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HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT MATE

2 Corinthians Series | 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

At Calvary Chapel Living Hope, we are committed to taking Jesus home. That is applying the scripture to our lives. Each week we look for ways to do that. Now when we apply the scriptures to our lives, we do that sometimes as individual for each person. So I might make an application to the business world, but some of you aren't really in business. I might talk to students and apply it in that way, but some of you aren't students. Often I'll talk about marriage or parenting and some of you aren't in that stage of life. Yet we all can gain from God's word benefits that can apply to our own hearts and lives.

Today we're going to zero in on a specific question that is answered by our passage today. The question is, how do we find a mate? So I trust that as we look at God's word today, those of you certainly who are in that stage of life or that is an important question will find answers, but that also those of you who might not be in that stage of life will find some encouragement from God's word that will apply to you in your life.

Let's pray to that end right now. Can we?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I ask that you would speak from your word. You know I'm going to take this application and apply it to those who are searching for a mate because that is such an important subject today. I pray that you would use the thoughts that you've given me this week from your word and from my study of the scriptures that I would present them in a way that would be most appropriate and helpful for this body today. Lord, we're asking your Holy Spirit would speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In Jesus' name, amen.

I'm going to ask you to stand with me. We're going to read a passage of scripture that we're going to look at here in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. It reads this way: *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.*

As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." And "I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

You may be seated.

Scott Turansky - Calvary Chapel Living Hope

It's amazing to me how many people analyze, spend a lot of time trying to figure out what kind of car they're going to buy. They spend a lot of time analyzing and figuring out when they're going to buy a house which house to buy. They even spend a lot of time planning their vacation. But when it comes to choosing a mate, often the question rests on emotions and not on thinking. I would suggest that although passion is great, I love emotion, I think it's great, I think we can get ourselves into trouble rather quickly if we rely strictly on emotion when it comes to finding a mate.

In our passage today we're going to see that Paul looks back at the Old Testament and draws some conclusions from the Old Testament that apply to us, to him in the New Testament era as he is communicating the truth. We're going to take those same ideas and we're going to apply them to us today.

So young people, I am really grateful that you're here because if you can learn from the message that we're going to see today, it will prevent you a tremendous amount of heartache in your life. Finding someone that you're really connected with and entering into that marriage partnership can be a total blessing, a great satisfaction, and an enjoyable place to be. On the other hand, there's a lot of people who are married and very unhappy. A lot of arguments, disagreements, tension in relationships.

Now let me just suggest I don't believe everybody should be married. There are a lot of single people who wish they were married, and there are a lot of married people who wish they were single. It's better to be single and wish you were married than it is to be married and wish you were single.

A hundred percent of people who get married have high hopes for this endeavor that they're in that their relationship will continue on. But if we look at the statistics, we've got a problem. The U.S. Census Bureau gives us some statistics about marriage that there's a divorce every thirty-six seconds. That's 2,400 divorces a day; 16,800 a week. That's a lot of divorces. And then just think about the people who stay married but are unhappy. There's a lot of that kind of group too. So fifty percent of the people get divorced and you've got another twenty-five percent of people who stay in the marriage but are unhappy. Wow. That's a lot of unhappy people. And that didn't even count the people who cohabit, that is they don't even get married. They don't believe in marriage. Those people are in and out of relationships continually, often disappointed, often struggling. It's painful.

I think it's painful because the formula that people use to find a mate today is flawed. I want to talk to you about that formula because I think that formula gets people into trouble today. It's basically today built on two things – attraction and compatibility. That attraction is that woo-woo feeling you have inside and the compatibility is the points of commonness that you share. If you have a lot of points in common and you have that passion on the inside, well then we can get married because we've fallen in love.

I want to suggest today that you don't fall in love. You fall overboard, you fall in a hole, you fall in a ditch, you fall downstairs. You don't fall in love. You plan your love life. Let's talk about what that looks like, because that is the second most important decision of your life.

What I want to do is take you through a pattern that often people use. In fact there are five different levels of this attraction of commitment. If I can show you how these commitments work together, then I think it will empower you to make a decision more wisely. Often people make decisions based on the attraction. That attraction is the woo-woo-woo feeling that you have inside. You know when the hairs stand up on your arms and you feel lightheaded a little bit and you just go "oh!" You feel like singing through the...whatever. You know what I mean. It's this really exciting feeling that you have. That's attraction. There's nothing wrong with that. I'm all into attraction. I think passion is really great.

I was working with one young lady. She's sixteen years old. She came into my office with her mom and I said, "Okay, how can I help you?"

Mom said, "Well my daughter here is attracted to a boy who's not a Christian and we're concerned about that because we're Christians."

So I said, "Okay, well let me hear from the sixteen year old."

So she started talking to me. "Oh I just really like him. He understands me. He's really special. He listens to me. He just makes me feel good."

I said, "Oh okay. Well let me explain to you a little bit more about attraction so you understand what attraction is."

We have attraction on this side and since we're going to talk about relationships, let me put sex on the other side. Between attraction and sex there is a line that progresses between attraction and sex. There is actually about fifty different hash marks on that line that represent the physical things that happen between attraction and sex. You need to know, young people, physical relationships always progress. Christian or non-Christian, you need to know that physical relationships progress.

But I said, "Let's just talk about attraction for a moment because I want you to understand attraction and what it is. Do you know you'll be attracted to men even after you get married?" Oh she was surprised to know that. I said, "Yes you will. To understand this idea of attraction, you must have a grid up. That grid will help you evaluate whether that attraction is for you. If you don't have grid up in your attractions then you'll have problems in life in all kinds of other areas too. A person who's addicted to drugs, for example, doesn't have the grid up. Drugs are very attractive, so if you don't have your grid up, you can get sucked into them very quickly."

I said to her, "In your situation, you need to evaluate this a little bit more because attraction isn't going to be the thing you want to use to determine whether you want to be in a relationship with someone. That's not how you evaluate this. What you want to do is you want to ask a question. Does this person share the same core values as I do?" And this guy is not a Christian. He's not interested in a being a Christian.

Well in the midst of our dialogue, this young lady was really responsive to the Lord and she decided, “Yeah, you’re right. This isn’t the best thing,” and she ended up breaking off this relationship with him. Which was very encouraging. She made a very important kind of statement about how she valued the Lord in the midst of that.

Attraction has some benefits. We will use that, especially when we understand the rest of the whole picture. But it can’t be the basis upon which a relationship is determined today.

But this is what you’re going to see in the media. You watch a movie and you can feel the attraction happening as they develop the movie and you get excited about them falling in love. “This is so cool.” And then of course they’re in bed before the hour-and-a-half is over in the movie in the midst of their attraction.

See, I would suggest that let’s take the analogy of baking a cake. Let’s say that you saw a lot of people eating cake and you said, “I want to have some cake and I’m going to make a cake. And where’s the recipe for the cake?” Oh there’s a common recipe for cake. “Okay I want to find out more about that recipe for cake.” You start looking at the recipe and you find out that fifty percent of the time when you bake a cake using that recipe, the cake flops and you can’t eat it. Twenty-five more percent of the time it doesn’t taste good. Now would you use that recipe to make your cake? Probably not. Yet today many people use the same recipe of attraction and compatibility to find a mate and then they find themselves in trouble.

I want to tell you what the problem is with attraction as a foundation for a relationship. People change. The fact that people change means that as your relationship grows, you’re not going to be attracted to the same things. In fact the thing you may have been attracted to at first now you might be irritated by. People change. Attractions change. So we need to go to someplace else.

We could talk next about compatibility. Compatibility is these points of contact in a relationship where we both like the same thing or we have the same thing in common. We wear the same kind of style of clothes or we like skiing or we like roller coasters. We like the same kind of music, we have the same kind of enemies, whether it be teachers or parents or whatever. We have these things that draw us to in common.

So sometimes when people say, “Oh, this is great. We are on the same page. We’ll be together forever because we have these things in common.” You know what the problem is with compatibility? What do you think? People change. And so they start finding other interests and other people that like those interests. So they drift apart in their relationship and then their relationship crumbles.

The average length of time that a marriage that ends in divorce lasts in America is eight years. Eight years. And you have to imagine that some of those years are rather difficult if they’re going to end up in divorce. So there’s this issue of compatibility that somewhere along the line it didn’t work. It is not a good foundation for building a marriage relationship.

So let’s go deeper. If we could go deeper, where would we go? I would suggest that having common values, that’s great. Now we have something more in depth. So we start valuing things

like travel or education or things that are important to us. The problem with values is that people change. So as you're moving forward with your common values then what happens is you come along, you start getting more interested in health, that value becomes more important, and the other person still wants to eat at McDonald's, but you don't want to do that anymore. So where are you going to go out and eat? You know? And so the values create some significant issues in a relationship because people change in their values. It's not bad. It's just the reality that as we change, those kinds of things happen. So values, although stronger than compatibility and attraction, still isn't the strongest form for building a relationship.

So then we come to another one and that is purpose. Now purpose is pretty significant because it deals with who I am and what I'm going to do with my life. So two people who have the same purpose. That is, we're going to start a business together. That's great. Or a very common one is we're going to start a family. Because one of our values and one of our purpose statements has to do with family. We're going to start a family together. But how many people do you know the kids all grow up and the family has kind of gone out of the picture and what do they have left? So they end up getting divorced.

Purpose can allow a couple to stay together longer than compatibility and attraction, but the challenge here is the purpose that we have changes. So when the business falls apart or the family grows up, then something happens there to the core of who we are together. So we need something deeper than purpose if we're going to have a relationship that will last forever.

I would suggest that the deepest kind of relationship, the relationship that we can have that can take us further so that we can have a relationship that will last forever, it will give us the deepest, more satisfying relationship is one that's God-centered. That sounds cool, doesn't it? What does that mean though? If we say a relationship is going to be God-centered, does that mean we just have a history of growing up in Christian families? I just got to tell you, there are a lot of people who grow up in Christian families who don't live like Christians. So just thinking that you're marrying someone or getting together with someone who is a Christian because of their heritage doesn't make them the kind of person you want to marry. It's not good enough to be a Christian. You have to be a Christian that's committed to the Lord and going somewhere. God-centered.

What does that mean in a relationship? If you want to have a God-centered relationship that's going to propel you forward so that you are growing together and your relationship is growing together, then you want to be doing some things in that relationship, some activities that are drawing you together. So if you want to build a strong relationship, one that can last forever, you want to be doing some things in that relationship that are tying you both to the Lord. So you've got two people who are growing close to the Lord who are growing closer to each other and they can have a relationship that will last forever. This is really powerful.

This is where long-lasting relationships exist. You can find them, some of them here in our fellowship. People who are really committed to the Lord and they're enjoying that relationship strategically. They have discussions about spiritual things. They're praying together, sharing prayer requests, and praying for each other. They're sharing God's work in each other's lives. Here's what God's doing in my heart and in my life. They're attending church together. There's a sense of God is doing something and so in our relationship together we're sharing that. What a

great thing to do, to take a book like James in the Bible and to go through it together as a couple and talk about it and allow the Lord to speak to you. What is it saying and how is God talking to you in the midst of that? Really good stuff there.

Let's look at our passage today because Paul gives a prescription here that's very important and he's going to tie it in to even the history of the Old Testament and God's people, Israel.

So what God says in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, we'll start with the verse 14. It says – *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers*. Yoked. We don't live in an agricultural society, but Jesus did. And in that early church environment, agriculture was very prominent. So they took this illustration from agriculture when two oxen would be plowing. When two oxen would be plowing, they would want to be balanced. This is a picture of two unbalanced oxen. The problem with two unbalanced oxen is that if you're trying to plow in a straight line, there's always this tension. You're trying to pull it back on the path.

We might, in our modern thinking, think about alignment of wheels. If your wheels aren't aligned and your steering wheel is pulling you the other direction, you've got a problem. Well if you've got two oxen and they're not balanced, then you're going to continually have tension trying to get things going. It's just going to be harder to get things done. That's the point of having an unequal yoke.

So the point that Paul is making is be careful about this unequal yoke and he gives this very specific truth. He says do not be unequally yoked with a nonbeliever. You want to have two people who are sharing the same faith so that they can experience God together, and they can grow spiritually, they can have this really strong foundation. I want to tell you, if you're here today and you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that is a good reason to do it. Because you want to find a mate that's committed to the Lord so that you can have this really strong relationship together. Powerful. There are lots of reasons to become a Christian, but certainly impacting the second most important decision in your life, which is the mate that you choose to partner with is very important.

The passage in the scriptures that we're looking at right now doesn't specifically talk about marriage. It talks about partnering. Which means the application could apply to a business. You don't want to start a business with someone where you're unequally yoked. Now that doesn't mean you can't work for someone who's not saved or have unsaved employees. That's not the point. The point is if you're partnering together, you want to be careful of the partnership that you're equally yoked.

Now he goes on to ask five different questions. What I'm going to do is I put numbers in front of the questions, but I just took the scriptures right where they are. The scriptures say this.

Question #1: *For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?*

You might be saying, "Whoa. That's pretty extreme. My boyfriend or girlfriend isn't wicked." Well granted maybe they aren't wicked, unless we look at it from God's understanding of righteousness and wickedness, I would suggest that all of us have this bent toward wickedness in

our lives. God calls it sin. We have a tendency to sin. It's only by God's grace and the power of His Spirit that we have something that allows us to repel that magnetic pull toward sin. That's the Spirit of God that allows us to do that.

So I would just want to suggest that if you're trying to live righteously and the other person doesn't have the Spirit of God, then you're really wrestling with something deeper inside than you realize now, and I can come out later and cause significant problems. The five questions are similar.

What fellowship can light have with darkness?

What harmony is there between Christ and Belial (a name for Satan)?

Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

The idea there is depth of commonness between the believer and the unbeliever is really important. It's so important that if you're married here today, you want to make sure that you're emphasizing the spiritual part of your relationship in order to keep it strong. Because when you have a strong relationship together spiritually then it impacts so many different things. It will reduce the conflict in your home or at least help you manage the conflict. All relationships experience conflict. But those who are committed to the Lord have a way of approaching conflict that's different than those who don't.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14 (the next verse) it says this – *For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."* He's talking about the relational component between us and God. Because the most important decision you'll make ever is about your relationship with the Lord. If your relationship with the Lord is strong and you recognize that He's living in you as the temple and you've got this personal relationship with God, this close relationship, then other things start to fit into place and good things happen. So if we take this idea of the yoke and the idea of working together, let's go back to our chart from the inside out and look at it.

So a God-centered relationship is going to allow you to have a purpose that is bigger than just your family or business. It has something to do with living for Christ. If you're living for Christ, then you might live for Christ in your family, yes, and you might live for Christ in a business, that's fine. But if those things start to fall apart, you still have the foundation, which is God-centered that keeps you together because that's more important than any of those other things that are going on.

Then we go beyond that, of course, back to values and values are these very important things that drive us in life, but the most important value we have is that God is at the center of our lives. So even if our values start to change and we start to become different people, we are still the same when it comes to our relationship with the Lord and that gives us the strength and power in that relationship.

The same thing is true with compatibility. The difference is now they start to move rather quickly. So if there were twenty-seven points of compatibility when you first got together and

now there's only five, there's a core at the center that drives you that is most important, and that is your relationship with God. It's really powerful.

And then attraction and passion, that's great in any relationship. It kind of ebbs and flows at times, but it's really valuable in any relationship. Let's just ask a very important question here. Where does sex fit into this picture if you were going to put it somewhere? Because I think that the world makes a very significant mistake. They put sex up there in attraction and passion. I want to feel good, so...and continue on.

I just want to show you a verse that helps us understand a little bit more about sex and where it fits into the picture. I know it's a fuzzy picture, but I really liked it. Back of this girl's shirt: "True love waits." It says – *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.* Why? Because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

See, when you truly understand sex, you're going to realize it is a spiritual activity. That may be weird for some of you to start thinking about this, but you got to understand it's a spiritual activity. If you get that sex is a spiritual activity then it makes sense why sexual immorality is wrong, according to this passage, and it will help you deal with sexual purity in your life. Because if you're just dealing with it on a biological level, you're missing significant pieces that you need. Sexuality is part of your spirituality. So if you piece those two together, you get much stronger in your understanding of sexuality. Not only in marriage but in your own private life.

Let's go to the rest of the passage. Verse 17 now gives us this *therefore*. So having given you all this basis about partnership and so on, he makes a very important claim when he says – *"Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord."* The word *separate* is put boundaries around. That's what it means. A great application here because we need to put boundaries around areas of our relationships, especially as we're growing and not married yet. We're trying to put boundaries and be separate. But it's also in our personal lives, broader than just our relationships, in marriage, or getting ready to get married. The idea is that we're putting boundaries in our lives to be separate from the world. We are different than other people.

He goes on to say – *"Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." And "I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

These are quotes from the Old Testament that Paul is taking and putting in 2 Corinthians for us. Why is he doing that? Because Paul was a Pharisee. Paul knew the Bible well. Anybody who knows the Bible, especially the Old Testament, knows that there's a love relationship going on between God and Israel. That God just loves them. He calls them His children, the children of Israel. He just has this great relationship with them. He wants the best for them.

When He says, "I want the best for you," He says, "I want you not to live like the other nations around. I'm going to give you a Promised Land. But there are other nations that live in the Promised Land and you can't let your children marry them. You don't want to do that. You want to have a purity about you that draws some boundaries in your life. Don't worship their gods. Don't participate in their lifestyle. Don't even eat what they eat." There were dietary laws

because God says, “I created you special. You are going to be separate and when you are, good things are going to happen.”

So you have a choice. Yeah, you can go out and mess with your life, make mistakes, and you’ll suffer for that. The pain that happens in relationships when a person violates God’s standard is very difficult.

Moses, when he’s sending people into the Promised Land and getting ready to acknowledge he’s releasing them, because Moses is going to die and he’s kind of giving his last sermon to the people, he’s telling them about the importance of obeying the Lord. I want to read this to you because I want you to see and feel the relationship between God the Father and Israel in this area of purity and being separate.

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God. Think about this individually just in your own life that God wants for you.

You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.

The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

God gave promises to the Old Testament believers about obedience and blessing that go together. Don’t take this out of context. We are not a church that preaches prosperity gospel that everybody needs to be rich and healthy. That’s not what we’re saying. If you’ve been here the last few weeks, we’ve talked about hardship and pain that we go through as believers. We know that. But just see the power that happens that God says, “I’m creating you as my people that you

are to be separate from other people. You are to be different.” And when you think differently and you act differently, there are blessing that come with that.

I would suggest that takes place as you’re pursuing a mate. If you set yourself aside, apart for God and you allow God to do a deep work in your heart, then that is going to maximize this decision that you’re going to make.

Now if you take this idea from the Old Testament Paul is using in the New Testament and then you bring it to our time, the word in the Bible that’s used to describe what we are here is the word *church*. The Greek word is *ecclesia*, which means called out ones. We are called out to be different. Not weird. Different. Okay? We are called out to be different. We live differently. We don’t follow the same recipe that the world follows when it comes to making decisions. We follow a different recipe. God wants to do amazing things. I would just suggest that you think about what God wants to do in your life.

I know some of you are young people here. I say to young people regularly, age thirteen and fourteen is my favorite age. Why? Because if you at thirteen and fourteen years old will make decisions now to serve the Lord, you’ll build a character now necessary to be strong in life. The life skills you’ll need now at thirteen and fourteen years old, do you know how many problems you can avoid at fifteen and sixteen and seventeen and eighteen and nineteen? There are a lot of people in their later teen years who are in trouble now and it’s going to impact the rest of their lives. They’re involved in drugs, they’re involved in all kinds of things that mess with them. In this area of relationships they’re involved in having sex just whenever they feel like it because they’re not abiding by God’s principles. That’s going to damage their future marriage relationship.

I’m just telling you, there’s a way that God wants to work in our lives and He calls us to be different than the world. So if you will listen to the world, not to the... You know today if you’re attending high school it is strange if you haven’t had sex yet. You’re considered odd. Hey look. You’re going to say, “I’m waiting because I want to be successful. I’m not like everybody else. I’m going to choose to live for the Lord in my life.” This is the second most important decision you’ll ever make.

I just want to say a word to those who are looking at this and saying, “I wish I would have known that back when I was whatever and now I’m in a difficult place.” I just want to suggest that God has this tremendous ability to bring healing into our lives. God with His grace empowers us to experience His greatness in super ways. I would encourage you to develop a passion for the Lord in your life. That you would develop a high commitment and value for marriage and what God has designed marriage to be and that you determine to serve the Lord with all of your heart. In everything that you do you’re totally committed to the Lord and He will provide the blessing for you. He’ll work those things out. He’ll provide the healing for you in your own heart. Let’s stand and pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, you know that I have just this passion for young people. I see that so many mistakes are made in this one area of relationships when young people are pairing up. I just ask that you would give the folks in our church, those people who are listening to this message, have

such a commitment to you that they're willing to counter the culture, to have a revolution in their thinking about this subject, that they would understand that you want them to have successful relationships and that's why there are guidelines. You designed us, Lord, and I just pray that you would allow us to trust you for that design and to serve you wholeheartedly. Lord, I pray for those who are struggling right now with sexual purity, that you would give them the strength by your grace to recognize that this is as spiritual issue tied in with our relationship with you. Thank you, Father. We love you. We're grateful for what you've done. We thank you that you've chosen to be our Father. We accept that, receive it, and want to walk in your ways. In Jesus' name, amen.