

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

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Finally, we want to marry a person given to forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31-32). Among our temporal relationships, marriage is perhaps the one in which forgiveness is most needed! Two people whose lives are so intertwined are bound to "step on each other's toes," i.e., sin against each other. Those who are unwilling to forgive others upon their repentance eventually poison their own relationships with bitterness.

So much more could be said, but the qualities already mentioned are extremely important to a successful marriage. We might have fun in the presence of some people for the short-term, but they just don't measure up as good spouses. Thoughtful consideration of the character of the people we date can make the difference between an extremely good marital relationship and a failed one.

"But I'm not looking for a spouse. I'm just dating for fun." People usually end up marrying someone from among the ones they date. If we date people who are unsuitable as marriage partners, it is probably no surprise if we end up marrying someone who is not a

very good marriage partner! Don't expect Macy's quality if you shop at Wal-Mart!

Although this article has stressed the need to "measure" any prospective spouse, the idea that a successful marriage is all about picking the right person is just another myth! Obviously, caution in the selection of a lifelong marriage partner is critical, but individual marriages are not static relationships, in part because people change. Even if our choice of spouse is a good one, there needs to be continued spiritual growth in the marriage partners over the duration of the relationship. Some people become more Christ-like over time, while others become more worldly.

I suspect the reason some people are drawn to one another is that they have prepared themselves to be good spouses and are looking for the same character traits in others. Don't just look for people who exhibit the characteristics mentioned in this article; seek to be one!

#### **Bible Challenge Question - Answer**

His name was Zacchaeus. He was a rich tax collector who lived in Jericho. When Jesus passed through Jericho, on His way to Jerusalem, He stayed in the house of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9). Others in the crowd accompanying Jesus identified Zacchaeus as a sinner (v. 7), but Jesus called him a "son of Abraham." It appears from the text that Zacchaeus and Jesus were not acquainted (v. 3), but when Jesus saw Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree, He called him by name!



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## **Magic Moment...Or Thoughtful Preparation?**

By Allen Dvorak

He looks into her eyes and she looks into his. The whole universe slows to a complete stop during that magic moment. It was then that they realized they were destined to be together!

We have been trained by the entertainment industry, particularly by television and movies, to think that successful marriages begin in this way – a magic moment when two souls are knit together in romantic love, their futures bound together by the stars. Supposedly, the trick to a successful marriage is to find that one person in the world with whom one is meant to be, identifiable by the "magic moment."

Some might find such Disney-esque romanticism to be quite appealing, but it's a myth! While some people do indeed seem to be drawn to one another, finding a suitable spouse requires a great deal more preparation and consideration than "the magic moment theory" supposes. At the risk of making courting sound like an analytical equation,

prospective spouses should be compared to what is truly important to the success of a marital relationship.

It is unfortunate that so many people confuse physical lust with true love. Lust is more concerned with outward appearance than inward attractiveness. The same Hollywood entertainment industry that brought us "the magic moment theory" has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that physically attractive people do not necessarily possess good character. Picking a marriage partner primarily on the basis of "looks" is like buying a Ferrari with a lawnmower engine under the hood!

What should we look for in a prospective marriage partner? First, we want to marry someone who is a Christian, someone who has already demonstrated a willingness to submit to God's will. Unbelievers often reject the basic principles of Scripture that

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**Do You Know Who The Elders And Deacons Are?**

Two men will be appointed today as additional elders for the Kelly Spring Road congregation. We also have excellent deacons. Can you find the names (first and last) of all of our elders and deacons and their wives. Note: there is no space between first and last names.

A large grid of letters for a word search puzzle. The letters are arranged in 20 rows and 25 columns. The letters are: B P E O P A L B L O R I H O L D E R P E, F E G R O D N M E V G E N E S I S I H -, 2 9 T E P M O G E V E U X K G Q L V I A, C O B H N T I U I D E R Q N C T P R L S, M H W K E A I K G E H R A A G U J A D Q, E D M H I T D M E C E O L C P R S N A K, L E M L L M H A S E H I L Y H I C H V G, A B R H M S B R V M I I S D S I L T I A, N B R L I A L O I I I S L O E M L P S R, I I K P R J N X Y D S T O D N R I D N Y, E E A U D I Z I U D G D H N S C F T S C, G D A V I D W E A T H E R F O R D Q H O, O V R A L P H E T H R I D G E U F T E P, U O R A C H E L R E N F R O W M X P N E, G R T N G V E S T E V E R E N F R O W L, A A S G J U L S W E A T H E R F O R D A, R K Q T Y F G K A L L E N D V O R A K N, S E R M E R I C G O U G A R X P Z K R D, U Q I P R J I M B O Y D T O Z S I K O I, Z M C V I C K I C O P E L A N D U I F N

The Sermon Notes Feature will return next week.

**“Circumstances don’t determine character – they reveal it.”**

-- Unknown

**“The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.”**

-- Eric Hoffer

we hold dear. Marriage is a partnership and both partners need to be playing by the same “rules” in the game of life.

We are aware that some people are baptized, but they are not really committed to following God’s will in all areas of their lives. They are Christians “in name only.” Like the Corinthians, they are carnal, with their minds set on earthly things (1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Colossians 3:1-2). Such people make very poor marriage partners, abandoning the Word of God at the first sign of difficulty. Spiritually-minded people, on the other hand, are willing to seek and follow divine wisdom in the occasional difficult days of marriage. Spiritually-minded people are not hard to spot; they mind the things of the Spirit! You can see the emphasis in their lives by their interest in studying the Bible and by their prayer-life. It may seem counter-intuitive to some, but those who want to go to heaven more than anything else make the best marriage partners while here on earth.

Second, we want to marry someone who demonstrates self-control (2 Peter 1:5-9; Galatians 5:22-23). How a person expresses anger, a learned behavior, is extremely important for the success of a marriage. Does that person become angry easily (James 1:19-20)? Does that person stay angry for a long time (Ephesians 4:26)? Self-control, however, is not just keeping oneself from doing the prohibited; it is also the ability to fulfill positive responsibilities. We don’t want to marry someone whose highest priority is satisfying the current moment’s physical desire.

In the next place, we want to marry someone who is unselfish (1 Corinthians 13:5). Selfishness is manifested in countless ways and is a killer of relationships, particularly marriage. In the course of dating, it is normal to give attention to the one whom a person seeks to impress. How a person treats others who offer no advantage to one is often quite illuminating.

Fourth, we should seek to marry someone who is honest in all of his/her dealings (Ephesians 4:25, 28). From economic dealings to personal promises, one who would make a good spouse manifests personal integrity. Trust is a crucial part of the foundation of the marital relationship and a lack of integrity will destroy that foundation.

**Bible Challenge Question**  
**This man is described in Scripture as rich, a sinner and a son of Abraham. Who was he?**  
The answer to this question is on the back page.