

Wise Dating for a Happy Marriage

By
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Dedicated
to the
Sacred Heart of Jesus
and the
Immaculate Heart of Mary

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INTRODUCTION

All too often, marriage preparation classes presuppose that the couples present are truly in love, have considered and discussed marriage on all its important levels, and are simply looking for some practical little hints that will make the marriage adjustment easier.

The truth of the matter, however, is that probably 90% of the couples planning marriage have only a vague idea, at best, what true love and true marriage is all about. (The divorce statistics certainly bear that out.) This is because these individuals (maybe through no fault of their own) have never been taught the basics by their parents, teachers, or anyone else. Therefore, while these preparation classes do include suggestions which are helpful in themselves, they only place a cloudy barrier between the couple and the knowledge and understanding that they really need and deserve in preparing for the vocation of marriage.

In this work, nothing is assumed. Everything from the phenomenon of physical attraction to the adjustments necessary in marriage is presented and explained in a logical sequence, in order that an understanding of one aspect is based on the understanding of the ones which preceded it. Because of this, there are three ways to read this book for edification.

One way would be to read one chapter at a time, think about it, apply it to what you honestly know about yourself or have seen in others, and then draw some kind of conclusion on the points in it before proceeding further. At the same time, reading only one chapter at a time (and drawing those conclusions) could isolate the reasoning therein and may cause a preliminary judgement on the thoughts in that chapter which might be different if seen in the context of the whole presentation.

Another way is to read it from cover to cover within a period of a few days. With this method, the continuity between the ideas expressed in each chapter is more easily noted. To get the best of both methods, one could read straight through it the first time and then go back and reread it a chapter at a time - focusing on the thoughts and ideas of that chapter. It might also be helpful to reread particular individual sentences, in order that the point being made is understood fully in the context of what preceded it.

Whatever your method, it is hoped that the ideas presented will help you look at past, present, and future personal feelings and relationships in a different light. The author does not expect anyone to totally agree with everything written. What will be agreed on (or even understood) will depend on your own background and personal experience in the area of male-female relationships. It will also depend on your philosophy concerning what you think this relationship should be in a marriage.

Because the ideas presented may well be based on a different

philosophy than the usual one encountered, it is suggested that the reader proceed with an *open mind*. Before judging or dismissing any one thought or definition, allow yourself the opportunity to check out whether the ideas presented flow in a logical progression from one to another. To accomplish this, it may be necessary to put your present opinions and existing definitions on "Hold," in order to honestly evaluate the reason, logic, and common sense that is attempted to be presented here.

The author believes it will take this same principle - placing current feelings on the side for awhile - in making an honest evaluation of someone as a suitable spouse for life. For life's biggest decision, it is necessary to put aside the rose-colored glasses of present emotions, and use the binoculars of reason to see into the far future the possible ramifications of what those decisions could be. In fact, this should be the *ONLY* way to make true evaluations and far-reaching decisions.

This author is more concerned for your long-term happiness than short-term happiness. If it was a choice (and it very well might be) between a few years of happiness and then a *lifetime of unhappiness*, or a few years of less happiness (even unhappiness) and then a *lifetime of happiness*, the second is a much wiser choice.

Another way this book could be used is for parents and teenagers to each read a chapter and then discuss it together. Often there is little communication of any kind between parents and teenagers about anything. Not only would this help open up lines of communication in this important area, but also other areas as well.

For any ideas and principles in this book to be discussed with someone else, it is necessary that both persons have read to have the same background information. Otherwise, opinions or conclusions reached by one may not make sense to the other. It would be like isolating one step in a complicated mathematics formula and asking someone to evaluate it on its own. It is also extremely important for both persons in a discussion to be using the same definitions of terms involved. This book has some very specific definitions of certain words, definitions which are different from what is commonly accepted. Whether anyone agrees with these definitions is one matter; whether the same definition is used by both parties in a discussion is another.

And, of course, everyone is allowed their own opinions and conclusions. This book was not written to go along with the modern (but wrong) ideas about love and marriage that are popular today. That is the problem - as evidenced by the number of broken homes and unhappy families.

This book offers a solution to these problems. It is meant to be a starting point for thoughts and discussions and living. Many people can validly say that their life is "messed up" because no one tried to help them make the right kinds of decisions. No one was there to warn them about making a mistake. The usual cliché is "If I can prevent only *one* person from making a mistake, then this book will have served its purpose." This writer's intentions are more far-

reaching than that, because one bad marriage (or even an unhappy one) affects many more than simply one person. It affects a couple, their children, their relatives, their families, and even society itself. Every break-up of an individual family is another tear in the fabric of society.

Dr. Jack Dominion has said, "The welfare of societies - and nations - depends on the well-being of the individual marriage and family." Americans, of course, like to consider themselves exceptions to every rule. Unfortunately, we are finding out the hard way that they are no exception to the rule that the goodness and strength of a society is based on the goodness and strength of the families in it.

If all couples believed the general principles expounded herein, this country could again return respect and importance to the institution of marriage and to the family unit. If all married couples practiced these principles, it is possible that 90% of the problems in marriage in this country could disappear overnight.

Part of living on this earth is the making of mistakes and the learning that (hopefully) follows from having made those mistakes. No one can prevent someone else from making all mistakes in life. However, people can and should be prevented from making the one mistake, that more than any other, affects them for the rest of their life. That mistake is a bad marriage.

While this book is not necessarily meant to be the answer for repairing deteriorating marriages, the principles stated herein for guaranteeing a good marriage could, if believed and followed, be not only what saves a troubled marriage, but turns it into a happy one.

STARTING POINT

It has already been mentioned that it is important that the same definitions of terms are agreed upon and used in a discussion between two people. The same thing could be said in a person's conversation with themselves - otherwise known as any thinking which leads to a decision.

If readers are to discuss the ideas and thoughts of this book with themselves first, then they should be aware of their own definitions of terms with which they are starting. It may be "What I think and believe at the present" compared to "What I think and believe now" after reading this book. Each individual reader should be interested in whether or not there is any change - and if so, what are the changes and what will that suggest for future beliefs and actions.

APPENDIX A (Page 187) and APPENDIX B (Page 188) are questionnaires that the author suggests each reader fill out now. Writing them on a separate sheet would keep your answers more private, keep your book clean, and allow someone else to use the page as a guide for their answers. (Alternative: permission is hereby given to copy that page in order to fill it out, with a suggestion to enlarge it 35% to fill a standard sheet of typing paper.)

Answer each question in Appendixes A & B as thoroughly as possible. After finishing, place your answers from both pages in an envelope and do not look at them again until suggested further on in this book.

* * * * *

What you have done is draw your own map of what your present thoughts and opinions are on the questions presented.

What you are about to do is take a journey through male-female relationships, where you will compare the road traveled to the map you have made, and where some of the scenery may seem quite familiar.

AN OLD PROBLEM WITH NEW COMPLICATIONS

The only male and female who ever lived to adulthood and who did not have any dating problems - at least in the beginning - was Adam and Eve. They also had no problem picking a partner for marriage.

For most of their descendants, however, the onset of puberty ushers us (whether willing or unwilling) into the natural, normal, self-conscious, misunderstood, frustrating, and exciting world of choosing a mate.

In centuries gone by for most societies, marriage was an uncomplicated process. Parents were responsible for choosing their children's spouses, even arranging marriages when their children were very young. While this would certainly be rejected by everyone in this country today, it is still being done in some parts of the world at the present time. Marriages were arranged for reasons of family ties, social motives or financial motives. Often it was a combination of all three. It can be presumed that most people imagined their future spouse to be unattractive in face and in personality and were pleased to be wrong in either one - and especially in both. While romance did exist, it was not the important element in the choosing of a mate, and it certainly did not permeate or define that choice.

While there are definite disadvantages in this system, there are also several advantages - the same results as in the American system of dating today.

One advantage of the old system was the fact that marriages were arranged between people of the same heritage. This included the same nationality, the same religion, the same social background and the same education. This meant that they both probably had very similar philosophies about life and about the expectations of marriage. In those times and in those cultures, the separate roles of a husband and wife were clearly defined, well understood, and readily accepted.

Today we live in a fragmented society. The person next door may have a completely different background, resulting in a completely different set of values on everything. Even when parental backgrounds are similar, the children of two families may have nothing whatsoever in common, thanks to the combination of thousands of different influences in society that have possible effects on the children. Society's worship of the "individual" also contributes to children moving in different directions from their parents. All of this has combined to cause a complete change in the concept and practice of dating - with "good results" being highly questionable. America was the forerunner and is still the leader in this modern style of dating. This is a result of our being the most homogeneous country in the world and also our overemphasis on the individual being the final arbitrator on all matters.

The biggest and most important difference between the old and

new schools of dating, however, is the value placed upon emotion - not just as the only prerequisite for marriage, but also the only reason for continuing in it. Love has changed in its essence to mean nothing more than "feelings." It seldom seems to involve anything on a higher level.

This change of attitude, which has been proven by application, was probably first showcased in romance novels. The origin and popularity of relationships being only based on feelings go back to Fairy Tales such as Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. At least in those days it was more obvious to those concerned that they were just that: Fairy Tales.

The invention of the motion picture, however, was probably the turning point in the mutation of the meaning of Love. In reading about romance, the imagination is used, but the motion picture added the powerful senses of sight and sound. These add a kind of tangibility to the imagination. Not only does this heighten the feelings evoked, but also makes the imagery much longer lasting - not only for the present but also for the future.

Another element added by the theater was the susceptibility to crowd psychology. In reading, one's feelings are activated by one's own thoughts. In a theater filled with people, however, it is the natural tendency to accept the crowd's emotions and actions as your own.

This was evidenced in the silent movie days of the 1920's, when a woman swooning and fainting over Rudolf Valentino's presence on the screen could cause a chain reaction all over the theater. His movies shown today bring more laughs than swooning. This same crowd psychology was used in the 1950's with teenage girls being paid to scream at the arrival of a totally unknown rock and roll singer. Shortly afterward, teenagers all over the country were doing the same thing without the slightest idea that they were reacting simply in imitation of their peers - and only because their peers had done it first.

An obvious example in the 1990's is the reaction of pre-teens in the live audience of a television show, who clap and scream at every entrance of a "teen idol." They also giggle and "ooh" and "ah" at every kiss. The only difference between now and the 1920's is that the modern effect is on a younger audience.

If the motion picture was the turning point in the changing of the meaning of Love, then television was the point of no return. From novels to television, there have been several noticeable effects: the changing from being an active participant in reading to a passive participant by simply sitting in front of the set; the changing from an occasional influence of two hours a week at a movie to six hours a day with the TV; and the changing from being influenced as an adult to being influenced throughout life starting as a toddler.

Added to these influences is the catalyst that makes long-term commitment and self-sacrifice (necessary ingredients in a good marriage) not only difficult, but almost impossible. That catalyst is the present day, fully-inflated mentality that "I am the center of my universe, and the only thing that is important in the whole world is

what I want, what I need, and what I think makes me happy at the present moment."

Besides the lack of wisdom that happiness never comes from self-centeredness, this kind of person can never learn any other wisdom that has been learned throughout the ages. There is an adage from George Santayana, "Those who refuse to learn from the mistakes of the past are condemned to repeat them." Unfortunately, even the ones who claim to want to learn from mistakes are only willing to learn from their own mistakes. If each generation only picked up 1% of wisdom from the preceding generation, and this was added to the wisdom that had been collected from all previous generations, the human race would have been at a level of 99% wisdom a long time ago.

It is often said that "Experience is the best teacher," but that is only true if it is someone else's experience. Every generation should not have to learn on its own that falling from the top of a 100-foot tree causes pain and damage to the human body. If each generation had the purpose of teaching the next generation what it had learned (usually the hard way) and that next generation had the humility to accept, believe, and act upon that knowledge, then those same mistakes would not have to be continually made by individuals, families, or even societies.

Unfortunately, not only has knowledge, wisdom, and understanding not been handed down (or picked up) there also seems to be an absence of good old-fashioned common sense at the present time. This is related to the others, as common sense has to have a background of useful information in order to be used and applied.

The purpose of this book is to try to add at least 1% each of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and common sense to an individual's practice of dating, so that their first selection of a marriage partner will also not be considered "practice."

The purpose of this volume is to teach. If the attitude of the reader is to learn, then that goal has a chance to be realized.

DEFINITIONS

In order for readers to understand the principles that will be formulated, it is necessary to have an understanding of the definitions of the terms that will be used in making those formulations.

These definitions, and the ones to follow, are not ones that have been written in granite somewhere and were discovered in archeological diggings. They are simply the definitions that will be used here in trying to explain what feelings and thinking and actions are operating in the different levels of relationships between males and females. It is for the purpose of helping individuals understand themselves better and more honestly evaluate their personal feelings and relationships for what they actually are.

A good many of the problems, troubles, and misunderstandings between males and females finds their root cause in a lack of understanding of the differences between "like" and "love." While they are not mutually exclusive, they are also not just two different degrees of the same thing.

To understand them, it is first necessary to categorize all the feelings and relationships that are possible between members of the opposite sex in a "Positive Relationship." That categorization will include the following:

- Physical Attraction
- Infatuation (or Crush)
- Puppy Love
- Like
- In Like
- Love
- In Love
- Married Love

Since the word "love" is used indiscriminately for every category in both positive and negative relationships, it is important to give a usable definition of each of these terms.

PHYSICAL ATTRACTION - is the first and simplest to experience and therefore to recognize and understand. It is also sometimes the hardest to define. Certain aspects of physical beauty are obvious. For a woman, it means her face, hair, and figure. For a man, it is presumed to mean "tall, dark, and handsome." This writer will concentrate on female beauty since that is where his lifelong interest and expertise lies, and also because physical attraction is more important to a man than it is to a woman. That natural fact cannot be changed even though recent attempts have been made to encourage females to have a greater interest and place a greater importance in the physical attractiveness of males. The difference is still evidenced by the percentage of advertising for men based on sex appeal versus that of women, and the ten times greater number of girlie magazines for men than the opposite for women.

To women's credit - at least in the past - their choice of a mate

has been made on more than such a shallow basis as physical attractiveness. It must be noted, however, that the present popular mode of some women of seeming to choose a man by the kind and color of sports car he drives, necessarily fits into the "very shallow" category.

All men will basically agree on the difference between a really attractive woman and a really unattractive one. What is difficult to do is for an individual man to pinpoint what makes one beautiful woman more attractive to him than another beautiful woman. The whole idea of a Beauty Contest is somewhat of a contradiction in terms. If a beauty contest had twenty contestants and twenty judges, there would probably be twenty different winners picked. In addition, each judge would rate all twenty differently in order of attractiveness to him.

Physical Attraction is simply a kind of magnetism based simply on appearance - an appeal to the sense of sight. It is solely an attraction to the outside physical characteristics of a person of the opposite sex. While it is certainly not the most important quality of a person, it *is* usually the first one noticed.

It is not only possible (but highly likely) to be physically attracted to someone you have never met and in fact have only seen from a distance and maybe just for a few seconds. You can even be attracted to someone from just looking at their picture. In fact, you can even be attracted to a drawing or painting of a fictional person.

Evidence of Physical Attraction by males is characterized in incessant staring and occasional drooling. In females it is often shown by a sigh and a "Oh, he's so fine."

With INFATUATION, sometimes called a "crush," there is an attraction to outside social attributes. These include popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, money, clothes, car, dancing skill, important job, social contacts, and outgoing personality. We can be easily attracted to a person with many (or even one) of these traits, because it often appeals to us in an area in which we are lacking or even envious. Being poor can make someone rich seem attractive. Being shy we may be drawn to someone popular, which allows us a feeling of importance when with this person. These inner needs reflected in "crushes" are usually subconscious, and because of that can rarely be honestly evaluated. It is common to be infatuated with someone that you are only acquainted with (whether in person or even in movies or on television) and about whom you actually know very little.

With females, it is evidenced in teenage years by thoughts like, "I will die if I do not get a date with him" or "He touched my cheek. I will never wash it again." Another common indication for females this age is writing his name 1,000 times on a sheet of paper - at least twice a day. A male's Infatuation at this age can be summed up by his constant daydreaming of being on a desert island with the object of his intended affections. It is especially easy for a male to be infatuated with any female that he perceives as "sexy." For both males and females, Infatuation most often includes Physical

Attraction.

PUPPY LOVE is a very unique experience in this life, and because of its elements, can ordinarily happen only once. That is because it is the first two-way relationship of any kind - and you can have only one "first" in anything. Physical Attraction and Infatuation are both one-way, but Puppy Love is a case of infatuation being two-way.

There are six big transitional points in a person's life in relationship with the opposite sex. The beginning of Puppy Love is the first. (Before this, the opposite sex merely co-exists on the same planet.) Puppy Love causes a whole new outlook on life, and to that point, it is the greatest feeling one has ever experienced. It causes a new awareness of flowers, clouds, birds, stars and everything else in nature. To be in this state is obvious to everyone else in the world because of the twinkle in the eyes, constant ear-to-ear smile, and perpetual good mood. You are in love with the idea of "love" and the word "love" itself.

For a boy, it is characterized by a sudden urge to be neat for probably the first time in his life. If he is of driving age, he would never think of going to see her unless the car is spotless both inside and out. A block from her house, he stops the car and wipes the dust off the hood that accumulated on the drive over. There is a change from being a walking, eating machine to having a loss of appetite - made easier by the fact that he uses less energy when walking on air.

For a girl, it could be the transition between tom-boy and a young lady. She loses her interest in competing with boys on their level, and maybe for the first time really likes being a girl. She may change from pants to dresses in order to be more feminine. She stays indoors more, if only because the telephone cord is only so long. She looks forward to talking to him on the phone for four hours, after they have just spent six hours together talking in person.

Their physical intimacy is limited to holding hands (until they are clammy), short hugs, and maybe even simple kisses. Life has never been so happy - regardless of what age you first are in Puppy Love. You daydream about marrying the other person because at that moment you cannot even imagine having those feelings for any other person, and you automatically assume that they will always have the same feelings for you. You are totally insensitive to possible pain. You were certainly "meant for each other." You will feel this way "forever and ever and ever."

There are two reasons why this relationship is called Puppy Love. The first is that it does have some of the elements of true Love. There is a true unselfish concern for the happiness of the other person, even though it is on the simplest level. Unselfishness comes easy because you are always trying to please the other person. Romance is thoughtfulness, and Puppy Love has pure romance. In fact, one of the necessary ingredients of Puppy Love is that it is a time of innocence, which it could not be if it were not a pure relationship in the physical realm as well as the mental.

It is called "puppy" love because there is a similarity in how we

feel about puppies. They are cute, playful, and friendly. They are totally "loveable" because they are never any trouble or cause any serious problems as adult dogs often do. Even people who do not like dogs still like puppies, which is rather a shallow or surface liking of dogs.

Puppy Love is a shallow or surface type of love. This is certainly not a criticism of it by any means, but only an honest recognition of what it is. In Puppy Love, the knowledge of the other person is not very deep, because all conversation is usually on the initial learning of each other's interests or the trivial happenings in their daily lives. It is not only all that is necessary, but all that it could be. Even if one knew what important questions to ask, the other person would not know how to answer. In this relationship, those questions and answers are not important.

Puppy Love usually happens only once in a lifetime, because the time of total innocence is usually very short. The end of the first Puppy Love is the second transitional stage, and it comes when you find out that the other person does not feel the same about you any more. It is one of the most crushing blows life has to offer. Your high in the sky idealistic illusions have just come crashing down to earth. You can go from the heights of elation to the depths of depression in a matter of a few seconds. Your dreams have become nightmares. Just as you imagined that you would always have those great feelings, now you think that you will never be happy again. To be Physically Attracted to (or Infatuated with) someone who does not feel the same thing is not as bad because being only one-way, it still allows you to imagine having your feelings returned. The end of Puppy Love does not allow that possibility. It is difficult to accept - and almost impossible to understand - because you still feel the same way about the other person. While the beginning of Puppy Love brought about a good feeling of self-worth, the end of Puppy Love almost always takes it away completely.

Other physical attractions and infatuations allow you to day-dream again, but are not a cure for a "broken heart." You only start healing at the beginning of another two-way relationship, but the next one cannot be Puppy Love.

The difference is that now you have been hurt, and instead of totally giving mentally, you hold back a little. Your optimism has been brought down several notches by some realism and can even contain a touch of pessimism. You tell yourself that the next one will not last, in order to try to protect yourself from being hurt again. Unfortunately, this thinking sometimes continues throughout life, including in marriages.

The next category is LIKE, which can be one-way or two-way. Like is different from Puppy Love in that it is the first feeling for someone else that includes some actual reason in it and is not all emotion. When you Like someone, you are attracted to the qualities that are easy to see in the other person, such as: friendly, affectionate, sense of humor, good conversationalist, common sense, kindness, fun-loving, manners, and having common interests. In the Like stage,

you really enjoy being with the other person. In Physical Attraction and Infatuation, you may only imagine enjoying their company.

You have to know at least some of what a person's true characteristics are in order to Like them. While the first three categories are all emotion, Like is about three-fourths emotion and one-fourth reason. Whether you spend a lot of time together in a short period of time or a little time together over a long period of time, you will eventually find out things about the other person that you do not admire, or little things that simply bother you to an extent. The one-fourth reason involved is this knowledge itself and the acceptance of that knowledge. In this stage, however, those things are usually shoved in the background, and you either convince yourself that they are not important or that the other person will change for you or be changed by you. The other person also finds out these kinds of things about you and does the exact same thing with the information.

Later, in discussing marriage, we will see that this rarely (if ever) happens. It is evidence, however, that there are always bits of idealism in every relationship, whether one-way or two-way - and whether short-term or long-term.

Still, however, to truly Like someone you must accept a little of the bad with the good, and that is the first time that this happens. If Puppy Love lasts more than a short period of time, it must necessarily go into this stage of Like. There is at least some effort involved in Like, because you recognize that the other person is not perfect.

Since Like can be one-way or two-way, then we will use the word "Like" for one-way and a separate term for two-way. Since IN LOVE will be used for two-way love, IN LIKE will be used for two-way Like. It is also a separate category, because where Like is three-fourths emotion and one-fourth reason, In Like is one-half emotion and one-half reason. That change is due to the fact there may be little or no interaction in Like, but In Like requires it. There is a conscious decision on both parties to be In Like, so there are some necessary adjustments and small compromises. In Like is the first stage in which there can be an argument, usually because the natural tendency of our human nature causes each one to always want the other person to make any of the necessary adjustments and compromises in the relationship.

In Like can also be the first stage in which you really are disappointed in someone of the opposite sex, because you find out one or more things about the other person that you really do not like or respect. You could be disappointed with someone in the Physical Attraction or Infatuation stage, but since both are based purely on emotion, it may not really change anything. For instance, if you are Physically Attracted to someone and you see that person treat someone mean, or kick a dog, or curse someone out, you might really be turned off to that person's actions, but the Physical Attraction remains. It just may be that there is no longer a possibility for it to move past that stage. If you are Infatuated with someone because of their money, it may not change because of finding out that the person

is stingy with it.

There ordinarily is not this kind of disappointment in Puppy Love, due to several factors. First of all, Puppy Love usually happens at a younger age before some undesirable character traits are even acquired. Sometimes it is because those traits are not yet shown on the outside. It is also due to the short time frame of Puppy Love. The latter allows these traits to be hidden, not be recognized, or subconsciously ignored. A disappointment in Puppy Love, however, could possibly keep the relationship from going into the In Like stage. At the same time, a disappointment there could even be a kind of proof that it had moved to the In Like stage - if the relationship continued after the initial disappointment.

Again, these categories include both some generalities and some specifics, and all feelings and relationships may well include some aspects of more than one category. Still, there is always one category that will be the most dominant at any one time in any one relationship. Being In Like is definitely a step forward, and the third transitional stage of relationships.

LOVE

Ah, L-O-V-E. It is certainly the most misused and misunderstood word in the English language, as well as probably every other language in the world. Since Love (or the absence of it) is the basis for all relationships that can exist, it is necessary to first understand what Love is and what it is not. Only then can it be recognized, and only then can it be applied.

The first misconception about Love is that it is only an attribute of "feelings," that if you feel strongly about someone or something, then it must be love of some kind. Having Love equated with an emotional response makes it a very appealing word to those same emotions. As a result, the more we use it, the more we want to use it; and the more we use it for everything, the further we move away from its true meaning. It is a vicious self-perpetuating circle that some people stay in for a lifetime. Never understanding the true meaning, they can never express that true meaning either in words or actions, and therefore can doom themselves to a truly Loveless life.

The misconception about Love starts in childhood, when the word is used as extension of Like. If you "like" someone or something a whole lot, then it must be "love." Most often, there is a double misconception here, as the word "like" is also being used as a generic term, and not in its highest sense. While there is no harm in a 5th grade boy saying that he "likes" a 5th grade girl, (when it is simply Physical Attraction or Infatuation) the harm would start if he liked her more the next year, and thought, therefore, that it had changed to "love" over the summer.

As children get older, the teaching of any subject to them should be more specific, in order that their understanding - and application of that understanding - increases with their age. Otherwise, we have the case of teenagers thinking that they are ready for marriage because they have been "in love" for several years. We shall see how their misconception of marriage (and corresponding failure in it) is due primarily to their fundamental misunderstanding of what Love is.

All of the categories previously discussed - Physical Attraction, Infatuation, Puppy Love, and Like - are all wrongly called Love. While there is certainly some Physical Attraction, Puppy Love and Like included in human Love, all of them together do not equal the main ingredient.

That ingredient, or actually that dimension, that is necessary to truly Love another, is the spiritual element. The other categories cover the physical and the mental and combinations of each, but Love is the only category which must necessarily include the spiritual. True human Love has both a spiritual meaning and a human meaning, and the human meaning must not only be connected to the spiritual meaning, but actually must be preceded by it.

While not wanting to get into the depths of theology, it is necessary to discuss some theological principles in order to give basis

for this contention. It is necessary to give my source for this definition of Love. The Holy Bible will be used as this source, with its wisdom and truth having been passed down to us over thousands of years. Even for those who do not consider it the inspired Word of God, its definition of Love should still be considered more valid and reliable than the definition that has been advertised over the last 70 years or so by the movie, record, and television industries.

The entertainment industry may not have been the inventor of love being only an emotion, but they certainly have been the greatest promoters of that falsity. The unfortunate results of society's acceptance of that myth is the basis for probably up to 90% of the problems in all male-female relationships today. (The other 10% is the innate differences between the sexes - mentally, physically, and emotionally - which is built into the system.)

A few quotes from the Bible will be given to show the basis of Love as being primarily a spiritual attribute. St. John the Apostle, who wrote about Love probably more than any other Biblical writer says,

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him". (1 John 4:16)

St. Jude also quotes,

"As the father has loved me, I also have loved you." (John 15:9)

All Love originates with God. Therefore, the highest Love that can exist is the Love from God to His created human beings. The second highest is that of human beings for God, our Creator. The third highest is the Love of one human being for another. For the third highest to exist, however, it must be based on a correlation between the first two. One cannot Love another person more than God - or without Loving God - because the most "Loveable" human being reflects only a percentage of the goodness which characterizes God.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

(John 15:12)

"If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

(1 John 4: 12)

Now let us examine the essence of these three kinds of Love. The everlasting desire of God's Love for us (the end product of it) is that we share perfect happiness with Him in Heaven for all eternity.

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish but may have life everlasting."

(John 3:16)

Christ's dying on the cross opened the gates of Heaven and made it possible for us to attain Paradise forever. Whether we understand it or not (and we usually do not), God's relationship to us always has this as the highest goal. (The application of this is the three answers to prayer: "Yes," "No," and "Not Yet.")

God's Love for us is perfect since He is a perfect Being. Since humans are imperfect beings, our Love for God at best is imperfect. This means that we cannot desire Heaven for ourselves as much as God desires it for us.

Our love of God becomes more perfect the more we Love God for what He is - Our Creator and the Supreme Being of Goodness. (The perfect application of this would be pure adoration of God.) Our Love of God becomes less imperfect the more we simply desire Heaven for our own benefit. (The application of this is the keeping of the Commandments, and the necessary charity displayed towards others.) The more we Love God, the more these applications become the focal point in our lives.

For both of the above kinds of Love to be fully accomplished, the Love must come from God - and go back to God. For human love of one person for another to be truly Love, that Love must also fit in the above equation - *not outside of it*. Otherwise that is a love without a spiritual dimension, which is then not a true Love.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God." (1 John 4:7)

"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole Soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it. Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself."

(Matthew 22:37-39)

Without the spiritual element, what one person "feels" for another can again be Physical Attraction, Infatuation, Like (and, of course, Lust), but it cannot be true Love.

Loving someone's immortal Soul is the most unselfish Love we can have for another person, because it is the most unselfish Love we can have for ourselves. If your own self-Love is tied in with your Soul, then getting your Soul to Heaven becomes your primary goal in life rather than attaining riches, fame, power, or uncontrolled

satisfaction of the sexual drive. You can only truly Love yourself if you care more about the immortality of your Soul than the passing needs and desires of your body and mind. (The common expression, "He loves himself" really only means Physical Attraction if it is tied in with vanity, and it only means Infatuation if it is tied in with pride.)

Since we are to "Love thy neighbor as thyself," we must also have that as our highest goal in our relationship with others, whether it is a personal relationship or not. This is why Christ used the word "neighbor." It does not just mean the people who live in houses on your residential block. It means "every other person on the planet Earth."

It is very important that Christ did not say "friends" - or "relatives" - or even "spouse." The point is that the Commandment to Love is not based on positive feelings or emotions for other people. Otherwise, how could we possibly Love our enemies?

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. (1 John 4:20)

*"But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you, so that you may be children of your father in Heaven."
(Matthew 5:44-45)*

To accomplish this, you must have the desire - and must prove it in action - that you hope that every "neighbor" goes to Heaven as much as you hope to go to Heaven yourself. This includes all five possible categories of people:

- 1) those who know you and feel positive towards you,
- 2) those who know you and feel negative towards you,
- 3) those who do not know you and feel positive towards you,
- 4) those who do not know you and feel negative towards you,
- 5) those who do not know you exist, and could care less one way or the other.

Particular examples of people as they fit in the above categories:

- 1) friends and relatives,
- 2) enemies and relatives (those you are supposed to have wronged either through actuality or imagination) and who have not forgiven you (or vice versa),
- 3) people who are impressed by what you are or what you give an

- indication of being - or what you have accomplished or seem to have accomplished,
- 4) those who are jealous of what you have, and
 - 5) people you have never met and have never heard about you.

It is obvious that you have very different feelings about the people in each group, and also within each group. For the possibility to "Love thy neighbor as thyself" to exist within you, it cannot be based on your feelings for that neighbor. Again, the essence of Love must be based on something higher - or it does not fulfill the true definition of Love.

For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? (Matthew 5:46)

In other words, it is easy to have positive feelings for those who have positive feelings towards you. It is also easy to have positive intentions (the desire for them to go to Heaven) for those who are nice to you.

To desire everyone to go to Heaven is the origin of the philosophy of "Love the sinner but hate the sin." This is even possible in wartime. While you may wish - and even directly cause - the death of the body of another person who is out to kill you or someone else unjustly, you are still to hope through the mercy of God that somehow the immortal Soul of that person ends up in Heaven. To have that intention is certainly not based on positive feelings for that person.

This is why Christ said "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and not "Like thy neighbor as thyself." Like means positive feelings, which we are not required to have for anyone. Later, we shall discuss how marriage partners do not stop Loving in times of not Liking each other, just as parents do not stop Loving their children in times of not Liking them, and we do not stop Loving ourselves even when we do not Like ourselves.

While discussing the spiritual essence of Love, we should define the spiritual essence of non-Love - which is hate. To truly hate someone would be to truly mean that you wish that person would go to Hell for all eternity. That would obviously be the opposite of "Love thy neighbor." Hating someone (friend or enemy) would be a very grievous sin. Just as the word Love is misused, so is the word hate. It has come to mean strong negative emotions and is used instead of "intense dislike" - which we are allowed to feel. While it is (hopefully) very seldom for a person to actually mean "Go to Hell" when it is expressed, it still should never be said or thought.

While Love is reduced in meaning when it is defined only by feelings for a person, it is reduced even further when it is also defined by emotions for "things" - even other living things. That is why you hear people saying: "I love clouds," or "I love pizza," or "I love my

car," or "I love walking barefoot in the mud," or a thousand other things like that. It is a constant cheapening of the word Love. By using the word thus, you not only cause a loss of the true meaning of Love to other people, but more importantly - to yourself.

When and if the day ever comes that you ever truly Love someone else, it will be somewhat frustrating because you will not be able to express it into words. You will have spent too many years using it for clouds and pizza and cars and walking barefoot in the mud. There is no higher word than Love, so if you use it for anything and everything lower, you will not have any word that was reserved for what you respect and admire and think and intend and feel for another person on the highest level.

This is why people should also not even say they "love" animals. We can certainly become very attached to animals, especially when we have them for many years and have raised them since they were very young. While these two circumstances are similar to the same ones as with children, it would be lowering the meaning of concern, care, and feelings for children by having it on the same level as that for dogs, cats, horses, whales, or butterflies.

While discussing feelings for animals, it is interesting to note that the two main qualities of a dog that make him "man's best friend" are two of the qualities that we can truly Love in another person: faithfulness and forgiveness. The reason one cannot really Love those qualities in a dog is because for them it is a matter of instinct. It is not a matter of choosing by free will to have that quality and to work at developing that quality to the highest degree.

In the future, we should avoid using the word "love," when we simply mean a form of the word "like." This is the word that simply means a fondness for, and interest in, or an attraction for. (This is not an attempt, however, to try to get anyone to start saying "I am physically attracted to a tall mountain," or "I am infatuated with the sport of fishing.") Using the word "Like" indiscriminately does not have the short or long-term effects of using the word "Love" in the wrong context.

To return to human love, the bottom line is this: If you do not care about the immortal Soul of another person - if you do not care first and foremost whether that person goes to Heaven or Hell for all eternity - then you do not Love that person. Period.

Repeat: If you do not care about the immortal Soul of another person - if you do not care first and foremost whether that person goes to Heaven or Hell for all eternity - then you do not love that person. Period.

That was repeated twice because the world says just the opposite to you a thousand times a day, every day, in a thousand different ways. You may want to start listening closer to how people (in person, or on TV, or in movies, or in reading material) use the word "love" indiscriminately. You will hear it mean *lust* more often than any other definition, but you will rarely, if ever, find it used in reference to God or the Soul.

Now while spiritual Love is the highest Love, it certainly is not

the only ingredient in human Love. The simplest fact that we are human means that true human Love must include the body and the mind as well as the Soul - although reverse in order of importance. God also Loves all three in us in the order of Soul, mind, and body, and it is also the order in which we must Love all three in other people. When discussing marriage, the application of this will be evident.

There is an old saying that "Whenever you learn a new fact of knowledge, you forget an old one." That may be debatable, but it seems very likely that the acquisition of much *new knowledge* may lead to the forgetting of *old wisdom*. While we should be increasing in wisdom (which has much more true value than knowledge) it seems that people today have a much less understanding of Love than the people of bygone civilizations and societies. One example of that is divorce was not allowed, condoned, or approved of simply because "feelings" between a couple lessened after the honeymoon.

To return to the wisdom of the Holy Bible, it breaks Love down into three categories: brotherly love (the spiritual), family love (the mental) and sexual love (the physical). Human love between a man and a woman should be an increased consideration and heightened awareness of each of these. The spiritual and the mental are not supposed to be lost or ignored in favor of the drive for the satisfaction of the physical.

Let us assume now, that one has the right spiritual philosophy towards all people. How is that philosophy applied towards those of the opposite sex that you are attracted to or interested in?

Either attraction or interest can come first. You can be attracted to someone and therefore are interested in learning more about that person, or you can become interested in a person by being in close proximity, and then start being attracted to that person. The initial attraction, therefore, can be either physical or mental. The mental attraction would actually be a better beginning, as physical beauty could blind you to the absence of a person's good qualities, or a lack of physical beauty could blind you to the presence of them.

In both cases, you must learn about a person before even having Like - much less Love. This cancels out two common expressions, "Love at first sight," and "Falling in love." It should be obvious by now that "Love at first sight" is an impossibility and is only Physical Attraction. "Falling in love" sounds as if Love comes naturally and easily, and is just a matter of letting a kind of emotional gravity take over your feelings. "Falling in Love" is just a matter of Puppy Love, mutual Infatuation, or In Like at best.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find a television show or a movie in which the main characters are not "in love" ten minutes after they meet, or at the latest, at the end of their second date. "Falling in love" has to be fast when it must take place in the first 5 or 10 minutes in a television show or a movie. "True love" has to be easy when all differences, problems, and troubles in a relationship have to be completely settled within a period of between thirty minutes to two

hours. It is no wonder that even potentially good relationships in the real world can be ruined before they hardly start because of this incessant bombardment of false emotional propaganda.

As Like requires knowledge, Love requires much greater knowledge. Each also requires self-knowledge, and an element of self-worth. Like is a recognition of surface qualities. To be in Like, you must recognize your own surface qualities or the qualities that you wish to have and are willing to work on acquiring. If you Like someone because that person is friendly, outgoing, a good sport, and interesting to talk to, then it is because you grant yourself the same qualities, or at least wish to have them. To be able to Like someone else, you must Like yourself. You cannot give what you do not possess. You must believe in your own self-worth before you can help someone else feel their self-worth. You must perceive yourself as Likeable, not only in order to give Like to another person, but also in order to receive it. These attitudes may well be more subconscious than conscious, but they still exist in everyone.

It is possible to be Physically Attracted to someone who is conceited about their looks, because you wish you could be conceited about your own. You can be Infatuated with someone because of their money, talent, or popularity because you inwardly desire to be infatuated with yourself having them. These inner, subconscious feelings can often turn into jealousy as in, "If I had good looks, money, or talent, I would be popular too." Another form of jealousy is, "I am nothing because I do not have good looks, money, talent, or popularity." The latter is not usually recognized as a form of jealousy, but it is the other side of the same coin.

Jealousy is simply an envy of one kind or another of what another person has, because you are not satisfied with yourself. Ironically, and tragically, the envy is often of someone else's talents or shallow qualities only because the person doesn't recognize his own talents and deeper qualities.

To really Like yourself, you must first really Love yourself. You must first of all look past the flashy and transient things that the world thinks are important, to honestly see the only way in which human beings will ever be equal - and that is the immortal Soul. When Thomas Jefferson wrote that "All men are created equal." he certainly was not talking about height, weight, looks, athletic ability, intelligence, creativity, artistic ability or a thousand other things.

If you Love yourself - if you are concerned with your Soul first - and not any of these other things, then you will Like yourself for the way God made you and simply work at improving in your own areas of talents and abilities. Therefore, if you do not Love yourself, there is a good chance of your not Liking yourself, and then there is a good chance of being jealous or envious of others. If you have the right values and priorities in your own life, then it is much easier to have brotherly Love and then have Like, and then have the fullness of human Love for a person of the opposite sex.

Love also includes Charity. Charity is another greatly misused

word, and has come to simply mean the giving of money or items to the poor. Charity or "Love in Action," means much more than that.

"Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth, bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

(1

Corinthians 13:4-7)

This kind of Charity is based on reason and can only be lived and practiced if not dependent on the transitory feelings of Like. It can already be seen that these qualities of Charity are ones that would be very helpful in marriage.

Like is a learning stage, both in learning about yourself as well as learning about others. Most of what is learned is subconscious, as well as the reasons behind most of your actions at this stage. While In Like is the third transitional stage in relationships, it is the first stage of a maturing relationship. Besides the feelings present, it involves a more honest evaluation of another's personality and qualities. To Love someone involves even deeper feelings, but also must be based on a mature recognition of even higher qualities.

This is not to suggest that the qualities of Like and Love are mutually exclusive. Since the essence of all Love is spiritual reason, then human Love must also be based on reason. Because Like is mostly based on emotion, and Love is mostly based on reason, Love is much more objective in its evaluation of another person's qualities. Part of that reason-based objectivity is an honest appraisal of short-term dating qualities versus long-term marriage qualities.

Love is a nice word to say, a nice word to hear, and a nice word to feel. That is why there is such an appeal to say the word, hear it in return, and then unfortunately, sometimes allow anything and everything that seems to follow from it.

Love, however, is God's word and must be used according to his definition. While society may change the common definition of love, and how people use the word, it cannot change what Love really is in essence, and what it necessitates in action. Those who have believed the wrong definition have been rewarded with unhappiness and misery. The proof of that is the partial to complete failure of every relationship without true Love

QUALITIES OF LOVE

Some qualities of Love that are recognizable during dating are the following: kindness, honesty, thoughtfulness, self-respect, respect for others, giving, tolerance, compromise, and obedience to God's Laws. These are deeper qualities than the ones in Like, which are often summed up as "fun to be with, similar interests, and good kisser." Let us look closer at each of these qualities of Love.

Kindness is shown by how you treat everyone, not just your best friends or people you want something from.

Honesty does not mean just in financial matters. In dealing with people, honesty is like a knife in which the cutting side should be used sparingly and with much caution and tact. Living the quality of honesty sometimes means using the dull side of the knife. This means that complete honesty is neither required or beneficial when that honesty does more harm than good. It is sometimes necessary under Love (or even Like) to refrain from saying something (or telling something) which would cause more harm than good.

Thoughtfulness, or romance, is when you do some little things to please the other person to make them happy. This giving is a quality of Love when it is done without the purpose of receiving something in return. It is unselfish giving.

Self-respect is the middle road between conceit and considering yourself "no good." It is another way of saying that you Love and Like yourself.

Respects others is a way of projecting your self-respect in relating to other people. An example of the lack of these qualities is obscene language, filthy jokes, or filthy conversation which both shames the speaker and the listener.

Even-tempered means that you do not get angry because everything in life does not go perfectly. It also means that if you do get angry, you do not take it out on another person. Even-tempered often shows itself in tolerance, which is an acceptance of yourself as well as other people for not being perfect. Tolerance includes letting minor irritations pass, instead of making mountains out of molehills.

Considerate means that you take another's thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes into mind in dealing with that person. It is connected with compromise, as in not always insisting on doing things your way, or having the last word.

While all of the qualities of Love require maturity, it may be more accurate to say that maturity is only evidenced by the possession of most of these qualities. It is certain that these qualities are signs of true spiritual and mental maturity which is a more important gauge of maturity than physical size or chronological age or educational background.

Last, but certainly not least, on this list is *Obedience to God's Laws* and a desire for a better spiritual life. Without our natural

personality traits being based on this quality, even the good ones can and very often do change because of any negative element that enters the environment of the person involved. No one is naturally endowed with all of these qualities, and even the ones in which we seem to naturally possess are not always easy to practice - especially in the highest degree. Without a spiritual basis (a determined attitude to be more pleasing to God), any attempt to develop qualities we lack, or improve on qualities we have, would most likely be for a selfish reason - no matter how unselfish it may look on the surface.

A classic example of this is a person endowed with the non-qualities, or faults, of jealousy or possessiveness. Jealousy is marked by the attitude of "I want you and I do not want anyone else to have you." Possessiveness is shown by the attitude of, "I do not want you, but I do not want anyone else to have you." An example of possessiveness is a child wanting to play with a toy only to keep another child from playing with it. A small child doing this over a toy is no big deal. An adult doing this with another human being, however, is not displaying evidence of having matured beyond that level.

Both are signs of selfishness and both can be manifested by an unwillingness to allow another to have even an acquaintance with a person of the opposite sex, or sometimes even a close friendship with a person of the same sex. Neither of these negative traits can be controlled or eliminated without exchanging them for the qualities of trust and unselfishness. Without a spiritual basis as the reason for change, all attempts will most likely be short term and unproductive. The reason for that is because those attempts would simply be based on the prospect of less emotional turmoil, both within themselves and on the outside with someone else. Unfortunately, the slightest spark would set this emotional time-bomb off again.

Jealousy is often mistaken as a sign of Love. In reality, the presence of jealousy - as it is with lust - only proves that true Love does not exist. Jealousy is nothing more than a strong, emotional defect in philosophy and personality. It is a lack of spirituality, which surfaces in personality, and is demonstrated in relationships. It may seem to be a *positive* to some while dating, but will be a *negative* to all in marriage.

Using the definition of maturity as having many or most of the previously- mentioned qualities, or at least recognizing the need to improve and develop them, we could say that Love involves a mature person recognizing mature qualities in another mature person. There is no particular age in which this automatically happens. There may be some 15 year-olds who fit this definition and many 50 year-olds who do not. Age, however, is rightfully credited with more common sense, understanding and wisdom, if for no other reason than a person having lived longer to learn from their own false ideas and mistakes, as well as those of others.

Even so-called mature people who really do not know what Love is have learned (often the hard way through an unhappy marriage) that Love is not just physical attributes, mental abilities and personality

traits.

The category of In Love is simply a case of a man and a woman having true Love for each other. It is the fourth transitional stage in relationships.

Everything written so far and everything else that will be written is a philosophy of life and Love based on God's Plan for the human race. That plan involves following His Will on earth in order to have happiness here (as imperfect as it is) and more importantly, perfect happiness in Heaven for all eternity. That Plan includes obeying the Ten Commandments and living the teachings of Jesus Christ. There is no serious problem in the world that would not be cured if all people seriously tried to live this way.

Now after all this, you might think that the last category, Married Love, is always the natural last step for a man and a woman in Love. This is not always true, as shall be seen when discussing the preparation for marriage. Suffice it to say for now that it should be evident that marital Love is a union of Souls and minds in God, not just a union of bodies in bed.

CANDLE ANALOGY

Every person you meet of the opposite sex is like a candle to you. What happens with that candle is indicative of your relationship with that person.

The wick which sticks out the top is the potential emotion that can be felt for that person. The wax in the candle is the different levels of feelings that you can have for that person - Infatuation, Like, and Love. (See Appendix C - Page 189)

If you meet someone and no "sparks" fly, the candle remains unlit. If there is Physical Attraction, then the "sparks" light the exposed wick. A newly lighted candle burns very bright, because the emotion involved in Physical Attraction is highly concentrated at that moment with nothing to distract from it.

The emotion of the exposed wick, while easily lighted, also can be put out by the slightest breeze, as it does not have the protection from burning in the candle at a deeper level. This slightest breeze can range from simply a closer look, to a person opening their mouth and saying something, to a rejection when the first personal contact is made.

If the candle stays lit, however, it necessarily starts burning into the wax. The wax is the personality, philosophy, and qualities that a person has. The first level of wax is Infatuation. It is when you find out a little more about the person to which you are also initially attracted.

The kind of wax on each level determines how fast the candle burns at that level. The wax in the top part of each candle has very little beeswax in it which means that it burns rapidly, and moving from Physical Attraction to Infatuation can happen quickly. In each succeeding level, more beeswax is present and the candle burns slower. It takes a little longer to burn to Like and much longer to get to Love. At the Married Love level, it is almost entirely beeswax, and it always burns slow enough to last a lifetime. If at this level, it is also protected from even the strongest winds.

Each level of feelings and evaluation of the other person's qualities is on a deeper level as the candle continues to burn. That is why the qualities on the upper level are more superficial and less important than the ones on the lower levels. (See D.) It also takes more reason and less emotion to recognize and appreciate the qualities on the lower levels. This is also why it takes a good amount of time to reach Love, and again why "love at first sight" is an impossibility.

The levels of relationships have been explained earlier, but the reason that a candle analogy is being used here is because many people have the false notion that only one candle for another person can burn at any one time. This is the basis for the "going steady" philosophy. If after a first date, both do not have a candle burning for each other, then that date will be their first and last one. Either the

male will not ask for another one, or the female will refuse the next request. (Or vice-versa, which is more common now than any other time in history.)

If both candles are still burning - even at slightly different levels - there will be another date. If still burning after that one, then there is usually a conscious (if not spoken) decision to go steady - or in modern terms, simply "going out." Nowadays, it is either an exclusive relationship or none at all.

The only thing a couple going steady will concede, is that it is possible to be Physically Attracted to others, but of course, even that is usually highly resented. That is as far as it can go for any other person, as they are limited to only one candle burning below that level - their steady. What they fail to realize, however, is that you can also have several candles burning at any stage from Infatuation to Like at the same time. Love and Married Love will be covered later.

In dating, the mind recognizes that it is natural to have more than one candle burning at a time, but modern society has conditioned people to believe that it is wrong. It is considered "cheating" to be seen with any person of the opposite sex that is not your "steady." This can induce an artificial guilt in someone who is interested in dating others. By only dating one person, you can also artificially keep the candle burning for your steady when it would normally have gone out, or when it would normally not burned as bright because another candle was given a chance to burn. Also, when several candles are burning, you are now able to compare each one against the others, as total attention is not being given to only one.

By only allowing one candle to burn, you also increase the chance of "carrying a torch" for the other person if they put out the candle that was burning for you. When that happens, you do not have any other candles burning to turn your attention to, so you keep attempting to light your former steady's candle for you. What is not realized is that if you are going steady and your steady breaks up with you, it is like their pulling the wick out of your candle. The wick, remember, is the emotion that must be present for a candle to burn. Only they can put the wick back in and light it. Of course, it can always go out fast again, because it starts burning at the same stage where it left off - a stage where it went out before. There is also the situation where a couple puts out the candles for each other, but lights them again quickly because neither likes the insecure feeling of not having a steady.

If you are dating two or more persons, though, and one of them has the flame on their candle for you go out, it is quite possible for it to again be relighted. This is due to the fact that it is not necessary for them to keep yours unlit just because another is burning for someone else. At the same time, it is actually easier (in principle if not in practice) to get any other person's candle for you burning than to relight that one. "Carrying a torch" becomes a mental situation composed of the tendency of human nature to look to the recent tangibility of the past instead of the promise of the future. It is the mind wanting and hoping another's candle for you to be relighted long

after the flame has gone out.

Since 95% of the time you will not end up marrying a person you date, all of these negative, painful situations can be prevented by not going steady until you are both old enough to make a lifelong commitment, and found the right person with which to make that lifelong commitment.

When two people each have their candle for the other burning at Love, then it is an In Love relationship. When two people In Love marry, the commitment is like a glue that binds both candles together and both candles burn at the Married Love level.

The people who do not want to give the necessary time for a candle to burn slowly to the stage of Love are ones who believe that Love is just beneath the top layer and Married Love is just beneath that. They get married after a short period of Infatuation, but the candles still burn at their normal rate. When the emotion lessens because the candle is naturally burning less bright than it did in the top portion, that situation does not fit their incorrect idealism of what marriage is all about, so they put out their own candle and get out of the relationship. That means divorce. This is like breaking both candles with a hammer. What they do not realize, is that with the knowledge of the actual levels of wax in their candle, the acceptance of that truth, and allowing the candle to continue to burn, the couple could still reach the stage of Love and be happy in Married Love.

Marriages that begin with one at the stage of Love and one at the stage of Like (or even both at Like) can be very successful with enough effort and enough time for their candles to burn to Love and Married Love. One reason so many marriages fail is because most of the time, the two people marrying have candles burning at different levels - and do not give their own or the other's candle the time to burn down to those deeper levels. If the slightest breeze (differences) causes the slightest flicker in the flame (problems), they think that the easiest thing is to blow that one out and start again with someone else.

This is often precipitated with a flare-up of initial Physical Attraction towards someone else. What married persons fail to recognize is the naturalness of Physical Attraction to others after Marriage - regardless of the amount of attractiveness of a spouse, and even regardless of how happy the marriage is. To be attracted to others of the opposite sex is normal and life-long, and is not a reaction of human nature that ends with the signing of a marriage license.

In fact, after being in Love and Married Love, you can still have numerous candles burning at the one-sided levels of Physical Attraction, Infatuation, and Like. Married Love neither puts out candles burning at those levels, nor does it prevent new ones from lighting and burning to those levels.

After a true marriage, it then is not so much a case of not allowing any of the others to burn to Love, but it being a case of it not possible to do so. The natural prevention is due to the essence of what the nature of shared Married Love entails. The other candles continue to

burn but cannot burn at any level below Like.

As to the question on whether it is possible to Love more than one person at a time, it is possible if one particular criteria is met.

Love is a spiritual recognition of the right qualities, a mental alignment with the personality, an attraction to the physical, and the feelings associated with all of them. It is possible to have this for two people but only if each Love is one-sided. In an In Love relationship, the reason this physical, mental, and spiritual is totally focused on one person is because the same focus is being returned. One cannot have a 100% focus on two different people. When Love is not returned, however, it is not a total focus - it is always open to an interest from someone else. Therefore, you can *Love* more than one person at a time, but you cannot be *In Love* with more than one person at a time.

This is also why a man cannot "love" his wife and his mistress at the same time. In that situation, by the true definition of Love, he cannot Love either one. He may have candles burning for each one, but neither is at Love or Married Love.

Unfortunately, what often happens is that a married person becomes Physically Attracted to someone else and does not simply recognize it as such. Instead of simply allowing that candle to burn at that level, their *focus* turns from their spouse and is given to the new candle. Because of its initial brightness - and its comparison to the smaller flame for their spouse, they erroneously think that they no longer Love their spouse and now must "love" the new person.

For physical adultery to ever take place, it must first be mental adultery, and that always starts with a shift in *focus*. It never takes place simply because Physical Attraction or Infatuation or Like exists. In a similar vein, this is also why second marriages fail even more than first ones. If one or both spouses in a first marriage either are not satisfied with the smaller but steady flame of Married Love the first time, they will not likely be satisfied with it the second time around. If they found it easy to change their focus in the first marriage, they will find it even easier to change it the second time.

In this analogy, a happy marriage is simply one where both candles are burning in Married Love, and the focus remains committed towards each other.

LUST

Thus far, only positive feelings and relationships have been discussed. It is time to place into prospective a negative relationship which is also wrongly called "love." It is also the most dangerous vice that can enter into one's mind in relation to a person of the opposite sex. That vice is *lust* - the single most important item that can prevent or destroy true Love.

Some dictionaries define lust as a "strong sexual appetite," but this would have to be considered some kind of a generic definition rather than any kind of a moral one. Having a strong sexual appetite simply means possessing a high sex drive. That would certainly include most men, which might insinuate that it is almost automatic for a man to lust. However, just having a physically high sex drive is not lust in itself. Lust is a condition of the mind in relation to how this drive is directed towards others. Lust is a conscious effort of continuing unpermitted sexual thoughts and desires towards someone else. Many women may also have a high sex drive, but it is not as predominant in women as it is in men - or to the same degree. Lust is actually "counterfeit Love," because it equates the appetite for sex as Love.

To better understand how the appetite for sex should be understood and controlled, let us compare two appetites that God instilled in humans, the appetite for food and the appetite for sex, and His Plan for both. He could have made eating simply a requirement for maintaining the human body, and not given a taste to food. He could have told Adam and Eve that to remain physically healthy, it would be required that they eat food every day, roughly three times a day. While it would be necessary to eat, there would be no pleasure involved in eating itself. God, however, put a pleasurable sensation on eating in order to encourage us to do so, and also as a gift for following His Plan for the human body. The good taste of food is not the purpose for eating - it is only a bonus.

Before Original Sin, there was no real responsibility involved in eating. Before the Fall, the control of reason saw to it that proper amounts of the right foods were eaten for good health. After the Fall, however, reason was not in total control, and the appetite for eating has not always (some would say *very seldom*) been controlled and applied correctly for our best health. For many, the pleasure of eating has become an end in itself, rather than a means to an end, and there are a multitude of health problems associated with the abuse of the appetite of eating. There is the decaying of teeth from eating so many sweets, sicknesses from eating too little of the right foods, and a host of problems from just eating too much food in general.

While the appetite for food is natural and normal, it is not natural and normal to satisfy it any way we desire. It is the same with the appetite for sex. God could simply have told Adam and Eve that if they wanted to have a child, they would have to engage in intercourse,

but there would be no pleasure involved in it. It would simply be a necessary physical act that would have to be accomplished in order to conceive a child. Of course, if this was the case, then there would be neither a need nor a reason for intercourse again until the next time a child was desired.

God in His goodness, however, put a pleasure into the act of intercourse, and He did it for two reasons. The first was to encourage humans to "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...." By putting a pleasure into intercourse, God's Plan could better be fulfilled in that children could be and would be conceived at times other than only when a couple "chose" to attempt to have a child. (It should also be mentioned that contrary to the population-explosion-doomsayer claims, there is still a long way to go in filling the earth -especially in this country. No one who has ever been up for any length of time in a plane ride in the United States could claim that we have a population problem here. While some cities are certainly crowded, no one forces people to stay there.)

The second reason is because the pleasure involved is a unitive factor for a married couple who must live together "for better or for worse." It is a kind of reward for the problems and sacrifices that are necessary in living with another person for life and in raising a family. Again, the pleasure of sex is a bonus for marriage - not the basis of it.

Whenever sex is used outside of God's Plan, it is sinful. Fornication is sex between unmarried persons, who have not made a commitment to God and each other for life, and who, therefore, have not earned this privilege. There are no exceptions to this, regardless of the "feelings" the couple has for each other. Adultery is sex between one married and one unmarried person or two people who are not married to each other. Both of these sins are actions that have as their purpose the use of this pleasure as an end to satisfy selfish desires, rather than for the purpose that God created it.

While the desire for the pleasure of sex is strong, and while the weakness of human nature may make us weaker in this area than any other, this desire is never allowed to be satisfied in conflict with God's Plan. One has to keep in mind that the desire itself is part of that Plan. If there was no pleasure in sex, there would also be no pleasure in anything leading up to it. This would include in reverse order: foreplay, kissing, holding hands and even physical attraction.

Neither the innate desire for sexual gratification nor the general desire for a particular person is being condemned here. Innate desire belongs to human nature, and particular desire belongs to the phenomenon of attraction. Both remain a general desire as long as it remains a desire in principle. The general or particular desire becomes lust when the mind receives pleasure from continued, willed, conscious thoughts of sex in opposition to God's Plan. Christ said,

*"...anyone who so much as looks with
lust at a woman has already*

committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28)

The simple act of a man looking at a woman is not lust - only looking at her with lust in his heart. This means that he looks at her with mental intentions that are not allowed to him. For a single person, all willful thoughts and desires of sexual intercourse with any person of the opposite sex is unpermitted because there is a lack of the commitment of marriage to legitimize that desire morally. For a married person, it would be all willful thoughts and desires towards someone other than your own spouse. However, it is still possible for a married person to lust after their own spouse, and this also is wrong.

Pope John Paul II received much criticism and derision when he said that "A man may not lust after his own wife." He did not mean that a man cannot have sexual thoughts and desires about his wife; what he did mean was that he may not have the desire to use her solely as a sex object for selfish means. The Pope was simply upholding the dignity of women in the matter of sex.

Lust is not immoral just because Christ taught it. He taught it because lust violates the basic element for having respect and truly caring about another person. Lust is totally self-centered. It uses and often degrades another person in its drive to seek its own gratification (the satisfaction of its sexual drive) without regard to either the mental or physical welfare of the other person - and especially the spiritual welfare.

This is again why it is wrong even for married persons to "lust" each other. It is not wrong for them to desire each other under Love, because then it involves giving as well as receiving. And the best proof of it being Love and not lust is when "giving" is the primary intention. When sexual intercourse in marriage is Love-making, it is concerned with giving pleasure and not simply receiving it. Since it involves the feelings of the other person, if it did not take the other's well-being into consideration, it would be "having sex" rather than "Love-making."

Under this definition, more Love would be shown by one spouse in *not* having sex if the other spouse was either mentally or physically unable to reciprocate. Examples would include being under an unusual mental stress, or in a time of sorrow, or the presence of a physical ailment. To ignore consideration under these circumstances would be contradiction of the word Love. Again, it would show nothing but a selfish desire for self-gratification. The other side of this coin would also not be Love for one spouse to deny sexual satisfaction to the other under a false pretense of a mental or physical ailment. Consideration must work both ways.

As in all the other areas, the best way to prevent lust in marriage is to prevent it before marriage. It is most commonly directed from males to females, and any female that thinks that having a man lust after her previous to marriage is a compliment and desirable, may soon change her mind after marriage.

The Bible also mentions lust.

*"Lust indulged starves the Soul."
(Proverbs 13:19)*

Lust before marriage also prevents the development of the spiritual relationship before marriage which can cause that aspect to never come into being - or reach its necessary prominence after marriage.

It is important here, since sin is being considered, to state that the temptation to lust is not a sin. As stated previously, temptation is just a beginning to an inclination - which often does not originate with ourselves. Temptation - all kinds - most often originate from "the world, the flesh, and the devil." We will narrow down the point here to "the flesh." For a man with his high sex drive, it takes very little to bring about a temptation to a desire in the area of sex. Therefore, it is necessary for him (or a woman) to prevent temptations in this area as much as possible, and to get the mind off those temptations as soon as possible when they appear. This is seldom done, because people have lost the notion that all regulations, laws, and restrictions are only meant to free us from long-term mistakes made from short-term emotions.

In one-way lust, it is the taking of Physical Attraction or Infatuation and adding impure thoughts to it. In Two-way lust, each person is using the other for self-gratification, and any "giving" in the total relationship is really only for the purpose of "receiving." Therefore, lust and Love are mutually exclusive - they cannot both exist at the same time for the same person.

EMOTION AND REASON

Before discussing dating, let us compare the amount of reason and emotion that is involved on the different levels of feelings and relationships. Listed on the composite in Appendix D (Page 190) is a comparison of these. These percentages are not meant to be either scientific or absolute. They are simply terms to show the correlation of changes that are necessary for growth in relationships.

The first thing to bear in mind is that while there always will be some overlapping of categories, the characteristics named in that category is what defines the category itself. In other words, the amount of reason that is involved in your evaluation of the other person determines the category you are in.

The emotional attraction or attachment is not the final determinate. You cannot say, "I love him, therefore he must have the qualities listed in that category," or "I love her, so I guess the qualities in that category must be the ones I admire." You do not respect the person because you love them. You Love because you respect. You do not Love because you have feelings - you have feelings because you Love. Of course, feelings must be there for it to be the beginning of sexual love rather than just a higher level of the "Love thy neighbor" type of Love.

Physical attraction is all emotion - based solely on the physical. Infatuation is all emotion - but adds mental emotion to the physical. Puppy Love is a fairy tale relationship. It is having a mutual idealized affinity for the first time with a person of the opposite sex. Like includes a one-sided wish for a fairy tale relationship. In Like is the first reality of a relationship, but on a light level. Love is a one-sided high respect for another's qualities with attraction included. In Love is the relationship between two people who Love each other. Married Love is the reality of life together, when even the lightest shade of rose-colored glasses come off.

Each succeeding category contains some or all of the categories preceding it. This does not necessitate a contradiction in the changing of the percentages of reason and emotion. You can be 100% physically attracted to a person in Physical Attraction and still be 100% physically attracted to that person after marriage. It is just that Physical Attraction makes up 10% or less of what is important in marriage.

The diagram on Appendix D also shows a comparison of the personal effort necessary in feelings or relationships.

Physical Attraction and Infatuation take no effort at all. You will note that Puppy Love is easy, because it is an idealized relationship, while Like takes some effort because it takes more true knowledge of the other person. In Like takes more effort than Like, not only because it is based on more knowledge, but also because it involves an actual relationship while simple Like does not.

Love is easy for two reasons: it is one-sided (no true relationship

on a personal level) and it includes the acceptance of the other person as is. For this to be really true, there is necessarily a spiritual dimension to that Love.

In Love may take considerable effort, because while each truly Loves, it includes the relationship aspect and is on a highly knowledgeable level. This means that while you accept a fault of the other person by the reason of Love, you may not be fond of it under the emotion of Like.

Marriage is the ultimate reality because it is the ultimate relationship. Emotions are a valuable part of any marriage and the amount of happiness in it. However, emotion without substance leads to a happy marriage from a few months to a few years. Having substance without emotion leads to a permanent, successful marriage, but without the peaks of happiness. Both substance and emotion, then, are necessary for a permanent, happy marriage.

There are two kinds of emotion - or two ways to get it.

- 1) Initial physical attraction with mental to follow.
- 2) Mental attraction over time, with physical to follow.

A happy marriage can result from either one, but the odds are much better with the second method. A good-looking spouse can become very plain if mental attraction never surpasses the physical. On the other side, a plain person can become very attractive because of the mental qualities.

While both are important, they do not surpass the spiritual qualities which are the most important in determining where the marriage effort lies between easy and very difficult. In the long run, the spiritual is the most important aspect, because it is the only true binding force that will keep the couple together through mental and/or physical problems of any kind.

THE DATING GAME

It is time for another exercise on the part of the reader.

Answer the questions on Appendix E (Page 191), again either in the book, on a separate sheet of paper, or on a copy made of that page. When you have finished, return to this chapter.

* * * * *

After you have finished, open your envelope with the qualities of an ideal *DATE* and compare to this list of an ideal *MATE*. They should be identical! If they are not, either you plan to date people who do not fit your standards of a good spouse, or you have upgraded your standards for a mate from what you have already read. If the latter is true, then your evaluation of the qualities of a good date should have changed also.

The point is that you will end up marrying the kind of person that you date - even if that kind of person has almost none of the qualities that you yourself claim to want in a date. There are two usual reasons for this. The first is that you will not meet a person with the second list if you always date people that fit the first list. Second, you will become emotionally involved with someone that fulfills much of the first list which will cause you to quit thinking about or looking for someone on the second list.

There are basically two purposes of dating - or at least two good purposes. The short-term purpose of dating is to mix with people of the opposite sex, to enjoy their company, and have fun together. In dating, one can expand knowledge and interests and learn to be comfortable with the opposite sex. It is the beginning of real communication and the beginning of affection. With the onslaught of puberty, the initiation into physical maturity is a fast process handled by nature. The initiation into mental maturity is slow and painful and must be handled by people themselves with help from others. There is little doubt that becoming comfortable with the opposite sex is the slowest process and also the most painful.

There are a number of things that make the dating game more difficult now than any other time in history. It is due to there being a greater change in society in the last 100 years than in the 1,000 years preceding it. As previously mentioned, parents arranged weddings in the past. In rich and powerful families, marriages were often arranged for political and financial reasons. These marriages were often arranged when the couple to be married were only children. They grew up knowing and accepting that the marriage would take place when they reached the appropriate age. A similar thing was done with the common people. Parents would arrange marriages by agreement among themselves and the children were expected to follow their parents' wishes. There often was little or no communication between couples before they were married.

That situation would be considered ludicrous, horrendous, or even worse by today's youth. It did, however, have some advantages. Parents would pick "suitable" mates for their children, and as already stated, reason was involved in the selection much more than emotion. Suitable mates were those of similar heritage, similar background, and even a similar standard of living. Parents made the agreements with other parents who shared the same beliefs, both social and religious. This would mean that the children of both families were taught a similar philosophy of life, and their opinions on important matters such as marriage were more than likely the same.

Consequently, there was little dating as we know it today. Girls did not go out every Friday and Saturday night to a bar with a guy that the parents have never even met before (or get picked up there by some stranger). There certainly was not any making out in cars until all hours in the morning or watching pornographic movies on TV while locked in a bedroom at night. While it is certain that today's youth have more wild "fun," which situation seems more conducive to picking a partner for life in the institution of marriage? In which time was marriage considered permanent (and most of them were), and in which time are so many marriages ending in divorce?

Now the point could be made that divorce was illegal in the past. However, it was illegal then because it was considered morally wrong by individuals and because society was protecting its basic unit - the family. It stayed illegal because there was no general desire for divorce. There was no general desire for it because there was no general need for it. There was no general need for it because couples married for life, willing to make whatever compromises and sacrifices were necessary to make the marriage work and keep the family together. They were taught that principle, they believed it, and they practiced it. It may be debatable at the level of communication couples had, but that situation certainly led to communication being a natural part of the process of working at marriage.

Is that the situation today? What are the chances of meeting someone in a bar - especially in a big city - and for that person to have the same background, index of beliefs, and set of values that you have? Of course, most people in bars are not looking for that. They are looking for a good time with an attractive person who is probably a good dancer and certainly a good kisser. (We will take up "good sex partner" later.)

Besides the old way evidently being better in the long-range view of marriage, it may have also been better in the short-range view. While today's youth again has more "fun" in dating, it is also certain that they have much more heartache and pain because of it. Undoubtedly the aspect of not dating or partying weekly (or daily) brought some loneliness in the past, but not the depression (and sometimes almost despair) that it brings today.

Dating has changed from the traditional means - that of finding a marriage partner for life, to a modern end - of searching for that elusive and fleeting concept of "fun." Today, when a couple has fun together and then adds physical intimacy (most often sex) which leads

to emotional attachment, they think they are "in love" and ready for marriage. If marriage was simply a narrowing down of fun and sex with only one person, then maybe their marriage would be successful. However, since a successful marriage is not based on this even for a short period of time (much less a lifetime) these hastily made marriages with superficial commitments are doomed to failure from the start.

Proper dating is a means to marriage, but the entertainment media either does not portray it as a means or as the wrong kinds of means. It is obvious that movies and television usually portrays dating as simply a means to find a sex partner - for one night or longer. In Hollywood vs. America, film critic Michael Medved points out the hypocrisy of the claims of the movie and television industries that the advertising of products cause people to buy, but the advertising of promiscuous sex (and violence) is not supposed to have any effect on viewers. For dramatic effect, relationships in movies deal with problems, usually superficial ones, and those problems are always cleared up by the end of the show. The audience is always left with the impression that the couple will live happily ever after. On television, the relationship may be required to be ongoing over a few episodes to a few seasons, but it almost always includes sex, and usually that starts on the first date.

Premarital sex is hardly ever shown as having negative consequences in short-term dating, and is never shown as having negative consequences for a long-term marriage. Neither of these is true in real life.

Another often negative and wrong concept of the entertainment media is that no kind of dating at all is a necessary prerequisite for marriage. They portray a man and woman thrown into some kind of highly emotional adventure together over a period of a few hours to a few days with the inevitable insinuation at the end that they will get married and live happily ever after - or just have sex and live happily ever after. The implication is either that having sex only or having sex and getting married is the guarantee of ultimate happiness.

In contrast to these wrong concepts, let us look at the right concepts of dating starting with the first one - that dating, any kind of dating, should not start too young. The simple fact of being attracted to a member of the opposite sex is not reason enough to start dating. It is reason enough to start going to occasional informal parties which put boys and girls in a relaxed social situation outside of school. This situation, however, can become very uncomfortable for pre-teens if the parties are based on dancing, and can become traumatic if kissing games are included. Also, since the trivialization of sex has to start somewhere, it usually starts in the trivialization of affection. Kissing should be reserved as a sign of genuine affection for someone who is thought to be at least a little special - not a reward for winning a game, or a penalty for losing one.

Parties would then lead to informal school dances for early teens, one in which there are no dates, and in which the lights are bright enough for students to recognize each other at a distance of more than

two feet. One of the reasons there should be no dates at this time is to introduce the concept that it is permissible, even laudable, to dance with more than one person at a dance.

This modern day attitude of exclusive dancing with your date at twelve years old is undoubtedly a precursor to going steady at fourteen years old, which is a precursor to thinking of being ready for marriage at sixteen or eighteen. Having "dates" at these dances also psychologically excludes every boy and girl who do not have a date. Even though they are always officially welcome without a date, it is a pressure-filled situation which most would prefer to avoid.

It is a modern phenomenon that the wisdom and common sense of the principle of cause and effect seem to have been lost somewhere, as one rarely finds it in use in any area of our society today. To say that "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," is another way of saying that "A minute of foresight is better than a year of hindsight." While children are not expected to use much foresight, and teenagers can be forgiven when they do not use what they could, it is difficult to excuse parents who are supposed to have enough hindsight to guide their offspring and enough true parental Love to use it.

Dances can also be traumatic to teenagers if a girl does not get asked by a boy she is infatuated with, or a boy gets refused by a girl to whom he is attracted. The point is, that if parties involve games and activities for all - instead of attempting to pair off everyone - it allows for children and teens to learn to be comfortable around the opposite sex without the devastation of real or imagined rejection. Bad experiences with the opposite sex at an early age is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in determining future relationships - or the lack of them.

Psychologists would agree by placing any bad experiences in this area in the category of the loss of self-esteem. Next to the self-esteem gained (or lost) from parents, this is likely the second most important area. During and after puberty, it is probably the most important one. At this time, teenagers often perceive themselves as they think the opposite sex perceives them. A negative impression here may well make all of their life take on a negative tint. Parents need to remember their own teenage years in order to be aware of what their teens are experiencing, and be conscious of helping their children with the hindsight that they now (should) possess.

The same concept of group activities should also be used when young teens in a mixed group go to movies, bowling, skating, or similar activities. Parents can volunteer (or be begged until they give in) to bring a group of boys and girls someplace without the numbers of each sex being equal, in order to prevent the subconscious need to pair off. This should even be done with older teens who drive, as it gives opportunities to develop and continue friendships that have nothing to do with sex. When dating starts with the boy driving, it should be double-dating. It is much better for conversation all around, and much better for companionship without the occasion or necessity for physical intimacy. More potential good friendships or

relationships are lost in the beginning by the self-consciousness and pressure of a one-to-one situation than anything else.

Double-dating almost guarantees that each couple can enjoy each other's company without a determination having to be made by the end of the date as to what their "relationship" is, and where it is heading. Again, there is less pressure, not just because the couple agree to have it that way, but because the situation allows it naturally.

Now while it is a good idea to apply these tenets at the beginning of one's dating life, it is never too late to put them into practice. There are many lonely single adults who would like to have a good relationship with a member of the opposite sex that could lead to marriage, but they blow any possibility of it by putting too much pressure on themselves and their date by expecting to hit it off on the first date like it is the start of "the romance of the century." When the first date is not all fireworks (and maybe passion) they get discouraged and write the person off.

Modern society has conditioned people to want and expect to find instant "love connections" like they find instant foods. Good relationships take time to build, and the best relationships are the ones that are built on a foundation of friendship.

As teens get older, they will naturally start comparing one person with another as to qualities. While these comparisons may take place before this time, it is not done to the extent of deciding to whose company you want to narrow yourself down. At least this is usually true if these group get-togethers and group dating ideas are practiced.

Young teens most often like someone just because the person is "cute" or "fun." While group get-togethers allow one to learn about the opposite sex in general, group dating allows the beginning of learning more specific things about the opposite sex, and more specific things about the particular person to whom one is on a date with.

Group dating and double-dating leads to less self-consciousness when beginning to single date. The art of conversation, nurtured in the more personal atmosphere of group dating (compared to the social situation of school) goes a long way in easing this natural self-consciousness. For too many, the beginnings of single dating has been disastrous because of this lack of transition. While conversations were easy at school, there often is ominous silence on a first date. Because they may consider the date to be a catastrophe, they are then even self-conscious around each other at school. While teenagers are not expected to be able to know and avoid this, parents again should remember their own youthful experiences and try to avoid having their children go through the same thing - or at least as much.

The thing to keep in mind when starting to date is that a date has two purposes: an "end" and a "means". It is an end in itself just for a couple to have a nice time and enjoy each other's company. It is also a means in that it is one step in the long and total process of possibly finding a suitable mate to spend your life with. In the

beginning of the dating process, the first one is the most important. After years of dating many others, the second one takes on more meaning. Teenagers and young adults should be encouraged to look upon the beginning of dating with the first purpose in mind, in order to avoid general judgements after the first date on the desirability of the other person as a lifelong spouse - or even a steady. One of the worst mistakes of dating is to stop dating someone after one date because it wasn't a "Cinderella and Prince Charming" kind of date. This is again at least partially (if not greatly) due to the fact that after years of movie and television watching, this is what people have been told and conditioned to expect. In a two-hour movie, a couple meet, and after a problem or two for dramatic purposes, patch things up, and everything is peachy-pie between them at the end.

Compared to that, the first two hour single date of a couple may well be uneventful - if not almost boring. In fact, the more one fantasizes that it will be the classic date of all time, the greater the chance will be of disappointment. There is not a female alive who can match a male's idea of the perfect female, and no male alive who can match a female's idea of the perfect male. Therefore, on first dates, no comparisons should be made to this "ideal person." The sooner people realize this, the better off they will be in the long run, and the more enjoyable dates they will have in the meantime. Instead of evaluating the person as a possible future mate on the first date, evaluation should simply be on whether or not another date (as both an end and a means) is desired. This not only lessens unreasonable expectations, but also allows a second date. On that one, self-consciousness is much less and therefore more of the person's natural personality shows itself. Each succeeding date determines the amount of desire for another date, while the increasing number of dates over time allows some percentage of evaluation as to the actual qualities that the person possesses.

In the beginning, no one is looking for absolute marriage qualities - only some qualities of like-ability. In the long run, however, both should be very similar. If theirs is a true friendship, then they can continue to date on a friendly basis even if the dating does not seem to be leading toward being "serious." This is one of the things that can set up lifelong friendships with a person of the opposite sex whom one does not end up marrying. This would include everyone dated besides your eventual spouse.

With these principles, reason becomes an important criteria in dating and not just emotion. Unfortunately, what often happens is that people are more likely to continue dating someone they are attracted to - even if the person has few good qualities - than give a chance to someone with many good qualities that they are not instantly attracted to. Now the usual thought here is, "What's wrong with that?" The first thing is that they are setting themselves up more than likely for hurt and disappointment and rejection (not to mention being used) by just dating highly attractive members of the opposite sex. More important than these temporary hurts, however, is that if attraction and emotion is the only consideration here, then what

change that to using reason, when the time comes, in choosing a marriage partner with the important qualities?

Many people claim to want a person who is kind, patient, understanding, and faithful (and not necessarily great-looking) and then always go out with the ones who are inconsiderate, thoughtless, ill-tempered, and promiscuous (but always great-looking). In that case, the odds of marrying someone with the qualities that are supposedly desired fall somewhere between *very slim* and *none*.

While evaluation of someone as a marriage partner should not occur on or after the first date, it is not too early to start it after the second date (if approaching or at suitable marriage age), and if an emotional attachment is starting to form. It is always easier to break off a potentially unhealthy relationship before it gets serious than after it reaches that point. Again, the old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is nowhere more true than here.

No date should be considered worthless just because it does not blossom into romance. No romance should be regretted just because it did not lead to marriage. We should not only learn something about members of the opposite sex on every date, but also something about ourselves. We also learn how to get along better and improve our communication with those mysterious and occasionally incomprehensible members of the opposite sex. Dates should not be evaluated simply on degrees between "getting sex" and "Well, at least I got a good-night kiss."

If you are not somehow a better person for having had a date with someone, then at least they should be a better person for having dated you. Let us take one quality - patience - and look at how this situation could work. Suppose you dated a person who shows an abundance of patience. It may not have been a quality which was evident in just seeing and talking to someone for only a few minutes at a time. A date, however brings this quality out, and you realize that it is a quality you like and respect. It may get you to think that you would like to be more that way yourself. If so, you can also compliment them on their patience and express the fact that you admire them enough to want to be more like them in this area. You are reinforcing them which they will appreciate, and also doing yourself some good by admitting (out loud) that you need to work on that virtue more yourself.

Often, the humility of admitting the need for improvement (even if only to ourselves) is the first step required to acquiring it. Even if for any reason you do not date this person again, you have learned about a quality that you will look for in others you date. On the other hand, if the person is very impatient and that turns you off, then you will still have learned that impatience is a fault you do not like. You just learned it from a negative experience rather than a positive one. At the same time, if your date is very impatient, then you could get a chance to influence them by being a good example and displaying patience yourself.

Dating, therefore, is a two-way street of learning for both people. If all dates are only for "fun" or even companionship, and all

conversation is only on trivial matters, then important opportunities for this kind of learning is being missed. Again, dating has more than one purpose, and a date should be evaluated on more than one level.

GOING STEADY

If a boy and girl like each other even just a little, the ordinary thing nowadays is to be going steady after the first date. It usually is not a formal arrangement, but just one that exists because of it being a *de facto* situation. In other words, whether or not you agree to go steady, or even acknowledge going steady, the simple fact is that if it is exclusive dating - it *is* going steady.

Now going steady with the person you like the most is a very natural thing. However, being natural does not mean that it is necessarily the best course to follow. (It is perfectly natural to desire that only desserts be eaten - but the effects of that are not exactly positive natural effects.) The same is true for the naturalness of going steady.

Let us look at a common situation. We have a boy and a girl who like each other more than anyone else and want to go steady. They desire this because they look at dating as one date at a time. If there is a dance this week, who would they rather go with the most? Answer - the person they like the most. If there is a good movie next week, who would they prefer to see it with? Answer - the person they like the most. If there is a party next month, who would they prefer to attend with? Answer - the person they like the most.

On a "one date at a time" thinking, the person liked the most will always be chosen. This kind of thinking probably originated with dances. In modern society, it is no longer the pattern to go to a dance with a date (even if it is your first-ever date) and dance with others. If each song is considered separately, and the choice is between your date (the person you like the most) and anyone else, then the winner is always your date.

In fact, the prevailing custom now is to either dance every song with your date - or not to dance that one at all. It is even common to see a couple at a dance who never dance to any song, because one of them (usually the boy) does not like to dance or is self-conscious for thinking that he is not a good dancer, and his ego is on the line in front of his peers. Boys who feel themselves in this category often dance the slow dances with their date (no opportunity is passed for hugging) and sit out the fast dances. If his date does not dance any of them with any other boy, then he is not being compared to them - either by himself or by others. Ironically, this idea was more valid in the past when dances had actual steps to them.

Nowadays, if you get out on the floor and do something different from anyone else, you will be considered the inventor of a new dance. While having some rhythm was formerly a need for doing certain dance steps properly, the only requirement now seems to be an ability to gyrate uncontrollably as if being repeatedly stung by berserk bees. Anyway, this concept of dancing with only your date at a dance certainly leads to the concept of going steady. There are several working psychological principles that are the same in both cases.

If one goes to a dance without a date, there is a definite risk involved. For a girl, it is the risk of not getting asked to dance. For a boy, it is the risk of getting refused when asking for a dance. (These roles can be reversed at a "Sadie Hawkins" dance.) Both the risk of not getting asked and the risk of refusal involve feelings of rejection - one of the most devastating emotions that one can suffer.

The easiest way to avoid these feelings is to seek feelings of security. If a couple at a dance only dance with each other, both avoid any possible feelings of rejection. It is easy to see how the avoidance of that situation on the lesser level of a dance can lead directly to an avoidance of that situation during dating.

Going steady is certainly a measure of security in the dating game. The couple already know ahead of time that they will have a date on Friday or Saturday night or both. The girl does not have to sit by the phone all week hoping that a boy will call for a date. The boy does not tend to avoid phones like they are poisonous snakes because they are the instruments through which he receives rejections. The girl does not spend half her time daydreaming that a certain boy will ask her out, and the boy does not spend half his time worrying about the nightmare that a certain girl will refuse him. This may be all a part of growing up, but is the one that teenagers want to avoid at all costs. In the long run, it usually ends up being a case of "Pay the price now or pay a higher one later" - of which we shall see the effects later.

There is also the security of knowing what a date with your steady will be like. There is no self-consciousness of a first date (from both of you) of being afraid to say the wrong thing, or even the worse self-consciousness of no conversation at all. A couple going steady may just ramble about nothing at all, but at least they talk. The same kind of date that is boring with a new person is comfortable with a steady. Even if dates with a steady become a bore, the "status quo" is considered better than the risk-taking of being challenged to meet and converse with a new person in a dating situation.

These reasons of wanting to always be with the person you like the most - and wanting security - certainly seem like advantages and not disadvantages. Even parents sometimes fall into this "status quo" thinking when they approve of the person their teenager is dating. They feel safer than if their teenager was also dating someone with possibly a bad reputation.

These reasons can only be considered disadvantages if the long-range view of binoculars is substituted for the short-range view of a microscope. This long-range view is not only hindered by natural emotions and prevailing customs, but also by direct outside influences. This would certainly include most television shows and almost all movies which today seem more interested in influencing society rather than reflecting it. While they definitely portray many things much worse than going steady, they still rarely if ever show someone dating more than one person at a time. Growing up and never being exposed to any other kind of dating other than "going steady" becomes the psychological norm long before it becomes the practical norm. If this is true, then television and movies could be

more than a little responsible for "going steady" to be the prevailing attitude that it is today.

The long-range view is looking at the effects of steady dating both psychologically and practically over a lifetime - rather than over a period of weeks, months, or even a few years. Only looking at it from this perspective can its effects be considered negative rather than positive.

As previously mentioned, one of the most important aspects of dating is the learning process that it invites. There are two parts to this: the learning of new interests and the new learning about people themselves. Both involve development of the individual and both are interrelated. As you are introduced to new interests, you increase your general knowledge of things in the world, and also the specific knowledge in a particular area. That new area may end up being a temporary or permanent interest or hobby, or it may end up being a part of your life's work.

Going steady usually reduces the introduction of new interests (if any) to those of your steady. Opportunities are missed that could not only lead to a new personal interest, but also one that could bring about new friendships of either sex in the future. The simple fact of narrowing down interest to a person - especially just one - when the whole world is starting to unfold before you, can have all kinds of detrimental effects in the long run. One learns to communicate better in a variety of social situations when there is more of an opportunity of a variety of social situations in the first place.

There is also the case where a person gives up interests they already have because they do not appeal to the steady. Since the couple spend most of their free time together (or on the phone) interests or hobbies tend to fall by the wayside. Resentments and regrets usually follow, regardless of how long it takes to surface and be realized. This is due to the actual cause of the resentment not being consciously realized, and it usually shows itself in other ways first. It is another case of "cause and effect" with the cause being temporarily forgotten while the effect is being felt.

The new learning about people involves both the learning about the opposite sex and the learning about yourself. Narrowing down dates to one person narrows down the learning on both levels. In steady dating, you only learn about one member of the opposite sex. There is little opportunity to compare philosophy, qualities, and attitudes with others on the personal level of dating.

Let's say that Lana is going steady with Tom. To Lana it is important to be on time for a date. Tom always shows up on time but is seldom interested in doing anything on a date but watch TV. Lana is emotionally attached to Tom and she likes him being on time, so she seldom complains about not actually going out on dates. This will usually continue until it builds up resentment in Lana and they have a fight about it. Results of a fight like this will be covered later.

However, let us say that instead of Lana going steady with Tom, she is also dating Dick and Harry. Dick is always on time, likes to go out on dates, but is only interested in doing what he wants to do.

Harry, on the other hand, is always late, but he lets Lana choose the activity of the date at least half the time.

Since Lana is not emotionally *dependent* on Tom alone - versus being simply emotionally *attached* - she can make two evaluations here. She can decide on which boy she likes the best with a more objective look at his good and bad points in these areas. She also finds out how important "being on time" is to her in comparison to other considerations. Even going steady with one person at a time every few months prevents these comparisons because the high emotional attachment at the time spotlights the good points and leaves the bad points in the shadows. This happens with each successive steady, so little objective comparisons are made or evaluated.

If you go steady for a number of years, there can be almost a complete lack of knowledge of qualities that you would consider important - because you never dated enough people to come into contact with them. Another thing to consider is that not only do you need to be introduced to all kinds of qualities (and non-qualities), but your evaluation of qualities also changes during the dating years.

What is important at 15 may not be important at 20, and what is important at 20 may not be important at 25. (In actuality, what is important at 15 may not even be important at 16.) The emotional dependence in going steady is responsible for the phrase "Love is blind," whose consequences are far-reaching. Again, little of this may seem important or necessary when judging each individual date as far as just "fun" is considered. Remembering, however, that if dating is also for the potential selection of a partner for marriage, every date is not expected to be - and is not meant to be - just "fun." The total picture must always be kept at least in the back of the mind even when trying to put any piece of it in the right place.

Going steady usually means that your free time (if not your life) belongs to your steady. This "belonging" is one of the many two-edged swords in steady dating. The other edge of the sword is not only a lack in making new friendships of the opposite sex, but also causes a lack of making new friendships of the same sex. It usually lessens and can even disrupt friendships that are already there.

There is a security in "belonging" to someone else or having them "belong" to you. While the first involves emotional dependency, the second signifies jealousy, which more often than not turns to one form of possessiveness or another. The first level of one form of possessiveness is to always want to share the other's activities - whether the other person is interested or not. If Lana's steady Tom, likes to go fishing every Saturday, she always wants to go with him. Whether he really wants her there or not, he usually takes her (emotional dependence again) and he does not want to take a chance on disturbing those emotions. Then his best friend who usually goes with him is either no longer interested in going or goes along with hidden or unhidden resentment. Regardless, his steady is coming between their personal friendship and their activities together. Their male bonding (if you will) is being weakened by Tom's steady. This

is usually no problem when the initial emotional attachment is at its highest, but will sooner or later turn around and affect Lana and Tom's relationship. The same thing is true if Lana likes to spend Saturdays in the mall with her best friend, and now Tom wants to join in.

Of course, it is even worse if your steady and your best friend do not like each other. This can lead to animosity, and the choice often has to be made between the steady and the best friend. Usually, the steady is chosen - sort of the "Call of the Hormones" winning over the "Call of Camaraderie." Since each going-steady situation rarely lasts a long time (with the loss of a best friend often consciously or subconsciously contributing to it) the end result is frequently the loss of a steady *and* a best friend.

The second level of possessiveness is not just wanting to join in, but expecting, or even demanding, to join in. The only way to avoid any confrontation (which is what the emotions want at almost any cost), is to go along with the demands.

The third level of possessiveness is expecting or demanding that your steady do what you want to do. It would be Tom demanding that Lana go fishing with him even though she would rather be at the mall, or vice-versa. Whether there is a confrontation at this point or not would depend on the amount of emotional dependence present in the one being dominated. Without a responsible discussion and compromise - which is not usually done at this level - the effects will always be negative, whether the couple stays together or not.

Possessiveness always leads to jealousy - or you could say jealousy leads to possessiveness - as they both go hand in hand. A jealous steady does not want you going on other dates, dancing, or sometimes even talking with other members of the opposite sex. If Tom saw Lana talking to Harry, he demands to know what they are talking about. Or, Lana expects Tom to call her every night and tell her everything that happened to him that day, especially anything involving one or more other females. It becomes a kind of "checking in." This kind of jealousy is often flattering to the ego - in its beginning stages. The long-range view may be quite different.

Possessiveness in its long-range effects is even worse than jealousy. To repeat, jealousy is "I want you and I do not want anyone else to have you." Possessiveness is a case of "I do not really want you, but I do not want anyone else to have you." Jealousy can lead to a feeling of being smothered. Possessiveness can lead to a feeling of complete emptiness.

For every notch jealousy goes up, Like comes down a notch; for every notch possessiveness goes up, Like comes down two notches. To move the scale, Love cannot exist in the same relationship as jealousy and possessiveness. They are mutually exclusive.

There is an easy way to check out the jealousy or possessiveness in another person - or yourself. If it is in the other person, it is time to re-evaluate the relationship and what you are giving to it - and getting out of it. If it is in yourself, it is also time to re-evaluate your own feelings, and more importantly, your attitude and philosophy. It

is a real danger sign when one person regards the other person almost as "property." This attitude in boys in steady dating is commonly previewed at dances when he will not let his date dance with any other boy. This attitude is previewed in girls when a boy gets the "third degree" from just looking at another girl.

It is interesting to watch and listen at a dance to see what happens when one boy asks another boy's date for a dance. It is easy to tell something about their relationship by what follows. Either she said "Yes" without hesitation, or she "asks her date's permission." Her response says something about her relationship with him. Whether he said "Yes" or "No" said something about his relationship with her. The same would be true in the other direction if another girl asked the boy to dance.

It should be noted, that while some of the examples given here may not seem to be very important by themselves, one of the purposes of this book is to help people recognize pieces of floating ice as actually being only the tip of an iceberg - and not just a big ice cube. The danger may not be seen on the surface, but sooner or later (like the Titanic) it will sink the relationship.

The lack of learning that going steady contributes to, is obviously worse during junior high and high school years than in later years. What it hinders more, though, than the growth in new interests and in new friendships, is the lessons in emotional growth that take place at this time. The same is also true to an almost equal degree for a number of years after high school, whether college is attended or not. (Of course, emotional growth should continue throughout life, but if it is nipped in the bud at the beginnings of sprouting, it may never come to full bloom.)

This emotional growth was touched on when mentioning the risk-taking that happens when attending a dance without a date, and being open to new dating relationships rather than going steady. True, this risk taking always includes some disappointments, but this earthly life we live in will always include some disappointments, and in more areas than just male-female relationships. (There will be no attempt to rate the importance of male-female relationships in comparison with any other area of life, as this will vary according to the individual. For many people (if not most), however, it is the most important social area in their life at all times after puberty.)

This is simply to suggest that if you do not learn to accept the small disappointments in life, no matter how large they seem at the time, then you will never be able to accept the truly larger ones that will come later.

While this book is not an attempt to prevent all the mistakes and disappointments of anyone's life, it does have as a purpose to help prevent some of the biggest ones. One of the biggest ones is lessons about the results of jealousy and possessiveness. These lessons can be avoided in the first place by preventing jealousy and possessiveness, and those can be prevented by not going steady at too early an age or too early in a relationship.

A primary example of the lack of growth from going steady can

be seen in two 13 year-olds who start going steady and are still in that relationship when they are 16 years old. Even if they would have grown far apart normally and naturally, their emotional attachment kept them together. If they split up at 16, both may rebound to another relationship quickly because of the social setting they are in. The need to regain the security felt over the last three years may propel them immediately into another "going steady" relationship - which may simply be a case of "out of the frying pan and into the fire." Since the heat feels about the same, they are not even aware that they were in hot water in the first place. They missed some valuable emotional growth between 13 and 16, but may even be more afraid to face it at 16 than at 13. Hence, the chance for that growth is stymied again. (We all may know adults that have continued this pattern, and remain emotional children in their 30s, 40s or even older.)

All of the principles involved in the negative aspects of going steady pertain equally to both males and females, but in some circumstances, it is definitely the female who loses the most. It is a truism of nature that girls reach puberty sooner than boys, both physically and mentally. Because of this, girls emerging from puberty find boys their age "very immature" - which is usually true. They are attracted to boys older than they are, most often by one, two, or three years. Those older boys are interested in them, as they certainly notice the sudden changes in these girls - mostly physical. Also, the girls that are their age have been going steady with boys one, two, or three years older than them. (History repeats itself.)

This in itself causes no problems as long as both are in the same social setting - as in the same school. They can always go to the same activities together as their lives are not only going in the same general direction, but also specifically on the same road.

The situation can change dramatically once the boy graduates from high school. If he stays in the same town and gets a job, the situation may stay relatively the same. They can still be together about the same amount of time except at school, and he still probably has male friends at the high school younger than him. It is far different if he leaves town, whether it is for a job, college, or the armed forces.

If he leaves for a job in a different city, he is in a whole new life - not only from the work situation, but also in a completely different social setting and with a new circle of friends. All that means new influences. If he is "going steady" with a girl back in high school, his new circle of friends and activities is supposed to exclude dating.

Now if the boy goes off to college and is going steady with a girl back home, then he would be expected to miss all college activities that usually require dates. He also misses out on the learning opportunities from dating girls from other cities (or states or countries) who have different interests and are from different social backgrounds. In actual practice, his girlfriend still loses more - which will be explained shortly.

The other possibility is the boy joining the Armed Forces. At this

time, almost all boys want to be "going steady." That brings him some security into his life when the future of the next four to six years is very uncertain, and his life is not his own. He is guaranteed letters from his steady, and knows he will have a date every night he is back home on leave. He may be stationed at Antarctica where there is not much opportunity for parties and dances, but his steady is supposed to sit at home for months or years waiting for his return.

More likely, however, he is stationed at a base in a city with all kinds of activities and dating opportunities. And if there is any girl who thinks her "steady" is over 1,000 miles from home and not dating, she should look up the word "naive" and then put the word "extremely" in front of it.

It is a classic case of a double-standard, with the boy in another town - whether working, going to college, or in the service - living it up every weekend while expecting his steady to stay home and be "faithful." The reason he can get away with it is that his steady cannot hear about his escapades because she does not know anyone in his town, but he can always go home and "check up" on her because everyone there knows that they are supposed to be going steady. The old cliché about the sailor having a girl in every port can be true, but his steady back home will never find out about it.

Sure, the girl can feed her vanity somewhat by bragging she is going steady with a serviceman and show his picture around in his dress uniform, but she still loses the most by far in the long run. On her side, she either has to pass up school activities, go alone, or go with her girl friends. The only thing "forbidden" is to have a date. She feels left out and sits at home for homecoming and prom unless her steady can make it back for them. She may end up missing out on a lot of high school life which only comes once in a lifetime. The high school years (and college years to only a somewhat lesser degree) are very special, unique years. If you blow your teenage dating years by sitting at home waiting for a steady (or marrying too young), you can never get them back. Lifelong regrets always follow from hindsight, but some foresight could have prevented it.

To look at feelings and distance, it definitely would mean something to feel more secure thinking about someone 1000 miles away than actually being hugged by someone else. At the same time, it is often easier to keep feelings on a high level for someone because they are not around. Not only that, it is easier for the mind to imagine a relationship being more than it is, if the other person is not around. Dating others prevents both of these unproductive situations.

Another negative situation can occur if a girl and her steady split up after she graduates. How is she supposed to let other boys know that she is available for dating? Does she give out a news release to the local newspaper and radio station? It also can happen that after going steady for a long time, no one else you know considers you "dateable." This can even reach tragic proportions as in the case of one couple who started going steady when both were in the 7th grade and continued all through high school. They never really mixed with anyone else and got married two weeks after graduation. Two years

later the husband was killed in an accident. This was obviously a great loss, not only in the physical and mental sense, but also in the only emotional stability she had relied on for eight years. This is not just any eight years - but the eight years where there is the biggest growth and change in developing interpersonal skills. She really had none as her steady was her only real friend through all those years. After his death, she moved back home with her parents, and years later had still not started to mix with people. While this may be an extreme example, it still shows what can happen when social skills are not developed.

Once you graduate from high school, you will not see about 90% of your classmates until your class reunion. If you split up with your steady after graduating, that 90% will probably think of you two as a couple until that time. If you are a girl, many of the 90% who are boys might be interested in dating you, but never know you are "free to date" and ask you out.

At one 10-year high school reunion there was a couple standing by the door talking when in came one of their classmates. After the usual greetings, the classmate asked them how many children they had. He said, "Four" and she replied "Three." The classmate's eyes widened and jaw dropped until they explained they were not married to each other. They had gone steady their last two years of high school, and when the classmate saw them together ten years later, simply assumed they had gotten married to each other.

BREAKING-UP

It has been repeated here numerous times that couples go steady for emotional security, and they very often stay together simply because of a fear of any emotional insecurity. The one thing that any couple fears more than anything else is breaking-up. If there's anything that human beings avoid, it is pain of any kind, and breaking-up causes not only the pain of loss of good feelings, but also the loss of self-esteem. This is, of course, when the breaking-up is not your idea. Going steady is a kind of social status symbol granted subtly by peers. Going steady means you can "get" a boyfriend or girlfriend. That is lost when breaking-up.

The loss of good feelings, however, is the biggest hurt. When starting to go steady, feelings for and between both people are at a high. Both candles are burning brightly as all candles do when first lit. They soon lower to their normal brightness which allows them to burn longer. Often, couples think that something is wrong with the relationship because it does not burn as bright as it did in the beginning. They still go steady, however, because low-light candles burning are much better than the perceived darkness of no candles burning. They stick together through thick and thin - regardless of how thin it gets.

Even if the relationship has deteriorated to the point that both would want to break-up, they continue to go steady because neither admits it to themselves or to each other. While they have communicated good feelings to each other before this point, they do not communicate a change in those feelings. It could be because there is still an emotional need for the other person. It could be because there is still Physical Attraction, and even more often if there is lust present - especially in action. Sex can be an artificial glue that keeps a couple together long after anything meaningful is there.

Staying together can be the fear of the loss of that status symbol. It could be the avoidance of having to tell everyone "what happened." It is always not wanting to be hurt, but also can include not wanting to hurt the other person.

A couple can feel "trapped" in the relationship, but the discomfort of going steady is not as bad as the risk-taking that would have to replace it. The longer the relationship continues after what would be a natural parting of ways, the harder it is to break-up. The end result can be marriage because they just sort of floated into it, and also almost because after a period of years of going steady, friends and relatives sort of "expect it."

It usually takes something really drastic to cause a break-up. There are numerous cases of couples that not only have cold feet the night before a wedding, but have knock-down, drag-out fights the night before - and the wedding goes on the next day with outwardly happy smiles on inwardly miserable people. Then there are times when one person is both afraid of marriage and afraid of breaking-up,

as in the case of the young man who tied himself to a tree on the side of a deserted road on the morning of his wedding. When found, he claimed to have been kidnaped.

If a break-up is inevitable, it is often a psychological contest to see who does the breaking-up first. Suppose a boy is preparing to break-up with his steady girlfriend, but she breaks up with him first. He may then try to patch it back up - presumably so he can be the one who breaks up with her. Whoever is the one who does the breaking-up is the one in the "power" position. It is the other person who will feel the rejection. (A classic example of this aspect of the psychology of breaking-up is the Albert Brooks' movie, "Modern Romance.")

The actual breaking-up often happens when one person finds someone else and can instantly switch to going steady with the new person - thereby avoiding any insecurity and loneliness. Without someone else in the wings for at least one of them, a couple breaking-up often get back together. This is due more to regaining that loss of emotional security and physical affection (or especially sex) than any result of compromises made or problems solved. Then it is back to one of the only two possible results from going steady - either they eventually 1) break-up permanently, or 2) they get married. Again, the longer it takes for an eventual permanent break-up, the worse it is. Still, however, this is not one-tenth as bad as a disastrous marriage.

Another big reason to avoid breaking-up is the impression (possibly to yourself and certainly to some others) that you are a "failure." You continually are asked and have to explain "What happened?" When you show up somewhere to meet new people, you are often asked, "What are you doing here. I thought you were going steady." or, "Where is...?" Some mutual friends or acquaintances are on your side and some are on your former steady's side. It becomes a very uncomfortable situation not only for you two but for everyone else around.

If a couple breaks-up, especially after high school or college, then the risk-taking is not only an emotional issue for both of them, but also a physical one as well for the girl. It is worse emotionally because you are no longer in a social setting in which there are not only large numbers of the opposite sex, but also in a position to get to know them at least fairly well before dating. For girls this can be a safety measure in preventing "date rape." Out of the school setting, meeting someone you might want to date is not only more difficult and awkward for both girls and boys, but it can also be dangerous for girls.

In most places, there is no comfortable setting for singles to meet other singles. If over the drinking age, there is the old stand-by: bars. Now if you are looking for a one-night stand, or a temporary relationship based on superficial or outward appearance, then this may be a good place to meet someone who meets your meager requirements. However, if you are looking for someone with qualities other than a high capacity for downing beer or liquor, and a loss of hearing from blaring rock music, you might want to look

elsewhere.

While it is conceded that there are some nice people who go to bars - maybe because there is "nowhere else" to go to meet new people - how many people and uncomfortable situations would you have to go through in order to find one person worth dating? This is, of course, assuming you have high standards and are looking for someone else with high standards. While there may be a lack of enough appropriate places for "nice" singles to meet, that is no reason to lower your standards.

To summarize this particular point, it would seem that the best place to meet new good friends of either sex, would be in organizations or activities in which you have an interest. (It would seem that churches should feel a responsibility and take the lead in this direction with the organization of Singles Clubs.) If, however, you have not developed social skills or a variety of interests throughout your growing-up years because of going steady, even a good situation with good people and good opportunities could well be lost. Here again, these long-term effects from going steady too young or too early in a relationship should be given more consideration than just the immediate feelings of the moment.

PHYSICAL DANGERS

So far, only the negative emotional and practical effects of going steady have been discussed. One can not, however, ignore the negative physical effects which besides their own end results, also have a long-term effect both emotionally and psychologically.

The first obvious physical effect of going steady is the natural intimacy that results. Because of innate sex drive, the desire for physical intimacy is always present even when there is a lack of mental or spiritual intimacy. It could be said that "our physical nature (or sex drive) has a mind of it's own." This is why a man and a woman who are total strangers can have sex without any meaning, and still have physical pleasure attached to it.

It is widely accepted, however, that the best aphrodisiac is being "in love." The adding of mental emotion - whether it is anything from infatuation to true Love - heightens the physical pleasure of sex because of the added mental intimacy. Therefore, the presence of mental intimacy also increases the desire for physical intimacy. This desire for physical intimacy is natural and there would be something wrong if it was not there. As stated previously, this in itself is not lust. It would only be lust if the general desire led to an immoral intention or immoral action. When dating, affection is good, passion is dangerous, and lust is deadly.

Since humans are physical, mental, and spiritual beings, we have needs in all three of these areas. The primary physical needs fall into the area of what is now known as "skin hunger." We need to feel the touch of other human beings. This need is most commonly met by hugs. Scientists have now discovered that the physical action of a hug actually releases chemicals into the body which are responsible for making us feel better. It is said that every person needs three hugs a day. It has also been proven that babies who are taken care of in every way - but who are not held - tend to withdraw from all external stimuli.

Humans are not like animals who hatch out of eggs on their own and are totally independent upon birth. We grow inside our mother's womb where there is the most physical closeness possible. The need for physical closeness is not something we ever outgrow.

Because physical intimacy and mental intimacy are so closely connected between members of the opposite sex, the closer they get mentally, the closer they desire to get physically. If a couple is going steady, they have narrowed down all specific mental interest to one person - which means they have also narrowed down all specific physical intimacy to one person. This would not have been dangerous in former times, when this physical intimacy was limited to hand-holding, short hugs, and goodnight kisses. When couples were chaperoned, the desire for physical intimacy certainly still grew, but the occasions for it to go too far were not as often present. There is a great difference between having temptations, and having a chance

to follow through on those temptations.

There are three levels of physical needs and satisfactions. The first is the desire for affection - the simple pleasure of sitting together (bodies touching) and the aforementioned holding hands, short hugs, and simple kisses. Holding hands is the "first affection" for couples as it is bodily contact with the basic instruments of touching. Affection like these are simple physical expressions of a developing mental closeness. When little boys like little girls, their "picking on them" is simply an attempt to put a little physical contact into their relationship.

As one gets older (after puberty), and as relationships get deeper (going steady), the natural needs escalate from solely affection to affection and passion. Passion - the second kind of physical expression of affection - is the physical sexual arousal that occurs as a result of long embraces, long kisses, necking, and especially "French" kissing and "petting." Another definition of these physical expressions of passion is "foreplay", because they constitute the preliminaries before sexual intercourse.

Now if their purpose is to increase passion before intercourse, they can either be positive or negative depending on whether intercourse does occur, and the class of morality under which that intercourse occurs. If it is a married couple expressing their total true Love in this ultimate physical sharing, then the foreplay is a positive action. If it is a prelude to an unmarried couple committing fornication, then it is a negative action. If it is an unmarried couple who engage in foreplay without sexual intercourse, it is still a negative action because it increases the desire for sexual satisfaction and in almost all cases leads to lust - the sinful aspect of the third kind of physical desire.

Lust, again, is the desire to have sexual satisfaction with a person not your spouse. It is extremely rare for a person to be able to engage in foreplay without this desire either present beforehand, or at least during and after the fact. It must also be kept in mind that males and females are tempted to lust and sexual intercourse at different levels of passion. It is common for a woman to be "satisfied" and willing to stop, while a man is much further on the passion level and is not as easily "satisfied." Unfortunately, there are many females who are introduced to these facts after a case of "date rape."

If affection is an expression of on-going mental closeness and passion is an expression of temporary physical closeness, then the more often and more exclusive there is physical closeness, as in going steady, the more the desire and the more the opportunity for passion, lust, and fornication. The sexual urge is like a motor that always is running in Neutral. It is not supposed to be put into Drive until marriage. Passion is like revving up your engine while trying to keep it in Neutral. There are only two occasions in which one does that in a car. One is when preparing to take off as fast as possible, and the other is when the motor is about to stop, and revving in Neutral keeps it going.

In these two occasions in relationships, passion is often used both

in an attempt to develop a relationship that really has nothing else going for it, or an attempt to revitalize a relationship that is naturally dissolving. In both cases, any intimacy that is created is simply artificial and will only perpetuate the relationship for awhile.

The sexual tension that naturally occurs between males and females is heightened because of the modern world we live in. We live in a sex-saturated society. Our engines are constantly being revved up in Neutral by the fashion industry's penchant for displaying more skin in every year's new fashions. We are constantly bombarded by sexual images, sexual stimulants, and the absolute lack of morals displayed from almost every "celebrity" that receives publicity in this country. About 95% of all sexual intercourse hinted at (or shown) in television shows and movies are between unmarried couples or couples who are not married to each other. Our society is also a result of the modern technology that makes these temptations possible, from the movie and television and videotape industries - to cars. Dr. Lynn Atwater, a sociologist, has said that "Cars helped revolutionize American romance. They moved courtship off the front porch and into the front or back seat of the car and then to motels."

Then there has been the invention of contraceptive pills and devices which have allowed females the "equal" amount of "promiscuity without penalty" that men have had.

Another thing that adds to modern temptations is all the public as well as private talk about sex. While the public school system cannot teach morals (for fear of offending even one atheist somewhere) it certainly adds much fuel to the fire in teaching sex education in schools without any moral basis. Sex education was introduced into the school system under the guise of having it reduce teenage pregnancy. Supposedly, the solution of the problem of too much teenage sex was teaching sex education to every student in every level from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

That is like saying that the solution for the problem of obesity is eating more sweets. It is an absurdity, with more of a problem being hailed as the solution - and with people naively believing it. Evidently they are not told that teenage pregnancy *rises*, not falls, in every school system in which amoral sex education has been taught. The legal system also gets some of the blame here for taking prayer out of the public school system and allowing (or pushing) amoral sex education in it.

Holding frank discussions about sex between boys and girls in a classroom certainly does nothing to lessen their preoccupation with sexual matters. On the contrary, it promotes and encourages it. In Jacqueline Kasun's "The War Against Population," she offers indisputable statistical evidence that sex education actually increases teenage pregnancy. This is even true in private schools which can teach some form of morality with it. If a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, then with sex education, more knowledge only leads to more danger.

One cannot be constantly inundated with advertisements about food and then talk about it without the appetite for food being

aroused. It is the same with sex. With the bombardment of sexual images and then the predominance of sexual talk, it is no wonder that the sexual appetite is constantly aroused. A pre-occupation with sex has also been shown to delay or even cancel areas of personal development as well as social development.

All the modern temptations that are presented to couples going steady in our sex-obsessed society are ten times worse than temptations presented to couples a hundred or a thousand years ago.

As flagrant, common, and pervading as all these temptations to illicit sex are, it is still no reason to give in to them. One cannot excuse fornication or adultery because "it just happened", or because "everyone else is doing it." Before it can ever happen, there are many temptations that have to be encouraged instead of avoided. One is the physical temptations that arise simply from the exclusive dating in going steady and the situations that occur because of it. Far too many people evaluate their relationships in terms of passion and lust, and "good sex" is often a reason for continuing to go steady or even to get married.

You can like someone without ever Loving them and you can certainly Love someone without liking them at every given moment, but you can have lust for someone without even the slightest amount of Like or Love present. The most common proof that Love is not present in a relationship is when one person (inevitably the male) says, "Prove you love me" by asking for or demanding sex. Only a female who does not know what Love really is could fall for that.

Pre-marital sex is actually a proof that real Love does not exist. It is certainly a proof of physical attraction, obviously a proof of lust, and maybe even a proof of emotional attachment. None of these three separately - or even all together - constitute Love.

Love in its true sense, can only be proved by the commitment of the marriage vows and through the living of "the bottom half" of those vows. If a couple pledges their love "for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part," it can only be at the most 50% Love if all they ever have is "for better, for richer, and in health." A pledge of a marriage "till death do us part" is easy to fulfill under those circumstances.

The proof of 99% Love, however, (no one ever hits 100% on this planet) is to continue to Love "till death do us part" under the situations of "for worse, for poorer, and in sickness." In other words, Love has to be tested under the difficult times with the difficult problems before it can be truly called the highest form of Love. And it can be guaranteed to every female alive that these principles are the last thing on a male's mind when he asks a female to have sex with him to "prove her love."

A boy's thinking is, "I want to have sex with you; therefore, I must love you." A girl's thinking is, "I claim to love you; therefore, I must be willing to have sex with you." He is confusing the sex drive as Love, and she is confusing the emotional attachment need as Love. Both are failing to see that sexual intercourse is not the only way to express true Love. It is sometimes the least way - even in marriage.

There are times when a spouse forgoes intercourse, one example being in consideration of the other one's health. It would be ridiculous, for instance, for a husband to tell his wife, "Prove you love me by having intercourse with me even though you are sick." He would be proving that he cares more about his own self-gratification than his Love for her as his wife.

The same is true (even more so) before marriage. A boy who wants sex from a girl is showing no consideration for her either spiritually, mentally, or physically - the three conditions necessary for true Love. He could care less about her morals, her principles, and her conscience - and how pre-marital sex may be a contradiction to all three. And if he does not care about his own Soul spiritually, he certainly does not care about hers.

He could care less how she feels mentally about herself as a person, versus feeling like a sex object. As a result, a girl's loss of virginity is even a greater mental loss than a physical one. It is the girl who earns the right to wear white at her wedding for remaining pure. She is the one who knows she is "living a lie" when she wears white regardless of whether or not she is a virgin.

He could also care less about her physical results of sex - and these range from contracting any of a number of sexual diseases to getting pregnant. The latter is only the beginning of a life-long problem - regardless of the action taken. To murder the pre-born baby with an abortion is inviting a lifetime of trauma and guilt - even after the action is regretted and there is sorrow and forgiveness. It is one sin that can never be forgotten.

If the child is kept by the unwed mother, her whole future is affected, both in lost opportunities for education and work, as well as in social relationships. There are also the many negative aspects of the child probably growing up without a father - or never knowing who his father really is. Even with the best decision of giving up the child for adoption, there is still the difficult turning away from the maternal instinct in order to do so. These are all very high prices for a girl to pay in a (usually futile) attempt to get or keep a boy emotionally attached to her.

To feel Loved and to feel desired are two different things, but they are too often mistaken by girls to be the same thing. To feel desired is appealing to vanity - a lower side of the mind, while to feel Loved is appealing to the deepest need of the higher side of our mind. For a boy, his drive for sexual satisfaction, and his need for closeness with a girl are mistaken to be the same thing. He tends to express every emotion in a physical way.

Bishop Fulton Sheen said, "A boy plays with love to get sex, and a girl plays with sex to get love." Each one wants their needs met in the area most important - physical for the boy and mental for the girl. Pre-marital sex becomes a mutual self-gratification. He gets his sex which satisfies him for that moment and she gets her "I love you" which satisfies her for that moment. Often, the exchange of "I love you's" is only a subconscious way to validate going steady, and the second person's "I love you" is simply the required response for being

told that by the first person.

Now, if a boy saying "I love you" is not enough to get a girl to commit fornication, then the word "marriage" usually is. The word marriage for her conjures up the mental idealism of being loved permanently and having the fantasy of feeling loved at every single moment for the rest of her life. It is an appeal to one of a girl's greatest needs - security. Far more girls are probably seduced by the emotional power of words than by actual physical passion.

Girls are naive, to say the least, if they think that these words mean anything to a boy in a state of sexual arousal. Words are cheap, and if an "I love you" or an "I'll marry you if you get pregnant" is what is needed to get a girl to commit fornication with him, then he will readily say them. Then there's the classic question from a girl at the height of passion, "If we have sex now, will you respect me in the morning?" Is there any female past puberty who really expects a boy to say "No" at this time?

The number of girls are legion who have learned after one night of fornication with a boy who "loves her," that he has no further interest in her. Instead of the temporary satisfaction of his sex drive being a beginning of his interest in her - or creating a greater interest, it had the opposite effect and it ended his interest. His physical sex drive is wrapped up in a mental box of "conquest," and having succeeded, he moves on to other challenges.

It is amazing how many girls fall for a boy's "line" about the words love and marriage, even when they know he may have used the same line countless times before.

While pre-marital sex gives the boy his physical satisfaction and the girl her emotional satisfaction for the moment, the long-term effects are negative even on a purely practical plane. Boys then become men - still not being able to distinguish any kind of need of true affection from a need for sex. This leads to looking for sex as a substitute for looking for Love. They never realize that sex with a prostitute is only physical intimacy and even sex with a steady or fiancé is only physical and mental intimacy. Only with a truly Loved spouse in marriage does sex have its true meaning of physical, mental, and spiritual intimacy.

Not understanding, recognizing, and admitting this, a man can go from one sexual encounter to another. He may always gets his "climax", but never is really satisfied because he is constantly after the wrong thing. Constantly going from attraction to sex, Love is skipped and Love is never reached. This is the case whether remaining single or getting married. The proof of this is readily available from almost any wife whose husband was promiscuous before marriage.

While males tend to make the same physical mistake repeatedly, females tend to do the same with mental mistakes. Some learn the valuable lesson of being seduced by empty words and promises, and do not fall for it again. Too many more repeat the same error and sin of fornication, convincing themselves that the next guy to come along is different - or that "This time it is really love." They tell themselves

this the next time, and the next, and the next. They would never prostitute themselves for money, but are quite willing to do so for the promise of emotional security or a marriage license.

When teenagers have sex, they are not thinking of physically expressing the total Love that is committed to in marriage. They are not thinking about the possibility of bringing a new life into the world, with everything from financial responsibilities - to time responsibilities - to discipline responsibilities - to teaching responsibilities.

More often than not, these teenagers have had little or none of these responsibilities taught to them, which helped lead them to having no sexual responsibility. The only thing on their minds is the temporary (very temporary) satisfaction of mental needs coupled with the sex drive. Since all teenagers have both of these, the best way to avoid the multi-layered problem of fornication is to prevent the situations in which it flourishes. Those situations all fit in the category of being alone, in the dark, over long periods of time. It is time to bring back the concept of chaperons. That would be highly resented by today's teenagers, who want to be alone, in the dark, over long periods of time.

For both males and females, human nature has a tendency to pick up with the next person physically where it left off with the last person - and get there much sooner. This ties back into the dangers of physical intimacy when going steady. Sexual passion and sexual experimentation never de-escalates. There is a tendency to go farther into passion on each subsequent date in which there is an opportunity to do so. Once it reaches sexual intercourse, it becomes the usual, customary, and expected end of each date. If the couple breaks-up, this often becomes the expected end of dates with the next person with whom going steady. Then it becomes the expected end of all dates - especially for males.

At this level, all the legitimate and practical reasons for dating have ended. Everything is physical. Passion blinds the mind to looking for and recognizing true qualities in another person. The physical act of seducing and being seduced takes most of the time away from sharing conversation and sharing interests, and applies it solely to sharing passion. The potential mental side of a relationship is subjugated to the physical. The spiritual side is totally lost, or more accurately, never found. Each one's conscience has to be ignored until it is clouded enough to be unable to discern right from wrong. This not only affects their relationship in other ways (in the present as well as in the future) but it also starts affecting their morals and judgements in other areas of their life.

Everyone is familiar with one extreme case, that of serial killers who murder their victims as well as rape them. While this is now claimed to be more of a case of violence than sex, no one has ever gone from being a virgin to a serial killer in one step.

No absolute statistics are available, but it can be theorized that a 90% pure relationship before marriage may set up a 90% chance of a life-long marriage, and only a 10% pure relationship may set up

only a 10% chance of success.

It would seem that all couples should be willing to give up the pleasures of illicit sex before marriage even if it was only in order to have trust, security, and faithfulness after marriage. It is a well-worthwhile trade.

GOING STEADILY

It has been explained how a boy can mistake a need for sex as a desire for love, and how a girl can mistake a need for love as a desire for sex. It has been shown how going steady leads to physical intimacy and these mistakes becoming the off-center of their relationship. It has been detailed how these natural desires and needs, left uncontrolled, actually are harmful to a potential or developing relationship. It is now time to discuss how the negative short-term and long-term effects of these natural tendencies can be prevented.

All relationships have a natural time to them - a day, a week, a year, or a lifetime. Going steady is a subconscious attempt to have each new relationship be the one that lasts a lifetime. The natural hope and optimism of the human mind makes it not only possible, but probable, that we always hope the next person of the opposite sex that we meet is the "right one" - just as we hope each Physical Attraction or Infatuation will turn to Love. Without this capacity for optimism and outlook of hope, we could never recover from our first "hurt."

Unfortunately, going steady not only does not prevent future hurts - it sets them up. As previously stated, there are only two possible outcomes of going steady: breaking-up and getting married. Another option should be available. Relationships should be able to end without the necessity of a break-up which leads to pain, rejection, and loneliness.

This can be prevented by the principle of *steadily dating* instead of going steady. In steady dating, only one person is dated at a time. In steadily dating, the person liked the most is dated most often - but not exclusively. There is no set percentages, but probably a good general rule is for no more than half of all dates being with the person liked the best, and half with others. Yes, that last word is plural.

The advantages include the mental and physical - as well as the spiritual. The first mental advantage is that it takes the pressure off of relationships. By not narrowing down dating to any one person, there is no conscious or subconscious attempt to make that relationship work or last on any particular level. It is then free, on its own, to either move to Like and stay there, move to Love and open other possibilities, or develop into a good friendship and remain there. Then again, it may simply end because of a lack of common philosophy, interests, or attitudes. With going steady, it either drifts (or is hurled) toward marriage, or a fight is mandated (to allow a break-up) that usually involves insults and hurt feelings - which tend to stay permanent.

In steadily dating, each relationship has the option of becoming what it will on its own. Just as water will seek its own level if not contained or trapped, relationships will seek their own natural level if not forced to attempt to be what they are not.

Steady dating not only traps that relationship, but it prevents others from possible development. What some fail to understand (or refuse to recognize) is the fact that it is natural and normal to like

more than one person at a time. It is possible to have any number of candles burning at the same time - on all the different levels of Physical Attraction, Infatuation, Like, and yes, even Love. Even when a couple is In Love and are happily married, there still can be a candle burning for someone else at Like, and there will always be some burning at Physical Attraction. If it is unrealistic to deny this after marriage, how much more unreasonable it is to attempt to deny it or ignore this before marriage - especially after having only a couple of dates with the same person.

It would be difficult to pinpoint when this arbitrary thinking arose, that after the second date with someone, a choice must be made to either go steady or never date again. That situation puts a tremendous pressure on the couple. Not only do they have to define their relationship, but they have to make a prediction on the possible permanence of their relationship - and then act upon that prediction accordingly. They do not have the option of simply dating without strain or stress which will increase or decrease the possibility of Like or Love. They either have to decide at that time that it will never be Love (not even giving their relationship a chance to grow into it) or instantly change attraction, infatuation, or like into "love" in order to justify the exclusiveness of going steady. Both decisions are artificial as well as arbitrary.

Going steady is often a case of "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." It makes little difference how many others out there are people with whom a better or more true relationship could be found. Security is security.

Of course this security is satisfying enough until accidentally meeting someone else also appealing to date. Now there is a problem. One solution is to deny interest in dating the other person. This is more difficult if one has begun to know the other person, and a candle is already burning at Like - whether admitted or not. This causes confusion in the mind, as going steady is supposed to mean that you have no interest in anyone besides your steady. The conscious mind is supposed to feel guilty for liking more than one person at a time - but the subconscious mind knows that this is natural and not wrong.

In order to alleviate this guilt, there is self-denial that more than one Like exists. This may cause a kind of conscious putting out of another candle of Like - or try to deny the candle of Physical Attraction - but not from any good reason that the subconscious mind can accept. One kind of guilt feeling is simply replaced by another. This inner misplaced guilt will in one way or another be manifested against the steady over a period of time, whether by sub conscious resentment that comes out in subtle ways, or by slowly attaining a feeling of being "trapped."

If the fear of insecurity is greater than the resentment of being trapped, then the going steady is continued. If the reverse is true, there is the obligatory fight with the resulting break-up, and everyone is aware of the situation between two people who have broken up. Not only do they no longer talk anymore; they cannot even look at

each other. They cannot smile or be civil to one another. They cross the street to avoid one another. It is akin to meeting the enemy face to face. More often than not, going steady sets up forced "love" or forced "hate." This is not only uncomfortable - it is wrong.

In steadily dating, each relationship - both the steadily one and all others - move forward or backward or stay the same on their own time. One can even change steadily dating partners slowly without any big hurt, resentment, or breaking-up. Each candle is allowed to burn at its own level. By dating more than one person at a time, comparisons can better be made by reason instead of being clouded by the emotion of any given moment. A variety of dating partners allows us a better opportunity to analyze the qualities and virtues we really want in another person and then evaluate our dating partners in this very important area. Again, without the feelings (or passions) involved in going steady, this evaluation has a much better chance to be done with reason rather than emotion.

This very fact, of course, is usually why one or both people going steady do not want their steady to date anyone else. They are afraid of the other person finding someone better (or liking someone else whether they are better or not) and "losing" their steady. That is not only an emotional reaction, but a selfish one. We are back to jealousy. It's a case of "I want you" or "I want you for myself even if you want someone else." "Therefore, I do not want you to have even an opportunity to get to care about someone else." That attitude can exist in Physical Attraction and Infatuation but not in real Love - or even in real Like. To really Like someone, one should care about their happiness as much as your own, and selfishness in dating would not fit in that half. In Like, allowing someone you care about to date others may not appeal to the emotional part of Like, but is accepted as good by the reasoning part.

In Love, the other person's happiness comes first, which would even include introducing the person you Love to someone else whom you know they could possibly come to care about more than you. Just using this one evaluation, it is easy to understand why there is so little true Love in individuals today, including at the time of marriage.

One man who puts the principle of steadily dating into practice even introduces women he dates to his male best friends. Twice he dated a woman at the same time as a best friend, and in both cases, the woman married the best friend. With all three practicing the concept of steadily dating, there was no need for anyone having to "break-up" with anyone else. The first man ended up being "Best Man" at both weddings. It never changed the best friend relationship between the men.

If there had been steady dating, a break-up would have been necessary in both cases, and the first man would have probably lost not only two women friends he has today, but also possibly two male best-friends in the process. They would always be uncomfortable around each other.

Actually, there is no such thing as "losing" someone to someone else. It is a matter of the other person "gaining" someone. There's an

important difference. It is not necessarily that one person does "wrong" while another does "right." It might simply be a case of one person doing more right than another - one having more desired qualities than the other. If that happens, it is more of an example of Love to let go. Sometimes Love is not clutching - it is releasing. If, however one loses someone else because of doing "wrong," then it is a matter of them causing their own effect - not the result of the actions of anyone else.

In most cases, the desire to steady date involves one or more aspects of the sin of Pride. (A capital "P" will denote the sin of Pride, not the self-satisfaction from doing a good job or accomplishing something. "Pride" will henceforth be used to denote sinful Pride.) One cannot lose anything in a relationship by dating others. Either it will strengthen the first relationship or cause it to die a natural death. If it would eventually die that natural death anyway, the sooner it does so makes it easier on both people.

When going steady, relationships are not allowed to die a natural death. It is more like a homicide on one or both of the couple's part. In steadily dating, however, there is also a lack of complete emptiness with the natural death of one relationship because there are others that are going on at the same time. While the one that dies may have been considered the most important relationship, at least its end does not leave a complete void. This is also important in preventing the "rebound effect," which will be covered in more detail later.

These are the good short and long-term mental effects from steadily dating instead of steady dating. The physical reasons go back to the dangers in steady dating of concentrating all your attention on one person. Normal tendencies of the sex drive are always there, and by focusing it all on one person, there is a greater desire, a greater need, and a greater susceptibility to becoming too intimate. The physical passions are easier to keep in check and the passions toward any one person is reduced when there is more than one person in your life mentally and physically.

While the inclination to letting the passions run wild may be natural, it is necessary to control them for all the practical reasons listed as well as to prevent grave sins. These are sins that are serious, you have to know they are serious, and you have to commit them anyway. It takes an act of "free will." To prevent these (which puts the immortal Soul in danger) is the spiritual reason why going steady too early in a relationship is not wise.

Now the person who believes and accepts all these reasons for steadily dating will still sometimes find it difficult to put them into practice. The most obvious reason is that it will be rare to find someone else who has the same or similar understanding of the wisdom of it. That, however, only means that it will be necessary for one person to explain the principles to the other. That also means that the first person must put these principles into action regardless of whether or not the other person does so. It should remain steadily dating in practice for the first person even if it is a matter of going steady to the second. That happens when the second person does not

date anyone else. They are not officially "going steady," but it again becomes a de facto situation for the second person because it is exclusive dating for that one. This, at least, prevents half of the dangers of going steady. There is also the situation of going steady for both of them (still it is not "official") simply because neither person dates anyone else. Going steady *unofficially* does not prevent any of the negative aspects and dangers of going steady *officially*.

After educating the other person as to the principles and benefits of steadily dating, it will then be necessary to educate family and friends. Since society presently has almost a complete wrong concept of dating, it is generally thought that if you date two people at the same time, then you are "cheating" on one of them - or even both of them. In fact, "cheating" seems to include just being seen with another person of the opposite sex other than your "steady" - or who is considered your "steady." The small minds of these people also think that jealousy is not only an approved reaction, but an expected one as well. They would consider it shocking, almost scandalous, if someone dated more than two people at the same time.

These attitudes go back to the beginning of dating, when a second date with the same person means you are "going out." This means the same thing as going steady, but it does not sound as official. It is, in fact, not official, because at this level it is not something that is agreed on by the two parties. Again, it is just a de facto situation until one of them "likes" someone else better and wants to go out with the new person. Even though they are both in the stage of Infatuation, Puppy Love, or even Like, it is still devastating to the one being dropped. The expression "down in the dumps" is appropriate at this time because of the feeling of being thrown-away and worthless - hence "dumped."

The negative feelings associated with any relationship not working out or lasting can never be eliminated completely. It could be lessened considerably, however, by wise parents who explain the potential and real, good and bad effects from liking and dating the opposite sex. This should start even before puberty, to help the adolescent mentally prepare for what lies ahead. This also prepares the parents for what will happen in the life of their child, and makes them more attuned to it when it is happening. Far too many parents focus on the physical changes that are occurring in their children during puberty, but forget or disregard the far more important mental changes that are occurring at the same time.

Good, wise parents prepare their children for adult life while allowing them to be children. It seems as though the modern world does not allow children to be children, adolescents to be adolescents, and teenagers to be teenagers. There is this constant pressure on having them grow up too fast. There are dances for 10-year-olds, dating for 12-year-olds, and "going steady" for 14-year-olds, all of which is considered "cute." It is no surprise that they think they are ready for marriage at 18 - or even younger.

No matter what society thinks and does, however, it is always up to individual parents to teach the right principles and set the right

standards for their own children. To go along with the "Everyone else is doing it" philosophy is only a cop-out on the responsibilities of parenthood - whether it involves steady dating or anything else. Good parents are not "know-it-alls," but they should be "know-it-most." For one thing, they have the hindsight of their own and other's experience which their children do not have.

The break-up of the American family has much to do with the abdicating of parental responsibility. After a split, there not only arises disagreements on the rules for children between the parents, but neither wants to be the "bad guy" to the children in regards to the rules. More often than not, the parents are mostly concerned with their own lives, and their children (especially during the teenage years) are left to fend for themselves - physically, mentally, and spiritually. A good many of the big mistakes of teenagers (as well as small ones) could be prevented by wise, understanding, and caring parents who Love their children in action as well as words.

Some of the educating and preparing of younger teenagers for their life ahead could also come from older brothers and sisters who either learned the hard way through their own experience, through knowledge gained from others or from books such as this one. There are two purposes for any knowledge, understanding, or wisdom attained. The first is for the edification of the person who learned it, and the second is for passing it on to others.

The acceptance of "going out" or "steady dating" as the norm after a first date, or certainly after a second, is something that started sometime and somewhere by a single couple and then spread from that point onward. The principle and acceptance of *steadily dating* will have to be spread the same way. The benefits to the couples practicing it, however, will never depend on the necessity of it becoming the practicing norm, or even accepted by most people. What is right is right - regardless of how few believe it, and what is wrong is wrong - regardless of how many believe it.

A FATHER'S RESPONSIBILITY?

A father should not - or it is at least not feasible - in American society to arrange marriages for his daughters. However, he should be able to tell his daughters that you can marry boy A, B, C, D, E - but not F, G, H, I, J. The father can (better than his daughter who is much more likely to rely on emotional attachment) evaluate and recognize if the young man has little or no morals, little or no work ethic, little or no love of children, and most importantly - little or no real love of God.

In any one of these cases - much less in more than one - the young man would not be suitable to date, much less marry. He would be right in ordering his daughter not to date someone in those categories because of his knowledge that dating - especially if it includes any physical intimacy - will lead to an even greater unwise emotional attachment.

Now the only way a father would be willing to do that is if he had two purposes in mind. The first would be for his daughter to have lasting happiness instead of temporary happiness. The second is the most important - that he is more concerned for the salvation of his daughter's Soul than even her happiness in this life. He might even have to be willing to forego his positive relationship with her to accomplish what Christ would approve of rather than what his daughter would approve of.

This means that it would also be his duty as a father to declare this order, even though knowing that in the natural rebellion of children based on Original Sin, and the very often successful temptations of the devil after puberty. It would then be the choice of daughters to ignore their father by committing a sin against a Fourth Commandment - "Honor thy father and thy mother."

In maybe 99% of the cases of daughters who refuse to follow the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of their fathers, will learn the hard way that he was right. The most important effect would not be just the lack of happiness, but any negative aspect over any period of time for those daughters. It would be one more case - in this very important area of life - in which emotion was followed instead of Reason. And it is not necessary to go into detail on all the negative aspects besides unhappiness that involve any and all of their children. The devil has two major desires for all marriages: the first is that it not follow God's plan for marriage, and the second is that it is an unhappy marriage - which can lead to not following God's plan to marriage. It follows Satan's plan for marriages to be "till divorce do us part" instead of "till death do us part." And broken marriages and the number of divorces is proof that Satan has been very successful.

ENGAGEMENT

In the not too distant past, the engagement period was the time between a formal proposal and acceptance, and the marriage itself. To go back further in time, it also was not a formal situation unless the parents agreed on the match - especially the girl's parents.

At the present time, however, there often is no formal engagement period. The couple just "go out" until talk is begun of marriage. Sooner or later a date is set often without there ever being an actual proposal. They just drift into marriage. The proper time for formally "going steady" and for "being engaged" is run together with no physical (and more important, mental) separation between them. There is a proper time for going steady, but it is neither at too young an age, nor in the beginning of a relationship.

After many years of dating many different people, a rightful step in preparation for marriage is to then go steady with the one person who rates the highest in having the right qualities for a spouse. (At least it is the person who rates the highest out of the ones who are eligible.) At this point, narrowing down dating to one person is good and necessary, because now more time (quantitatively as well as qualitatively) is being spent with the other person to test out the supposed qualities to a deeper degree. At this time, neither person should be consciously or even subconsciously "putting on a show" for the other. The non-exclusivity of their previous dating took the pressure and necessity off of putting on a front for the other person and having to hold that front up for a long period of time. Even if a front was put up, it can only be held up for a certain length of time. Therefore, just dating over a length of time will cause it to be taken down or to crumble on its own.

For a couple to agree to "go steady" after a long time of steadily dating it also means that it is a formal decision agreed on by both. That means that their relationship at that point would have had to have grown mentally and have reason as a part of it, and not just be based on a flare-up of initial emotion or escalated passion. While dating was a preparation for finding the right person that could be considered *suitable* as a marriage partner, going steady is the preparation for making a decision that the person selected might actually make a *good* marriage partner. There is a big difference between those two italicized words. A *suitable* mate is one in which there is enough physical attraction between them, and enough agreements in areas of philosophies and interests to be comfortable with each other in conversations and free time spent together. Even someone who is a good date might not even fall in the *suitable* category - much less the *good* one. This is because the usual purpose of a date nowadays - "a fun and exciting time together" - is not what is going to make up the vast majority of time spent together after marriage.

Most dates are "going out." This is not just an expression, but a description of the date. It takes place at a movie theater, bowling

alley, nightclub, concert, spectator event, museum, restaurant, tourist attraction, shopping, dancing, sports activity, or the neighborhood bar. After marriage, the time spent in all of these together will not even be 10% of the time that the couple are together. If they only enjoy each other's company in the midst of social activity or participating in athletic activities, boredom will set in as soon as the honeymoon is over. If they mostly just enjoy each other's company when both are drinking, it will set in even sooner.

"Going out" on a date is not only good, but necessary in the beginning of a relationship. It gives them a chance to get to know each other slowly without the self-consciousness of being alone with nothing happening around them to give them something to talk about. Even a couple going steadily, however, should spend about 50% of their time in home activities, away from crowds and events. At this point, they should be comfortable enough around each other to be able to talk about common interests, and not just comment on whatever outside activity they are involved in. It also means that they are past talking about just the news, the weather, and local gossip to get a conversation going - or keep it going. They should be personally interested in what is going on in each other's lives. And they should be able to be around each other physically without always touching - of one kind or another.

By the time of "going steady," a couple should be spending about 80% of their time in home activities. Communication should not only be on a level which includes personal thoughts and feelings, but also about ideals, goals, and ambitions. If a woman wants a husband who is going to be home every night, and her boyfriend wants to be a traveling salesman, then it is time to back off from steady to steadily dating. It is not necessary to break-up, but the relationship needs to be slowed down. In the course of time, one will have a change of mind, or they will drift apart. If he is not a traveling salesman at the time, it will not affect their relationship as far as time together. In this example, before any consideration of marriage, the boy should get a job as a traveling salesman. Then he can find out if that is what he really wants, and she can find out how she reacts to it. If he likes it and she does not, it is time to back off from the relationship.

If a man wants to see a clean house and a cooked meal waiting for him every night, and his girlfriend does not like to cook and is sloppy, then either she had better change, or he had better start liking TV dinners and living in a pig pen - or look for someone else. These are just two examples of how a relationship and possible marriage can be checked out for the long run, and not just evaluated on having a good time together when they go out. As already mentioned, there are also many couples who only consider each other "fun" when both are drinking. Take that principle and apply it to long-term affects, and the prospects for a happy marriage are almost nil.

By the rightful time of engagement, a couple should not only have talked about long-term goals, ambitions, and philosophy of life, but should agree on the vast majority of them. The couple should not only be comfortable with other than superficial chit-chat, but should

also be comfortable with silence. One of the best indications of a good mental relationship is not to have to be talking all the time. If you and your fiancé can be in the same house, or same room, and be involved in different things without the need of the physical touching of affection or the mental touching of talking, you have a good satisfying relationship. While it is natural at this stage of a relationship to want to share physical affection often, "hanging on each other" is more of a sign of infatuation. That is another thing that would end soon after the honeymoon. Another evaluation in this area is the ability to sit together on a couch and each read a book - without the need to constantly kiss or grope each other.

An engaged couple should be spending about 90% of their time together in home activities. "Going out" should be no more than once a week, whether it is a special event or just an outside activity together.

In comparing time spent "going out" in the stages of steadily dating, going steady, and engagement, a general guide should also be given in regard to *total* time together. In steadily dating, the couple should not be getting together more than once or twice a week. Being with one person six days out of every week and the other day with someone else, will not allow the relationship to grow at an appropriate rate - or stay at an appropriate level. In going steady, the couple should not be together more than three or four days a week. Any more than that, and one or both may soon feel trapped into having to be together every day before the relationship has grown to where that is a comfortable situation. While emotions will sometimes cause a desire to be together every day (in the beginning), reason should understand and dictate that it is not a good idea in the long run.

There have been many couples who broke-up because they did not give their relationship a chance. There was too-much time together, too-soon in the relationship. Karl Menninger said, "We do not fall in love; we grow in love, and love grows in us." Too-much too-soon is like trying to prepare a good meal and serving a vegetable that did not ripen yet.

For engagement, it might be thought that being together seven days a week would be suggested. Only six is suggested, however, as the maximum for a very important reason. The engagement period should include as much as possible a preparation of how marriage will be lived on a practical daily level. This includes not only physical preparation for time to be spent together, but mental preparation for time to be spent apart. They will not spend every waking non-working moment together. No matter how much a couple Love each other, that does not mean that they will completely and equally share every outside interest. In fact, some different interests may be as equally important as having some common interests. It is another fact that the willingness of one to hear the talk of the other about an interest not shared is an important element of the mutual compatibility necessary for a good relationship in marriage. It is necessary for each spouse to not just tolerate, but to actually

encourage the other in cultivating old interests of their own and developing new ones. This keeps each spouse from becoming stale mentally, which can lead to a stale relationship. This principle involves time as well as the interests themselves.

If this is to be practiced after marriage, then it should also be practiced before marriage. If the girl resents her boyfriend having a "night out with the boys" while they are engaged, then she will resent it even more after they are married. It is the same for him on how he feels about her having a "night out with the girls." (The gate should swing both ways.) At the same time, she would rightfully resent him getting drunk and hanging around floozies at a bar on his night out while she took an art class or attended a meeting or function of a charitable organization. The same would be true if he was involved on a sports team, while she got together with a group of females who spent all their time condemning men in general and marriage in specific. If it is something positive, then this night out a week (at the most, two) should be encouraged.

At the same time on the opposite side of the coin, having meetings, or functions, or activities to go to four or five nights every week is not only detrimental to the relationship they are in and the one they are preparing for, but again, it sets a precedent for what it will be after marriage. There are a hundred good organizations in which a person can join, and a hundred other activities in which a person can participate. It is neither necessary nor desirable for any person to feel as if they must constantly be "involved" in everything or the world will fall apart without their involvement. The simple desire to "stay home" as well as the ability to say "No" is a valuable one for the single person as well as those who are married.

For one, married people were once single, and if the involvement in outside activities does not slow down before marriage, it may be a difficult habit to break after marriage. (One reason is that there will always be people who call on you for your time - especially if they know you find it hard to say "No.")

If you are very involved, then the engagement period - if not before - is the time to start giving more time to your fiancé, because it will be necessary to give this time when that person becomes your spouse.

The engagement period is a time for getting and understanding of some of the reality of what marriage would be like with the other person. It also must be long enough for this reality to set in. If the engagement period is only a month or two, then this whole period is taken up with the actual plans for the wedding itself. It is a common occurrence for couples to be more involved in preparing for the wedding than in preparing for the marriage.

Preparing for the wedding is usually comparable to a snowball going downhill. It continually gathers size and speed. If a couple is standing at the top of the hill looking down, it is not likely they are thinking about anything else except the giant snowball heading towards the bottom. What is necessary during the beginning of the engagement period is to stand on the top of the hill and take a close

look at each other, rather than start a snowball rolling. This close look involves evaluating the other person's attributes and qualities as pertains to the *lifetime* of a marriage - not just the initial phase.

Probably the biggest mistake in selecting a marriage partner is overlooking the necessity of having the kind of qualities that are necessary for a successful and happy marriage over 10 or 25 or 50 years. As mentioned previously, the only qualities that seem to be considered by most today are 1) physical attraction, and 2) fun to be with. Let us be honest and admit that the physical attraction will not stay at the same level as it is on the honeymoon. It is nice to be planning to marry someone with the same feelings, but it is far more important to be planning to marry someone with the same philosophy.

The first natural aspect is that the emotions involved with attraction lessen as a result of simply getting accustomed to the looks of the other from being around them so often. The second natural aspect which contributes to the first is that there is usually a weight gain over time, and nothing may affect physical attraction more than a weight change. (It can work both ways of course: a weight gain means a decrease in physical attraction, and a weight loss means an increase in physical attraction.)

The third aspect is not a natural occurrence, but a learned one, and that is the lack of attention to details that helped make them attractive to each other in the first place - like the woman wearing at least a little make-up and the man shaving. Anyway, the physical attraction - for whatever reasons - will not stay at the same high level forever.

The second reason, "fun to be with," can be as superficial as physical attraction. Having sexual intercourse in marriage helps keep physical attraction alive and well, but no one married for any period of time would claim that marriage is always "fun." It does not have to get to boredom, but it certainly gets to repetitious - and often to tedious. Marriage is more "staying in" than "going out" - and the qualities of enjoyable company within each of those two categories are sometimes mutually exclusive.

An example is the boy who drives a sports car, drives wild, hangs around bars, and spends money freely with no thought of tomorrow. He may be a "fun" date, but will more than likely make a lousy husband. Then there's the cool beauty queen who basks in the attention given her by all men, and who has been spoiled since childhood. She may be a "fun" date, but will more than likely make a lousy wife.

The qualities of a good husband and a good wife - as well as those of a good father and a good mother - are not the ones that usually show through on a "fun" date. They are qualities that must first be recognized as the most important qualities - and then evaluated honestly in the other person with an eye toward the future.

The worst thing a newly engaged couple can do is to start planning the wedding. That is fun and exciting and everyone is interested in helping because it is fun and exciting for them also. There will be no guide here for preparing a wedding, as everyone from florists to tuxedo rentals to photographers to dress shops have

guides available for the asking. (It is even possible that they want you preparing for the wedding itself well in advance in order to help that snowball pick up speed. Always remember that weddings mean money to them. Postponed or canceled weddings do not.)

The best thing a newly engaged couple can do is to make a particular and in-depth evaluation of the relationship. An in-depth evaluation of the other person should have taken place during going steady, and if found lacking in enough important areas, an engagement should never have happened.

The evaluation of the relationship should be two-sided, and should clarify issues and problem areas in order to open or continue discussions, and to necessitate understandings, compromises, or solutions. One of the most complete aids for accomplishing this is a booklet called FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) which is put out by the Family Life Office in Omaha, Nebraska. It is a list of 156 statements upon which a couple individually makes a response - either Agree, Disagree, or Uncertain - and then discuss them. (Information on ordering copies is listed in the Bibliography.)

Having a long enough engagement allows an in-depth and objective evaluation of the qualities of the other person and their suitability for marriage. One interesting way of starting this evaluation is for the couple to sit down and write the reasons why they want to marry each other. The only regulation is that they cannot use the word "love" in their explanation. It is similar to asking, "Why do you love me?" It requires an answer in more concrete terms than simply throwing it all under a general emotion as defined by "Because I love you." For a marriage to last 50 years or more, it had better be based on more than that.

To continue this evaluation, another good format is an actual list of questions to which each person answers separately, and then a comparison is made with ensuing discussions. These questions may include the following: (These are different from those in the FOCCUS questionnaire.)

- 1) How many persons of the opposite sex have you dated? Your fiancé? Has that number been a positive or negative influence?
- 2) Name three things that you talk about the most when together.
- 3) How do you feel about the other person's hobbies or interests? How does your fiancé feel about yours?
- 4) Name three things you enjoy doing together (not counting "making-out").
- 5) How do I think marriage will change me? My fiancé?
- 6) How important is money to me? My fiancé?
- 7) Am I thrifty or a spendthrift? My fiancé?
- 8) Who will manage the money after marriage, and how will it be done?
- 9) How important is sex to me? To my fiancé?
- 10) How many children do I want? My fiancé?

- 11) How much time will I want to spend alone, or with my friends after marriage? My fiancé?
- 12) How often will I expect my spouse and I to go out after marriage? After we have children?
- 13) How soon am I interested in having our first child? My fiancé?
- 14) Name three things you like about your fiancé. Name three things your fiancé likes about you.
- 15) Name three things you do not like about your fiancé that should be improved or changed.
- 16) Name three things your fiancé does not like about you that should be improved or changed.
- 17) Name three things you Love about your fiancé. Name three things your fiancé Loves about you.
- 18) What is the one thing you find most difficult or unpleasant to talk about? What is it for your fiancé?
- 19) How would you feel if your fiancé gained 25-50 lbs. after marriage? How would your fiancé feel about you gaining that amount of weight?
- 20) How does your fiancé feel about your parents and best friend? How do you feel about your fiancé's parents and best friend?
- 21) Name three things that are points of disagreement now.
- 22) What should be our rules for handling the discussion of disagreements after marriage?
- 23) What is a sensitive area in which you cannot take kidding? What is one in which you cannot take criticism?
- 24) How do you handle a bad mood of your fiancé? How does your fiancé handle yours?
- 25) What are the methods of discipline that will be used with your children?
- 26) What is the attitude of both of you about the future husband's work?
- 27) Will the future wife work out of the home? After children are born?
- 28) If the future wife works, how will that affect your relationship and your home life?
- 29) Is smoking, drinking, or drugs a problem with you now? Your fiancé?
- 30) Is jealousy or possessiveness a problem with you? With your fiancé?
- 31) What is one area of your relationship in which you would like to see improvement?
- 32) What is one thing that you would like to do more often together?
- 33) What is your usual method of avoiding conflict?
- 34) If you or your fiancé was suddenly paralyzed, would the wedding still take place? Why? What if it happened after marriage?
- 35) What is your biggest concern about married life?

- 36) Do you believe in divorce? Under what circumstances would you attempt to falsely justify it?
- 37) Will there be a "head of the house"? Who will it be?
- 38) How often do you quarrel now? Over what? How is it settled?
- 39) Will the above three change or stay the same after marriage? Why? What could change it?
- 40) How important is faithfulness to you? To your fiancée?
- 41) Do you plan to be faithful after marriage? Your fiancée?
- 42) Have you engaged in premarital sex? Your fiancée?
- 43) If "Yes" to Question 42, how many for you? Your fiancée?
- 44) How will the answer to Question 43 affect the odds of Question 41 remaining "Yes" in action after you are married?
- 45) What is one thing you would like to change about your fiancée? What is one thing your fiancée would like to change about you?
- 46) Does the future wife know how to cook? Like to cook?
- 47) Are you a procrastinator? Your fiancée?
- 48) Are you neat? Your fiancée? How important is a neat house and yard to each of you?
- 49) Do you think "Please" and "Thank you" should be used often between husbands and wives? Your fiancée?
- 50) How important are small affections and thoughtfulness to you? Your fiancée?
- 51) Can you express true feelings to each other without fear of being ignored, put down, or rejected?
- 52) Do you keep secret the personal matters between the two of you including your fiancée's problems and faults?
- 53) Do you offer your fiancée encouragement, cooperation and emotional support? Does your fiancée offer it to you?
- 54) Do you have a problem with nagging? Your fiancée?
- 55) What is your philosophy concerning marriage? Is it a life-long commitment to God and each other which must be worked at on a daily basis, or is it just a legal shacking-up which lasts as long as everything is fine emotionally? What is your fiancée's philosophy concerning marriage?
- 56) What is your earthly goal in life? Your fiancée's?
- 57) How will you help your fiancée get to Heaven? How will your fiancée help you get to Heaven?

Granted, some of these are tough questions, but life is often tough and so is marriage. Learning to communicate on important issues before marriage definitely makes it easier to do so after marriage. Every one of these questions will come up after marriage, and the more that is understood and agreed on ahead of time, the less problems that will arise later.

If enough is not agreed on ahead of time, or the honest evaluation of a fiancée finds them short of the mark as a potential good mate, then the time to part company is before marriage - not after.

One good way to help the evaluation to be honest is to share the answers with one or more persons who are trusted in their wisdom, and sincerely interested in your future happiness. This should include your parents, who should be more interested in your long-term happiness than in simply "marrying you off." It should also include the clergyman who is to marry you, and also, if desired, to a marriage counselor. (Do not take it to someone who is sour on the institution of marriage in general, or sour to the whole opposite sex in specific. Their opinion is not exactly unbiased.) The clergyman or counselor should then talk to each person separately and then both together.

Some religions have this kind of evaluation as part of their customary preparation of a couple for marriage. In the Roman Catholic Church, it is known as Pre-Cana. (Cana is the town where Christ performed the first miracle at a wedding feast.) Couples must notify a priest between four and six months before a wedding date is set, and during this time they attend discussions on marriages with married couples and professional counselors.

In Protestant churches, the minister usually spends time with each couple in discussions on marriage, but there is no church-wide regulation involving a waiting period before marriage or any standardized pre-nuptial preparation. It is much the same in the Jewish religion. All priests, ministers and rabbi, however, are concerned with helping to prepare couples for the state of matrimony.

Hopefully, the point has been made on not only the importance of a couple's honest evaluation of each other and their relationship, but the absolute necessity of it. If a couple begins a marriage with the idea that it will last as long as it is "fun," then little or no evaluation needs to be made. If it is for a lifetime, though, then no amount of evaluation is too involved or too complicated.

Everyone will have their own basis for evaluating what they need and want in a marriage partner. For some it may be only 50% of the total of good qualities. For others it will be 90%. Unfortunately for many, it is realized too late that while someone with 50% can still make a good date, they rarely make a good mate. It is probably unwise to marry someone with less than 80% good qualities, and if the 20% deficiencies are in very important areas, then it still is unwise.

One example of that is in the area of parenthood. Just because a person is physically mature enough to be a parent does not mean that the person is spiritually and mentally ready for the responsibilities of parenthood, or emotionally capable of doing the job. Babies are "cute," but they are also a lot of trouble. While parenthood is probably the most rewarding job in the world, it is also probably the most difficult. That is because it is the job with the greatest responsibility in the world: that of the development of a completely helpless baby into a spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally functioning young adult.

If you are not already one of those kinds of adults yourself, then you are certainly not ready for parenthood. And if you are not ready for parenthood, then you are not ready for marriage. Contrast this

philosophy with the modern thinking that either: a) parenthood should never have to be considered before pre-marital sex (among other things) and b) the only important preparation in married couples for parenthood is financial readiness.

There is one additional point to be made on the evaluation of a marriage partner. You do want to wait for someone with enough good qualities, because being unhappily married is much worse than being unhappily single.

At the same time, do not wait for someone "perfect" to come along - because the "perfect" person does not exist. If marriage is your vocation, then you will have to be satisfied with someone who has faults, just like someone will have to be satisfied with you and your faults. Otherwise you could end up like the aspiring photographer who never buys a camera because he thinks the next year's model will always be better.

You can never be happy in this life if you expect perfection in others - or even in yourself.

GOOD QUALITIES OF A SPOUSE

Just what are the "good qualities" that should be looked for? These would include strong religious beliefs, high morals, kindness, consideration, understanding, appreciation, respect, maturity, good work ethics, common sense, continual learner, lack of jealousy and possessiveness, lack of smoking, drinking, drugs, and gambling, even-tempered, sense of humor, adaptability, honesty, trusting, faithfulness, affectionate, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, unselfishness, sacrifice, and love of children.

At first glance all these qualities may seem self-evident as good, but let us break them down into possible specific applications as they will occur in a lifetime of marriage.

There are two parts of "*strong religious beliefs*" as a quality. The first is that it is a *good* quality in that other desired qualities are most often based on religious beliefs. This means that other good qualities are based on believed principles and not just are pragmatic and for the time being.

The second part would make it a *best* quality - and that is if the other person has the same religious beliefs. That is most often given little or no importance before marriage. So what if each person has different beliefs? It is usually avoided as a topic of conversation in order to prevent a possible (or probable) argument. It is not an important element on dates. Even when groups of friends are together, nothing stops a conversation faster than to bring up "God." Even for many people who call themselves "religious," that simply means that they go to church on Sunday. That does not mean that God or religion has anything to do with their daily lives.

Which brings us to the second quality - *high morals*. Usually a person's morals are determined and defined by religious beliefs. Different religious beliefs often means a different set of morals. While this may occasionally come up before marriage (as well as with some of the other qualities mentioned) it will not come up anywhere near the level that it will after marriage.

It is rare for a person to become more religious and therefore more moral after marriage. What usually happens is that both tend to sink to the lowest common denominator of the two. If one spouse is outwardly religious and the other one is lukewarm, the second one is liable to give up religion altogether, and the first one becomes lukewarm. If one spouse is lukewarm and the second one is irreligious, then before long, both are liable to be irreligious. The only time it seems to stay the same is when one person is so strong in religion that they refuse to be influenced negatively by the other person. There is really no such thing as religious beliefs and practices "staying the same." It may look the same on the surface, but either a person's relationship with God is always improving because of continuous effort, or it is deteriorating because of the lack of it. There is no such thing as a plateau in one's spiritual life.

Different religious beliefs - or different levels of belief and practice - can cause major problems after marriage that are not even hinted at during courtship. Any decision that effects morals and ethics are based on the principles that one lives by. If two people who live by different principles get married, the problems that come up in these areas will be big problems - not like the kind of disagreements over what kind of car or TV to buy.

Two of the biggest moral problems today are the acceptance by some of abortion, and the acceptance by most of artificial contraception. A disagreement over the morality of these has to affect the basic fabric of any relationship. With the practice of artificial birth control, the couple is basically telling God, "We want our plan for sex - whenever we want - without the possibility of conception taking place. We don't want your plan of every act of sex to be open to the transmission of life." (When a couple does not want the sacrifices involved in having a child, then the only moral action is to trade for the sacrifice of not having sex a few days a month when the woman can conceive.) The only time this may come up before marriage is if the couple is engaging in fornication. Then the question of whether or not to practice contraception comes up, and the question of an abortion comes up if there is a conception. Regardless how this couple would feel on either of these two questions, they are already practicing "selected morality" by committing fornication in the first place.

A couple with high morals, (but of two different religions), may not have these problems either before or after marriage, but they have others. One that is not important to their relationship before marriage is "In what religion will the children be brought up?" This problem becomes very important to their relationship after marriage. Of course, an easy solution for some is not to bring up children in any religion - which abandons them to the world without any moral guide or direction.

Often the excuse from the parents is "We are going to wait until they are adults and let them choose for themselves." While this sounds nice on paper, it is illogical in practice. A person will always "choose for themselves" when once they are an adult. The choice to be irreligious is always there and can easily be put into practice in an instant. If, however, no background is ever given in religious beliefs, then making a choice in that direction is not as easily put into practice. It is always easier to drop religious beliefs, values and morals after being taught them, than pick them up after never having exposure to them.

To wait until they are adults to choose religious beliefs for themselves is worse than waiting for them to be adults to decide whether they want to learn to read and write or to learn basic math.

Of course, parents who do not give their children religious beliefs, values, and morals more often than not find their children rejecting all authority and all distinctions of right and wrong from that authority. Then they wring their hands when this causes a multitude of trouble for their children - which in turn always causes problems for the

parents.

It should already be able to be seen that these kind of situations and problems do not just go away because the couple are "physically attracted to each other," and "have fun with each other."

Connected to religious beliefs are the qualities that reflect the continual attempt to be a better person - to be more Christ-like in dealings with other human beings. This philosophy leads one to practice these qualities to a greater (not lesser) degree with one's spouse than anyone else. These include *kindness, consideration, understanding, appreciation, respect, and unselfishness*. A person with these qualities would not only want to protect the mental state of their spouse, but improve it. This is shown in the effort to make the other person happy. It is not shown when one spouse constantly dumps their stress, hassles, and frustrations onto the other person. When this happens on a regular basis, much of the time a couple spends together is really unpleasant. Again, this happens after marriage when a couple is no longer trying to "win" each other and are on their best behavior.

Because of the "courting" attitude, it is usual to see some of these qualities being practiced, especially in the beginning of a relationship. When it is still there after dating for a long time, there is a better chance of it remaining that way after marriage. Also, before marriage we may get some or much of our need for these qualities from people other than our steady or fiancé. After marriage, most of it will always be needed from the spouse.

The quality of *appreciation* is important, because daily married life becomes repetitive, and the routine jobs that each do within the marriage should never be taken for granted. "Thank you's" should not be reserved for only special favors, and "You did a nice job" should not be reserved for only special accomplishments.

Respect is accepting other people for what they are - and not just for what they may become. It is also treating them in the manner in which they deserve.

Maturity and a *good work ethic* attitude go together. Maturity involves the acceptance of adult responsibilities, and one of the most important is in the area of work and finances. When single, spending money as fast as it is made is only a concern in which it reflects an attitude. This attitude is natural for a teenager or young adult, but it had better change long before marriage. A prospective husband had better have shown the ability to save money, no matter how much earned. A prospective wife had better realize that frugality is the standard operating procedure for a new marriage. Both had better accept the fact that a new house, two new cars, and an unlimited spending account for clothes and travel does not come with the marriage license.

A thousand years ago, or even a hundred years ago, a couple could get married without a dime in their pockets and make it; this was partly because they did not have the attitude of today's generation of instant gratification of all material wants. They also did not have the costs of today's house payment or rent, or utilities, car payments,

gas, food, and forty-three kinds of insurance. It now takes a nice size income just to break even. That was not the case in times past.

If one spouse wants to live a simple life, and the other wants to live a luxurious one, there will be conflict. At no other time in history did money worries cause as many problems in marriages as it does today. The good work ethic attitude has a bearing on all financial matters. Without that attitude, it will be difficult to get a job - and almost impossible to keep one. Then there is the situation of a spouse with a good work ethic attitude who is stuck in a good paying job that they dislike. It is, or becomes, a matter of not being able to do the kind of work enjoyed because the salary of that job is not as high as the one presently held. To be stuck in a dreaded job affects not only the person stuck, but always the spouse also.

Common sense and *continual learner* also go together. Just living an orderly daily life constantly involves using common sense. Dealing with a real ding-bat may not be an important issue when dating, but trying to deal with one constantly after marriage can drive one up the wall. Being a continual learner means a continual effort to improve oneself mentally, both for the edification of the learner and for conversations with the spouse. One of the fastest ways to "grow old" is to stop being interested in learning new things. It is also one of the fastest ways of becoming boring to yourself and to others. This is not a problem when dating because of the different things that are happening in each other's separate lives that are talked about when together. The repetition of married life is a totally different situation.

The level of *intelligence* is not a requisite for marriage as such, which is why it is not listed. However, it is better if the general intelligence of both spouses in a marriage are relatively on the same level. This is for their own benefit when together, as well as when they are in the company of friends.

The *lack of jealousy or possessiveness* has already been covered. The *lack of smoking, drinking, and drugs* have more important consequences than just the physical health of the person involved. It is well documented that not only can smoking cause lung cancer in the smoker, but also in anyone else affected by secondary smoke. It is also known how a pregnant woman's smoking affects her unborn baby. Of course, this is even more true if she drinks or uses drugs. While it seems inconceivable that a mother would be willing to harm her baby for life for a little "pleasure" of her own, it does happen all the time. The same can be true for the father in the case of drugs.

Drinking and drugs have brought more unhappiness, depression, misery, and despair into lives than just about anything else. Anyone who does not see the evil lurking in even "social drinking" or "recreational drugs" should talk to anyone who's life has been decimated by either - or to their spouse or children. It would seem that any type of drinking or drug problem may affect either the non-development or non-practicing of all of the other qualities listed.

Again, people forget to take the long-range view of the future when making decisions on actions of the present. You cannot

become an alcoholic or drug addict if you never get started in the first place.

The lack of a gambling habit actually ties in with maturity and a good work ethic attitude. A gambler wants to "strike it rich," not by ability and hard work, but by luck. This is not a realistic acceptance of our own personal labor as the normal means of living our vocation, and also of an understanding and appreciation of the self-satisfaction of hard work. All this involves a lack of real maturity.

Even-tempered makes our relationship with ourselves and other people run much smoother. It is the ability to not get upset at the smallest things - and then take it out on someone else. It is being able to stay calm while the world rages around us. A popular current term for this is to be "mellow."

Sense of humor is carrying even-tempered a step further. It is not the ability to tell a dirty joke or laugh at someone else. It is the capacity to see the lighter side of all of life, and to be able to laugh at yourself for your actions as a non-perfect human being. Having a good sense of humor makes life much easier to bear for yourself, and also helps you accept the foibles and idiosyncrasies of other people.

Adaptability ties back to maturity. It is a realistic acceptance of the fact that your spouse is not perfect, nor will ever be perfect. It is also realizing that they have personal habits that will drive you batty if you concentrate on them. It is also the knowledge that neither daily life nor lifetime plans will ever go always as mentally formulated. Where there will always be some disappointment and frustration when life does not work out how we want (or within the time frame we desire) it should not be debilitating.

Honesty and *trusting* go together because if you are honest, you should be and will be trusted. At the same time, the virtue of honesty does not mean that it is necessary to tell your spouse something that would do harm. An example is the man who is faithful to his wife who is propositioned by a woman who works in the same office with him. It would do no good to go home and tell his wife what happened and that he refused her. Sure, that would make her proud of him, but it could also cause the ugly head of jealousy to rise. She might then start worrying about him whenever he was at work. This could lead to questions (or the "third degree") every time he was late coming back from the office. Even if it never happened again, the wife would be uncomfortable around all women from the office - especially around that particular woman if she knew who it was. He would not be dishonest in not telling his wife anything in the first place. He would simply be avoiding trouble and saving his wife needless concern or anxiety. In fact, he would be showing his wife much more consideration in not mentioning her, than by telling her all about it. Of course, if she heard about it from someone else and asked him about it, he should tell her the truth - that it happened, he refused, and he did not tell her about it because of his concern for her peace of mind.

Faithfulness does not just mean not committing adultery. It means faithfulness to all the marriage vows. While this can only

really be proven after marriage, there are indications ahead of time as to whether or not it will be. The most important is that if God is not a priority in someone's life (even though He should be the highest priority in everyone's life), then making vows to God means very little, and then making vows to another person will mean even less. One small indication of this would be if a person is a "fair-weather friend" to others. Another warning would be the lack of consistency between words and actions, or being wishy-washy when it is important to stand firm. It is following the crowd instead of personal principles. Any or all of these examples may show how it is possible to supposedly mean the vows on the wedding day - and have a change of mind at some time later.

Affectionate is a quality that has been overlooked (if not lost) with the modern emphasis on passion, lust and sex. The importance of it, both before and after marriage, will be covered later.

All of the above qualities can be evident or not-evident during dating, but usually only really tested after marriage. The qualities of *patience* and *tolerance*, are tested when the idealism of having married a faultless person ends, and the realization sets in that your spouse not only has faults, but also little habits that really get on your nerves. To concentrate on the few dislikes rather than the many you like is to dwell on the negative.

There was an old TV show about two policemen who were partners and who rode in the same police car every day. In one episode, they got along well until a police psychologist told them to tell each other whatever habit the other one has that bothered them. They could not think of any, but the psychologist insisted that there must be something. Finally, to get it over with, they each mentioned a minor habit of the other that they could do without seeing or hearing. After that session, they could not ride with each other without the previously un-bothersome habits really getting on each other's nerves. Minor matters had become major matters by concentrating and focusing on them.

In a marriage, each spouse has to learn to let a lot of little things go by unmentioned. Then there are other small things that can be mentioned tactfully, but dropped if there is no improvement or change. No one likes a nag.

In dating, it was discussed how being "on time" is important with some people. If one spouse marries another who is seldom "on time" but has many other qualities, it is something that will just have to be accepted. It is not difficult to take the bad with the good as long as the good far outweighs the bad. At the same time, over a period of years it will take more patience to deal with the "bad" if there is no improvement. In actuality, there should be improvement or change if each spouse is willing to be helped by the other in "weak" areas.

There are two sides of the quality of *forgiveness*. One is the ability to forgive yourself. This ties back to religious beliefs. In the Our Father, it is "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." No one is perfect. We all make mistakes and we all sin. Both need to be forgiven. We will never always do or say the

right thing at the right time. This is part of the reality of this life.

If we accept the fact that we are not perfect and that God forgives us when we are sorry, then we must be willing to do the same to ourselves and to others. Many people live a life without peace of Soul because they cannot forgive others of hurts caused - whether it was accidental or intentional. There are others who lack peace of mind because they are forever chastising themselves for wrongs they have committed. Constantly living in the past - especially the negative past - can be crippling to the mind, and prevent one from seeing the reality of the present and the hope of the future.

Love of children is a quality that is often taken for granted. Even if Love is not shown to anyone else's children, there is this conscious or subconscious belief that it will suddenly be in full bloom for one's own children. While it is true that it is natural to Love one's own children more than anyone else's, it is also true that parental love is not always totally automatic. If it was, there would never be any cases of child abuse. And there certainly would not be a million and a half mothers each year who kill their own baby growing in their womb through the evil of abortion.

The last qualities - but certainly not the least - are *unselfishness* and *sacrifice*. It could be said that they are the evidence of having most of the other qualities. They are certainly the end product of Love, because they are Love in action.

Actions always speak louder than words. Words are cheap when not proven by actions - they are empty, meaningless, and a lie. No marriage has ever been successful or happy without each spouse having the ability to be unselfish and a willingness to sacrifice.

While it is not absolutely necessary for a potential good spouse to have every one of the above qualities, the more that each one brings to a marriage, the better the chance of the marriage being happy and permanent. If one person has 50% of the qualities and the other has 50%, that does not make a 100% marriage - not if 100% is taken to mean total and complete. If added, that total of 100% is only half of what is possible, because if each person had 100% of the qualities, it would add up to 200%.

Also, the complete presence of a particular quality in one spouse does not make up for its complete absence in the other. Hopefully, it can be seen that these are the qualities of a person that will or will not make them a good spouse, and not only the aforementioned "physical attraction" and "fun to be with." The latter are not worthless qualities; they are just not the foundation upon which to build a good marriage.

The important, honest, and total evaluation as to the presence or absence of these qualities should be started during the going steady period. If enough of the qualities are not present, the relationship should never get to the engagement level. Becoming engaged, however, should not mean that the evaluation should stop. That also means that getting engaged should not mean that it is necessary for a marriage to take place. While it is always easier to slow the snowball down before engagement, that does not mean it cannot be stopped,

and should be stopped in many cases. While no one can see into the future, at least foresight should be used in planning for it.

Being together six days a week over a long period of time for an engagement is one of the steps in the planning. There was a case of a girl who went home one day and told her mother that she was getting married to her boyfriend. The mother agreed, provided that until the wedding she wanted the boy over every day after work until midnight, when he would go home and she would go to bed. After nine days, the girl broke off the engagement - she was sick of having him around. (If they had gotten married, it might have lasted 18 days.)

Being around someone for a few hours a week, or even a few hours a day over a period of a few months, is not the same as being around them for most of your non-working hours for the rest of your life.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

This preparation should not start at the beginning of the engagement period, or going steady, or even with dating. The planning for the future starts in childhood, with parents doing the planning.

Wise and loving parents should have started preparing their children for the vocation of marriage long before they were even interested in the opposite sex. While the best preparation is always a good example, it also includes such things as developing responsibility by having children do chores, and not spoiling them by giving them everything they want when they want it. Accepting the responsibility of marriage and learning to work and wait for material possessions is not an attitude that comes automatically with the marriage license. When parents develop the right attitudes in their children, the practice of those attitudes develops the qualities that makes one a good person, and the possibility of being a good spouse.

It could also be said that all of those qualities fit under "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." While everyone would want to be treated right, they do not always treat others the same way. If we do not treat others badly first, we often react to them that way in return if they are guilty of it first, or if at least we convince ourselves of that. While it is well understood that not everyone has all the good qualities listed it should be equally understood that everyone *could* have all of them. Whatever is missing in a child depends first on the parents, second on friends and acquaintances, and third on society in general.

Once a person is an adult, however, whatever is missing is their own fault. Pointing the blame on anyone else then is only an excuse. As an adult, we choose what we are and what we will become. While there may be more effort involved because of negative childhood environment (and even heredity) that does not absolve anyone of their responsibility in the matter, or the blame for not accepting that responsibility.

All the excuses commonly used are false: "I cannot control my anger because I have always had a bad temper." - "I am not affectionate because my parents were not affectionate to me." - "I do not have any self-respect because my mother was a prostitute." - "I am abusive to women because my father beat my mother." - "I take drugs because no one has given me a break." - "It is not my fault I steal because I grew up in poverty." - "I am selfish because no one else cared about me." - "I cannot make a commitment because I grew up in a fatherless home." - "I am not religious because my parents never took me to church." - "I am jealous because it is a part of my nature." - "I do not have to be faithful because no one else is."

There are a hundred more, but this should give an idea of some of the main ones. It would be fitting to add as the final one, "I am only paranoid because everyone *is* out to get me." All excuses are simply

means to try to escape responsibility for your own actions.

There is another important aspect to a marriage that is seldom discussed beforehand because of the inevitable conflict in philosophy that would follow. That concerns (for women) the most hated word in any language - "obey." This is another major problem that is a modern invention - at least in practice if not in opinion. In the past wives obeyed their husbands, without argument, even if without agreement. Females were taught that principle from childhood, and it was commonly accepted by individuals and society.

Wives obeying their husbands was set up by girls obeying their fathers. While the fathers may not have chosen whom their daughters would marry, they certainly had a say in whom their daughters did not marry. This decision was also previewed in the beginning of the courting stage. In the 1800's, a young man courting a woman in her home would be expected to leave when a particular candle burned out. If the father liked him, it would be a long candle; if not, a short one.

Fathers had an important say in their daughters' marriages because they could evaluate a couple more on reason than emotion. Many a father suffered temporary misunderstanding and loss of affection from their daughters for making an unpopular decision in regard to a suitor. When done with Love, it was to prevent their daughters from making a big mistake and the future unhappiness which would follow from it.

The principle of a male operating more from reason than emotion is probably the reason for the father's authority passing to the husband. Hence the young man asking the father's permission to marry, receiving approval, and then the father "giving the bride away" at the wedding. Obviously it did not always work as well in practice as in theory, but that may be more due to the individuals involved than the theory itself.

The acceptance of wives to the practice of obedience to their husbands was based on beliefs found in the Bible. The New Testament exhorts elderly women

"...to train younger women...to be discreet, chaste, domestic, gentle, obedient to their husbands, so that the word of God be not reviled(Titus 2:5)

This principle is also expressed in several other passages:

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is becoming to the Lord." (Colossians 3:18)

"In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands." (1 Peter 3:1)

"Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; because a husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Church, being himself

savior of the body. But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things."

(Ephesians 5:22-24)

It takes a very thick pair of rose-colored glasses to misinterpret all these. Most of these quotes come from St. Paul, which makes him very unpopular with some people. Most of these "some people" are of the female gender. The New Testament commands are also backed up by the Old Testament, which says that God told Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had committed Original Sin,

"For your husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over you."

(Genesis 3:16)

It is a historical fact that until recently, all Christians (as well as many other religions) expected wives to obey their husbands. There certainly seems to be a contradiction in calling oneself a "Christian" and believing otherwise. Since Christ was crucified for telling people how to live correctly, it could not have done Him any harm to preach our modern definition of "equality of the sexes" if that is what He thought a marital relationship should be.

While both men and women are certainly equal in their personal self-worth and their value in a marriage, that does not deny the fact that they are better suited for different roles in a marriage because of different mental, physical, and emotional talents. Unfortunately "equality" has come to mean "sameness." It cannot be denied or ignored that since that happened (and women have been led into believing that being a wife and mother is not "fulfilling" enough) the divorce rate has increased drastically.

The breakdown of the family has not made mothers or fathers or their children happier. There is also a larger percentage of unhappy marriages that have not broken up - yet. Anyone is allowed their own opinion on whether the trade-off for an attempt at "equality" has been worth it.

Since all moral principles are based on practical applications (consider what this country would be like without "Thou Shalt Not Steal"), let us examine a few of those applications without the principle of wives obeying husbands. The first obvious result would be that neither one has the final say. While compromising plays an important part in a good marriage, there are always some decisions that need to fall to the highest authority. In an "equality" marriage, if the husband wanted to live in Alaska, and the wife wanted to live in Florida, is living in Montana a compromise? If the wife wants a second car and the husband does not, is buying a go-cart a compromise? If the husband wants to buy his son a hunting rifle and the wife does not want her son touching a rifle, is it a compromise to buy him a handgun? If the wife is so mad at her husband she wants

to burn the house down and he wants it unharmed, do they compromise by letting her torch only the kitchen, living room and one bedroom?

These examples may seem to be a little extreme, but that is exactly what would happen between a husband and wife when there would be a struggle for power.

Another example that is not an extreme is the husband wanting a big family and the wife wanting no children - or vice versa. What number is the compromise? In every decision without an amiable agreed-on compromise (which would probably be most of them) there would eventually emerge a winner and a loser. Psychologically, this battle for power and winner-loser outcomes will destroy a relationship.

There's ample proof of this as a result of relationships already destroyed. Consider the battle for power and the winner-loser outcome of divorce proceedings. There is no other time in any human relationship when there is as much vindictiveness, if not viciousness. These are all between couples, by the way, who pledged "undying love for each other forever." In these modern times, the length of "forever" has diminished considerably - because the definition of "love" has changed considerably.

Where there is authority and its decisions followed, obedience to that authority is not considered "losing." When a child obeys, he learns to follow the wisdom of his parents - and therefore is winning. When a quarterback obeys his coach, he is learning from a source of greater knowledge - and therefore winning. When an employee obeys his boss, he learns his work better (or at least keeps his job) - and therefore is winning. Picture a job where each employee has an equal amount of power as the boss. No job would ever get finished. Picture a football team where each player has the same power as the coach. That would make for an interesting huddle. No game could ever be played, much less won. Picture a home where each child has as much power as the parents. There is no need to suggest picturing the outcome of that situation.

While no organization or society could last without authority, that does not mean that the authority should be a dictator. The Bible also commands husbands - since they are given the authority - on how they are to treat their wives.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church." (Ephesians 5:25)

"Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter towards them." (Colossians 3:19)

Both of the last quotes are again from St. Paul, so he definitely swings the gates of responsibility both ways. It is necessary, of course, for a person to believe two things in order to accept these teachings and practice them. First, it must be believed that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. This leads to an intellectual acceptance

of what it contains. Second, it must be believed that it was inspired by God as a guide for our lives, in order to make our lives better - if it is followed - for both the *here* and the *hereafter*. This leads to an emotional acceptance of what it contains and an easier task in practicing it. (Incidentally, anyone who has a problem on what the Bible contains has to take it up with God Himself, not anyone else (like this writer) who comes along and simply repeats what it says.)

In actuality, anyone who is in a position of authority has the most difficult responsibility. If the team does not win, it is the coach who is held responsible. If the job is not done, it is the employer who takes the loss. If the final decision in a marriage is not a good one, it is the husband who takes the blame. It is much easier to follow than to lead. This not only refers to its application on Earth, but also in answering for our actions on Judgement Day. At the same time, both the husband and wife will have to answer for what is expected of them - the husband to rule with Love, and the wife to obey with Love.

This understanding of God's different plan for a husband and wife in marriage in regard to authority, and its corresponding responsibility, needs to be understood and agreed upon by both parties long before any marriage takes place. It should be obvious that the compromises and decisions in marriage are far more important, far-reaching, and difficult than the dating decisions of which movie will be attended, or whether the bowling lane chosen will be in the middle or at the end of the alley.

Many of the important decisions that will come up *after* marriage actually need to be settled *before* marriage. A person has to have the qualities for being a good spouse and parent before the wedding, and it should not be assumed or hoped that they will somehow magically end up with them afterwards. Any serious lack in a person's philosophy, attitude, or personal habits is like a sharp wedge that is hanging over the relationship - ready to fall and start a crack between them that can eventually cause a permanent split in the relationship. Disagreements over serious matters before marriage is a wedge that is already doing damage. The emotional high in planning for a wedding is only an ornate picture hung in order that the crack in the relationship does not show.

There is, in the time preceding a wedding, a natural tendency to avoid discussing subjects which will cause problems. Anything that could slow down or stop the existing emotional feelings are avoided. That includes bringing in parents and best friends into the evaluations. They may have a more objective view, since they are not as emotionally involved. The best objectivity, however, would be from someone who is not emotionally involved at all - a member of the clergy or marriage counselor.

Parents and best friends are often not completely honest in order to preserve the good relationship they have with you. Professional counselors - whether married or single - can be completely honest, and are familiar with the statistics of thousands of marriages and have personal knowledge of hundreds of them. If one of these people cautions that 90% of all marriages with similar people under similar

circumstances ends in divorce or misery, then the marriage should be postponed indefinitely. The opinion and advice of a professional counselor should be the final word - at least for the time being. It does not mean that important disagreements or problems cannot be worked out. It does not mean that qualities that are deficient cannot be attained. It does not mean that being too young to have the general maturity needed for marriage will not change over time. It does not mean that the time will never be right. It just means that the time is not right then.

It is naive for every couple emotionally involved to believe that they will always be the exceptions to every general rule. It is foolish for them to believe that their feelings are stronger than any other couple who have ever lived (even in the same circumstances), and that their "love" will conquer all difficulties. It is reckless to ignore all the evidence that has built up over generations by the actual histories of what has occurred in other marriages.

It is ironic that couples avoid discussions in some areas that need discussing, and then delve into other matters that should actually be avoided. An example of this is "confessing" to each other. In the "sensitivity training" that some couples go through before marriage, they are encouraged to tell each other everything that they ever did - including all past indiscretions of any kind. This is supposed to bring them so much closer together because they have no "secrets" from each other.

This is another thing that sounds good on paper but does not work in practice. At the height of emotion during the sensitivity training, it is easy to forgive each other, as an example, for past indiscretions. They can "feel so close to each other" as a result. Unfortunately, this is a temporary result.

There is an old movie about a couple who are flying in an airplane when one engine catches on fire. Thinking they are going to crash, the man decides to ease his conscience and confess to a one-night affair from five years earlier. His wife thanks him for telling her and forgives him completely - until the plane lands safely. Then she blows up and tells him she is leaving him. It was easy to forgive when death was imminent, because there was no having to deal with that knowledge for the rest of their lives.

Obviously, the best way to live is not to do anything that you have to "confess." Failing that, confess to God - not your spouse. God can forgive without having to deal with the matter emotionally on a day-to-day basis. Anyone who truly cares for another person should never tell them anything that could hurt them in the future - no matter how good the intentions may seem in the present. It is a mistake to think that you or someone else is an exception to all the natural attributes of human nature.

How can one couple be an exception to every rule, since they individually are like billions of human beings who came before them - all with the same wants, needs, desires, and yearnings? How can they be so completely different from any other couple before them when they have the same plans, hopefulness, optimism, and

confidence? Since billions of marriages have existed before theirs, why do they think that they are the only couple to ever think that they are so much in "love" that nothing else matters. It simply shows, like all the couples before them, that they have a good imagination, an ability to idealize the future, and the same tendency to allow their emotions to override their reason.

One of the main purposes, it seems, for the life of one generation to overlap the next one or two, is to pass on knowledge, understanding, and wisdom so that the same errors of judgement can be prevented. It has already been quoted that, "Those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it." That has probably referred more to marriages and wars than anything else, with the former often including the latter. Anyone who refuses to learn or take the advice of another who is older and wiser is simply operating under the biggest sin of all - Pride. And "Pride comes before a fall" often is an explanation of what happens in marriages.

POSTPONING A WEDDING

While it is true that a few engagements are broken off, it is more true that many more that should be broken off are not because of the snowball-rolling-downhill effect. Once wedding plans have been made, there is more of a dread of having to explain to relatives, friends, and neighbors why the wedding was canceled than a dread of making a big mistake. That is even more true if the invitations have already been mailed out. More than one wedding has taken place simply on the insistence of the parents because of the need for "show" and because of the money that had already been spent.

A divorce attorney once remarked that the more expensive the wedding, the greater the chance for divorce - and if there was an ice sculpture at the reception, it was almost assured. That simply reflects the general principle that the more time and money spent on the preparation of the *wedding* means the less time and energy spent on the preparation of the *marriage*. That would not only include the couple themselves, but their parents who are more interested and involved with impressing guests at the wedding than impressing their children with making a wise decision that will affect the rest of their lives.

Going through with a marriage just to avoid embarrassment is only a temporary solution to a permanent problem. It will be far more embarrassing when the marriage breaks up. Of course, some marriages "last" a little longer than they would normally, just because both spouses want to avoid that same embarrassment. Putting on a show during a deteriorating engagement leads to putting on a show during a deteriorating marriage.

The same principle works in avoiding the pain of breaking-up. The longer you wait, the worse it is for both people. Many engagements have gone on to marriage because one (or maybe both) did not want to hurt the other person by calling off the wedding. The pain of a broken marriage, however, is ten times worse than the pain of a broken engagement. The human tendency to avoid any kind of pain for the present, always leads to an inevitable greater pain in the future.

There are times when a postponement would have been a good idea, because problems could have been worked out over a period of time without the pressure of an impending wedding hanging over their heads. Even if the problems are not worked out, a postponement could be a mid-step in preventing much of the pain and embarrassment involved in the absolute calling off of a wedding. It becomes a mental transition as well as a physical transition.

If a postponement is agreed on by both parties, it should be an indefinite one. Setting another date simply starts the cycle of pressure again between the couple themselves and between the couple and everyone else. If problems are not worked out, then the couple never sets another date, and the engagement is broken off simply by

agreeing to date others again. Again, this is a transition state rather than totally breaking- up. This not only lessens the disappointment in the wedding not taking place, but also any hurt that is involved.

There are two kinds of hurt present in this situation. The first is a lack of a positive feeling and the second is an actual negative feeling. Both can lead to a couple getting back together without problems being solved simply because of that human tendency to avoid the present feelings of disappointment, hurt, or loneliness. A transitory stage can prevent a "rebound" effect between the two of them. That transitory stage - not cutting off their feelings for each other and continuing to date - also prevents the emotional and physical situation of the "rebound" effect with someone else.

The rebound effect happens because the lack of the feelings leading to marriage is a large loss to the emotions, and there is an attempt to get those feelings back as soon as possible. The next person who comes along gets the full rush of those emotions. Even if it took two years to start talking about marriage with the last person, it may take only two months with the next one. All the reason that went into the preliminaries of the choice of the last one could be lost in the powerful rush of the emotions to regain that mental happiness of the past and the plans for happiness and security for the future.

It was discussed earlier how a boy going off into the Armed Forces can come back a changed person (even more than the girl who stays home) and a marriage as soon as he came back would be as unwise as one before he left. There is a case of a boy who went in the service out of high school and a girl who went to college. They had dated some, but it never was serious. Several years later he was discharged, and went home looking for her - the last girl he had dated before he left. She had just broken up with her boyfriend a few weeks earlier. On the "rebound," she married him a month later. It only took another month for them to both realize their mistake. They had not even written to each other since he left, and neither was the same person as several years earlier. With both of them operating on emotional needs - and also the positive emotional atmosphere of making wedding plans - neither really got to know the other again. There was no evaluation made on each other as a suitable marriage partner for life. The only evaluation was a "Does this person satisfy my emotional needs now?" With that answer being "Yes," it was time to grab at the balloon of happiness.

When you date steadily, it is as if holding a balloon lightly in your hand. If you let it go, it may float away ready to be picked up and held by someone else. To go steady too soon is to squeeze the balloon with one hand. Even if it does not pop, it will be bent out of shape - which causes one part of it to be stretched too far - and susceptible to popping. To get married too soon is to squeeze the balloon with both hands - and it bursts in your face.

When it was mentioned that weddings should be postponed and then called off because of unsolved problems, these problems include several kinds. The most obvious is personality conflicts, an inability

to be around each other for very long without arguments or fights often taking place. This is evidence that there are not enough qualities there to Love, or not enough Love there to overlook the qualities that are missing. It does not mean that the couple does not care about each other, and it certainly does not mean that they do not have an emotional attachment for each other. It just means that it is not enough to hold a marriage together for any length of time.

While most problems tend to be emotional, there are some very important ones based on reason. One is the realization that the other person does not have enough qualities (or have them in a high enough degree) to make a good husband or wife for a lifetime. An extremely important example is how a person feels about marriage itself. If either one believes that a couple should stay together only as long as emotional feelings for each other is high, then the marriage is doomed to failure. If they both believe, however, that the marriage vows are indeed a commitment to God and to each other for life, then the marriage will succeed. It will go through periods of greater or lesser emotion, but if they work at their marriage in both good times and bad, it will be a good marriage in which Love grows and flourishes.

There is another important problem (or rather the potential for a problem) that is seldom given consideration (or at least enough consideration) when evaluating a person for marriage. That involves the honest assessment of the other person as a good father and a good mother. It has been said that it should never just be assumed that the other person will be a good parent. An indication of this can be checked out in advance by not only talking about beliefs and feelings about children, but seeing these beliefs and feelings in action. The couple should occasionally do some babysitting together for a whole day.

A situation in which the boy goes to where the girl is babysitting, and they make-out the whole time after the children go to bed, is not a case for any honest evaluation. A whole day babysitting should be with children of friends or relatives as well as children not previously acquainted with. It is often easier to be patient with children not previously dealt with before. That is also because those children often obey those who are new in authority, rather than someone with whom they are comfortable. Neither of those situations will be found in parents with their own children. The reason this extremely important evaluation seldom takes place is because children are a third party to a relationship - which are neither there at the time, nor will be there in the very near future. (We are not considering here the cases of marriages with the girl pregnant or second marriages where children are involved. Even in those cases, though, any consideration of one another's capabilities as a parent usually takes a far back seat to the emotions involved between the couple).

It is not an easy decision to not get engaged (or break one off) with someone for any good, reasonable, and logical cause. The emotions are totally against it. It is only possible when reason is in command, and convinces the emotions that it will only be much more

difficult for the couple in the long run if the present decision is not made by reason. While this will not make the feelings about it positive, at least it helps them accept the facts of the situation and its rightful and necessary outcome. Very often, it does not take very long for the emotions as well as the reason to be glad that a particular marriage did not take place.

A common way to express the fact that the emotions are overriding the reason that should be involved is the expression "love is blind." It should be noticed that love is not capitalized here, as Love is not blind - while Physical Attraction and Infatuation and Like can be, and lust certainly is.

This is why it is easier to give someone up to another if there truly is Love involved. The unselfishness of Love in wanting the other person's happiness could mean an acceptance of the fact that they would be happier with someone else. When it is not Love (or not yet Love) the basic operating force is the satisfaction of one's own emotional wants, and also possibly the non-Love of jealousy or possessiveness. This makes the giving up of the other person much harder.

It is also easier to call off a marriage if some true Love exists between the couple, rather than just a mutual need for emotional satisfaction. True Love recognizes that "love and marriage" do not always (as an old song suggests) "go together like a horse and carriage." (Sometimes they can go together, but horses can certainly get along very well without a carriage.) There are different levels of Love that one can have for another, and different levels of Love that a couple can have for each other. If the Love each has for the other is high enough before marriage, then it includes the qualities necessary to make a marriage succeed and be happy. Without this high level, there should not be a marriage. The end result of a low level of Love and a subsequent marriage is evidenced by the married couple splitting up while telling each other that they still "love" each other. Either it was not really Love in the first place, or there was not enough of it, or what was there was not watered and cultivated and it did not grow.

While Love does not have to be full grown at the time of a wedding, it still needs to be much bigger than a seed. In cultures where the parents arranged the marriages, it could start from a seed and be successful, because all the other marriages started from a seed and were also successful, and also because weeds were kept out of the flower box in which the seeds were planted. The flower box is like the human mind, and the ease and prevalence of divorce in a society is like a weed that is allowed to grow there and which can block out the sunlight and warmth of God's blessings on a marriage.

While the Love brought to a marriage has to be in full bloom, so does the qualities previously mentioned. While it is true that marriage can and should complete a person, it is a mistake to say that one is only a half a person if not married. As explained previously, being only a 50% person in qualities is not enough for a good marriage. While everyone has some rough edges that can be

smoothed by the Love of a good spouse, no one should go into marriage with the idea of turning a sheet of sandpaper into a roll of silk.

If there is anything that the other person needs to become in order to become a good spouse and parent, then that change has to take place before marriage - and be proven over a length of time.

One of the worst mistakes that is commonly made is to marry someone with the intention of "reforming" in mind. This mistake is usually made by women because of their helpful, nurturing, and compassionate nature. It is also due to their need "to feel needed," and no one seems to fulfill this more than a man who shows no responsibilities, or gets drunk nightly because of loneliness, or is on drugs because of no purpose or aim in life. Women often marry these men in an attempt to give them responsibilities, take away the loneliness, or give them a purpose in life. Marriage effects only a temporary change - if one at all.

The problem of people who need reforming is that the reforming needs to come from within themselves. While others can be a good example, or show them the way, or be encouraging, they can do nothing themselves to cause the needed reform to take place. What happens is that the reformer - because of disappointment and frustration - often falls to the same level as the person who is not being reformed.

It is also important that any "miraculous" change that takes place before marriage be proven over a long length of time. It is too easy for a person to effect a change whether consciously or subconsciously over a temporary period of time simply in order to get married. A man giving up drinking and girl-chasing (and going to church every Sunday for the month before getting married) is only presenting a facade which will crumble shortly after the marriage takes place. There is a psychological tendency (again, even if subconscious) to be what the other person wants in order to "catch" them. A little of this can be fine, especially if it is real, but a great deal of it is usually phony, and as a result - temporary.

There is an old romantic movie, "Three Coins in the Fountain," in which a woman fakes a man's interests as her own - in foods, activities, and attitudes, just to get him interested in her. It works (of course) and they are together at the end of the movie. There was no logical sequel to that movie as to what happened to their relationship after they got married because of the lack of any common interests. It was a typical ending to a typical Hollywood movie - that "love (emotion) conquers all."

COHABITATION

There is one evaluation which, while becoming more and more common among couples, is still one that is invalid. It is the practice of living together before marriage under the expressed purpose to "check out" each other before actually getting married. In reality, it is an excuse to have regular sex without the commitment of marriage. The current state of accepted immorality has darkened consciences so much that seldom does anyone try to justify living together as a prelude to marriage any more. It is just something a couple does as long as it is fun and convenient - until they move on to the next person.

When the conscious mind needs some sort of a rationalization, it relies on the second worst line of all time. The first was "Prove you love me." The second is, "We have to find out if we are sexually compatible." While ranking only second as a line, it ranks first in amount of illogic in it. Sexually compatible? If a man has a male sex organ and a woman has a female sex organ, they are sexually compatible! The fact is that if they are both virgins when they get married, they are far more sexually compatible than if one or both is not.

If a man and woman who marry are both inexperienced in sex, they will both be satisfied, as they have nothing and no one else to compare it with. If a man, however, has had other women (whether 200 or 20 or just 2), his wife has to equal or better any woman he ever had. That brings about a second contradiction in the old double standard of a man who justifies fornicating with any woman he can, but wants his wife to be a virgin. Then this virgin wife has to match the performance of even the most experienced prostitute or whore he has ever had. It is amazing how a man's sexual arousal disconnects one part of his brain from another.

It is also unfortunately true that many men who do find their partners "sexually compatible" think that is a basis for marriage. The number of sexual positions shared becomes more important than the number of other common interests shared.

Being In Love is the greatest mental pleasure that the mind can experience. Sharing physical Love by its true definition and under the right moral condition (marriage) is the greatest physical experience that the body can experience. Without both of these conditions being true, sexual intercourse can be the most degrading experience in the world, because it is an attempt to live a lie while calling it the truth. It is lust masquerading as "love."

Shared mental pleasures are more important (and last longer) than shared physical pleasures. The mind can re-experience a mental pleasure from the past, but the body cannot re-experience a physical pleasure from the past. A relationship will not grow if the physical side receives all the attention. Living together to see if you are "sexually compatible," is only a man's conscious way to get regular

free sex, and a woman's subconscious way to attempt to further a relationship that is not going anywhere. She gets to play the game of mentally convincing herself that it is the reality of marriage "without the piece of paper," forgetting that the piece of paper, besides making it legal, is only a symbol of the actual commitment made in a real marriage.

None of the true qualities of being a good spouse are being developed in cohabitation. Any tolerance or patience that is exhibited is only for the purpose of not losing a sexual partner (for the male) and the emotional security present (for the female).

This trade-off can work for awhile, but since there is no true love on either side, the relationship will not last, whether it is within or without the officialdom of marriage. With a concentration on developing "a good sexual relationship," there certainly is no honest evaluation of each other as a good mother or father. Living together outside of marriage has increased tenfold from the late 60's to the late 80's. In one recent daily newspaper with marriage licenses listed for 14 couples, 8 of them had the same address. (It can only be wondered if there were any other girls who simply used their parent's address.) All the ages listed were between 17 and 23 except for one.

It was once thought by some "experts" that these "trial marriages" would be a way of lowering the divorce rate. Even if statistics had shown that inclination, it would be a false one, because it would only include the split-ups that happen after an eventual marriage, and not all the split-ups that happened before it ever got to that stage. Cohabitation, however, has neither lowered the break-up rate or the divorce rate. In a Columbia University study, it was found that only 19% of couples who live together outside of marriage eventually marry. Out of the ones who do marry, 80% of those end in divorce. Therefore, for every 100 couples who live together, only 3 end up in a marriage that lasts. It would also be interesting to know how few of those are happy marriages.

Neil Bennett of Yale University explains it by saying, "Those who live together prematurely are simply less committed to traditional institutions and more committed to individualism than those who do not. These factors are also associated with a greater inclination to divorce."

It would seem obvious that premarital sex is the single greatest factor in almost guaranteeing either an end to a relationship or an unhappy marriage.

Premarital intercourse is associated more closely with broken relationships than with strengthened ones. Twice as many engagements are broken among couples who have intercourse as among those who did not - the more frequent the intercourse, the greater the number of rings returned. Both divorce *and* adultery are more common among those couples who indulge in premarital intercourse. Even among those who do not separate, the incidence of marital unhappiness is greater.

In "Sex, Love, or Infatuation," Dr. Ray Short criticized the fact that "Premarital sex and the living together syndrome is being

promoted as the sure way to find out if you love someone and can live with them forever." Since most movies are made with teenagers and young adults in mind, this age group is constantly inundated with this propaganda whenever they go out to the movies or get one from the video store. Dr. Short also says that the sexual urge is so deep and urgent that as long as a person can identify another person as the one who helps satisfies their sexual needs, they can be fooled into thinking they have a total relationship.

Divorce, abortion and living together without marriage has been considered "suicidal" attempt to "invent another type of family." Living together before marriage is certainly one of the principal social conditions which eventually causes "the disintegration of the family."

To quote a different kind of source, advice columnist Ann Landers once said that she never got one letter from a woman who was sorry she waited until marriage for sex, but has received a multitude from women who wish they had. Most of them probably found out the hard way that self-control before marriage leads to self-control after marriage. If a man "has" to have sex with his girlfriend before marriage just because he finds her desirable, then why will he not "have" to have sex with any other females he finds desirable after he is married? If before marriage one is faithful to God's Plan for sex, then that leads directly to the same after marriage. Adultery is much more common with a married spouse who engaged in fornication than one who was a virgin on the wedding day. In particular, a man who "cannot wait" for sex until marriage, may also in his own mind, not wait for sex from his wife at these times: 1) before and after she has a baby, 2) in times when she is sick, or 3) when either one is out of town.

While any excuse he uses is false, if his wife did not help him exercise self-control before they were married, then she is partly responsible for his lack of it afterwards. In the same vein, if her husband is always interested in sex but seldom interested in affection (a common complaint of wives), it is at least partly due to her setting up his psychology before marriage of not being able to show affection without getting sex as a result. After marriage, affection is no longer "necessary" in order for him to get sex.

Regardless of the amount of physical attraction, emotional attachment, and sex drive present, it is much better for a couple to live with curiosity about sex and the total lack of physical satisfaction than living with the guilt and psychological dissatisfaction that fornication brings about. Since sex is much more personal with a female, she suffers the most guilt. Also, especially for a female, the feeling of disappointment in a relationship, or outright rejection, is much worse after being used sexually than when she has preserved her virginity.

Virginity can only be lost once, and it can be a lifelong regret if it is given up with the first person to come along and use the word "love," rather than the person who makes a lifetime vow to you. Wives often feel guilt long after marriage for pre-marital sex, even if

it is with the person they end up marrying. Women need to realize that they have basically the same thing to offer physically as any other woman, and their body itself cannot be Loved on its own - only as a part of the whole person. (It can, however, be lusted on its own.)

Mother Theresa has said that "the greatest gift, the most beautiful gift, that (a couple) can give each other on their wedding day is the beautiful virtue of purity - that virgin heart of body and soul."

On paper, it looks like living together would be a valid test for checking out how a couple will get along by spending much time together over a period of months or even years. This could only possibly be valid if they did so without having sex. While this is not an impossibility - it is very close to it. Even if they had not engaged in pre-marital sex before, it is inviting unnecessary danger in setting up a situation with the greatest temptations. In this situation, the snowball of passion would double its speed, and it would be a toss-up whether the planning for a future marriage would increase the likelihood of having premarital sex, or that the almost inevitable premarital sex would increase the likelihood of setting the marriage date too soon.

Of course, the third option is that if they are living together and having sex, then why get married at all? (Why buy a cow when the milk is free?)

A much more valid test is to go exactly in the opposite direction. If an engaged couple could spend most of their time together after work until midnight (as previously stated) and limit their physical affections to simple goodnight hugs and kisses, it would definitely show whether or not they had only the physical going for them. Without any exercise of the passions, it would show whether their sexual attraction for one another was an expression of their love - or a substitute for it. If they can enjoy each other's company *without touching*, then they know they have a good mental relationship and can develop a good spiritual relationship.

The other side of the coin is that if it is necessary for them to be apart, and it does not affect how they feel about each other, this would also show that they have a good mental relationship. If an engaged couple can be apart for a long period of time and not feel a need to be with someone else, it is even more of an example of having a good mental relationship. Both of these situations are liable to occur after marriage.

Another reason that cohabitation is not "practicing marriage" is the absence of children - not only for responsibilities, but for time itself. Without children, it is easier to concentrate on sex as a basis for much time spent together. At this time, a couple can even bypass conversation for sex. After marriage and children, sex is no longer the focus or the emphasis. It can no longer make up for lack of conversation and communication.

The physical aspect of a relationship (including sex) makes up about 10% of a marriage. If this aspect of the relationship before marriage was only affection, then the 10% physical after marriage (which includes sex) will be an increase, and will encourage greater

feelings. If the physical was 90% of the relationship before the marriage, then the 10% it will be after marriage will include nothing new. Then it becomes a disappointment and will cause a decrease in feelings.

So far, we have discussed the good, practical physical and mental reasons for not having sex before marriage. The bottom line, though, is the spiritual reason - it is a grave sin. It is time to call it by its proper name - fornication - and the Bible is very clear on what will happen to those participating in it.

"Fornicators will not enter the kingdom of Heaven." (I Corinthians 6:9-11)

"No fornicator has any inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven." (Ephesians 5:5-7)

That, of course, means those who have been guilty of fornication and have died unrepentant in that sin. It does not include those who have been guilty of it, are truly sorry, and commit that sin no more.

If a couple is having premarital sex, the first thing they should do is give it up for six months before ever trying to do an honest evaluation of their relationship. If cohabiting, that also means separate living quarters. They should not even go steady or talk about marriage during this time. Individual qualities should be evaluated during this time, but the relationship should not be evaluated until after the six months are over. This is the only way to find out if they really have more than sex going for them. While chastity (based on morals) is an almost forgotten issue with many people, it is still a basis for action which shows its merits in the practical results.

Love between the sexes is a mental and spiritual state wrapped up in a physical package. Sex outside of marriage is only an empty box covered with emotional wrapping, with the word "love" used as a fancy ribbon, and the promise of marriage used as a bright bow.

One can have sex without Love, or Love without sex, but the only legitimate place to have both - for moral and practical reasons - is exclusively within a valid, spiritual marriage.

Besides couples not living together before marriage, it is a good idea if they are also not living at home during the engagement period. It is a positive situation for them to have to be on their own. The first reason is to show themselves that they *can* live on their own. This means that they are mature enough to be able to handle the basic responsibilities of taking care of themselves before adding someone else to the formula. (The man needs to show that he can pick up his own clothes and the woman needs to show she can keep her own bathroom neat.)

The second reason is for each to be able to appreciate the "role" of the other in marriage. A man having to cook and serve and clean for himself learns to appreciate more what his wife will do for him - rather than simply take for granted that she will do for him what his mother has always done for him. A woman who has to take care of

her own car and yard and "handyman repairs" learns to appreciate what her husband will do for her rather than simply assume that he will now take care of all the things her father took care of previously.

Living independently instead of being dependent on someone else also allows one to make a conscious choice in trading the independence of being single for the interdependence of being married.

WEDGES

There are ways for a marriage to be sabotaged even before the wedding takes place. This is because of differences that do not seem important during dating but become very important after marriage. They are being called "wedges," because they slowly can split a relationship in half - and with it, a marriage.

Probably the most insidious wedge - and the one that causes the most physical problems - is one involving alcohol or drugs. Persons who lean on either or both are self-destructive to themselves, but it never ends there. It shows evidence of a lack of the self-worth and self-confidence which allows a person to live a normal life with both accomplishments and disappointments, success and failure. It is a retreat from normal reality into an artificial world of temporary "highs," which (when they end) plunge the person into deeper self-doubts and depression. If a person needs alcohol or drugs because of not having a good relationship with himself, then he certainly cannot have a good relationship with anyone else. The lack of the first caused the flight to alcohol or drugs; the lack of the second leads to physical abuse of that person. It starts as a psychological weakness, which grows to encompass the entire mental and physical life.

Unfortunately and ironically, this very psychological weakness of men in this area often appeals to a psychological weakness in women. Their weakness in self-worth and self-confidence exposes itself in a tendency to want to "reform" a man. If they could accomplish this, then their feeling of self-worth is reinforced. In both cases, this feeling has to come from outside of themselves. Also, in both cases, though, self-worth cannot be attained through an outside source only.

While it is true that we as human beings can and should offer counsel, encouragement, and incentive to others, it can only do some good if the ones it is offered to have at least some self-motivation in the area in which there is a problem. As an example, there are the millions who continue to smoke despite the health warnings, the death statistics, and all the habit-breaking aids that are on the marketplace. To choose to continue means to choose the results that follow. The same is true - even more so - for the abuse of alcohol and drugs. It is idealistic folly to marry someone with the hope or intention of changing that person. If alcohol or drugs is a problem, the only safe road is to pass on marriage. If it has been a problem in the past, there had better be a few years between the end of that problem and any thoughts of marriage. Again, it takes time to prove an actual change in philosophy and actions. This is not to suggest that no one can ever get over these problems completely; but the fact is always there that there is a greater chance of it recurring with someone who once had the problem, than appearing for the first time in someone who never did it before.

There is both a physical and mental indication of having a problem with alcohol or drugs. The physical problem is the act of

getting drunk or stoned on any kind of a regular basis; i.e., once or twice a month (or more) rather than once or twice a year. The mental problem occurs when the physical problem is not too great, but it is always excused or justified.

There might not be a physical problem yet, but there is no mental prohibition from it becoming one. And if it does become one, there will still be the same claim that, "I do not have a problem with it."

In this area even more than others, take the problem or fault as it exists and multiply it by 3 to get an idea of what it will be like after marriage. Using that formula, you may just break even by marrying someone with 15 good qualities and 5 bad ones. If the ratio was 18 and 2 before marriage, then you would still end up with a positive 3-to-1 ratio after marriage. Of course, this is assuming that the 2 are not the kind that would influence all the other 18 negatively.

Other physical wedges could include a person who is a workaholic or who has such high ambitions and drive for success in the working world that there is little mental interest (and therefore physical time) for a spouse and family. It is also situation ethics that allows trading time with the family for giving them what money can buy. Material comforts can often become a trade-off for happiness for the spouse and children. This same kind of physical wedge includes persons who spend *all* their time outside of work and sleep involved in a sport or sports. The harm to relationships is well documented with world-class athletes, but it is common on much lower skill levels also.

There is also what could be called an artificial physical wedge - "artificial" because it occurs outside of the people themselves. It is the very modern problem of money. Even 50 years ago, couples could get married without money or income being such an important issue. It is one now, though, for two reasons. The first is that it takes so much monthly income at the present time to simply break even. It was never this way before in the history of the human race. Even just 100 years ago, a couple got married, bought a horse, had their neighbors over one weekend to help build their cabin, and they could start life together. Now, there is either an expensive small apartment or a 30-year house note, usually two cars at a cost of a year's salary each (or used cars with repair bills at a cost of a week's salary every time), high utility bills, and skyrocketing insurance payments for every kind of necessary coverage except for sunburn.

Besides the high basic physical living costs, there is also the modern mental pursuit of more and more materialistic possessions. "Keeping up with the Joneses" has now changed to "keeping up with the Rockefellars." Many couples marrying today are made up of individuals who have been brought up with "instant gratification" of most or all of their material wants. They never learned "to wait," which translated to marriage means they want everything at the beginning of it. They are not willing to wait and to work for things that are *wants* and not *needs*. This has helped produce a credit-card mentality with the necessary resulting problems that follow.

While money (the presence or the absence of it) should not be a

major issue in marital relationships, it nevertheless is an important one. There needs to be agreement on both the physical and mental importance of money (and the lack of it) before any marriage takes place.

The mental wedges fall into several categories. They are the things that are simply *differences* in the beginning, but can become *problems* over time. The first is the standard social background differences - one being from "high society" and the other one from "the opposite side of the tracks." It usually is a case of "opposites attract," but, as always, attraction is not enough upon which to base a relationship. While social background differences is not a moral prohibition to marriage, it may well be a practical one. This is because the couple is not going off to live in a cave or in a desert; they will live in a society of people, and these people (whether it is right or not) will have an influence on the lives of the couple. Each spouse may be totally uncomfortable around the relatives and friends of the other. Is the solution simply for each to accept being uncomfortable 50% of the time they are with other people? Even if this sounds acceptable on paper, it would not stay that way in actual practice.

Totally different backgrounds could mean totally different interests, and while some separate interests are good, there also ought to be major common interests for both time together and communication. Different backgrounds could also include different educational levels. A couple, consisting of a person with a Ph.D. and one who did not finish high school, might find themselves with little to talk about after even a short period of time. This would again also have an effect on whether or not they are comfortable with each other's friends.

While in-laws can be or become a problem under any circumstances, those possible circumstances are increased because of highly different backgrounds. It is not a matter of one person not being "good enough" for the other. No marriage should take place in a conscious or subconscious attempt to "prove" that different backgrounds are not important. The emotion of "love" does not conquer all.

Also in this category would be the inadvisability of marriage between two people of different races. Again, there is no moral impediment, but the practical ones are the same as the ones mentioned above - except probably with a multiplication factor of 2. It simply does not make sense to ignore all the proven wedges that lessen the chance of a good marriage, either under the excuse that there are many general exceptions, or the belief that you are the one specific exception. That is sheer folly, as it plays directly into the weakness of human nature and Pride to always think that we are the exception. It is a fact that every marriage break-up, and every unhappy marriage that exists, involves "exceptions."

There is another modern mental wedge, and that is the one where one or both parties believes that marriage is a "50-50" proposition. They sit down and draw up an agreement whereas each one agrees to

wash the dishes so many nights a week, or vacuum the floor, or change diapers, or cut the grass, etc. This is defining roles for a husband and wife in reverse. It is an attempt to make each's role not only "equal" but "the same." It would also involve keeping track of every minor change in the contract. "I washed the dishes for two days on your turn when you were sick, so you owe me the washing of one batch of clothes and cutting the grass in the front yard." It could really get ridiculous in a very short time. "Work contracts" automatically eliminate any selflessness and sacrifice - which will always be necessary virtues of each spouse.

The spiritual wedge is one in which each person is of a different religion. Having the same religion not only means agreeing on the same beliefs, but also an agreement on the application of those beliefs in everyday life. It includes the principles and actions concerning your morals, ethics and principles. It also includes how you act and react towards your family, your friends, strangers, and even your enemies.

In the beginning, religious differences may affect a couple's relationship very little. If they both go to church on Sunday, they simply go to separate churches. That simple solution always changes when children come along. If a married couple had different religious beliefs, it would affect many of the important decisions that have to be made regarding their children.

The first one is, "In what religion will the children be brought up?" The so-called "solution" of alternating churches every Sunday would be disorienting to them. Children would already be confused by the simple fact of their parents having different religions, even before discovering that their religions may have contradictory beliefs. If the children were exposed to two religions and they "liked" one religion better than the other, it is unlikely that it would be on the truth that it contained. And how would "truth" even be defined to them in the first place? If one religion's moral code is higher than the other, which one will be followed?

This not only affects the parents' relationship with their children, but also with each other. Would there be competition over "winning" the children to one side or the other?

Problems and misunderstandings would also extend to a couple's relationships with relatives and friends. It would always add some stress where there neither should not be any, nor need not be any.

Religious beliefs, in common or not, will be the deciding factor in the presence or absence of family devotions. More importantly, religious beliefs will define the very moral fabric on which marriage is based - not the least of which is the (im)morality of divorce. While there are some moral standards that should be held by everyone (to live right with God even more than to avoid marital problems) it still will always be a good idea for a marrying couple to have the same religious beliefs. It sets up many positives and avoids many negatives.

The worse-case scenario regarding the difference of religions may be the necessity of one day having to choose between pleasing a

spouse and pleasing God. The former is involved with happiness in this life; the latter is involved with happiness in the next. To choose the first would involve the worst trade-off possible in this life.

THE BEST TIME FOR MARRIAGE

Assuming you have the right philosophy of dating as an end in itself as far as friendship is concerned, and as a means towards finding a suitable marriage one day, there are some time elements that come into importance.

We have already seen how dating too young leads to going steady too young which leads to marriage too young. If simple dating is delayed, then each of the two following categories will also be delayed. While there is no iron-clad rule involving the beginning of dating, a general guide might be to wait until the sophomore or junior level in high school. Before this, dances and parties are not only appropriate, but also needed to introduce boys and girls (after puberty) into learning how to be friends with the opposite sex. It is a much more difficult thing to accomplish after puberty than before. When dating starts, it should be group dating, with single dating being the exception rather than the rule. There should not be any going steady in high school, which prevents the senior year panic of some to have some kind of "commitment" going at graduation time - especially for those not going to college.

Every engaged couple of 18-year-olds who plan to get married within a month out of high school "know what they want, and want each other." That is absolutely true, but what they both want at 18 may very well not be what they want at 20, and what they want at 20 might not be what they want at 22, etc. Also, at 18 the other person may be exactly what they need. Needs change as well, and if the other person does not or cannot fill the new needs, then the relationship falls apart. Unfortunately, it fell apart after marriage rather than before. All these couples think they are ready for marriage because they have been "going steady" from between one to four years. The biggest life changes, however, do not all take place during the high school years.

They also, more often than not, do not finish taking place during the first years out of high school - especially if these years are spent in college. College years are simply advanced high school along with more freedom and independence. A person working for two years after high school may well mature more than a college student after four years of additional schooling. That is because the former is at least somewhat "matured to the world," whereas the college student has delayed that necessary process for four years. (You mature faster when you are on your own and you have to pay your own bills.)

This is why it is also not a good idea to go steady anytime during college, as it is a similar artificial, automatically-set social system (like high school) which does not correspond to the everyday outside world that must be lived in when schooling is over. At the same time, a college graduate, because of being four years older, can mature to the world in less time than a high school graduate.

Since the biggest changes - mentally, psychologically, and emotionally - occur between the ages of 16 and 21, there should be no

going steady during this period. A college graduate should not go steady within a year after graduation, in order to prevent the situation of getting married right after college. There is simply too much of a change in lifestyle already built into that situation (with all its complications, problems, stresses, and uncertainty) without adding marriage to the formula. Unfortunately for many people, marriage is looked at as a measure of security at that time. Benjamin Franklin said, "Those who give up essential liberty for temporary security deserve neither liberty nor security." Getting involved too young or too soon leads to getting married too young or too soon, which in far too many cases is a matter of giving up future enduring happiness for present temporary security. Teenage marriages have gone up over 500 percent since 1945, and the divorce rate for these marriages is three times higher than for ones where both parties are over 21.

If going steady is delayed until between 21 and 23, and then going steady should be for at least two years, and this is followed by an engagement period of six months to a year, then we are talking about being much better prepared for marriage at the age of about 25. This age is not an arbitrary figure. It is determined as a result of the figures that preceded it, as well as a starting point, from working backwards. Psychologists say that a person at 25 is basically what they will be for life. By this time, males are usually settled in the kind of work they will be doing for life, and females know whether they want a career in the business world, or whether they are willing to trade it for being a homemaker and mother. By 25, they have either settled down from the "party all the time" mentality or they may never do so. Either way, this can better be evaluated by a person of 25 than one of 18.

By 25, a person's philosophy of life and set of values are usually fixed. This does not mean that changes cannot be made, but between 18 and 25, most of the drastic changes that could be made have already been made - whether they were good or bad changes.

For people under 25 who are interested in getting married, waiting until you are 25 years old may seem like a long wait. It is not really that long when considering the average life expectancy of today. When life expectancy was around 40, it made sense to marry young. It could even have been considered a necessity to get married and start a family right after puberty. If married at 15, then they had a married life of about 25 years. Now with an average life expectancy of about 75 years, even marrying at 25 gives a couple a married life of 50 years! So what is the rush?

What counts even more than the quantity of those years is the quality. The potential temporary happiness between the ages of 18 to 25 is not as important as the potential permanent happiness between the ages of 25 and 75. The former may have to be sacrificed to an extent for the latter. Another thing is that the dating years are few and should be enjoyed at the time, because once they are over, they cannot be regained.

More importantly, if the marriage is supposed to be "until death do us part," that decision is the most important single decision that

can be made in this life. With this in mind, waiting until the age of 25 to make this decision can only help in making it a mature decision - one based on permanent reason rather than temporarily emotion. If a couple are truly In Love, then waiting for marriage can never hurt a relationship - only help it. If the relationship cannot "hold" for several years before marriage at 25, then it would not have held after marriage. The only end result possible for waiting to 25 to get married is a good one, whether it involves staying together or separating. If you stay together, you are both more sure of yourselves and more sure of each other. If you go your separate ways by that time, it is better for that to happen before marriage than after.

If there is a separation around the age of 25, that should not set the stage for the "rebound" effect - to go steady with the next person with whom you get along, with marriage within a year. It is true that the older you are, the less the time would be necessary for each period that precedes marriage. However, it is a good idea at any age not to go steady within the first year after starting to date someone - especially when one is at the age of "ready to get married." That could encourage a subconscious rush into early marriage. It would prevent infatuation (or the need for security) into trying to make a marriage relationship out of one that would naturally fall into one of the shorter time periods. That goes double after a break-up - even for the same couple who get back together. A quick marriage will not prevent another break-up.

At any age, a good date is easy to evaluate. Also at any age, though, it takes time to evaluate a good mate. Some less-than-happy periods of marriage could also be bypassed if enough adjustments took place before marriage. Then the honeymoon would be a renewal of romance, rather than just a short-lived period of high emotions.

Going through these stages before marriage takes time to accomplish, but saves more time (and much more trouble) if not delayed by rushing into marriage. And a rushed marriage will only delay trouble. It will never stop it.

If "Good marriages are made in Heaven," then the problem is that too many people are rushing into bad ones before God gets a chance to set up the good ones. As you get older, the choices available may not be as numerous (almost everyone else is married), but those choices are among people who are more mature, and as you, were not interested in making marriage a total gamble. At any age, marriage involves two people choosing each other. There can only be a good choice if the evaluation of many other possible choices over a long enough period of time assured both that choice being a good one. Before choosing a marriage partner, it is not possible to date every single person of the opposite sex, but there needs to have been enough dates with different ones, however, to make a valid choice. At the same time, there is any number of people of the opposite sex that you can Love. It is just that you stop looking when you find one who Loves you in return.

To *find* the kind of person you are looking for, it is necessary to *date* the kind of person you are looking for. While that is rather

obvious in principle, it is not always applied in practice. This is why the "qualities of an ideal date" and the "qualities of an ideal mate" should be the same. A person will marry the same type of person that is usually dated about 99% of the time. If you have a habit of dating persons with only superficial qualities, then the odds are that you will end up marrying someone with superficial qualities.

Of course, you cannot always know the depth of a person's qualities before the first date or even just after it. There are, however, certain places to draw lines in a relationship which can be called "dating demarcation lines." Before even going steadily (as in "playing the field") it is not necessary to do serious evaluations of your dates. That is the time of developing friendships and simply enjoying companionship and activities with members of the opposite sex.

The first "dating demarcation line" is between general dating (no one person is more special than the rest) and going steadily (dating one person equal to all other dates). This person should be someone with good qualities in evidence, where a greater concentration of dating can still be a positive experience. The second line is between going steadily to going steady. This step should not be taken on emotional attachment, but rather on the evidence of enough of the qualities that could make that person a potentially good mate. It would be wise to avoid any specific talk about marriage even for the first year of going steady. This helps prevent any kind of presumption in that area. Also, by not starting the ball rolling downhill (even in a subtle way) they will not just think and act the way the other person wants them to be.

The next dating demarcation line is between going steady and getting engaged. This line is almost non-existent today. Marriage is less the result of a direct proposal and a direct affirmative answer, as it is the talking about marriage as a possibility in a couple of years, which slowly leads into the actual preparations. It could not happen that way in former times, because not only was a direct proposal necessary, but as mentioned, the permission of the father of the prospective bride was necessary. The father had the last word - presumably given to him because he could evaluate the prospective groom more objectively than the intended bride who would be evaluating by her emotional feelings.

C. S. Lewis wrote that, "All emotions and sentiments are illogical, but they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head; but it can, and should obey it."

There's that unpopular word "obey" again. Because females had shown a tendency to not have their hearts obey their heads, the responsibility of obedience passed from that of their own heads to that of their father's.

There will always be the claim that "love is not logical," and that is true if love is defined as an emotional feeling. If, however, Love is defined as an intention to make another person happy while expecting nothing in return (even at the cost of your own happiness),

and wanting them to attain the salvation of their Soul (through your example and aid), then this Love cannot be built upon emotion.

Marital Love needs this kind of Love as a base, along with Physical Attraction (and the natural desires that go with it) and Like.

Since nowadays only the couple planning marriage makes any of the evaluations (at least the ones considered), let us now reconsider what that evaluation entails. Everyone may be familiar with the girl who spent more time picking out a wedding dress than she did picking out a husband, or the boy who was more particular picking out a car than picking out a wife. There are far too many cases of finding someone you like, and hope they end up fitting your ideal, rather than finding someone who fits your ideal and then hope they like you.

There is too much "love" for what you wish the other person to be or to become, instead of having Love of the person for what they are. A person should be Loved because of the presence of good qualities, not "loved" in spite of the lack of them. Using a scale of 10, it is much better to marry someone who rates an 8 on communication, a 9 on philosophy, an 8 on personality, a 9 on morality, and a 5 on physical attractiveness, than someone who rates a 10 on physical attractiveness and a 3 to 5 on the rest. The latter makes a great date for the ego, but the former makes a better spouse for life.

There is no doubt that these guidelines and suggestions will be considered "unrealistic" by many of today's young adults. However, those who do so must admit that they are looking at the future through rose-colored glasses of optimism (if not idealism), and not from the hindsight of age and experience and wisdom.

The road to marriage is a move from *dependence* as a child - to *independence* as an adult - to *interdependence* as a married couple. To marry too young is to skip the necessary independent stage which is crucial if there is to be an actual choice to move to interdependence. It should be "I can live alone the rest of my life, but I choose not to." In other words, "I know and enjoy the positive aspects of being an independent single adult, but I choose to *trade* them for the positive aspects of being married." "I know what the negative aspects and problems are of the single life and I choose to *trade* them for the known (and unknown) negative aspects and problems of married life."

This is a mature choice, based on a mature decision to move from basically self-centered concerns to other-centered concerns. If each person is at that stage of maturity when they are willing to give that gift of self to each other, and to understand that God is the ultimate giver of this gift, then they are ready for marriage.

On this basis, following the suggested "unrealistic" guidelines of this book only increases the realistic chance for having a successful and happy marriage.

One last "unrealistic" point: if you wait until the time of engagement to use the word "love," you greatly increase the chance of your head guiding your heart in these matters. You can certainly Love someone before that time; it just may not be wise to say it

before then.

VIEW AND REVIEW

There are several points which have been made repeatedly in this book for two important reasons. One is that they are related to all the different aspects and levels of male-female relationships, and therefore, the correlation is made on each level under discussion. Another reason is they are the principles that have been misplaced or lost in the modern concept of dating and marriage and cannot be reiterated too often under the purpose of returning dating and marriage to the level of its original intents and purposes. If the *causes* of good marriages are reestablished, then the *effects* will be more good marriages. This chapter will be not only a review of those points, but also establish some possible guidelines in applying them. As before, the importance is placed on the long-term effects and the causes that proceed them.

It would be a good idea for both singles and married couples to fill out a "15 qualities of an ideal mate" sheet every year - and then compare it to ones filled out before. It would be not only a reinforcement of what they consider important, but also maybe a standard of measurement of a growing maturity in this area over that time. Hopefully, there has been some growth accomplished in the reading of this book, with an understanding and acceptance of the validity of the principles presented here.

It has been shown that while Love between man and woman includes emotion, like all forms of Love, it is not based in principle on it. Therefore, it should not be based in practice on it. And the emotion rightfully involved should not be based solely or mostly on sex.

This should be kept in view even at the beginning of dating. This allows dating to be an enjoyable positive activity rather than simply high-pressure exotic salesmanship. The best way to prevent dating falling into this category is through what is called "public dating." This means double and triple-dating rather than single dating (especially in the first few years) and having dates consist of public outings in lighted places versus the back seat of a car in unlighted places. Even in the very beginning, it is better to avoid temptations and the occasions of sin. It is easier to accomplish this if good parents lead the way by setting up rules and regulations concerning dating and by having their children understand that the beginning of dating is to learn to be comfortable with the opposite sex through developing friendships - not sex partners. Children should be taught moral education (God's purpose and plan for sex) long before sex education itself. And when sex education is taught, it should be limited to the basics of how a child is conceived. No one needs to know details about the mechanics of sex until the night before they get married, and they never need to know details about perverted sex.

Those who have been taught the correct principles - and believe them - can pass it on to their dates by saying that they are more

interested in having a long-term friendship than a short-term romance.

Dating should always be considered on a friendship basis in the beginning, rather than on a romance basis. This takes off the pressure to have a "love connection" on the first date. While having a "chemistry" between you is really nice, it should not be granted an undue status. "Chemistry" or romantic love is just Infatuation and should not become a substitute in the mind for real Love. Romantic love is a strange combination of sexual attraction and emotions. Physical attraction and Infatuation means the eyes are wide open and the mind is shut off. There is no honest evaluation of another person when the candle is burning so bright at this time.

It is a natural process under idealism, whether you are an adolescent or an adult, to believe that if there is "chemistry" present, you are "meant for each other" and are "right for each other." That may sometimes be true, but what is not understood is that it can fit anywhere under four natural times of a relationship. There is the hour/day/several days relationship, also called a shipboard romance. It is two people being together somewhere away from normal daily life and sharing the newness of place and the recreation of time. It is mutual Infatuation in its truest sense, and can occur at any age. If the two people who have "chemistry" during this time separate and never meet again, the mind will always remember the idyllic nature of their time together. Trying to hold this idyllic relationship when back in a normal setting would probably only end in disappointment. It would be like trying to live a Fairy Tale - which is impossible.

The next normal time is that of a few weeks to a few months. A "summer romance" fits into this category as it involves Like, but the relationship will probably not hold up over a long period of time because it is simply not one that has enough common interests, or common philosophy, to move to a higher level. It will hold the same level for a period of time after the summer is over if they are not around each other. Either way, feelings just slowly fade, or they are replaced by Like for someone else.

The third normal time is that of several months to several years. This is a stable relationship because it is based on reason as well as emotions. The couple have enough in common - both in philosophy and interests - to keep the relationship fresh and active. During this time, Love can start and can grow at its own rate.

The last possible normal time of a relationship is a lifetime. That is the only relationship that can endure what is involved in marriage. It is the only true relationship of In Love as it is the only relationship that necessitates and demands that all the qualities of Love be practiced over a lifetime together - and under all the different circumstances that arise during that lifetime.

All of these relationships have some sort of a "chemistry" in the beginning. Unfortunately, because of this, there are two major mistakes that are commonly made. The first is to go steady after the first date of a relationship that involves "chemistry." Trying to give permanence to any one of the first three relationships by going steady is like setting out on a nice walk through a thick forest in the dead of

night. What is not seen is the open pit that is waiting up ahead. That pit, which will always be fallen into, is the inevitable break-up. Going steadily instead of steady is like taking that walk in the daylight so the pit can be avoided.

Even as dating continues as you get older, premature physical and emotional bondings prevent a realistic view and evaluation of your dates - evaluations that are very important as an exercise leading to that all-important evaluation someday of someone as your marriage partner. Going steadily instead of steady allows a much better chance of this being accomplished.

Going steadily also helps falling into the second major mistake. That mistake - much worse than the first - is to add sex to any one of the first three relationships. In any level of relationship, it automatically makes the mind think that the relationship is on the next higher level. It is also an attempt to give a type of meaning and permanence to a relationship which cannot support it. At the same time, it is also used to support the relationship. It is counterfeit Love in both directions. Pre-marital sex is just pre-nuptial pretense.

If the differences between romantic infatuation and true Love is like the difference between a cheap couch and an expensive couch (both look the same on the surface), then sex is like a fabric stain guard sprayed on the surface of the cheap couch. It prevents problems from showing upon the outside - until the couch falls apart.

The grave sin of fornication is the surest and most obvious way to prove that real Love is not involved in the relationship. Human Love is always imperfect, because humans are imperfect. It is closer to perfect the more it is self-giving, and it is furthest away the more it is self-seeking. Sex outside marriage is the epitome of counterfeit love. While it claims to be the giving of oneself to another, it is at its core only interested in receiving. The male is really only interested in satisfying his physical sex drive and his mental conquest drive. The female is only interested in feeling physically desired and mentally cared about. Fornication is simply the mutual self-seeking gratification of a need. It is a kind of an animalistic symbiotic relationship between human beings. The attempt to justify it by calling it "love" is not just a misnomer - it is a degradation of true Love.

While it is not impossible, it is highly unlikely that someone who has regularly engaged in pre-marital sex for self-gratification of one kind or another (whether this was done consciously or subconsciously) will even attain the self-giving of true Love that is necessary to make a marriage successful and happy. Since the primary mode of personal operation has been on the *self-seeking* of the physical and mental, and not the *self-giving* based on the spiritual, any superficial thoughts of self-giving at the height of the mental emotions at the wedding and the physical emotions of the honeymoon, will inevitably erode. This erosion, (whether it takes weeks, months or years) coupled with a lack of growth in any true Love, is responsible for unhappy marriages - whether they end in

divorce or not.

A couple who is truly In Love before marriage will naturally have a physical desire for each other, but since it is not the essence of the relationship, it will be able to be controlled much easier than a couple to whom the physical is most of the total support of their relationship.

There are many positive practical results for avoiding sex before marriage. The fear of AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases is but one reason (and probably the least) for remaining a virgin, marrying a virgin, and remaining faithful for life.

Virginity can only be lost once. The first time of sex between a boy and a girl may be unplanned, and simply happen as a result of escalated passion and loss of self-control. It certainly leads to an increased lack of self-control, however, with the result of allowing passion its desires on a regular basis. This is what leads to relationships being held together by sex, often followed by a marriage based on it. If Physical Attraction and Infatuation closes the eyes to what another person really is in the beginning of a relationship, then lust and sex blinds them completely.

The best thing is to prevent escalated passion from getting out of hand in the first place. Whether they like it or not, the major responsibility for this belongs to females. That is because males really are "like animals" in that they lose reason much easier and much faster because of sexual passion. Even if this were not true, females should be willing to take the greater responsibility if for no other reason that they have, in many ways, the most to lose.

While it is certainly wrong, men still have a double standard about sex outside of marriage. One man on a television talk show stated that he would never marry the woman with whom he was committing fornication, because he would never be able to trust her completely. And what gives him the idea that any woman could ever trust him?

Men more than women base their interest in a relationship on physical attractiveness. Sooner or later though, the attractiveness of a woman's body changes after marriage, due to weight gain, increase in age, or both. Women are more physically attractive than men, but they also lose the peak of their attractiveness sooner than men. If a man bases his marriage on the physical, then it will go as the physical goes. When the attraction lessens - the marriage lessens. If the attraction ends - the marriage ends.

Let us now look at three different couples and the relative merits of three types of relationships that can exist with them. Couple A has a great sexual relationship. Everything will be fine as long as 1) their emotions stay on the same high level, and 2) they have no real problems that an hour of hot passion cannot solve. This couple will have a "good marriage" until the honeymoon is over - whether by the end of the actual physical honeymoon, or at least no longer than the end of the mental honeymoon.

Couple B has a very good sexual relationship and a good mental relationship. They will have a "good marriage" until either 1) one or both of them are more sexually attracted to another person or 2) they have serious problems in which divorce seems the easiest solution.

Couple C has a sexual relationship ranging anywhere from good on up, they have a very good mental relationship, and they have a great spiritual relationship. Because of the depth of their Love and commitment, most serious problems will be avoided in the first place. They do not have to worry about themselves or their partners wanting to desert the marriage because of simply finding someone else sexually attractive. They do not start thinking that the marriage is over because the honeymoon is over. They do not think the relationship is falling apart because they no longer want to spend every minute of the day with each other. When a serious problem does arise, their attitude is to work out a compromising solution rather than separate to keep their individual pride intact.

For sexual, emotional, or financial reasons, some couples have this right kind of thinking from a short to medium length of time. The only way to have this thinking over a lifetime is to have that all-important spiritual dimension to their marriage.

There are also two other conditions that affect the long-term relationships of these couples. This writer would guess that 99% of Couple A's have probably been involved in pre-marital sex. For Couple B's, the percentage is probably at least 80%. For Couple C's it might be less than 10%. As far as children are concerned, the usual tendency is for Couple A's to not want any, for Couple B's to want two as a minimum and a maximum, and for Couple C's to want or accept as many as God wills or allows them to have.

Now while these last two aspects, as in the others mentioned, are not absolutes -they generally fall true according to the categories outlined. It is also not a coincidence that they fall *where* they do within those categories.

Again, these last two involve the spiritual first - the morals involving sexual activity, and the attitude deciding whether children are blessings or burdens. The spiritual dimensions and one's philosophy involving them is what determines the mental attitudes and the physical actions that follow. There is also the obvious connection between the two - that God's primary purpose for marriage and sex is the procreation of children. In denying that, a couple undermines the institution of marriage - which will probably eventually undermine their own marriage.

Again, the way to evaluate a potential spouse and their philosophy is to use the highest standards of objectivity to evaluate permanent qualities. Does my intended have a strong belief in God, which translates into following His laws - especially those concerning marriage? Will this person help me to live right in order to get to Heaven, or hinder me in that area?

Does this person Love all children in general, which will translate into Loving ours even more in specific? Does this person show evidence of the qualities that are necessary to be a good parent?

Does this person have and show respect for all people in general, which translates to really being able to have respect for me in specific? Is this person really "Loveable" (having qualities worth Loving) which translates to those qualities being evident in

relationships with others?

If the answers to all the above objective questions are positive, then the subjective evidence towards you (feelings and emotions) is much more valid. If the objective evidence is negative and only the subjective evidence is positive, the chances for a lasting, happy marriage range from *slim* to *none*.

THE LOST VIRTUES

One of the best ways for a female to let a male know that the answer is "No", long before it ever gets to the point of needing to be said, is by modesty in dress.

Whether they realize it or not, females give messages to men by the way they dress. If they are dressed modestly - with clothes that conceal rather than reveal - then they give a message of having higher morals than a female wearing a tight low-cut sweater with short shorts. The same is true for halter tops, and for slacks that a woman looks like she was poured into and needs a can opener to get out of. While it is possible (but not likely) for a female dressed modestly to have low morals and one dressed immodestly to have high morals, that is not the impression that is given on the outside.

Wearing modest fashions gives the impression of chastity, which today, along with virginity, is considered a word of ridicule and scorn. It is unfortunate that many people give up high morals simply to avoid being made fun of by people with low morals.

What is advertised on the outside is usually a good indication of what inside intentions are. This is why women in the past would have blushed with shame to be seen in today's fashions. Shame is the guardian of modesty, and modesty is the guardian of chastity. While shame (a painful sense of having done something wrong) is a natural virtue, it is still one that can be overcome by repeatedly ignoring its warnings. This is why modesty and chastity must be cultivated from an early age. It does no good to let pre-teen girls show off half their body or wear tight clothes when they have little or no "figure," and then expect them to dress modestly after they have suddenly attained a figure at puberty and find that accenting it attracts boys. It would be similar to allowing adolescent boys to look at pictures of naked women and read books about sex and then expect them to control their passions on a date (especially if the girl is immodestly dressed).

It is common knowledge that males like to look at female's bodies, and that females like males to look at their bodies. This is tied in with the sex drive on the part of males and vanity on the part of females. It is not necessary, however, for a female to walk around half-naked in order to get males to notice her. As one modesty guide suggests, "Females should wear clothes tight enough to show she's a woman, but loose enough to show she's a lady."

While Physical Attraction is usually the first thing to get a male's attention, it should not be the only focus of that attraction. If the look in your eyes when you are facing the person you care about is the purest form of mental affection, females can prevent that from happening by (un)dressing so that a male's eyes have difficulty making it up to her face. This is not to suggest that females are not attracted to the bodies of males, but nowhere near the same extent or to the same degree. (A male can walk down a street at night naked to the waist without fear of being "attacked." A female would be worse

than naive to try the same thing.) This is also not to suggest that men do not also have standards of modesty. The standards are somewhat different because of physical attractiveness and corresponding physical dangers.

What you see physically about a person is like the tip of the iceberg. It is there to let you know that the iceberg exists. Just as the vast majority of an iceberg lies below the surface of the water, the vast majority of a person's qualities (the mental and spiritual) lie below the surface. If too much emphasis is placed on surface attributes, the more important qualities are not explored and discovered. There are many females who claim to want to be appreciated for other than their body but dress in such a way as to contradict those claims. You will attract who you want to attract, and to what you want to be attractive.

It also goes further than simply to be noticed physically. If a female dresses immodestly, she gives the impression (at least that is the way males interpret it) that she is interested in sex. Men take immodest fashions as "advertisement" of being "loose" morally. In years past, it was easy to identify a prostitute who was "soliciting business" by the way she was dressed. Now it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between a prostitute and a woman in any other "profession." Even if they do not have the same lack of morals, the way they are (un)dressed gives that impression.

This impression (whether meant or not) is often responsible for males expecting sex even on a first date. Then when improper advances are not rebuffed in the beginning, it can lead to the more and more common occurrence of "date rape." Females have to realize that a male loses control much sooner than she does, and the male may be past the point of no return of controlling his own passions long before the female is in danger of losing her own self-control.

Females could prevent "date rape" more by avoiding places and situations which lead to escalating passion, than by waiting for a male to be out of control and hope that saying "No" switches his sexual motor from overdrive to neutral.

If males need to control their sex drive, then females first need to control their vanity in wanting to be stared at physically. A female can be dressed modestly and "attractive" at the same time, but not modestly and "sexy." The difference is how much of her body is accentuated or revealed. It is another in the series of life's trade-offs. A female has to decide whether she wants a male's lust - or his respect. The two are incompatible.

Of course, there are a few women who are so uninterested in developing their mental and spiritual qualities that they think that their body is the only thing men could be interested in. They think that a good body - and the freedom of sex with it - is enough to hold a man. They are occasionally right, of course, but that means that the man she attracts is as shallow as she is. It also means that he will leave her for the next "sexy" female he finds, whether they are married or not. After the newness of sex with her wears off, he leaves and starts looking for another conquest.

If a female does not believe this, there are two ways to check this out. The easiest is just ask a few honest men about it. The second way is to change your style of dressing. If you start wearing "sexier" fashions, watch how you get "hit on" more often. If you start wearing more modest clothes, watch that occurrence decrease. You might even hear comments about it from female friends and relatives. More often than not, those comments will refer to your new style as "defensive dressing," rather than "modesty dressing." That is the current term used to signify dressing which does not invite sexual advances. Call it what you will, it still accomplishes the same purpose. Modesty in dress will not eliminate the low morals of males in general, but it can certainly lessen the impression that most women fit in that same category.

The point is that you should not advertise what you are not selling - or giving away. If you want respect, show it by the way you dress, by the way you talk, and by the way you act. If you are not getting the respect you want, maybe there are some changes in order. It is unfortunate that the females who really want respect in today's world can no longer simply expect it from men; they must demand it from most men. While immodest fashions will certainly turn on men who are only looking for sex, it will turn off men who are looking for women who have more to offer. It all depends on what kind of person you are looking for.

Even without the ultimate goal of a happy marriage, females need to keep in mind that they are on this earth to know, Love, and serve God - not to know, love and attract males.

22 WRONG REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

Because almost one out of every two marriages ends in divorce, it is evident that there are many couples who are marrying for the wrong reasons. These reasons are physical or psychological or emotional or a combination of them. A number of them will be listed with a short comment on each. Undoubtedly they will be easily recognizable in other people that you have known, or even maybe in yourself. Some would mainly refer to females, some to mainly males, and some to both.

- Because you want to get away from home. (You can move out of your parents' house without the necessity of getting married. Even if that is the only option, it is most often not a solution.)
- Because you seek security. (If you think insecurity as a single person is bad, you do not want to find out what it is as a married person.)
- Because you are seeking mental love which is lacking in your life. (Marriage will not be like your daydreams.)
- Because you are seeking physical love - sex. (The best sexual relationship in the world will not in itself hold a marriage together.)
- Because you do not like your job and can quit. (Change jobs).
- Because you are afraid of breaking up or losing the other person. (Compare what you could lose now to what you could lose later.)
- Because someone proposes. (That is a compliment, not a requirement that you marry.)
- Because you are needed mentally. (Another compliment, but not enough of a reason to marry in itself.)
- Because you are desired physically. (Still another compliment, but not necessarily even a personal one.)
- Because you are not sure what you want in life. (Imagine what will happen if you marry and find out that it is not marriage - or not to that person.)
- Because someone "loves" you *or* you "love" someone. (Even if it is really Love, it has to be two-sided. A great abundance of Love in one person will not make up for a great lack of it in another.)
- Because parents or others keep pushing you into it. (You are the one marrying for life with this other person - not them. Tell others there will be a marriage if and when *you both* are ready - not when *they* are.)
- Because you do not want to be an "old maid" at 20, or a "confirmed bachelor" at 25. (While "confirmed bachelor" sounds like a choice, and "old maid" sounds like a girl could not find someone that would want to marry her, both should be ignored as derogatory terms.)
- Because you want to "mother" him. (Whether he did or did

not have a good relationship with his mother, you want a man who needs a wife - not another mother.)

- Because you want to "reform" him. (If he does not "reform" before you marry - proven over time - he will not reform afterwards.)
- Because you are attempting to "prove" to yourself or others that you are mature enough. (When you are mature enough, there is no need to prove it.)
- Because you "owe" it to the other person. (Never marry because of gratitude - or pity.)
- Because you want to be married and your steady is the only prospect in sight. (Second-best in dating is not the same thing as second-best in marriage.)
- Because of pregnancy. (Giving a child a "name" is not as important as giving yourself and your child a good life. Also, 85% of marriages involving pregnancy (or which takes place because of it) fail. It is folly for everyone to assume they fall in the other 15%. So did everyone in the 85%.)
- Because you cannot learn what marriage is without experiencing it yourself. (Having a bad marriage is the worst way to learn.)
- Because he is going in the service - or even to war. (Evaluate your relationship six months after he gets back.)
- Because you cannot think of a reason not to. (Start reading from page one of this book again.)

With all of these, idealistic imagination should never replace realistic evaluations when considering marriage as a permanent union.

The author, Carlo Carretto, has said, "We are not punished for our actions; we are punished by them, as we are rewarded by them." Marriage is a choice that everyone makes on his own and will be "punished" or "rewarded" depending on how good is the personal choice that is made.

If you marry in haste, you do not repent in leisure - you repent in misery.

RIGHT REASON FOR MARRIAGE

There are many wrong reasons for getting married, but there is only one right reason. St. Thomas Aquinas said that Love is "the willingness to sacrifice part of self to make someone else happy." When a man and a woman are In Love, are willing to make a lifetime commitment to God and each other, are willing to work at making each other happy for the rest of their lives, and are also willing to help each other get to Heaven - then they are ready for marriage.

Some people consider marriage a "gamble," because no one can predict exactly what will happen in the future. Having the right philosophy about marriage, however, is like betting on every number on a roulette wheel except double zero. There is still a possibility to lose, but it is very small. All one can do is to increase the odds of success and decrease the odds of failure. A happy marriage can never be absolutely guaranteed, because it is between two human beings with free will who may choose to change over time.

If the couple - as a couple and as individuals - believe that marriage is first of all for God's purposes, and not their own, and that their own purposes can only be fulfilled if God's are fulfilled first, then they will have a successful and happy marriage. It is necessary, however, for both spouses to believe this totally, absolutely, unequivocally, and without reservations or exceptions. Under these conditions, the marriage not only can succeed - it *will* succeed.

Obviously, there have been successful marriages that have not followed the principles expressed here, but just because a few people can pass tests without studying outside of class is no reason to assume that studying is unnecessary. It is also no reason to assume that either you or your fiancée individually (or both together) fall into that rare category.

God's Plan has always been and will always be the best way. No excuse of emotions, rationalization of motives, or situation ethics concerning morals will ever succeed in making better marriages than following God's Plan. No other way will ever guarantee successful marriages or set up as many happy marriages. There is simply no getting around it.

The purpose of this book is not to discourage marriages - only to discourage *bad marriages*. To have good persons marry other good persons for the right reasons is to have *good marriages* as a result.

It does no good to wish "Good Luck" to a couple contemplating marriage, because luck has nothing to do with a successful, satisfying, and happy marriage.

What is needed is a willful return to obedience to God's Laws in principle, and Christ-like actions in practice, as the basis for development of good people in the first place. Then there will be no need of talking of "solutions" for divorce, broken homes, unhappy parents and unhappy children.

Life on Earth will never be a perfect Heaven or an absolute Hell. Which one it resembles the most, however, is actually our own choosing in many ways.

It is your life - it is your choice.

APPENDIX A

Circle the quality if it is IMPORTANT in an *IDEAL DATE*, and draw a line through it, if it is UNIMPORTANT in an *IDEAL DATE*.

Introvert	Athletic	Romantic
Extrovert	Humble	Likes to Talk
Carefree	Nice Parents	Good Judgement
Serious	Understanding	Nice Hair
Musical	Adaptability	Sense of Humor
Pleasant	Good Christian	Trusting
Good Listener	Maturity	Intelligent
Tall	Nice Smile	Shorter Than You
Healthy	Modest	Wise
Same Religion	Quiet	Beautiful
No Drug Use	Thoughtful	Friendly
Likes Animals	Doesn't Smoke	Good Dresser
Lack of Nagging	Likes Parents	Fun-Loving
Dependable	Talented	Affectionate
Hard Worker	Good Figure	Considerate
Popular	Needs You	Sexy
Handsome	Good Cook	Honest
Kind	Jealous	Patient
Does Not Drink	Good Job	Adaptability
Manners	Very Religious	Tactful
Good Dancer	Rich	Not Moody
Punctual	Fancy Car	Respects You
Same Interests	Broad Shoulders	Optimistic
Self-Respect	Loves Children	Ambitious
Faithful	Not Possessive	Unselfish

After finishing, make a list of the most important 15 qualities on another sheet of paper. The order of the first five is VERY IMPORTANT, the order of the second five is IMPORTANT, but the order of the third five is NOT AS IMPORTANT. You are allowed five double answers, such as Kind/Understanding or Tall/Broad Shoulders.

* * * * *

Answer the following questions completely on a separate sheet of paper:

- What is the definition of "Like"? Love
- What is dating and what is the purpose of it?
- What is marriage and what is the purpose of it?
- Have you ever been in love? Has anyone ever loved you?

APPENDIX B

No one is born with an opinion of any kind. Everything you believe came from someone or somewhere else. It is very important to have an understanding of *from whom* or *from where* your present opinions and beliefs derived. It is suggested to do some thinking before answering the questions on this page. Use a separate sheet of paper, and your answers can be as detailed as you wish.

- 1) Who is the person or persons most responsible for influencing your answers on Appendix A?
- 2) From what source (other than people directly) has also influenced your beliefs?
- 3) To what do you contribute the influence taking hold?
Give sources and examples for each one.
 - What you see
 - What you hear
 - Direct teaching
 - Personal experience
 - Indirect influences
 - Peer influence
- 4) When someone or something attempts to influence you, what is their purpose?
(Give sources and examples.)

After finishing, put your answers away. You will want to refer back to them, and may also want to add more to your list at a later time.

APPENDIX C CANDLE ANALOGY

Physical Attraction

Tall	Good Figure	Shorter Than You
Handsome	Broad Shoulders	Beautiful
Nice Smile	Nice Smile	

Infatuation

Carefree	Athletic	Good Dancer
Musical	Talented	Fun-Loving
Healthy	Rich	Sexy
Popular	Fancy Car	Ambitions
Good Dancer	Intelligent	

Like

Introvert	Manners	Sense of Humor
Extrovert	Punctual	Friendly
Serious	Same Interests	Not Moody
Pleasant	Quiets	Optimist
Likes Animals	Thoughtful	
Kind	Likes to Talk	

Love

Good Listener	Good Christian	Affectionate
Dependable	Modest	Considerate
Self-Respect	Not Possessive	Honest
Understanding	Good Judgement	Tactful
Adaptability	Trusting	Respects You

Married Love

Same Religion	Nice Parents	Very Religious
No Drug Use	Maturity	Love Children
Lack of Nagging	Doesn't Smoke	Wise
Hard Worker	Likes Your Parents	Patient
Does Not Drink	Need You	Adaptability
Faithful	Good Cook	Unselfish
Humble	Good Job	

APPENDIX D

	%Emotion	% Reason
Physical Attraction (No Interaction)	100	0
Infatuation (Fairy Tale Relationship)	90	10
Like (Interaction Unnecessary)	80	20
In Like (Interaction required)		60 40
Love (Some/Plenty Interaction)	40	60
In Love (Planning Life Together - Optimism)	20	80
Marriage (Reality of Life Together)	10	90

APPENDIX E

Circle the quality if it is IMPORTANT in an *IDEAL MATE*, and draw a line through it, if it is UNIMPORTANT in an *IDEAL MATE*.

Introvert	Athletic	Romantic
Extrovert	Humble	Likes to Talk
Carefree	Nice Parents	Good Judgement
Serious	Understanding	Nice Hair
Musical	Adaptability	Sense of Humor
Pleasant	Good Christian	Trusting
Good Listener	Maturity	Intelligent
Tall	Nice Smile	Shorter Than You
Healthy	Modest	Wise
Same Religion	Quiet	Beautiful
No Drug Use	Thoughtful	Friendly
Likes Animals	Doesn't Smoke	Good Dresser
Lack of Nagging	Likes Parents	Fun-Loving
Dependable	Talented	Affectionate
Hard Worker	Good Figure	Considerate
Popular	Needs You	Sexy
Handsome	Good Cook	Honest
Kind	Jealous	Patient
Does Not Drink	Good Job	Adaptability
Manners	Very Religious	Tactful
Good Dancer	Rich	Not Moody
Punctual	Fancy Car	Respects You
Same Interests	Broad Shoulders	Optimistic
Self-Respect	Loves Children	Ambitious
Faithful	Not Possessive	Unselfish

After finishing, make a list of the most important 15 qualities on another sheet of paper. The order of the first five is VERY IMPORTANT, the order of the second five is IMPORTANT, but the order of the third five is NOT AS IMPORTANT. You are allowed five double answers, such as Kind/Understanding or Tall/Broad Shoulders.

* * * * *

Answer the following questions completely on a separate sheet of paper:

What is the definition of MARRIAGE?

What is the purpose of MARRIAGE?

APPENDIX F

TRANSITIONAL STAGES OF RELATIONSHIPS

- 1st - Beginning of Puppy Love
- 2nd - End of Puppy Love
- 3rd - Beginning of In Like
- 4th - Beginning of In Love
- 5th - Beginning of Marriage
- 6th - Beginning of Love-sharing Period