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How Not to Help Your Friends Find a Spouse

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How Not to Help Your Friends Find a Spouse

Abstract

"From my life experience, I understand that marriage is not an event to rush into because of community pressures or individualized fears of not finding a spouse."

Posting about expectations from others to marry from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/how-not-to-help-your-friends-find-a-spouse/>

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

How Not to Help Your Friends Find a Spouse

 [all in allthings.org/how-not-to-help-your-friends-find-a-spouse/](http://allthings.org/how-not-to-help-your-friends-find-a-spouse/)

Adam Adams

August 24,
2016

Your single friends and family do not want your help finding a spouse. No comments, no suggestions, and definitely not a blind date. I met and married my wife in my late 30s. Because we are newlyweds, I uniquely understand both why married couples want to help their single friends find a spouse, and why adult singles do not want help finding a mate.

For many people, getting married is “Plan A” for our lives. From the time we develop an interest in dating and meeting someone special, we begin thinking about a life together with a spouse. For many adults, the challenge comes when we must learn to faithfully live “Plan B”, that is, a life as a single person, as our “Plan A.”

Marriage is a unique and wonderful experience that I hope my married friends will live to its fullest, and an experience I hope my single friends will come to enjoy. From my life experience, I understand that marriage is not an event to rush into because of community pressures or individualized fears of not finding a spouse. Marriage, at any age, is the culmination of faithfully living “Plan B” as if it is “Plan A” to its conclusion.

When I came to understand the unique opportunity that my age and continued status as “single” provided, I was able to find contentment and feel complete. I am grateful for the many unique experiences God provided through the blessing of singleness into my 30s. When I met my wife, who was also living “Plan B” as “Plan A”, we soon saw that our lives could move from one stage of contentment and completeness to a different stage of contentment and completeness.

I hope that when a couple discovers how rich life can be together, they will pursue the possibility of a marriage relationship. Until that time comes, friends and family have a responsibility to support and encourage single friends in pursuing a life of excellence as a single person. It is a challenge to be content in singleness when the world around you shows that contentment comes through relationship, or puts added value on contributions that come from married couples. It’s necessary to recognize that our loved ones, irrespective of their age or marriage status, are reflections of our heavenly father and have immeasurable value just as they are. Marital status does not change someone’s value in the eyes of God.

My first inkling that I would be living as a single person came during my college years. My campus pastor asked me to meet him in his office one afternoon. I was not sure what to expect, and he surprised me with a pointed question, “Adam, are you going to marry your girlfriend or are you going to serve on the mission field?” I did not have an answer, but it was clear that he knew exactly what I was struggling with in my mind. I’m grateful that he brought me to a clear decision point. It took months of prayer and conversation to realize my girlfriend and I were called to very different things in our lives at that time. When our relationship ended, I began the process to serve abroad for three years. Those years of service abroad profoundly changed me as an individual, and what I experienced would have been impossible to do as a young married person.

One of my commitments to the agency with whom I worked was refraining from dating relationships within my service community or among the other American personnel with whom I served. This commitment forced me into a place of seeking contentment in my ever deepening relationship with Christ. Over my period of service, however, I became interested in a coworker living in another part of the world. When we both had returned to the United States, we started a long distance relationship.

We came to a point where I knew that I was unwilling to propose to someone until I had spent a considerable amount of time around them, and she was confident she would not move unless we were engaged. I searched for a

way to continue my studies in graduate school, and live near her. This search proved futile. In a profound example of what it looks like for a family to love the singles in their life, her father told me, "Adam, we love you, and we love our daughter. We know you have a decision to make, and we want you to know whatever you decide, we love you." In time, it became clear our relationship should end, and each of us moved into the next stages of our lives as singles. Again, a godly man provided insight at a critical point in my life that kept me from pursuing a relationship that was not meant to be.

I began graduate school, secretly hoping this next phase of life would be where I met my spouse. In the midst of the tension and hopeful anticipation of finding my wife, I actually met a number of men who were living fulfilling lives as single men well into their 40's and 50's, or who had married for the first time later in life. These men became examples that the societal pressure toward marriage could in fact keep me from reaching my full potential as a single man, or keep me from understanding my worth to God as a single person.

The years that followed provided opportunity to be involved in service to refugees and churches around the world, and abundant opportunity to lovingly serve my neighbor in the inner city. Giving my time and resources to those in need was profoundly rewarding and it was in the midst of this contentment that I met my wife. Our love blossomed through opportunities to serve together, and before long, our two fulfilling lives became one fulfilling life together. We're grateful for one another, and how the years of refinement we lived as single people has now allowed us to help refine one another in marriage.

I am grateful that God has provided my wife, and that we can serve the rest of our lives with each other. At the same time, I'm grateful to have learned the reality that singleness, no matter how long one lives as a single, is a blessing and not a burden.

I'm also thankful for people who were willing to speak truth to me that the right time, person, and marriage had not yet come. Because of them, I can say I gave my best to God as a single person, and now I have the opportunity to give my best to God in marriage.

As a church, let's recognize the contributions of our single members, and pray that they may use their gift of singleness in all they do.