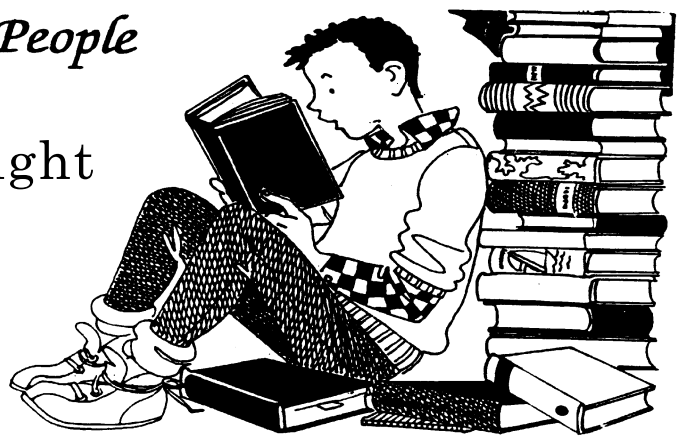
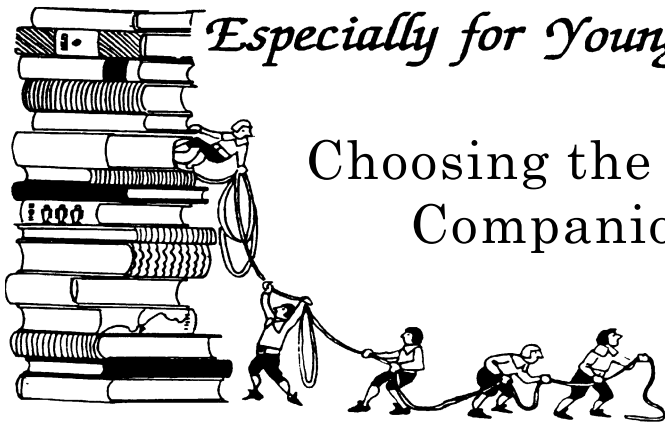


Especially for Young People

Choosing the Right Companion



The most important decision that anyone will ever make in life is choosing whether or not to be a child of God. I was brought up in a godly home, and I was made to realize that. I was six years of age when I got saved, and I can still remember how I felt. I knew that I was a sinner. I felt that I was the worst sinner in that church building.

There are things in my treasure chest of memories that I am going to mention. My godly parents taught me the great value of prayer, and they taught me how to pray. We prayed in the car, in the house, and everywhere we went. We prayed about nearly everything. I lived in a wonderful atmosphere, but living in that atmosphere did not save me. It did instill wonderful principles in me, but there came a time when I had to do something about salvation.

Divine healing is the first thing that I want to pull out of my treasure chest, but that is not my subject. When my mother was a baby, her parents trusted the Lord for divine healing. As a baby, she suffered blood poisoning, and they thought she was going to die. Her mother wrote to some people from the Church of God, and they sent her an anointed handkerchief. Now, there was no healing power in a handkerchief, but the healing came through obedience to the Word of God. She laid that handkerchief on my mother as a baby, and soon she was healed. My mother kept that handkerchief, and many times she shouted praises

to God with that little hanky for how He healed her. God healed her many, many more times.

The main thing I want to focus on is how to find the right companion. The second most important decision that you will ever make is marrying the right person. This was instilled in me as a little girl. One of my favorite bedtime stories as a little girl was how Momma and Daddy met. I often said, "Tell me how God brought you together." I heard that story over and over. As I heard it repeatedly, it was instilled in me how serious it is to get the right companion. The things that you learn early in life are the things that stay with you. It created a fear in me of marrying the wrong person.

I want to tell you briefly how Mom and Dad met. Mother lived in Tennessee, and my dad lived in Oklahoma. My mother was one of seven children. She was a twin, and her daddy was a preacher. She wanted a minister for a husband, and she wanted one who trusted the Lord for healing. She said, "I covenanted in my heart that if I have to stay home with Mom and Dad for the rest of my life, that is what I will do, because I am not going to make a mistake and marry out of the order of the Lord."

She started praying, and the Scripture that she used was Psalm 37:4-5: "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

My mother was in Tennessee praying, and Daddy was in Oklahoma. Young person, if you are still waiting for a companion, perhaps God still has to bring him or her in for you. You need to be patient. Mom put in her request, and that was fine as long as her petition was in line with the Lord's Word. My dad told his mother that he wanted someone who could play the piano, who could sing alto, and who had blue eyes. Well, he got everything but the blue eyes; Mom had hazel eyes.

My dad, in Oklahoma, was engaged to someone else. I want you to look at how God works. He was engaged to a United Brethren pastor's daughter. My dad had to drive sixty miles to go to the Church of God, so the family attended the United Brethren Church one Sunday, and the next Sunday they drove sixty miles to the Church of God. Back and forth they went.

This lady wanted my dad to marry her. She was teaching school, but he did not have a job. He had enough principle to know that it was not a good idea to get married when he did not have a job. Also, he said one argument they would always come down to was about the Church of God. She said, "Let's just forget both churches and join some other church." My dad did not like that idea. He just kept holding out for the Church of God, and one day she got out of the car, slammed the door, and was done with him. I will not go through all of how God brought my

parents together, but they were a godly team for the Lord. They worked together everywhere they traveled.

As I heard my parent's story over and over, the fear of God was put in my heart, and I really sought the Lord. The years that I was dating, I was not always wise. I did not have enough sense to direct my own steps, and none of us do. If you think you are smart enough to choose who to marry, you need help. I was afraid, and even when I knew I was in love, I said, "Lord, I have to be sure that this is Your will." Momma told me as a little girl, "Almeda, you need to start praying for a companion right now as a little girl. You need to start praying for God to help you find the right companion, because finding the right companion is the second most important decision to getting saved." So I did.

As a Christian, the first qualification that you need to consider when seeking a companion is whether that person is a saved individual. First of all, you had better make sure that *you* are saved and connected to Christ so that you can hear from Him. A lot of people are deaf, spiritually speaking. They ask the Lord, "This is the right one, isn't it, Lord?" Then they shut their ears and say, "Oh, yes!" They do not wait for the Lord's answer.

Just because someone says he or she is saved does not mean that person is spiritual. Does that person live as a Christian should live? Is that individual obeying the Truth? Is he or she submissive to the pastor? Is that person living what is preached or doing contrary to what is preached? Disobedience is not a good seedbed for Christian living.

I thought what it is like to cultivate a garden. The ground has to be prepared before you put seed in it; then you have to put good seed in it. Likewise, to have a happy home, you must have the right kind of ground. You have to be right with God, and you have to seek His counsel and direction. You must have

good ground to start with; then you must put the right seeds in the ground so that you do it right. The world says you just get married and live happily ever after; that is a fairy tale. It does not happen that way.

You can make your own choice. You are free to choose who you want to marry, but you are going to pay for it if you do it wrong. If you get in a mess, you are going to know that you put yourself in the mess. Second Corinthians 6:14-15 says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

How are you going to be in agreement if you marry someone who is unsaved? Are you foolish enough to think, "I can still live for the Lord and be married to this unsaved person"? The two of you would be going two opposite directions. You would have strife and division in the home, and that is not the happy way to go.

First Corinthians 7:39 gives the qualifications for the widow lady, but we know that God's Word does not have one standard for the young and another one for the older saints. Holiness is the standard for all of us. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:39, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; [Everybody likes that, don't they? That is what they want to hear, but that is not all of it.] only in the Lord."

God has someone just for you. It is your job to find out who it is and wait until He brings that person along. My mother was twenty-five years of age when she got married. Back in those days, people got married really young, especially in Tennessee. She thought she was an old maid at twenty-five. She thought she would be single forever, but she settled it, saying, "Rather than to be out of the order of the Lord, I will

just be single all my life."

The Scripture says you need to marry "in the Lord." God can let you know if a person is the right one for you, but you need to ask Him. If you are Church of God, he or she should be Church of God. You are going to have a divided home if he or she attends one church and you are going to another church. A divided home is not a good thing.

I had a wonderful godly home when I was growing up. I did not know what the word *divorce* meant. I do not even remember knowing anybody who was divorced. Children from divorced homes suffer greatly. You do not want to have to go down that road in life. Furthermore, you do not need to if you serve the Lord and do what He says. Some like to do what they want to do, and then they bring the mess to the Lord and say, "Here; fix it, Lord." Well, He can fix some things, but you still have to reap what you sow, and that is not always pleasant.

When I read the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 7:39 about marrying "in the Lord," I thought about when Samuel was choosing a king for Israel. All of Jesse's sons walked by Samuel. When Samuel saw the eldest son, he thought surely he was the one whom God had chosen, but he was not. He was tall and good looking, but God let Samuel know that he should not look on the outward appearance. When choosing a companion, we are not supposed to choose by the eye. Young person, you may think, "Oh, she is beautiful, so she has to be the one" or "He is handsome, so he has to be the one" or "Well, he has money" or "He is popular, and everybody thinks he is great." You are judging by the outward appearance.

What the Lord said to Samuel then will work for this today. He said in 1 Samuel 16:7, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." God is the only One who knows who the right companion is for you. The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is

not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." If you choose your own companion, you might choose wrong, and then you will have to pay for it. You are not wise enough to see down the road.

Let us consider some men in the Bible who made wrong choices. Solomon was the wisest man in the Old Testament. I do not think you can qualify as the wisest person around. Although Solomon was wise concerning many things, he was not wise when it came to women; he was very unwise. The commandment all through the Old Testament was that God's people were not to marry outside the nation of Israel. They were not to marry their enemies.

First Kings 11:1-2 reads: "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites [all of these were enemies of Israel]; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." I really do not think that it was love. I do not know how a man could love that many women at once; that would be a little hard to do.

Verses 4 and 6 go on to tell us: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. . . . And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father." Solomon built a place for idols for his wives, and the next thing, he was worshipping with them. This is what happens if you marry someone unsaved. That person can pull you away from the Lord.

We can read about another man in the Bible who was unwise in his choices. Samson lost out with God. He married a woman who was a Philistine, but that marriage did not

last very long. After that, he went after another Philistine woman named Delilah. He flirted around with Delilah until she got him to tell her the secret of his great strength. He was playing with the devil, and the devil won. He lost his strength, his eyesight, and the presence of the Lord.

I have seen young people lose out with God because they would not obey God about seeking Him for the right companion. A lot of them are not even saved today because they chose that companion over God. Some may be saved, but they have terrible home situations. A broken home or a home in trouble is far worse than living by yourself. If you are saved, you should not date an unsaved person. God showed one young person that she should break up with a young man, but she would not do it. She lost out with the Lord, but she did not even marry that guy. She was determined to have him instead of God, and she is still lost today.

Young person, God has good things for you. You can start your own treasure chest. If you have been given treasures from your parents or grandparents, you can pass those treasures on. These are things that are going to affect you spiritually. The most important thing is to let God have charge of your life. If you are not going to listen to Him about other things, you are not going to listen to Him about choosing the right companion. He is going to start talking to you about other things first, saying, "Don't do this," and "Do that." You cannot be His child if you are not going to obey Him.

Some young people lose out with God because they are not getting hooked into God. They are not getting that personal relationship with God. You are not going to make it just because you are with a group. Salvation is not a group plan. You are not going to get to Heaven because you are Brother and Sister So-and-So's child. You can only get to Heaven because your heart is right with God and you are walking

in 100 percent obedience to God. When you get to the Judgment, you cannot say, "Well, I sat in church, but I did not pay attention." Does that excuse work in school? No! If you did not hear what the teacher said, that is tough! If he or she said it, you are responsible. Salvation is a life and death matter. This is about your soul and where you will spend eternity.

Marrying out of the order of the Lord is just one of the many reasons people turn away from God. However, I think one of the basic reasons is that some are not getting a good handle on God in the beginning. You need to have a handle on Him and be determined, saying: "I am going to live for the Lord no matter what I have to do. If I have to be shunned at school, if I have to change all my friends at school, if I have to break up with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, I am going to be true to God." Being true to God has to be the most important thing in your life. Often people want the best of two worlds: they want to stay with the Lord and yet do what they want to do. It does not work that way. God is not going to accept anything less than your whole heart.

Sister Almeda Cummings

Advice to those who desire to know the will of God:

1. Weigh everything in the light of the Holy Scriptures and in the fear of God.

2. Seek to have no will of your own in order to ascertain the mind of God regarding any steps you propose to take, so that you can honestly say you are willing to do the will of God.

3. When you have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly, patiently, believably, expectantly, and surely you will, in His own time and way, obtain it.