

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

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SELECTING A COMPANION

A happy home begins with a wise choice of a marriage partner. We therefore submit the following questions as a guide for our young people as they seek out their companion for life.

1. Is this person eligible for marriage? There are those who have a right to marry according to the laws of our state, but who do not have a right to marry according to the law of God. God's authority is supreme, and the Christian must abide by His law whenever there is a conflict between His law and governmental law.

God's law is that only those who divorce a spouse because that spouse has committed fornication have a right to remarry. "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). If one's marriage partner is guilty of marital infidelity, he is permitted to put that partner away for that cause, and the one putting away the guilty is permitted to marry another. If the divorce is for *any other* cause, he is ineligible for re-marriage.

2. Is this person a Christian? Many problems can arise when a Christian is married to a non-Christian, especially when it is the wife who is the Christian. Before any young lady marries a non-Christian, she should consider the following problems which often face the Christian in a mixed marriage:

a. Problems in attending services - She should ask herself, "What will I do if my husband some Lord's day drives away in the car, leaving me with no transportation to the services?" "What will I do if my husband announces that his company is moving us to some city where no church of the Lord meets?" Many women have faced these problems.

b. Problems in giving - The young lady loves the Lord and His work, and wants to give liberally in support of it. Her husband, however, does not share her convictions. He feels that a dollar is plenty to give.

c. Problems in training children - Some have succeeded in bringing up their children to be Christians without the help of their companions. Eunice succeeded with Timothy. But the influence of a father is great, and many are the women who have not been able to overcome this influence to see their children become Christians and remain faithful.

d. Problems in overcoming the influence of one's companion - Marrying with the hope of reforming one's companion is a dangerous thing. Please stop and read that again. Often the companion is lifted to a higher standard, but seldom to the standard of a Christian. Instead, as the non-Christian's standards are raised, the Christian's standards are lowered, so that the two meet somewhere in between. The young lady should realize that the man she marries will be the greatest influence of an earthly nature on her life, and she should ask herself, "Will this man help me to go to heaven?"

e. Emotional problems - Recently a godly woman, having just received word of her husband's death in an automobile accident, cried, "Why couldn't it have been me or one of the children, for my husband was not ready to die?"

Is the reader thinking she will convert her husband after marriage? She may be able to do so, but statistics show that her chances are not very good. The risk is too great. The only safe course is for Christians to marry Christians. If deep in your heart you desire to worship and serve God, then marry someone who has the same heart (and be certain of this before you commit).

3. Does this person possess strength of character? Many boys and girls seem to want to do right, but are just too easily influenced by their associates or by the circumstances which surround them. Such weakness of character does not make for a good marriage partner. If one wants a happy home, he should choose a companion who is dependable, whose word can be trusted, who has the strength to do right, even when all around him are doing wrong.

After all, if that young man or woman lies to his parents or employer, he will someday lie to you. If he is excessively jealous and possessive during courtship, he will manifest the same weaknesses after marriage. If he is quick-tempered -- or flirty -- or a "show-off" -- or a spendthrift -- or a "tightwad" -- now, he will be after marriage. One cannot marry a moral weakling, and expect a happy home.

Yes, there will be faults and eccentricities that must be accepted and tolerated in any happy relationship between two people. But there are certain conditions that are practically intolerable, and we hope that this article will help some young person avoid such.

- Bill Hall [edited – GFS]

Don't Go Near the Lion's Den

Back during the time of the Old Testament there were many lions living in Palestine. There are numerous drawings and carvings on items that archaeologists have found showing these lions. Sometimes the lions are being hunted. Many rulers back then enjoyed hunting the lions. Sometimes the lions are shown killing and eating other animals.

The lions that lived in Palestine were the Persian lion. These are different than African lions. They have a shorter mane (the hair around their necks) and are not quite as big most of the time.

Most people think of a cave in a rock when you mention a lion's den. But many times the Persian lion lived in den within a thick brush or tree line. If you were on the outside of the brush or trees, you could not tell that a lion lived in it.

The lion could stay in this den and wait for an animal to come close. Then the lion could jump out of the den in surprise and kill the animal. The lion was able to get many meals this way. Of course, sometimes it was necessary to go looking for a meal. But if enough animals wandered by the den, the lion could eat and be full without ever having to go very far from the den.

God says that some evil people are like that. They stay in their den and wait for the unsuspecting person to come close. When the person gets too close, the evil person jumps on the chance to kill them.

Speaking about these evil people (lions) God through David said, "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net." (Psa. 10:9). The word "den" here means a thicket. And the idea about the "net" is that the lion trapped the poor person in his trap.

You must be very careful sometimes. A situation may look very innocent. You may think that something looks good. Or you may look and say that you do not see any danger in

going near. But the evil person (the lion) is just waiting for you to come too close. And when you do, the evil person will do much harm to you.

The best way to not get too close to the lion's den is to study God's Word, the Bible. God will tell you how to look for the lion and his den. And listen to your parents and other adults. They may have gotten almost too close and managed to get away before the lion could get them. Or they might have known someone who got too close and let the lion get them. So, from experience they can tell you what not to do and where not to go.

The Bible tells many true stories about individuals that got too close to the lion's den. From reading those you can learn how to avoid the lion's den. You will learn to see the little things that give the lion away.

Until next time, keep reading and studying your Bible so that you can have the wisdom of God. And if any of this is hard to understand, ask an adult to help you.

- Dudley Ross Spears

A Point from the Past:

"The simple message of the New Testament Christianity has never been as popular with the masses as the fabricated fables of the religious snake oil salesman. Men will usually prefer having their ears tickled to having their toes stepped on. King Ahab much preferred the false testimony of the four hundred phony prophets to the truth as proclaimed by Micaiah, the outcast prophet of God (1 Kings 21). John the Baptist lost his head because of his "doctrinal, issue-related" preaching. No doubt he could have taken the "motivational, positive approach to preaching," pleased Herod and his legalized mistress by so doing, and kept his head, But as B.C. Goodpasture once said, "It's better to have a head like John had and give it as he gave his than to have heads like some people and keep them." Did not Paul, that apostle of persecution, write, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ?" (Gal. 1:10) May we never become guilty of cheaply selling the truth of God for the laud and plaudits of men."

- Dalton Key, [excerpt from an article in Guardian of Truth, 01/03/1991]

- > "Eyes that look are common. Eyes that see are rare!"
- > "The purpose of prayer is not to get man's will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth!"

- > "I'm just a nobody telling anybody about somebody who can save everybody!"
 - > "The yoke of the Lord Jesus will never fit a stiff neck!"
 - > "Be humble or you'll stumble!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"From the Question Box: Reverence for God & Our Appearance!"* (Text: Psa. 89:5-8); Sunday evening: *"The Testimony of John!" #2* (Text: John 1:19-34).