



BY DR. DAVID O.OYEDEPO

BIBLE SENSE FOR GETTING INTO MARRIAGE

The Commission

"The hour has come to liberate the world from all oppressions of the devil, through the preaching of the Word of Faith; and I am sending you to undertake this task."

Introduction

To get at the best in anything, you need facts. I consider facts as the father of success. Every success in marriage is fathered by facts, not luck.

Quite a number of people have very peaceful and harmonious homes. Some are not even Christians, but they have unconsciously engaged the vital law of success in marriage the law of sense.

Many have put the blame for their troubled homes at the door of the devil. But I believe the devil is not to be blamed for some of the problems we find in homes today. Some of them are self-caused.

The Bible says by wisdom is a house built and by understanding it is established (Prov. 24:3-4). Wisdom has a way of establishing peace and serenity in the home. But it places a responsibility on you.

Men with successful homes have accepted the responsibility of loving their wives, and the wives have also accepted the responsibility of submitting to their husbands. The Bible sense for getting into marriage or for enjoying a successful home is accepting your responsibility in designing or determining your destiny.

I believe that shortage of sense is the reason for problems in the home. Marriage is neither a myth nor magic. It is a relationship consciously entered into. You can't wake up one morning and find somebody by your side. That happened only once in the Garden of Eden, never to happen again.

Marriage is a good thing established by God, for the benefit of man. But to enjoy the benefits, it must be entered into as God intended it to be.

Starting right is the solid foundation for success in marriage. The Bible says in ***Psalm 11:3:***

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Success in marriage starts even before a couple enters into marriage. A sure foundation sets the pace for a successful home.

1. Finding the Person

"How do I get into marriage?" is the first question you must ask. The answer is in ***Proverbs 18:22:***

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

"Whoso findeth..." not, "Whoso prayeth or fasteth", or "Whoso his father giveth a wife..."

Finding a wife is a conscious act. It doesn't happen in a sleep or dream. You enter into marriage with your senses alive. You consciously engage yourself in a finding process, by opening your mind and eyes to locate who you can spend your lifetime with.

The finding process is not spiritual, but a practical one. You open your eyes wide to find a partner. After finding, you evaluate what you have found, if it is what you really want or not.

For a believer, there are two basic criteria for determining who to marry.

Must Be A Believer

No matter the counsel, dream, or vision, there is no meeting point between a Christian and a sinner. The Abrahamic covenant demands that you marry among your kinsmen only. You're not permitted to marry strangers.

In simple language, the unbeliever is out of the question for a believer, no matter how you feel about it or how much you would have loved to. The Bible is clear on this.

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? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

Considering an unbeliever for marriage is completely out of the question, no matter how well you are convinced that someday he or she will be saved. If you go on in a relationship with an unbeliever, it is easier for you to backslide than for you to get him saved. This is because it is easier to be pulled down from a height than to be pulled up from a well or valley.

It is scripturally unsafe for you to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. No matter what possession the unbeliever has, he is out of the way. Even if she is the most beautiful lady on earth, she is out of the way. Even if you claim he looks gentle, there are many gentle

devils. A gentleman does not mean a saved man. You may say, "In fact, since I knew him, he has never hurt a fly." You will be the first fly he will hurt!

You don't need to pray or think about considering an unbeliever as a marriage partner. God gave us brains so we can let Him rest. God doesn't listen to prayers that negate His Word. Your friends and church members may hear your groaning in prayer, but God won't, if it contradicts His Word.

Agreement

The second criterion for making your choice on who to marry is agreement. The Bible says:

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Amos 3:3

You ask yourself, "Do we agree? Are we working towards a common goal?" If you desire a successful home, then you must sincerely answer these questions. You don't need prayer to be able to answer them.

If the person is bothered about your prayer life, then you're not heading in the same direction. If she feels uncomfortable when you read the Bible, then you should not bother about her. If your going to church is a concern to him, you might end up in a shrine. If he can't stand your relations, you can't have a good home.

"Are we agreeable?" Answering this question has a lot to do with your ability to analyze issues.

After these two criteria have been met, then you can make your choice of a marriage partner. Don't be afraid to make your choice, because even God respects your choice (Deut. 30:19). To marry someone you don't like makes you a fool.

Propose

The next thing to do is to propose to the lady. You go ahead to communicate to the person of your choice, your desire to marry her.

When you propose to a lady, give her a chance to decide whether she wants to marry you or not. Let agreement for marriage be by choice, not under any religious influence.

Somebody once told me that the Lord told him to marry a sister. I replied, "No problem, tell her." He then went to the lady and told her he wanted to marry her. But the lady told him, "No, I don't want to marry you." But the man insisted, telling her that God says she was his wife.

The lady later got married to another brother. I saw this brother some time ago and asked him, "What are you doing about marriage?" He said God hadn't told him any new thing, insisting that the lady was his wife. I said, "Ah, do you want to kill her husband? Then you will be a murderer and go to hell."

God is not the author of confusion. Choice must be by mutual agreement, not by spiritual harassment. When a lady says "No" to your proposal, go and look elsewhere for a wife. She has a right to choose who she wants to marry, so don't blackmail or stampede her into marrying you by telling her God said she is your wife.

Everyone has a right to decide who he or she wants to marry. Marriage is by choice, not by force.

2. Courtship

After proposing to a lady and she has agreed to marry you, the next thing to do is to obey the Biblical injunction to prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21). No matter how much you're convinced that you have made a right choice of who to marry, you need to prove the relationship.

The courtship period is the time to prove your relationship. **Proving all things is the essence of courtship.** It gives you the opportunity of proving your choice. Yes, your spirit agrees that you have made the right choice, but you still need to prove all things. So, take time to prove your choice.

Courtship is a fact-finding period. Marriage without courtship naturally ends in crisis, because there was no opportunity to get to know each other and prove whether the choice made was wise or not.

Impatience is responsible for many marriage failures in the west today. A lot of marriages in America today don't last for more than three months, and the data keep getting worse by the day. This is because a man can meet a lady on the subway and say to her, "Hi, I am Thomas. Can you go out with me this Saturday? After that, can we be married the next Saturday?" The lady says, "Why not?"

Their next meeting after that is on their wedding day. But very shortly after, Thomas says to Jane, "Jane, I am sorry I met you. It is the greatest mistake of my life. Let's call it quits."

A woman can just walk out of the house, saying, "I'm tired, I'm fed up." She leaves her home, leaving a note in the hand of the baby. The baby munches half of it, and the man returns home to meet the remaining half!

This is why there is need to prove the relationship by knowing one another well enough before getting into marriage.

Courtship can be broken. This should not be mistaken for divorce. There is a no law in the Bible that says one can't break a courtship. Courtship is only a period of proving your compatibility. If you are not compatible, then the relationship should end there and not continue any further. If your ideas and ideals are not similar, common sense demands that you call it quits.

I didn't marry the first person I was in courtship with. When I saw the way she was moving, I thought to myself, "We are not going in the same direction." There was no point in doing what I was not sure of, so I called her and said, "I am sorry, I don't think we can continue. May the Lord give you the right person, and He shall find me the right person too." Today, she is not a Christian!

Don't bind yourself with religion. You can't see problem ahead and not try to avoid it. Many who have problems in their homes today saw the problems ahead, but they still went ahead, like a horse and a mule that have no understanding.

You say, "How can I break our courtship? Our group leader already knows." By the time you start boxing yourselves at home, your group leader would have gone to work! Which group leader are you talking about anyway? I was the leader of my group when I decided I didn't want to marry the lady I first was engaged to any more.

Courtship is a covenant culture for a successful marriage. It gives you the opportunity to change your mind in the process. So one month is not sufficient for courtship. Two months is risky. Man is a complex being, so you need enough time to logically and analytically assess your choice, and get to know each other well.

The proving process is the personal responsibility of the individuals involved, because they are the ones to live together. Do not allow your parents or Family to prove your spouse for you.

3. Proceed

After you have satisfactorily proved your relationship, you can then go on to the next stage of informing members of your Family about the relationship. This is the time to meet each other's parents and Family members.

You are not permitted to proceed, until you're satisfied with the available facts about each other. When you are satisfied with your proofs, then go ahead and make announcements.

You will lose respect before people, if today you introduce somebody to them, and come back tomorrow to say you are no longer marrying each other.

4. Protect Each Other

While in courtship, there is the need to protect the relationship from incurring the anger of God. You must protect your destiny by protecting yourself from defilement. Hebrews 13:4 says:

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Courtship period is not the time to prove if your fiancée can be pregnant or not. That is not allowed in the covenant. It sows a seed of shame for the future and turns God's favour away from you.

The covenant demands that you protect the relationship from defilement. The honour of marriage is an undefiled bed.

For those who are ignorant of this, the former things God has overlooked. Those who know it pay heavily for disobeying. I was in courtship for six years. One day, the enemy told me, "I will make sure you fall into fornication." I told my wife-to-be what the devil told me, and said to God, "If I ever go into it, strike me with leprosy." That settled the matter, as I wasn't ready to be a leper.

Every beautiful thing has a price tag. So protect your relationship, and you will enjoy dignity at the end of the day.

5. Protest

If in an attempt to protect your relationship certain unpleasant things develop, then you have the right to protest.

Protest means pointing out the unacceptable issues you have discovered in one another before marriage. You have the right to tell your fiancé (e), when you discover an unacceptable thing with him or her, "No, no, no, I can't take that!" You can tell him or her, "That step is not acceptable. It is wrong, for so and so reason."

If you can't understand yourselves before you get married and start living together, you will never have an outstanding Family. You need to know what goes well, and understand the reasons behind it.

You had earlier agreed on certain terms, and then suddenly there is a change or a deviation. You are allowed to react, in order to put the issues right. That way, when you are married, there will be freedom of communication. Disagreements should be allowed from both parties.

Also, if any member of any of the two families raise some issues that can jeopardize your future, you are permitted to protest. You can tell them, "This won't work, for this and that reason."

When I was about getting married, certain things were included on the list of things I was to take to my in-laws, which I disagreed with. I would rather never be married than present those things, because of my stand for God and my future. I didn't respond when I got the list, because I knew I won't present the things requested for.

Even though they had the pipe and could dictate the tune then, I still had the right to change my mind. I knew I loved my wife and that we were looking forward to getting married; but I loved my God more.

One day, my in-laws said to me, "We sent so and so paper to you, but you didn't respond." God gave me wisdom to reply them, and I said, "You see, there are certain things on the list, that if we get involved in now, we would become problems to you

tomorrow." My father-in-law agreed with me and said, "Cancel whatever is against your future there."

Courtship time is the time to thoroughly thrash out your differences, so they don't become a problem in future.

6. Prepare For The Future

*So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.
2 Chronicles 27:6*

Jotham became great because he prepared his ways. Behind every great accomplishment is great preparation. In any task, your output is naturally a function of your preparation. God cannot prepare for you. He said, *"Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Matt. 3:3).*

You prepare for marriage by taking practical steps towards marriage. What you're not prepared for, you can't succeed in. You can't be a squatter and want to marry. You can't afford to continue living the way you were living before you got married after marriage.

Marriage is not for boys in the kingdom; it is for men. If you want to enjoy the full blessings of God in marriage, be mentally, spiritually and physically prepared for your home. *Matthew 19:5* says:

...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

A man leaves, not a boy! Marriage is not for girls and boys, it is for men and ladies. Peace and maturity in the home is a function of the parties involved. In recent times there are too many boys and girls in marriage, giving birth to babies. Marriage is for the matured.

Maturity has nothing to do with biological age. It is a personal development, that demands that a man or woman be responsible. For instance, to want to get married without a job, a house, and the basic needs of a home is a sign of gross irresponsibility. It

is scripturally not permitted for parents to sponsor their children's marriage. If a man can't handle the necessary expenses for his wedding, then it is dangerous to entrust a human being into his care.

Maturity determines serenity. Harmony and peace are all products of maturity, therefore, you need a matured mind and body. There is nothing more frustrating than being tied to the apron strings of your parents. Christianity does not equal stupidity. Your mind must be sound. Until you can stand your ground, you are not a man. You're not permitted to marry, until you accept full responsibility for your choice.

7. Possess

When all these are fully in place, you can then march to the altar together to be joined as husband and wife. This is the appropriate time to possess your husband or wife, and the home is born.

It is at this point that the young man can now stand in front of many witnesses and say, "I, Victor ... or I, Samuel...wed thee..." The man is set for the home. He is in shape both mentally and physically. He is leaving boyhood for manhood.

Until these processes are fully in place, it is not safe to marry. It is only at this point that you can be convinced that you have a goodly heritage, and that a great future is established for your home. It is then you can be sure that you are heading for something very colourful and glorious.

...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Matthew 19:5

This is the foundation. For your home to be successful, the couple must both leave their parents to cleave to each other. You can't enjoy peace in your home when for every small decision, you run home to mum and dad. It means you never left home in the first place.

A boy can't leave home; only men can. Neither can a girl leave home; girls live at home. Immaturity is the reason why many couples are in a house, but are not at home. They are married to their spouses quite alright, but they are at home with their parents.

Your parents or Family members are not supposed to be involved in the initial moves for marriage. They should not be involved, until all the facts have been properly analyzed and a decision reached.

The race is not permitted to begin, until after these things have been put in place. If you are absolutely responsible for your choice, then you won't look for someone to blame.

You will not fail! Your home shall be the haven God created it to be, in Jesus' name!