

## APPENDIX D

### A GOOD LAUGH

**That First Kiss:** At the end of their first date, a young man takes his favourite girl home. Emboldened by the night, he decides to try for that important first kiss. With an air of confidence, he leans with his hand against the wall and, smiling, he says to her, *"Darling, how 'bout a goodnight kiss?"* Horrified, she replies, *"Are you mad? My parents will see us!"* *"Oh come on! Who's gonna see us at this hour?"* *"No, please. Can you imagine if we get caught?"* *"Oh come on, there's nobody around, they're all sleeping!"* *"No way. It's just too risky!"* *"Oh please, please, I like you so much!!"* *"No, no, and no. I like you too, but I just can't!"* *"Oh yes you can!"* *"Please?"* *"No, no. I just can't."* *"Pleeeeeeease?..."*

Out of the blue, the porch light goes on, and the girl's sister shows up in her pajamas, hair disheveled. In a sleepy voice the sister says: *"Dad says to go ahead and give him a kiss. Or I can do it. Or if need be, he'll come down himself and do it. But for crying out loud tell him to take his hand off the intercom button!"*

**What is the proper age to get married?** *"Eighty-four! Because at that age, you don't have to work anymore, and you can spend all your time loving each other in your bedroom."* (Judy, 8). *"Once I'm done with kindergarten, I'm going to find me a wife"* (Tom, aged 5).

**When is it okay to kiss someone?** *"You should never kiss a girl unless you have enough bucks to buy her a big ring and her own VCR, 'cause she'll want to have videos of the wedding."* (Jim, 10). *"Never kiss in front of other people. It's a big embarrassing thing if anybody sees you. But if nobody sees you, I might be willing to try it with a handsome boy, but just for a few hours"* (Kally, aged 9).

**Is it better to be single or married?** *"It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them!"* (Lyn, aged 9).

**Why love happens between two particular people:** *"No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular"* (Jan, aged 9).

**On the matter of good looks:** *"It isn't always just how you look. Look at me. I'm handsome like anything and I haven't got anybody to marry me yet"* (Gary, aged 7).

**Why do lovers often hold hands?** *"They want to make sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them" (Dave, aged 8).*

**When is it okay to kiss someone?** *"It's never okay to kiss a boy. They always slobber all over you...that's why I stopped doing it" (Jean, aged 10).*

**Adams suit:** A little boy opened the big and old family Bible with fascination, he looked at the old pages as he turned them. Then something fell out of the Bible and he picked up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that has been pressed in between pages. "Momma, look what I found," the boy called out. "What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked. With astonishment in the young boy's voice he answered: "It's Adam's suit!!!!!"