

Series: Family Matters
#2 How to Find God's Good Thing
Proverbs 18:22; Genesis 29:16-20

Introduction: Turn to Proverbs 18:22

He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord. (NIV)

He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. (ESV)

Find a good spouse, you find a good life—and even more: the favor of God! (MSG)

PRAY

Do any of you remember that poem that your friends might have said to you, especially if they thought you liked somebody. It would be, "Gerry and Nancy sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g... First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in a baby carriage," or something like that. Don't look at me like I'm crazy. I didn't make that up.

Proverbs 18:22 says: "***He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.***" (ESV)

Today I want to talk to young people especially, about **how to find a good thing**...how to find the right person.

Marriage is designed by God to be a good thing. The Hebrew word for good means "to be acceptable, pleasing, beneficial, delightful." "***He who finds a wife finds a good thing and he obtains favor from the LORD.***"

The sad reality in our world today is that many people don't see marriage as a good thing. They are not experiencing the reality of Proverbs 18:22.

But here's the thing: For those of you who are ***not married***, but want to be married one day, this message is really geared to help you make a good choice.

For those of you who **are married** and say, "Yeah, that's my problem. I made a bad choice." I want to help you love the choice you made.

This might be your first marriage, your second marriage, your third marriage, and things are still not working out. I want it to be your last marriage. I want you to love your choice." You can't unscramble eggs. You can't go back in time and say, "Oh, I wish I'd known this stuff thirty years ago." I believe God can give you the grace to turn things around.

In Genesis 29:16-20, we have a great love story. ***Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.***

17Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.

18Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

19Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." 20So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her." (NIV)

I want to cast a vision for you that our society does a lousy job at. You've seen so much that you might think that there are only bad relationships; but I want to give you hope that marriage is God-ordained and wonderful.

This message is for everyone who thinks that someday they hope to find that special somebody and become a couple for as long as you both shall live; this message is also for those who need to keep love alive in their marriage.

Here is the little secret that every married couple here knows that maybe young adults and teens have never heard: your present, that will eventually be in your past, will keep showing up in your future.

Many people thought that once they got married it was a new beginning in the sense that the past was going to stay in the past. This marriage relationship will be new and wonderful, and we will live happily ever after. I want to tell you ahead of time. **What you are doing now will follow you. Your choices, your character, your relationships have a way of showing up in your future.**

Let me say it like this; I've never met many married couples that had marriage problems. What I see are people with problems who got married, and their problems followed them.

A marriage problem is: do we squeeze the toothpaste in the middle or at the bottom or do we each have our own tube; which way does the toilet paper come off the roll; who pays the bills or buys the groceries. Which parents' house do visit on celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas?

What really happens is that single people come into marriage with problems. They drag their past into their present. And the reason people get into trouble when they get married is that they believe the **“right person myth”...which is, if I marry the right person everything will be all right.**

Do you know how someone knows they've met the right person – chemistry?

We just think about each other all the time and talk and text on the phone for hours, and we like to do the same things. He's on my mind all the time and we have all this chemistry.

And here's what else they believe, that no one has ever loved in the history of the world like us. Not my parents, no one in history...no one in the movies...no one, anywhere, at any time. They are convinced that this is a once in a lifetime, amazing relationship; so, they finally decide to get to married.

The problem is they didn't have anything **but** chemistry; they didn't know much about relationships...couldn't make decisions, couldn't solve problems, couldn't agree to disagree agreeably. They thought “I don't have to be good at relationships”; because I married the right person.

I don't have to be patient, because she's never going to do anything to make me have to be patient, because they're the right person. I don't have to be critical, because he will never do anything I don't' like, because he's the right person. And guess what happens; eventually these newlyweds have problems.

Guess what kind of problems they have; **not** chemistry problems – they have relationship problems, because they didn't do anything to prepare for the relationship; they just thought love will keep us together. They start having troubles and guess what starts to suffer...**the chemistry.**

And where it's been so passionate and fun, it's not working now. The guy he's really confused and thinks, we just need to have more sex. And the girl thinks "that's not how it works." And suddenly there is all this tension and confusion.

And the very thing, the reason they got married – the chemistry starts to die, because they're no good at relationships. It's because they believed the right person myth. If I find the right person, everything will be alright.

And then someone has the idea; I know what will help bring us closer together, "let's have a baby." Yea that's great; let's bring another human being into this struggling relationship, and now it's harder, and there are new problems.

He's at work one day and notices some nice lady he has been working with. Or a woman is out somewhere and meets this wonderful, caring man. And after a while, as they pay more attention to these other people who are paying attention to them; do you know what they think. **I know what's wrong with my marriage, I married the wrong person.**

Joke: A man saw a very attractive girl while awaiting his flight at the airport. He approached her and asked, "Hey. Is there any chance you'd go out on a date with a guy like me?" She said, "Well, anything's possible. I might."

So, he asked her, "What kind of guy are you interested in?"

"Well, to tell you the truth", she said, "I really like to go out with native Americans, because they have rugged good looks and chiseled facial features."

"But then again, I also like to go out with Jewish men, because they are usually very well off financially and I love their culture and their traditions."

"But I guess my favorite, if I had to pick, would be a good ol' country boy."

"By the way, she said, what's your name?"

He said, "My name is Geronimo Bernstein, but you can call me Bubba!"

TRANSITION: Let me tell you, there is a different approach to right relationships and happy marriages. You won't find it advertised on TV or the internet. It's not that society is against a happy marriage. It's that it doesn't know where one really comes from.

Our culture doesn't highlight healthy relationships, happy marriages, because that doesn't sell; so, they emphasize cheating, divorce, illicit sex, and the dysfunctional lives of well-known people.

If you date with the mindset that if I can just find the right person, everything will be all right; you've bought into the fairy tale that doesn't work.

How can you find the right person to marry? Three critical factors.

I. To find the right person, be the right person.

I want to give you something that I want you to wrap your head around and start living out. Forget about finding the right person; the question you need to ask is, are you becoming the right person?

To find the right person, be the right person. It starts with you. It starts with you. Work on you. Now, we've all seen people who have gotten divorced, and then they're back on the market, so to speak. And they don't want to be single; they want to be married.

Here's a guy and he let himself go in his marriage. And then he gets divorced, and what does he do? He joins the gym, goes on a diet and signs up for the hair club for men.

There's nothing wrong with looking your best on the outside. But this is what nobody ever told you. After many years, people wake up on the other side of the bed or the wrong side of marriage and they wonder why they are more like roommates instead of soul mates?

If you were to sit down, you could come up with a list of all the things you would look for in a future boyfriend, girlfriend...husband or wife. I want them to be this or that. I don't want them to have this problem or that hang-up.

But are you the person, the person you are looking for, is looking for? Are you being intentional? Are you working towards becoming the person, the person you are looking for, is looking for? Or are you just hoping that someday you will run into the person of your dreams.

Here is the interesting thing, when you open the pages of scripture you will find little help in getting insight into **finding** the right person; but there is a whole lot of info on **becoming** the right person.

It is natural for you to want to hear someone say, “I love you...I want to spend the rest of my life with you...you are the most important person in my life...I have so much respect for you...when I hear the car pull up in the driveway, I’m excited that you’re home.” You were created to be in love with God and others.

But it won’t happen accidentally. It doesn’t happen if you just make yourself available to enough men or women, then eventually somehow, you’ll meet the right person. **You’ve got to be intentional about becoming the right person.**

Let me give you a list from the bible.

I’m suggesting that you practice all these things every time you date, in every conversation and relationship you have, whether that person is a candidate for you to marry or not. Becoming godly in Christ Jesus prepares you to be the right person.

If you want to develop some sweet dating skills, here they are. If you want to prepare yourself, and get better, here are some starting points in how you become the person, the person you are looking for, is looking for; and if you’re already married or dating – this list is how to keep becoming the person you need to be. It’s found in one of the most famous chapters in the bible; 1 Corinthians 13, known as the love chapter.

1. Love is patient. It means love never pressures the other person. Love creates as much space and margin as the other person needs. If you are in a relationship and the other person is always pushing you...rush, rush, rush, do this and do that; they ARE NOT loving you. This doesn’t suddenly appear as a virtue just because you say “I do”. It develops over time. Every day you need to get better at it.

2. Love is kind. We don’t like that word; it’s kind of wimpy; a better word is considerate. Love is considerate. Do you know what it means? You take into consideration how the other person feels. Love is kind. Love is considerate. I’m not suggesting that you work on this after you think you’ve found the right person. I’m saying work on it all the time in every relationship - NOW.

So that by the time you meet that special person, they think that you are the most patient, kind, considerate person they've ever met.

Let me tell you what married people thought. I don't need to become kind or considerate, because when I meet the right person, they are going to be so perfect it won't require kindness off me...they'll never be an occasion when I'll have to be patient or considerate, it's just going to be natural; because they're the right person.

Story: A couple of kids were in their attic reading old letters their parents had written years ago. The boy said to the girl: "These aren't the names they call each other now."

3. Love does not envy. A whole lot of couples, maybe some people you know split up over this. You know what envy is. Envy is "I don't feel good about me, so I can't let you feel good about you." And I'm going to drag you down. And some of you have a problem with this because of the way you were raised. And if you don't fix this now, you'll drag it into every relationship. You'll be a Debbie or Dudley Downer.

People get married, and she might be a little more successful than him and he doesn't like it or he might be more outgoing than she is and she's a little jealous and they drag each other down.

Do you know how you can fix this? When you are on a date and they tell you a story, instead of trying to one-up them or tell them a story that's better, just say, "Wow" that is awesome." You hit a home run at your game last night, wow; let me see those muscles; that's incredible.

You don't tell them that your dad played for the New York Yankees and your brother just got drafted by the Atlanta Braves. Let them bask in the glory of you thinking they are special. Practice this all the time. **Celebrate other people's stories.** This doesn't come naturally, so learn to go "wow" and be quiet.

4. Love is not boastful or proud. I know what you're thinking, time out. This all sounds like the worst date ever. Hey let's be patient. Let's be kind, we won't envy, we'll just drive around and can't decide where to go out to eat, oh I'll be considerate, where do you want to go...on no...it's wherever you want to go.

Let me ask you a question, for those of you who have seen friends, family or loved ones separate or divorce or you've seen your parents or others that do not have a very good marriage; do you think maybe that if your father was more considerate of how your mom felt; or if your mother was more patient, or they each showed each other more kindness, or if there wasn't so much competition. Do think if they would have had some of this, it might have kept the relationship together or made it better? The answer is YES.

Do you realize the opportunity you have. You have time to allow God to transform and mold your character in the image of Jesus. See you've got to decide to become who God intended you to be, so that when that time comes and you're blessed with someone who wants to spend the rest of their life with you, you'll be ready. You'll be so attractive to that person where it really counts...on the inside.

Some of you have missed this for so long. Do you know that if some of you met the person of your dreams this week; they wouldn't be attracted to you because you've not become the person they were looking for.

5. Love does not dishonor. This means that you will never ever create regret or do something that others will regret. You'll never be part of someone's regret story. You'll never be the one people thought I never wish I answered the phone...I wished I never said yes or went out with. You will never be the one to cause regret in someone's life. Here are some other words to spell this out...does not behave disgracefully or dishonorably or indecently.

I want you to get it right. Start to learn to honor a man and honor a woman; so that later when you meet that special person you will be the best honorer ever. All of us married people thought that once we got married, because we said "I do" to the right person, honoring would come easy because they were so awesome, it will just pull honor out of me. Doesn't always work that way.

6. Paul goes on to say...**love is not self-seeking.** Now stop there and let me ask you a question? Does any of this come naturally? No! Do you know what comes naturally in a relationship...passion, chemistry, selfishness, can't wait to be alone with you.

This requires effort, and you can do this if you decide from this point on you are not searching for the right person, you will instead allow the Holy Spirit to help you become the right person. Be someone worth finding and honoring.

"You're either single for a season, or single for a reason."

So, if it's a season, you just wait on the Lord. If it's a reason, get to work.

And that's going to require looking in the mirror not just physically, but emotionally, and spiritually. Where am I, and what do I need to do?

Everybody has hurts in life. Hurt makes you sad. How do you deal with that hurt because hurt has the potential to turn to anger. How do you deal with anger? Because if you don't handle the anger correctly, you're going to have a bad response, and it's going to create a chain reaction of badness in your life.

Ephesians chapter 4, **"Be angry, and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."** Literally, the word for opportunity is *topos*, which means "a place." Get it out of your life.

Proverbs 29:22 says: ***An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.*** (NIV)

Work on the inside, on the inner person...deal with your emotional baggage.

And wholeheartedly pursue the Lord. ***"An excellent wife, who can find? for her worth is far above jewels"*** (Proverbs 31:10). If you want to find an excellent wife whose worth is far above jewels, then work on you so that you'd be an excellent husband, an excellent man, a man of honor and a man of integrity.

Wholeheartedly pursue the Lord. Matthew 6:33, ***"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things..."*** What things? The things we worry about. "...all these things will be added to you."

Psalms 84, verse 11 says, ***"... no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless."*** (NIV)

If you walk uprightly, He won't withhold any good thing for you. He promises that. **"He who finds a wife finds a good thing..."**

II. To find the right person, look up...not around.

Mickey Gilley wrote a song, *"Looking for love in all the wrong places, looking for love in too many faces. Searching her eyes, looking in faces of what I've been dreaming of."*

To find the right person, look up and not around. That means look to the Lord. This is interesting: Proverbs 18:22, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing..."

The word for finds is the Hebrew word *matsaw*, M-A-T-S-A-W. Now, *matsaw* can mean to find what you're searching for, or it can also mean to **happen upon**. It's like this: if you lose your wallet, you're looking all through the house for your wallet, right? But if you're just walking down the street and, suddenly, down on the sidewalk is a wallet, you didn't look, you weren't searching for a wallet, but you found one.

The thing that the Lord is trying to communicate is, "He who finds a wife...." It's not that he's searching high and low for a wife. He just happens upon a wife, because God blesses him with a wife as he's looking up and not around.

First Peter chapter 5, verse 6, **"Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time."** Keep looking to the Lord. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith. Keep working on you. God is faithful to lead you in the path that He wants you to go.

David said in Psalm 27, verses 13 and 14, **"I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD." (NIV)**

Waiting time is not wasted time if you will... **"Be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD."**

Be patient.

Secondly: You need to be discerning. Look past the external. Be discerning. Look to see what's going on inside this person's heart. What is that person like spiritually? What are they like emotionally?

Proverbs 11:22 says: **"Like a gold ring in a pig's snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks good taste."**

Someone explained the differences between men and women. "When a lady gets married, she's thinking to herself, yeah, I'll change him. She's thinking, he's a project.

And when the guy gets married, he's thinking, she'll never change. I hope she never changes. I just want her to stay just the way she is.

Be discerning. Find out is this person pursuing Jesus? Because if they're not pursuing the Lord, why do you want to go in that direction?

Years ago, Pat Boone's daughter, Debbie Boone, had a song that was a blockbuster hit, and it said this: "It can't be wrong if it feels so right." You know the number one reason why people get married? Feelings. You know the number one reason why people get divorced? Feelings.

So, to find the right person, be the right person... Look up and not around.

III. Lastly, to find the right person, Trust the Lord's Plan.

Psalm 37, verse 4, "***Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.***" (KJV)

Delight yourself in the LORD means you're soft and you're pliable in the hands of the Lord. It means you're letting your heart go the way He wants your heart to go. And if you do that, here's the promise: He will give you the desires of your heart. God is a good God, and you can trust Him.

He cares about you and your desires. The Bible says, "Casting all our cares upon Him, because He cares for us."

Hey, you want to find the right person, be the right person. Look up and not around. And trust the Lord's plan.

Here's the deal: Every single Saturday in most every city in this country and in countries all over the world, a woman will put on a lovely white gown and she'll look as beautiful as she's ever looked and a guy will get dressed up in a Tux and look better than he really looks and stand at an altar and exchange rings, and a pastor will lead them in making promises that they can't keep and vows they can't fulfill.

They meant to keep them, and they tried, but they couldn't because they weren't prepared. They overlooked a principle that we know is true for every other area of life but for some reason we neglect when it comes to relationships – **Promises are no substitute for Preparation.**

This is true in business, in sports, in school, in life; everywhere. People think in relationships...I can promise my way past my lack of preparation. Just because you say "I do" doesn't make you able or capable, it only makes you accountable. And when you're accountable for something you are incapable of doing you and the person you promised will become miserable.

And there are so many people, miserable in marriage because they know what they're accountable for, but they can't keep their promises because they weren't prepared or they're not looking to God for help now.

In the OT the wisest man who ever lived spoke about this. Proverbs 14:8 says, ***"The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, (NIV)***

A prudent person is someone who understands that all of life is connected...What happens yesterday will impact tomorrow...what happens in my past will show up in my future...The prudent person understands that today is connected to tomorrow. What I do at home, at school, at church, when no is watching...it all matters, and it all connected.

Ways are behaviors, patterns, trends, pathways. Ways are what make us predictable. It's how you know what someone will do or say before they do it. We all have our ways.

So here is what this is saying, the wise person gives thought to his ways because the best indicator of my future behavior is my past behavior.

The verse goes on to say, ***"but the folly of fools is deception..."*** (NIV)

The point is that whereas the prudent person looks at the direction of someone's life, the foolish person pays no attention. They think that somehow everything they are doing and the way they have behaved in the past will have nothing to do regarding their promises.

Here's another verse; Proverbs 14:15 says, ***"The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps."*** (NIV)

When you fall in love, you'll believe anything. It's ok, we're in love and we have our song; yea, but your dad goes, "does he have a job." It's a proven fact that when you're in love chemicals are released in your brain that make you crazy.

A simple person believes anything. He'll say, I know I've got these bad habits and don't go to church and blah, blah, blah, but when we're together I'm going to change. This is why some of your parents freak out over your friends, because they see the path they're taking and what their life really is.

The simple believe anything. But look at how he contrasts that...***"but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."*** Do you know why this is important? When you look at a person's steps, you can tell where they've been and where they are going. Promises don't mean anything if you can tell the steps they are taking are leading in the wrong direction.

The question is not what they are promising, but where have they been and where are they going. **The past is a better indicator than a promise.** This is why God's word is so awesome; His promises are backed up with an incredible track record of his faithfulness to us. **Commit to becoming the right person, looking up, not around, and trusting God.**

CONCLUSION: Let me close this message. 1 Corinthians 13 says the most amazing thing in verse 11...***"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."***

Now with this in mind, let me ask you...how does every childhood fairy tale end? The prince finally rescues the princess, and they defeat the fire-breathing dragon and run away to the castle, and...they live happily ever after.

In children's stories, if the right people can just get together, the rest will take care of itself. It's time to put the ways of childhood behind you. It's not about finding prince charming or the beautiful damsel in distress, that's a fairy tale. That makes good movies, good stories, and good novels, but it will lead you down the "right person" myth into unfulfilling relationships. It's time to put away childish things and become the person, the person you are looking for, is looking for.