

What to look for, and hold onto, in seeking someone to marry (Part 3)

Here are ten rules of conduct - by Rev. Tom Aicken

- (1) A Christian should marry only another Christian, and if you are not yet sure where you stand in regard to that (i.e. whether you want to become a Christian yourself), I strongly suggest that you wait until you are sure before becoming entangled with anyone.
- (2) Physical attraction is not love. Such attraction, which often dissipates in a few years anyway, is not strong enough to hold a marriage together. If there isn't something deeper and more enduring to cement the relationship, it will surely fail.
- (3) Real love embraces the person, not just the appearance, the lifestyle, the convenience, or even the idea of being in love. Ask yourself whether this is a person of substance, whether you would like, still, to be living with him/her when all the more superficial things about you both have fallen away.
- (4) Compatibility is important. Do you enjoy being together, talking together, and doing things together? If there are certain things which annoy you, or even bore you, about that person - if he/she argues too much, or takes no real interest in you - that's a good sign that it's time to move on, right now, and look for somebody else. Marriage is neither a mission to change that person, nor a challenge to find out how much you can endure.
- (5) Look for someone who is well liked and respected by other people, particularly your parents. If your intended is not well liked or respected by others - if he/she is unable to retain long-lasting friendships, or is unstable in regard to employment - once again, it's time to move on and look for somebody else.
- (6) Be sure to investigate and interrogate your intended. Don't take anything for granted, only to be disappointed later on. Look to see if he/she is honest,

practical, hard-working, with realistic goals, and already part way there to reaching those goals. Beware of the dreamer who is all talk and no action.

- (7) Spend time with this person in public. You will probably learn a lot more of what you really need to know about your intended in the company of others, particularly around his/her friends and family, than you ever will when the two of you are alone.

- (8) Consider how this person treats you. If he is too cranky or controlling - if she is too clingy or domineering - you need to know that you can expect to see no improvement in the future.

- (9) Consider how serious this person is, and how spiritually-minded. If someone is only amusing, that's fun for awhile but it wears pretty thin in time. Is he willing and able to give leadership in the home, to lead family devotions, to talk freely about the things of the Lord, and to make good decisions which are based on sound, carefully contemplated principles? Is she willing and able to submit to authority, to leave the former influences of her parents and cleave to her husband instead?

- (10) Compatibility is important, but so, too, are attitude (an attitude of giving) and commitment (commitment to biblical principles). A good marriage comes out of a steadfast commitment, not only to each other but to the marriage itself, and to an unwavering determination to find effective solutions to the problems that come along. Sometimes you will find that you just have to be able to say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?"