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## **THE DELIGHT, DEVELOPMENT, DEVOTION AND DECISION OF DATING AND THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF SINGLES**

**by Jonathan**

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### **DELIGHT IN GOD AND DO HIS WILL**

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (PSALM 40:8).

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (PSALM 37:4).

"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them" (PSALM 145:19).

"...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (JOHN 4:34).

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Dating is an incredible activity that could lead us to find the right mate for our lives. However, the foundation of any godly male/female relationships must be based on the desire to do the will of God. Any goals short of this will almost always lead to disaster.

Unless we do not intend to get married, the most important relationship we can receive from God, other than our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, is to anticipate and await the right member of the opposite sex who will become our mate in marriage, as God opens the door.

In the meanwhile, however, we need to serve and trust God for our primary destiny in life is to allow the Holy Spirit to "...present (us) you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 CORINTHIANS 11:2) as well as to "go (us) you therefore into the highways, and as many as (we) ye shall find, bid to the marriage (supper of the Lamb)" (MATTHEW 22:9).

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHARACTER AND SPIRITUALITY**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (GALATIANS 5:22-23).

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7; NIV).

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Even though we certainly do not have to wait until we are "going steady" in order to develop the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, the opportunity and privilege of having two people of somewhat different family background and personality (though they better not be of a different faith or religion) is an excellent "testing and proving ground" to enhance the production of either the crisis or the crown of our character.

When two people grow together emotionally, mentality and spiritually (though physical and sexual intimacy should be forbidden and is reserved only for the marriage bed), there are bound to be honest disagreements from time to time. This is where commitment, love (according to 1 CORINTHIANS Chapter 13) and respect for your dating partner, with the exercise of the fruit of the Spirit, is so vital and wholesome.

### **DEDICATION AND DEVOTION TO THE LORD**

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (MATTHEW 6:33).

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (MARK 12:30-31).

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (COLOSSIANS 3:2).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (ROMANS 12:10-11).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31).

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When we are sincerely interested in a particular godly male or female, with the intention of entering into courtship and with prayerful preparation, possibly even commitment in marriage, the joy and the peace of God will "keep (our) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (COLOSSIANS 4:7). If we do not experience such characteristics, then it is almost definite that we are engaging in activities that are doubtful, questionable and unfaithful in the sight of God. And actually, anything that casts fear and a lack of faith is sin and displeases God. When we find ourselves in such a scenario and situation, then we need to stop doing what we are doing immediately, repent, change our attitudes and get right with God!

Of course, even when we conduct ourselves in a manner that glorifies and pleases God, there will be moments of anxiety and excitement, which is natural, but there will not be the guilt and condemnation as when we lack self-control and do wrong and sinned against God. We need to decline and denounce sin just as Joseph did, recognizing our own helplessness and pleading with God for divine grace and strength by saying, in essence, " ...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (GENESIS 39:9).

While dating activities may include playing basketball, jogging, hiking, cycling, dining, shopping, sight-seeing, etc., it is awesome and powerful to know that praise, prayer and thanksgiving should be the heart, root and spring of all that is being said and done (according to 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31). Of course, there must also be lots of times when we should devote entirely to prayer, worship and Bible

study. The bottom line is to allow the Holy Spirit to bring the balance, for we need to develop mentally, socially and spiritually in a mutually-compatible way.

When we consider that the person we are dating or will date is possibly someone whom we will spend the rest of our lives with, dedication and prayer, whether when we are shut in alone with God or sharing quiet times together, is serious business. Only then can the Holy Spirit strengthen the bedrock that will enable our future marriage relationship to weather any storm that may arise.

### **THE DECISION TO A LIFETIME COMMITMENT**

"...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (JOSHUA 24:15).

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (PROVERBS 18:22).

"...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (MATTHEW 19:4-6).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (EPHESIANS 5:22-25).

"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (1 CORINTHIANS 7:7-9).

"I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (ROMANS 12:1-2).

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Beyond the initial attraction and romantic element of courtship and dating, the choice and decision to enter into marriage, if intended by God, is a permanent one. When the honeymoon ambience is seemingly over, God is always our refuge and our lifelong partner is still our delight. Hence, the factors, foundations and principles of a strong and fulfilling marriage must be based on communication, communion, fellowship, friendship, intercession and partnership not only with each other, but with the covenant God as well. Of course, thank God that He created sex not only for the purpose of procreation, but for pleasure as well. Satan may pervert sex, but God wants us to know that sex within the bonds of holy matrimony is good and is for our protection. Hallelujah!

## **THE GIFT AND TALENT FOR THE SINGLE LIFE**

"But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction" (1 CORINTHIANS 7:32-35).

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It is unfortunate and unduly demanding that in this promiscuous age where the concept of "free love" is so widely portrayed over the mass media that godly singles or the never-marrieds are often perceived as "odd", "queer" and "unwanted".

However, God wants us to know that our place and position is in Him and in His Body and not in what society says do or don't do.

In fact, for those who have the "gift" of singlehood, his or her spiritual development and mission can even be further enhanced. I want to draw your attention to the knowledge that some of the greatest Biblical role models were never married. They include John the Baptist, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the Apostle Paul and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself.

Whether you are never married, widowed or divorced (especially if you have committed this decision prior to coming to know the Lord Jesus, for God hates divorce but loves the sinner), Jesus knows and understands your position and state. He identifies with you as you find comfort, solace and strength in His Presence.

You can be an active and productive member of His church as you learn to rest in Him. You may or may never have natural children of your own but you can have many spiritual children. You are a spiritual parent in the community of believers! One state of marital status is not necessarily better than the other, it is just different. Just as there are those who are single and unhappy, there are also countless others who wished that they were never married.

## **BEFORE YOU SAY "YES" TO ANY GUY OR LADY, SAY "YES" TO JESUS!**

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (PSALM 27:14).

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Realistically, for the vast majority of us, we will enter into marriage. When you do, I want to encourage you to pray that you will exercise and practise the gift and ministry of hospitality (allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read ROMANS 12:6-13, 1 CORINTHIANS Chapter 12, 1 TIMOTHY 3:2, 1 TIMOTHY 5:10, TITUS 1:8, HEBREWS 13:2, 1 PETER 4:9), if God should lead, to friends, relatives and

family members whom you know are single, for "God setteth the solitary (meaning, the single) in families..." (PSALM 68:6).

Also, remember the words of Jesus, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger (which could include "singles"), and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me ... Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (MATTHEW 25:35-40).

I pray that each and every one of you who reads this will not only have a successful career, marriage/singlehood (depending on your "gift") and ministry, but that you also have a close relationship with God.

If you do not know the God who created you who desire dating relationship or are happy being single, you can have a relationship with Jesus Christ right now. The choice is yours. If you say "yes" to Jesus, here's what you must do,

Admit the fact that you are a sinner, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (ROMANS 3:23);

Be willing to repent from disobedience and rebellion against God, " ...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (LUKE 13:3);

Believe that Jesus is your only Saviour, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (JOHN 3:16);

Confess, trust and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (ROMANS 10:9-10).

Please pray this prayer and do mean it with all of your heart:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I now recognize that I am a sinner and I am in need of salvation. I accept the sacrifice You paid for me on the cross of Calvary and I allow Your precious shed blood to cleanse me. I now surrender myself to You and invite You to be my Lord and Saviour. Please come into my heart. Take full control of my life and help me to live and serve You from this moment forward. I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen."

If you prayed this prayer in all sincerity, you are now a child of God. We encourage you to find fellowship in a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled church and obtain a copy of the Bible and that you read it diligently so that you will be the kind of Christian God wants you to be.

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