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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Bottom Feeders or Trophy Catch?

Bill Brinkworth

I love to fish. However, I am one of those fishermen who pose no environmental threat. Many times, I come back with nothing, but it is still fun to try.

Sometimes, when I don't seem to catch anything with my lures or flies, I switch to a sure-fire method that usually allows me to hook something. I find the wiggliest worms or the smelliest chicken guts I can get. I put them on a good-sized hook, make sure there is hefty weight on the line, and then cast it out into deep water. There it sits on the bottom. Every once in a while, I will reel it back in to check if the bait is still on, then cast it back out.

Rarely do I catch a wanted bass or trout on that rig (unless they are lost or very dumb). I usually hook something, but it's unwanted bottom feeders like catfish, suckers, or carp — at least I could tell my wife I caught something. Most of the time, my catch from the bottom is not what a fisherman is really trying to hook, and it is rarely something he would ever brag about.

I was thinking of catching the bottom feeders after seeing a young Christian woman's post on social media one day. She was showing off how she looked after getting ready for a first-time date.

There she was in her tight-fitting dress, far from being modest, with make-up that would rival many movie actors, and heels that were nosebleed high. Although I have only seen actors portraying prostitutes showing their "wares", she was not dressed much differently. I was troubled about what she was doing to herself and what she was advertising to her date.

I certainly would not say anything to her, but I would like to. I want to tell her that when a person dresses like that, she would probably end up with a "bottom feeder"; one of those catches that one usually throws back, and is not proud of pulling in.

Her dress-up efforts most likely will not attract someone looking for a good wife, not someone looking for intellect, friendship, good character, a sparkling personality, or a good mother for his future children. Most likely, he will only be attracted to the bait she is offering, get the biggest bite he can get away with, and will soon swim off to see what else the bottom of the lake has to offer. Then she will be left all alone again, more lonely and rejected than she was before, and she may even wonder where she went wrong.

A child of God should not be looking for "bottom feeders." When a fisherman wants to catch a fish worth his time, he uses the right bait and fishes in completely different spots.

To catch a desired trout, he fishes the cool, deep holes under a shaded tree. It usually does not look like a likely spot, but that is where you find them. If the goal is a lively, prized, large tail-dancing bass, then a line is cast among the tall grasses and lily pads. A Christian should not be going to the wrong, worldly places to find a mate.

Dating should not be about trying to catch everything that is swimming around. That type of "fishing" often does a lot of mental damage to the "fisherman" and "fish" alike, and the result is usually unhappiness. Feelings get hurt. Moral standards get lowered. Regrets remain. Frustration flourishes, and long-time marriage goals may be compromised. Dating should be for mating. It should be an avenue to find a lifetime marriage partner.

Only the right "catch" should be sought. The proper catch is one that is spiritually similar.

A Christian should only be seeking a Christian as a soulmate. Marriage is a joining ("yoked") of a man and a wife intended to be for a lifetime. Two cannot be yoked together if their relationship with the Lord will lead them in different directions. The goals and thinking are too different between a saved and an unsaved person.

Often, the pressures of those spiritual differences cause not only disunity between the husband and wife, but to silence marital problems, the Christian frequently changes or hides his/her spiritual feelings and desires.
"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" II Cor. 6:14 Also: Isa. 52:11.

It is quite common that when a believer marries an unbeliever, different problems arise. One wants to flee sin and obey convictions placed in his/her heart, and the other does not see things the same way. Often, sin is not recognized or seen as a problem, and it would be unlikely that an unsaved person would want to live for the Lord.

There cannot be any spiritual commonality between a child of God and a lost person. A spiritual relationship is far more important than married people realize — until it is too late.

"Well, when we get married, I'll change him," is often the excuse. Rarely can a person change another person's spiritual condition. It is the Holy Spirit that successfully changes anyone. Usually, when a person tries to change another person, regret, resentment, and rebellion result. Unless the Holy Spirit does the work, a relationship will not flourish.

There is a reason God tells believers to only "yoke up" (work together — and marriage is a lifetime "work") with like-minded believers. A Christian should desire to grow. Growth will be inhibited if a mate is not a child of God also (I Cor. 5:9-13, II Cor. 6:15).

Once a relationship with an unsaved person begins, it may be hard to end it. To avoid regrettable actions, never allow yourself to "bottom feed" in the first place. A regrettable relationship with a lost person will not occur if an unsaved person is never dated.

Set your goals on a trophy catch. Go where the "trout" or "bass" are found. Never lower your expectations, standards, or goals. If you are a child of God, you deserve only the best, God-selected trophy catch. That is God's desire for you also.

"Ladies, if you run after God like you ran after a man, He will send you a man you won't have to run after." — *Author Unknown*

Advice for a Christian Seeking a Mate

Bill Brinkworth

- Pray for the right mate! I know of young people who began praying for the right life partner in their early teens.
- Grow yourself! Some seek a mate when they can barely take care of themselves, let alone meet the needs of another!
- Be patient! An opportunity for a date does not necessarily mean it is God's will! If you are praying about the right mate, God knows about the need. He will provide. You or your future spouse may not be ready yet, so do not rush God's work in the situation.
- Seek only a Christian (II Cor. 6:14)!
- Seek a Christian who is as spiritually mature, or more so than you are. A couple with one who has been saved for a long time and one who has just been saved may have problems, as the younger Christian may need to mature spiritually.
- Seek one that you can look up to, not one that you have to "fix" to be happy with.
- Seek in the right places. A bar, nightclub, or other worldly place is not a place one usually finds a strong Christian. A strong Christian will be where strong Christians hang out: in church, serving the Lord in a ministry, helping others, etc.
- Seek one that you like. Best friends make the best marriage partners.
- Seek one for their character, moral values, and closeness to the Lord. Marrying someone for their looks may lead to disappointment as age changes one's appearance.
- Seek God's will and way in the search!
- Do not necessarily seek a mate that is just like you. I have observed and experienced that some of the best marriages are between two people who are not the same. In areas where one is weak, the other is strong, and vice versa. The two "halves" make a perfect union that only God can put together.

The Bible and Marriage

Bill Brinkworth

- Marriage is honorable.
  "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4
- It is a good thing to be married. God is pleased with that relationship.
  "*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." Proverb 18:22* Also: I Tim. 5:14.
- A husband and wife should show kindness to each other.
  "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband." I Corinthians 7:3
- A married person's life and body are not their own, but belong to their spouse. Most split-ups involve selfishness somewhere. Fewer divorces would occur if more mates did not worry about their own needs but about meeting their partner's needs. If both in the marriage made this their purpose, both needs would be met, and a happier, more content marriage would result.

"The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." I Corinthians 7:4-5

- There was no "trying out" a marriage. If the sin of fornication (sex outside of marriage) had been committed, the man had the responsibility to make the woman his wife.
  "And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife." Exodus 22:16
- Touching the opposite sex can lead to sin. To avoid that trespass, a man and woman should marry.
  "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." I Corinthians 7:1-2 Also: I Cor. 7:9.
- Although we are not under Old Testament law, the principle still applies that a husband and wife are still bound together until death separates them.
  "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Romans 7:1-4
- Although God's commandments are often disregarded, and man's laws are frequently obeyed more, God says marriage should be permanent.
  "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Mark 10:9 Also: Matthew 19:6.

"When asked how the married couple stayed together for 65 years, the wife answered, 'We were born in a time when something was broken, you fixed it, not throw it away as they do now."— Author Unknown