

GOING FURTHER

VALLEYDALE SUPPORT

Life Groups

Valleydale offers Adult Life Groups for singles as well as groups combining singles and married couples. There are also life groups for newlyweds and “nearly-weds”. To get connected to a group or for more information, either stop by the Next Steps Desk in the lobby or go to www.valleydale.org/lifegroups and click on “Find a Life Group”.

Valleydale Singles Ministry

The singles ministry at Valleydale is expanding. Preparations are underway for a Midweek experience for singles. Also, there are social opportunities for singles to fellowship and encourage one another. For more information about the singles ministry, contact mlmlanier9@gmail.com.

Pre-Marital or Pre-Engagement Counseling

For couples who are engaged and planning to be married. Talk to a pastor that you have a connection with or contact the church at 205.991.5282 for more information about scheduling.

Podcasts

“Dating to Marry” (Search for “Valleydale Church” on Youtube. Select “Playlists” and look for the “ONEFamily Series” then locate the given title.)

For more
resources, visit
valleydale.org/family
OR
visit our resource
center in the
lobby

INTENTIONAL DATING

Proactively Pursuing Marriage



PROACTIVELY PURSUING MARRIAGE

Most of us are called to marriage. It's the natural design for fulfilling our drive for companionship and sexuality. If you are not called to celibacy and service (1 Corinthians 7) then a significant priority for this season of your life is preparing for and moving toward a Biblical marriage. An intentional path to finding a mate recognizes that God is at work. We also have a responsibility to be faithful in our part of the process. How does a person who hopes to marry become intentional?

STEP ONE

Seek Direction Within Christian Community

We live in a day of hyper individualism where people feel very little sense of obligation to others. God calls us, however, to vibrant community within our families and within the body of Christ. That community is the source for much of our growth as Christians, and it's one of the best means for meeting a potential spouse and receiving guidance and support toward marriage. Marriage experts still consider matches made by friends, family and churches to be among the best.

STEP TWO

Move Beyond Recreational Relationships

One of the clearest messages for singles in the Bible is the call to sexual purity (1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Ephesians 5:3 & Colossians 3:5). That is proving to be a difficult challenge in a day when some statistics show that only a quarter of Christians are virgins when they marry. Sexual purity, however, is the primary means for intentionally moving toward marriage in a recreational relationship culture. Couples who stay sexually pure honor God and their future spouse, as well as avoid much of the confusion that plagues many of today's relationships.

STEP THREE

Seek The Right Mate

A study by the National Marriage Project found that 94% of young adults believe the person they marry should be their soul mate first and foremost. That pursuit leaves many looking in vain for the perfect person who is specially designed to complete them. The Bible and marriage research tell us that the more important "soul" mate to seek out is someone who shares your spiritual commitment. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians that a potential

spouse "*must belong to the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 7:39).

Singles should seek someone with whom they are able to serve God better together than apart. Christians seeking a mate who shares his or her Biblical values know that "*all have fallen short*" so there's no sense in holding out for a perfect person. Further, they know that instead of seeking someone to complete them, they are called to lay down their life for another. That makes for a much more realistic path to finding a good fit for marriage.

STEP FOUR

Be Proactive

Living in purity and Christian community makes it easier to find a mate who shares your spiritual values, but there's more you can do as a steward of your future marriage (Matthew 25:14-27). Titus 2 strongly encourages young men and women to learn from older men and women. In addition to Christian discipleship, you also can ask mentors for candid feedback about how you can improve in a variety of areas to be more prepared for marriage. Additionally, there's nothing wrong with asking mentors to keep you in mind as they become aware of other singles seeking a Godly spouse. Some of your best opportunities to be proactive will grow out of faithful prayer. As you pray – about your role in finding a mate, for the single men and women in your life, for your future spouse, for the help of parents, mentors and for God's glory in your path to the altar – He will open your eyes to opportunities you may have missed to take proactive steps toward marriage. It's important to note that men have a distinct responsibility in proactively finding a mate. Genesis 2:24 says that a man will leave his parents and cleave to his wife. Proverbs 18:22 says, "*He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.*" Notice it doesn't say, "*he who stumbles over a wife*" as if it is a happenstance occurrence. God calls men to do their part in seeking out women of character and showing leadership in pursuing a woman for marriage. Specifically, men should be willing to take the risk of rejection which requires a measure of faith and leadership.

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

Get Married by Candice Watters

Boundless.org

"A Guy's/Girl's Guide to Marrying Well" at boundless.org

MarryWell.org

"The Meaning of Marriage" by Tim Keller