

# ***THE PRESENT TRUTH***

*Bishop Stephen D. Lewis*

## **Choices That are Eternal**

Letter to my sons: First, know that the woman you marry will be the lifelong mother of your children. All that she is in the accumulation of her past experiences will be present as the mother of your children. There is not a more major decision affecting the future of your children than the choice of your life's partner. The relationship between a man and his wife has more effect on their children than any other factor. While a couple may carefully express their differences only in private, they cannot hide the effect from their children. Remember sons, your family will be no better than the relationship you have with your wife, their mother.

Be sure to cultivate your relationship with your wife. Meet her needs. Make her happy. ***Enjoy her thoroughly.*** Her state of mind is going to be 50% of your children's example and 100% when you are not there. If you will love and cherish your wife, the children will love and cherish her also. If you are a servant to her, your example will translate to their experience.

When you look for a wife and mother for your children, the first qualification is that she love the Lord and be his true disciple. Nothing else will adequately equip her for the duration. She will need to know how to pray. A girl who takes Christ for granted will do the same with her family. A man and his wife are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). It takes two, equally yoked, to pull the family wagon safely through the hostile deserts and minefields of this "last days" society we have inherited.

The second thing to look for in a prospective wife is **Cheerfulness**. While some might ignore this qualification altogether, I can't emphasize too forcefully the value and practicality of this quality. A girl who is unhappy and discontent before marriage will **NOT** suddenly change afterwards. Every prospective wife out there has already experienced trials and adversities in her short life, as have you. The happy and cheerful girl has learned to deal with them, and still enjoys life. No man can make a discontented woman happy. A woman who does not find joy from a wellspring within will not find it in the difficulties and trials of marriage and motherhood.

Courtship is a garden in spring, everyone's garden looks promising then. But marriage is a garden in August, when the quality of soil and seed and all the care to guard against pestilence, blight, and weeds begins to manifest itself. The fruit of the womb can be spoiled before germination. Give special, prayerful care to the choice of a wife and mother. A girl who easily gets her feelings hurt and cries in order to manipulate you will be a ball and chain after you are married. Look for that cheerfulness when things are not exactly the way she likes them.

The next quality to look for is **Thankfulness**. When a young girl is unthankful towards her family or her circumstances, a change of environment and relationships is not going to make her thankful. Thankfulness is not so much a response to one's environment as it is an expression of the heart. Avoid a moody, unthankful, unhappy girl. If she is not full of the joy of living before marriage, she surely will not be afterwards. A young lady who had been married less than a month said to your mom, "I have never in my life been one to have my feeling hurt. But since I got married, I seem to go around with a chip on my shoulder. I guess it is just that I care more than I once did." Your mother corrected her, "No, you don't care more; you just feel that you have more rights now and therefore you are ***expecting*** more." The thing to remember is that personalities and temperaments do not improve after marriage. When the social restraints are lifted, the freedom that comes only from a secure union permits one to express true feelings.

Boys take note of a girl's attitude towards her father. It doesn't matter what kind of louse he may be, if she is rebellious to him, she will be twice as rebellious to you. If she speaks disrespectfully of him or to him she will do likewise to you.

Another thing to look for is a **Creative, Hard Worker**. Don't marry a lazy, slothful girl. Beauty can get mighty old lying in a bed, framed in a disheveled, griping, slothful pout. Whatever you do, avoid a lazy girl. If she expects to be waited on, let her marry a waiter. You will have a full job rearing the children without having to rear a wife. Never marry a girl who feels she is not getting the best man in the world when she gets you. A girl who enters marriage thinking she could have done better will never be satisfied for wondering what it might have been like if... Avoid a girl who is enamored with her own looks. Better to marry a homely girl who is content to love you and be loved than one who is going to spend her years trying to maintain her fading, imagined beauty. Life is too big and full to be spent waiting on the disappointed woman who is regretfully looking in the mirror. Let her be one who lets ***you*** be the judge of her beauty, and remind her often of it. After all it was that beauty in her that attracted you to her in the first place. Avoid like the plague the girl who will pursue her own career outside the home. A wife must be your "help-meet".

The last qualification is a **Love for Children**. A girl who doesn't want her life encumbered with children is suffering a deep hurt and is walking a road to misery. One day, the Lord willing, you are going to have children of your own. They must have a mother who loves and delights in them.

Letter to my daughters: Life is full of choices. There are choices you will make while you are still young that will help fashion your life as well as that of your children. Helping you prepare to make wise decisions has been my goal.

God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen 18:19), Preachers have often pondered why God chose Abraham to be the father of the Jewish nation. **God knew Abraham will "command his children"** (teach them to walk uprightly)

When the time comes for you to consider marriage, think about this: can this young man be trusted with God's heritage? It is not only your life he will touch, but the lives of your children and your children's children. Abraham's teaching was so effective that his son Isaac was willing to trust his father and submit to the sacrificial knife. Again, Isaac showed absolute confidence in his father's judgment when Abraham sent a servant to his kindred to choose a wife for him. Abraham knew it would take a chosen woman for the chosen man to continue the lineage that had begun.

Remember to be a helper to your husband. Stand behind your man with prayer, encouragement and trust. Honor him, bless him, and serve him as unto the Lord. He will thrive before God in this environment. As he grows, your children will grow, and your cup will be so full that it will overflow into the lives of many others.

When you are peeved with him for some silly offense, remember, you are cutting off the prayer line. Don't allow hurt feelings to fester and disease the relationship. Be cheerful, thankful, and ready to forgive. Your children will watch you. If you show disregard, disapproval, anger, irritation, or dishonor to your husband, it will open the door for the children to do the same, not only to their father, but, in a greater degree, to you. Proverbs speaks of this very thing: "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands" (Prov. 14:1)

Begin training your children early; don't wait until there is a problem. A one-year-old baby who hesitates before obeying is developing a habit that will bring grief as he gets older. What your child is at two, he will be that at twelve, only magnified many times older. "***Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right***" (Prov. 20:11). Don't expect your children to suddenly grow into God-fearing adults. Adults spend their lives living out their formative years. ***Adults are just old children.***

Don't let the cares of the family, the church, and the world steal the time needed to maintain holy matrimony. The time spent being a good wife is a deep root that nourishes the whole plant. Have a sanctuary where no child is allowed. There are times when being a good mother means teaching the children that, "This is OUR time and you had better find something else to occupy yourself elsewhere." {This letter was written by approximately 30 years ago by a minister to his children}

Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Take heed, lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. Worldly associations tend to place obstructions in the way of your service to God, and many souls are ruined by unhappy unions, either business or matrimonial, with those who can never elevate or ennoble.

Weigh every sentiment, and watch every development of character in the one with whom you think to link your life destiny. The step you are about to take is one of the most important in your life, and should not be taken hastily. While you may love, do not love blindly.

Examine carefully to see if your married life would be happy or inharmonious and wretched. Let the questions be raised, Will this union help me heavenward? Will it increase my love for God? And will it enlarge my sphere of usefulness in this life? If these reflections present no drawback, then in the fear of God move forward.

Most men and women have acted in entering the marriage relation as though the only question for them to settle was whether they loved each other. But they should realize that a responsibility rests upon them in the marriage relation farther than this. They should consider whether their offspring will possess physical health and mental and moral strength. But few have moved with high motives and with elevated considerations which they could not lightly throw off--that society had claims upon them, that the weight of their family's influence would tell in the upward or downward scale. {Adventist Home Pg. 45}

The choice of a life companion should be such as best to secure physical, mental, and spiritual well-being for parents and for their children--such as will enable both parents and children to bless their fellow men and to honor their Creator. {ibid 45}