The Measure of a Man

Today I want to address the question, "What should I look for in a guy?" This is a question that primarily concerns young women, but for obvious reasons should be read by young men as well. After all, they are the ones being evaluated! Yes, we propose to take a look at what every Christian girl should expect and has a right to expect from the boys in her church.

Of course, I recognize that there are all kinds of complex factors at work between males and females. Who can really ever comprehend the "chemistry" that makes one person that special somebody? The way in which a girl sets her heart on a boy and a young man on a young woman is very mysterious. Nobody can discern just why one person becomes very special.

And yet, there are some basic principles which govern our choices. Although every relationship is unique, there are certain things which Christian women ought to expect from every Christian man. What, indeed, should a girl look for in a guy?

Well, the world has its own answers to this question. Some answers are crude: the guy should be "cute." He should have a good physique, a fabulous body. And, of course, he should have the bucks, the right wheels, the right clothes. He should be able to make hilarious remarks at all the right occasions. He should be popular. In short, for many people today, when it comes to looking for a guy, the big question is outer appearance. What counts is the surface impression.

Other answers of the world are a little more sophisticated, it is said that the man should be "sensitive" to the woman's needs. He should be "mature" which means that he shouldn't take the relationship too seriously and should simply accept things if at a certain time the girl wants to end the relationship.

Of course, these realities cut both ways. What girls want (or pretend to want), the guys are inclined to give.

Undoubtedly, all the factors which influence male/female relationships in the world have their impact amongst Christian young people as well. So we make it our task today to find out from the Word of God what the standards should be. What is the Biblical measure of a man? And once we find out what that measure is, we would encourage Christian women to hold men to it and not grant their favours to those who fall short. We need young women who will demand the very best in their choice of a partner - not the best in looks, prestige, ability and so on, but the best in meeting the Biblical requirements.

In a nutshell, the Christian young woman should expect of her male friend/ fiancé commitment to God. A relationship with a member of the other sex is meant, indeed, to be fun and exciting, but at the same time, it is a deadly serious business. You can't afford to be vague in your expectations on this point.

So when you think about the young men you know, the most important question is always: what kind of a relationship does this person have with God? The religious question is always the first one. The kind of relationship a potential boyfriend has with God will totally govern the kind of relationship he might have with you.

But how do you tell if a person has a good relationship with God? Well, in the first place, this means that you are going to have to talk with him. This will sometimes be hard in a society which values touch much more than talk. If a fellow is pawing all over you on the first occasion that you go out with him, this will have to be seen as an indication of a very poor relationship with God. Because he fails to know and love God, he also fails to treat you, God's creature, with respect and dignity. Drop him!

A man who knows God will have learned to keep his hands at home where they belong. Sexual intimacy of any sort is something that must be preserved for marriage. Of course, there is growing mutual desire and physical attraction, but that, too, must be carefully controlled throughout courtship and engagement.

The Bible presents sexual intimacy and intercourse not as the foundation but rather as the pinnacle of a male/female relationship. Without the framework of a relationship built on communication, lifelong commitment and the mutual worship of God, such forms of behaviour are merely degrading animal-like activities. Any man can fool around with a girl. Any man can try to seduce a girl. Any man can give in to lust. That takes no talent at all. But it takes a real man, yes; it takes a real Christian, a lot of self-control to behave yourself when you are with a girl you really like. It takes a Spirit-filled Christian man to find a wife for himself in all holiness and purity - not in lust like the pagans.

This does not mean that the Christian man is a prudish person who denies the reality of sexual attraction or who has no eye whatever for feminine charms. Far from it. But precisely because he knows the power and beauty of sexual attraction, he has learned to deal with it carefully - according to Biblical norms. So the young women of God's church should always make it clear that those young men who see girls as so many trophies to be won and placed in the cabinet, will never have a hope of winning their affection. A man who is always trying to get his hands on you should be thrown out of your life - at least until he smartens up. Even better, you should tell your parents about him.

A Christian young man will be interested in how a girl thinks and in what she feels about various matters. He will respect her opinions. He will be able to talk about God with her - not just in an abstract way, but concretely and personally. The measure of a Christian man is that for him, his girlfriend or fiancé is never number one in his life, but always number two - yes, number two after God!

All this does not mean that every serious young man should always be talking about God and Christ whenever he goes out with a girl. That would be unnatural. But it does mean that his relationship with God in Christ does govern him at all times. Even when he is having fun, sharing a joke, eating dinner at a restaurant, enjoying an evening of recreation with a girl he likes or is getting to know, he always conducts himself as a person living under the law of God. And, even though he might not always be talking about God or Christ, yet it will inevitably come up in conversation.

Unfortunately, many men themselves are under the impression that “spiritual conversation,” and serious talk of any sort is the wrong way to attract a girl. For the guy who is serious at a Young People’s Society meeting, or who takes an active role in church functions and affairs, who is even known to read *Clarion* and other kinds of religious literature is all too often seen as a “wuss” or a “wimp” or worse. They are not real men. Real men are macho. Real men don’t read the Bible. Real men don’t pray. Real men don’t show a soft side. Religion is for women. Real men buy nice clothes and hot cars and look for a good time. Real men drink beer and go to parties and dance well.
Well, the Bible has a different measure of a man. And it’s high time that all you young ladies of the church start holding the men to that measure. You ought to have high expectations. After all, if God blesses the beginnings of a liking so that it blossoms into a mature relationship and even marriage, the boy you once went out with for the first time will become your husband.

At that time you don't want to be thinking to yourself: Oh, I wish I had a husband with some convictions. I wish I had a husband who could lead our home, who could give spiritual direction, who could help me in disciplining our children. Love can cover physical blemishes. Love can cover a lack of money or the absence of a really nice car. But no amount of love can cover up the absence of disciplined manhood, of male Christian leadership. Love can cover a less than perfect body, a body which by the standards of the age is a weak body. But love can never cover a weak faith.

Let the girls of the church of Christ make it clear that what they really despise is a man who is weak of faith, soft in principle, a man who has never given his heart to God. Of course, you should always seek a partner within the faith, which also means within the church. But simply having his name in the church books is not good enough. What you want to see in him is a developing Christian character.

Does this sound dull? I hope not. I can't imagine anything duller, more predictable and uninteresting than the modern ideal of what a young man should be like. Truly exciting men are those who know God and who are working on getting to know Him better all the time, who live by His Law, and who, as living members of the church, are deeply involved.

Living by this Biblical measure of a man is the only hope for young men. It is the only hope for young women interested in building a happy and stable Christian life. And ultimately, only when people live by this Biblical measure of a man, is there any hope for the church. It's that serious.

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