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 WHOM SHALL I MARRY? | *By David F. Coffin, Jr.*


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## FOR ALL

First, know that this is one of the most important questions you will ever think about, and thus, above all, you must think biblically (Rom. 8:5; 12:1-2; Col. 3:10).

Second, be persuaded of this: it is your creation-calling, as with all children of Adam, unless exempted by God (Mat. 19:10-12), to marry and bring children into the world. (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18). This calling is not abrogated by the Fall, and is reinforced among the redeemed men and women of God. (Gen. 3:15-16, 20; Prov. 31:10-31; Mat. 19:5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 5:14) In faithfulness to Christ, you should be preparing yourself for this calling.

Third, be persuaded of this: antecedent to marriage, you have a calling from God (through His Word, Spirit & providence), to serve to the Lord, in your family, in the church, and in the world (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 4-5). In marriage you are looking for one to share with you in that calling, as well as sharing in the calling already enjoyed by your spouse.

In the choice of such a spouse, you must consider (at least) carefully, prayerfully, the following seven questions:

## FOR YOUNG WOMEN

1. Is he an heir with you of the grace of life? (1 Pet. 3:7) Is he a person of conviction in his love for God and his understanding of the basic principles of the Reformed Faith. (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; WCF 24.3)
2. Do you love him, in the sense that he brings delight to your heart, in his moral character as well as his physical appearance? (Deut. 24:5; Prov. 5:18; Prov. 31:10, 30; Song of Songs 5:10-16) Does he show evidence of loving you in return?
3. Do you find in him a companion, who completes you as a person, with whom you can work in this world in service to the Lord, e.g., compatible interests; intellectual, emotional, physical, social/cultural fitness; a faithful worker and good steward of resources (Gen. 2:15, 18, 23; Prov. 31:10-31; 1Thes. 4:11-12; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8)? Does he show evidence of finding in you the same?

## FOR YOUNG MEN

1. Is she an heir with you of the grace of life? (1 Pet. 3:7) Is she a person of conviction in her love for God and her understanding of the basic principles of the Reformed Faith. (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; WCF 24.3)
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4. Can you together fulfill the divinely appointed role relations of husband and wife?
    - a. Is he prepared to care for you as Christ cared for the church? Is he prepared to sacrifice himself for your spiritual good, and does he have the discernment to know what that is, and the courage to uphold it? (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7)
    - b. Can you honor him as your divinely appointed head? Are you prepared to submit, in the Lord, to his government with confidence that he will care for both your temporal and eternal interests? (1 Cor. 11:1-3; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-6)
  5. Do you find him physically attractive, such that you would be willing to become “one flesh” with him, to give yourself to him in sexual love (Gen. 2:24; Song of Songs 1:1, 15; 1 Cor. 7:3-4)? Does he show evidence of desire for you the same way? (Prov. 5:18-19)
  6. Does he give evidence that he will make a godly father for your children? Does he evidence the ability to discipline and nurture in the Lord, to govern your household well? (Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:6-1; 1 Tim. 3:4)
  7. Are you prepared to covenant before God and the community to spend the rest of your life with him in this calling, regardless of what providence may bring (except in the case of covenant treachery)? (Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:14-16; Mat. 19:5-6, 9; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:15; WCF 24.5-6)
4. Can you together fulfill the divinely appointed role relations of husband and wife?
    - a. Will she be able to honor you as her divinely appointed head? Is she prepared to submit, in the Lord, to your government with confidence that you will care for both her temporal and eternal interests? (1 Cor. 11:1-3; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-6)
    - b. Are you prepared to care for her as Christ cared for the church? Are you prepared to sacrifice yourself for her spiritual good, and do you have the discernment to know what that is, and the courage to uphold it? (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7)
  5. Do you find her physically attractive, such that you would be willing to become “one flesh” with her, to give yourself to her in sexual love (Gen. 2:24; Song of Songs 1:1, 15; 1 Cor. 7:3-4)? Does she show evidence of desire for you the same way? (Song 2:4-6)
  6. Does she give evidence that she will make a godly mother for your children? (1Tim. 2:15) Does she evidence the ability to teach them, by word and example, the way of life? (1Tim. 2:9-10; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15)
  7. Are you prepared to covenant before God and the community to spend the rest of your life with her in this calling, regardless of what providence may bring (except in the case of covenant treachery)? (Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:14-16; Mat. 19:5-6, 9; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:15; WCF 24.5-6)

With these questions in mind, be confident in this: if you marry, God has appointed for you a spouse, a spouse particularly fitted for you, and you for your spouse. Adam came to know of God’s provision of a suitable wife by special divine revelation. But though such revelation is not available to us in this age, God’s provision is not in principle any different than that which He made for Adam. His particular purpose is perfectly adapted to who we are, as an expression of His Fatherly care in Christ. And though His particular purpose is not specially revealed to us, He will lead us as we seek to find a spouse by attentive care to the principles of Scripture and the circumstances of His providence. Finding, we can be sure that God first sought us.