

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

For six Sunday evenings we are giving consideration to the important matter of BUILDING A HAPPY HOME. The first night I discussed "The Friendships of Youth." In that message I pointed out that thoughtful and sensible young people prefer a dating partner with physical and mental fitness, dependability or trustworthiness, pride in personal appearance and manners, cleanliness of speech and action, pleasant disposition and a sense of humor, and considerateness of others. In the second message I discussed the subject of "Falling In Love Intelligently." I pointed out the fact that a date is successful when it is mutually enriching. I stressed the fact that if young people would only give more time and thought to whom they are to marry, there would be fewer unsuccessful marriages and fewer broken homes. I spoke at length about choosing the best wife, pointing out some of the qualifications of a good wife. The best wife for any young man will be a real lady, morally clean, the daughter of a good mother, compatible, one who has domestic habits, one who has a genuine love for children, one who is neither quarrelsome nor nagging, one who knows the worth of money and a genuine Christian.

Now let us turn our attention to a very important matter, which should be of vital interest to every young lady, and that is the selection of the right husband. What are some of the qualifications for a good husband?

I. Good Background.

Does he come from a good family? Have his parents been happy in their home life? A girl can tell a lot about what his attitude toward her would be by the attitude that his father has taken towards the boy's mother; also, by the attitude which the young man takes toward his mother and his sisters. Does he treat them with courtesy and affection? Any girl should inquire into the laws of heredity and weigh them when she is asking the question: "Will he make a good husband?" As certainly as blood counts in the animal world, which all readily agree, it is exceedingly important in the human family.

It is perilous to marry into a family that is totally different from one's own. Marked differences in the social strata of two families nearly always lead to trouble and unhappiness. One young woman complained about seeing too much of her husband's relatives, whom she did not like, and said, "I married John; I did not marry his family." But, in a sense, she did. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the wife will have much to do with her husband's family before she gets through. It is only a common-sense matter that a young woman should think of the family, training, home conditions and ideals of the young man with whom she is to live the rest of her life, and who is to be the father of her children.

II. Good Education.

Education is invaluable. It widens one's vision, teaches him to think along independent lines, brings him into touch with great personalities, broadens his sympathies, furnishes him with higher ideals, enables him to do more and better work and makes him far more useful. Education is no longer a luxury, but it is a necessity. One can get an education if he wants it. People admire an iron determination and will always help one in the way in which he is going. If he is going up, they will give him a boost; if he is going down, they will give him a kick. It will be tragic in the future for any young man who refuses to get an education. Furthermore, there is no justifiable reason why any normal young person should not get an education in the present era.

As you think of your boy friend's mental rating, ask some very definite questions. Does he have an active mental life? Does he study? Does he have mental ambition? As you consider his mental fitness, raise this question, "If his brains were made of dynamite, and they should blow up, would it even disturb his hair?"

III. Good Habits.

Learn something about him, besides what he says about himself, before you ever contemplate marriage with him, and see if he is worth having. Inquire into his habits. If he associates with decent, respectable, moral and religious people, you will have grounds to believe that he has sympathies for the beautiful, the good and the true and that, therefore, he will be interested in the better and finer things of life.

IV. Good Character.

Any young man who is not morally clean has no right to marry a pure girl. No girl can afford to ignore the fact that she will be the greater sufferer if he does not have a good character. Marriage can never be a success if either party to the contract is a moral bankrupt. There is no reason why the morality that a man demands in a woman cannot be expected equally of himself. If he is not a man of honor and morality before marriage, the chances are decidedly against his ever being.

One of the greatest delusions that afflict young women in this matter is the idea that character is a subject of indifference or, if it counts, that he will reform after marriage because of the love which he has for her whom he marries. Don't marry any man to reform him. That stunt has sent millions of women to a living hell. A man who will not be a gentleman to get a wife will never be one after he has gotten her. God and common sense unite in protesting against any girl marrying a boy to reform him. Experience corroborates the protest. Occasionally, a love-sick girl will say, "But, it will just break my heart to give him up." That may be true, but a broken heart now is far better than a broken heart, wrecked home and disappointed life later. In a very real sense character is the binding quality in human society. Consider this, Has he lived the kind of a life that will bring him to the marriage altar free from physical taint?

V. Real Manhood.

Select a husband who is more than a "ladies' man." If you select a "ladies' man," you may expect to share him with other women, who are not ladies. If you are not willing to do that, then don't marry a man of that type. One thing is sure, namely, that a marriage ceremony will never convert him. Be very careful about marrying a man whom men do not respect and admire. Choose a husband of whom you will not be ashamed and for whom you will not have to apologize.

VI. Ability And Willingness To Support A Wife And Family.

It costs money to get married, maintain a home and provide for a wife. Perhaps you have heard, "Two can live as cheaply as one." That is a statement that millions of couples have proved to be untrue. Frequently a silly couple will say, "We can live on love." Living on love is a good thing to joke about, but, as a diet for fifty years, it is very unsatisfactory.

A man should support his wife and family. Of course, it is permissible for a woman to marry a man and support him if he is not capable or industrious enough to support her. Is he afraid of or allergic to hard work? Does he have a job? Can he hold a position? Is he in that group of fellows which is constantly changing jobs, but always because,

as they say, "It is the fault of another person"? The only kind of a job some fellows want is one which pays a big salary but does not require any work at all. Perhaps they would consider a job in a hothouse picking flowers from a century plant, provided it paid a large salary.

VII. Genuine Love For You.

Pass up the kind that pages you from the curb with a motor horn. If he sits in the car and blows the horn until you run out to see him, do not contemplate marriage with him. He will demand hotel service in the home after you marry him. In other words, "Don't marry a honker."

Ask yourself the question, "Does he truly love me?" Does the feeling that he has toward you respect, honor and exalt you? If it is true love, it will. If it does not, then it is not real love. True love never degrades, never treats with disrespect, never leads one to do anything that would injure the other or lower her in the estimation and respect of other people. Be sure that he truly loves you. Your courtship is not what it should be until that question is settled beyond a peradventure of a doubt. Never stand at the altar with any man until you know that he truly loves you.

VIII. A Faithful Christian.

God's Word very plainly says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Any Christian who marries an unbeliever does so without the sanction and blessing of God. A girl cannot marry a son of the devil without having trouble with her father-in-law.

Do not permit yourself to fall in love with and court a man who does not have an abiding faith in God and a genuine love for Christ if you are a Christian. Select a young man who attends church services regularly in order to worship, please and serve the Lord and not simply to date you. Then, after your marriage, his faith in Christ, love for Him and devotion to Him will enable your husband to live his daily life in a far more kind, patient, unselfish and loving manner. The deepest appreciation, greatest admiration and highest praise of all right-thinking people is due to those wonderful Christian women who are loyal, faithful and true to Christ and their churches, even though they have had the great misfortune to marry husbands whose interest in the work of the Lord practically ceased with their marriages.

In the thousands of people whom I have known through the years, thus far I have never known of a broken home and a divorce where both the husband and the wife were faithful Christians and devoted church members. If you think you can build a happy home without doing it according to the will and word of the Lord, you are certainly mistaken and will be greatly disappointed. God's Word says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

Now, if you and your friend have filled these qualifications, you are ready to discuss the engagement.

I. Purpose of Engagement.

1. Affords opportunity for getting better acquainted, both with your future companion and inlaws.
2. Gives time to arrange some financial matters.
3. Affords opportunities for prolonged discussions of mutual interest.

4. Enables you to test sincerity of professions of affection.
5. Provides testing ground for congeniality of personalities.

II. Length of Engagement.

Rarely should the engagement be less than six months or longer than two years. However, elopement is not the solution as you should be careful where and under what circumstances you marry.

III. Problems for Engagement.

1. Money.
What will be the source and amount of your income? How will you divide and budget it? Will you tithe?
2. Religion.
Discuss your church loyalty.
3. Housing.
Where will you live?
4. Wedding date.
When should you marry? Take your time; don't rush; be sure; look before you leap. Your future happiness and that of at least one other is at stake. Think it over carefully and prayerfully. Never marry in haste to repent at leisure. Don't marry too young before you know yourself, let alone your mate. Wait until you get an education and can earn a living. Don't delay too long and become so selfish and fixed in your ways that nobody could get along with you. It is far better never to marry than to marry the wrong person. Never marry until you are sure that you love each other with a love that only death can sever.