

HOPE TO MARRY

Proactively Pursuing Marriage



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PROACTIVELY PURSUING MARRIAGE

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Adapted by Riverside Church of Christ

As Christians we can serve God in singlehood (like Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 7), but many of us will likely want to become married at some point since marriage is God's natural design for fulfilling our drive toward companionship and sexuality. While movies talk about romantic relationships in terms of destiny or fate, a Christian recognizes that ultimately God is at work in our lives and choices.

Consider the following steps toward pursuing marriage:

STEP ONE: SEEK DIRECTION WITHIN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Online social media outlets provide ample opportunities for superficial connections. But God calls us to vibrant, authentic community within our families and within the body of Christ. Even in today's world of online dating, marriage experts still consider matches made by friends, family, and churches to be among the best.

STEP TWO: MOVE BEYOND RECREATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

One of the clearest messages for singles in the Bible is the call to sexual purity (1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Ephesians 5:3 and Colossians 3:5) —not an easy feat in our sex-saturated culture. Couples who stay sexually pure not only honor God, but they avoid much of the confusion that can harm future relationships.

STEP THREE: SEEK THE RIGHT KIND OF "SOUL MATE"

A study by the National Marriage Project found that 94% of young adults believe the person they marry should be their soul mate. That pursuit leaves many looking in vain for the perfect person whom they think is specially designed to complete them. The more important "soul" mate is someone who shares your spiritual commitment to Christ.

It's also good for dating Christians to understand that perfection doesn't exist, because "all have fallen short" (Romans 3:23). Instead of seeking someone to complete us, we are called to lay down our lives for each other (1 John 3:16). This expectation makes for a much more realistic path to finding a good fit for marriage.

STEP FOUR: BE PROACTIVE IN PRAYER AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Titus 2 strongly encourages young men and women to learn from older men and women. In addition to Christian discipleship, you also can ask mentors for candid feedback about how you can improve in a variety of areas to be more prepared for marriage. Additionally, there's nothing wrong with asking mentors to keep you in mind as they become aware of other singles seeking a Godly spouse.

Some of your best opportunities to be proactive will grow out of faithful prayer. As you pray, God will shape you and open your eyes to new and unnoticed opportunities.

It's important to note that men in particular have a distinct responsibility in proactively finding a mate. Genesis 2:24 says that a man will leave his parents and unite with his wife. Proverbs 18:22 says, *He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.* Notice it doesn't say "he who stumbles over a wife" as if it is a happenstance occurrence.

STEP FIVE: DEVELOP YOUR TALENTS AND GIFTS

As a practicing Christian, you should develop your talents and challenge yourself intellectually and socially by participating in a variety of activities that stretch you beyond your comfort zone. Not only does this make you a good steward of the gifts God has given you, but it broadens your horizons and increases opportunities for social interactions.

Pray about the type of spouse you want to be and actively work toward cultivating those qualities while you trust God to bring the right person into your path.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recommended Books

Get Married: What Women Can Do to Help it Happen (by Candice Watters) explains why marriage is an honorable pursuit and shows how women can live like they are planning to marry.

A Guy's Guide to Marrying Well – Boundless.org has put together a short, practical guide for men to help them become proactive about whether, how and who to marry. (Free download at www.boundless.org/guys.)

Recommended Website

Boundless.org is a webzine for young adults. Its most popular articles are those about finding a Godly spouse and dating according to Biblical principles.