

## Asking Too Much

The Lord, through His Holy Word, has deemed that extra-marital sexual intercourse is a sin in no uncertain terms. Society is aggressively promoting the idea that sex is a casual venture. The distance between the Godly and the godless continue to grow.

An examination of ancient Jewish culture yields a far different picture of marriage and society than what is seen as common or typical today. Most people were married by the time they were twenty. Many, if not most marriages, were arranged. The most informal social interactions between unmarried couples would be considered stricter than a modern courtship. Marriage was for life. The wedding and the marriage revolved around a holy God.

In stark contrast, modern society barely acknowledges the institution of holy matrimony. Society assumes that young adults will not remain sexually pure prior to marriage. Mid to upper twenties is a typical age to enter into a marriage the first time. Parents and family are rarely consulted on the matrimonial decision. From the first “date” the couple is left entirely to their own devices. The art of courtship is all but dead. Relationships, including marriage, are disposable. The wedding is largely secular and the God that instituted marriage is rarely invited.

Christian parents, in an attempt to follow Holy Scripture, request that their children remain sexually pure until marriage. Often the request to forgo marriage is until after high school, college, and even graduate studies. In the least, Christian young adults are often asked to postpone marriage until after they establish a career. From a biological standpoint human hormones and sex drive increase and begin to peak by mid-twenties. There is ample evidence that the incidence of birth defects increase with age after the birth mother reaches her mid thirties. The church in western society asks young adults to run contrary to the world and its standards. Are we also asking Christian young adults to run contrary to God’s natural design? Is both the church and society asking too much?

Unlike society we, as Christ’s ambassadors, cannot simply give up and assume that young adults will not behave themselves. Gods’ laws are eternal and do not change due to a societal whim. It is we; it is society, which must change to tread the path the Lord lays before us. If our young adults are not prepared for marriage then the fault lies squarely with us as parents and Christian mentors.

Rectifying this situation will require some out of the box thinking. A concerted effort to train and prepare young adults for a successful marriage must begin early. Our public and private education systems should adopt a more “European” architecture, become more academically rigorous, and begin “college” level work by 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Colleges, universities, and particularly churches should launch programs that support young couples making informed, educated life choices and even marrying. American churches have done an excellent job of training young adults to say no, but the church has done little to train and prepare young adults to select a Godly mate and enter in to a lifelong marriage in a purposeful and deliberate manner.

Young adults are going to fall in love and desire to become passionate. Young love has followed this behavior pattern since mankind lived in caves. Such behavior has continued through the middle ages, the Great Depression, and is still in vogue today. To believe that the future holds some theoretically ideal time for young adults to marry and start a family is delusional. Young couples fall in love regardless of the times or circumstances in human history. The approach that secular society advocates is to disregard the economic or social times and have sex recreationally. The church's approach is to ask young adults to gird up their loins, suppress their God-given desires, and wait until some ethereal ideal time. Both approaches are wrong.

If the modern American church is to increase its relevance to young Christian adults we must begin to take a long, hard, "out-of-the-box" look at how we support and minister to young adults and developing families. We must teach, and insist on purity and holiness, while simultaneously equipping them to make informed, intelligent decisions regarding their life partnerships. Additionally, the church must initiate programs that assist in the establishment of young and developing families even if the anchor couple is what would be considered a young age by modern standards. We, as the church, must lead the way and pray society will follow.

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