

CHOOSING
A MATE

God's Way

Marriage Minded Dating

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PAMELA ASHLEY



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WHAT READERS ARE SAYING

“This book was given to me at a perfect time in my life. I am so glad I was given the book to read. It was great. I will choose my mate God’s way!”

LaDonna Hemphill

“We cannot say that we perish for lack of knowledge in these areas due to books like this one where information and revelation have been given.”

Pastor Rose King

“(This book could) save many couples from making several mistakes before marriage. Perhaps they might even discover they are choosing the wrong mate.”

Penny Hillard Johnson

“This book will reach many people and give them a new approach to dating and marriage selection. This book is blessed. Pamela put her heart in it!”

Barbara Jones

“A lot of single adults need to know the pros and cons of an unequally yoked marriage and an equally yoked one! As a single person, this book made me stop and think. May this book be a blessing to many more, it has blessed me.”

Sha'Meque' Braziel

“This is a no-nonsense, scripturally-based, no-holes-barred, grass-roots approach to a very serious part of a person's life. I would make this REQUIRED reading for all pre-teens and teenagers!”

Minister Herbert White

“This book is a must read if you are in a relationship, not just planning to get married. The principles expounded on in this book make it a great gift or required reading for anyone getting ready to enter the “dating” scene.

I believe that this book should be one of the top resources for anyone who is dating and looking for a mate –especially those wanting to do it the RIGHT way.”

Brian E. D. Ashley

“This books contains expansive, BIBLICAL references to arm the committed and convince the unswayed. It answers timeless questions we all ask ourselves (but likely know the answer to) and presents the findings in a matter-of-fact, easy to digest way. Let's face it, we all know there is no gray area in s*xual purity, but the “why” is more elusive and seldom researched. This book peels back the layers, allows the reader to reach the conclusion on their own, and serves as a lighthouse – effectively equipping the reader to navigate the choppy, uncharted waters of (holy) dating in the 21st century by presenting centuries-old truths in a succinct, easy-to-read format.”

Phillip Ashley

“I was in a dating relationship, when I first read this book, with a young lady I thought was something she was not. I had many questions over the course of that relationship some I was afraid to ask others I did not know how to ask, maybe because I was young or naïve. After reading this book the third time, I realized I had accumulated enough facts over the course of the relationship to know I had to cut her off... It was a relationship that was not going anywhere and certainly not in the right direction. I want God’s best and a future with a woman God created for me.”

Nicholas Ashley

“This is my second time reading this book, the first time I read it was shortly after my divorce, after a 30 year marriage. It gave me a new perspective on marriage and I realized I was looking for the wrong thing. I was looking for a relationship, but I should have been looking for a best friend and intimacy – “into me, see”!!! This is the best book on being single that I have ever read to prepare for marriage.”

Jennifer Braziel

“Your book really helped me put into perspective what I need to focus on when selecting a prospective mate. One of my favorite chapters was Relationship Development, it clearly explained what steps to follow to have a long lasting relationship and one that will be pleasing in the eyes of God and lead to an equally yoked marriage.”

Shannon Epperson

“Awesome. Definitely an easy read. I wanted to hear more about those eagles. I could tell she really did her homework. I am ordering more books and sending them to my sons and a few of their friends.”

D. H.

“It was awesome, refreshing, timely, and to the point. I have gotten past tall, dark, and handsome, but truly desire someone who GOD knows is compatible with me... An EAGLE and PURPOSED to be with me.”

D. D.

“Choosing a Mate God's Way has blessed my life in so many ways. I learned an immense amount of information about God's plan for marriage, Godly approaches to dating, and about myself through this book. She has a true gift for using and explaining God's Word to others in a simple, no-nonsense, yet eloquent way...”

P. F.

“What can I say other than WOW! At first I felt like I had made too many mistakes for God to give me another chance to get it right... Now I know divorce is not the end!

I know now that I can soar, I can make it, and I deserve God's best for my life. I can soar like an Eagle, it is in my head, it is on my lips, and it is in my heart... I can soar like an Eagle....”

Cheryl Brotherton



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I thank God for giving me the desire of my heart—the wisdom and ability to clearly translate what is in my heart into these pages.

To my husband, Ashley: you have always been my strongest supporter and greatest encourager, always making time and provision for me to obey the call of God on my life. This, too, is your labor of love.

To my sons, Brian, Phillip, and Nicholas: thanks for challenging me, encouraging me, and for opening and sharing your hearts with me. Many of those conversations led me to the Word.



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This little book is a compilation of many notes and thoughts accumulated over the course of many years. Some is information from messages I have written; some is from personal ministry sessions with couples dating or contemplating marriage; and, much is from numerous conversations and heart-to-hearts with my sons regarding these very matters. Yet, the catalyst that prompted this book was a paper I was writing for a class—the topic of which was “Guidelines for Choosing a Life Mate.” I was not at liberty to include in that class paper all the information I researched, but that paper became the foundation for this book.

I sincerely hope that this book will be helpful and inspiring to you singles and will stir up your understanding that dating God’s way is not only possible but extremely beneficial. If you are single and you haven’t always dated God’s way, don’t be condemned but seek God’s forgiveness and set a new standard for yourself. You can do it!

I hope that many married people will read this book, too, and use it to encourage single people with the Godly wisdom shared here and share a copy of this book with them.

I hope that parents will read this book and use it as a foundation for heart-to-heart talks with their own children, teens, and young adults to bless their singleness and encourage them that there is a reward and a blessing for their obedience to God's Word regarding dating and purity.

Through Victorious Family Ministry my heart's desire and intent is to write other books like this to encourage believers with the Word of God, specifically in family matters like marriage and raising children.

God's Word is full of wisdom for our lives, so when it is time for us to make one of the most important decisions of our lives, we should find out what our Creator has to say and follow the wise counsel of His Word. His Word will guide us through the process of making a good and Godly decision regarding a spouse or marriage partner. There is no reason for Christians to leave a decision this important to chance. We can know, have peace, and make the right decision.



VICTORIOUS FAMILY MINISTRY VISION STATEMENT

Father God, I accept the call of ministry on my life and walk in the office to which You have assigned me. I accept and recognize the assignment You have given me to aide and assist the Christian family.

I single mindedly pursue my assignment and Godly dream (Ecc. 5:7) realizing that Your anointing on my life and ministry is your approval, but will come to manifestation with my diligent application and obedience (Ecc. 5:3 and Isaiah 1:19). Therefore, I continue to study and present myself to You as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, and who correctly divides the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Father God, I willingly allow You to minister to me imparting (revealing, communicating) to me some spiritual (divine, holy, supernatural) gift (endowment, talent, favor) to make me strong (enduring, firm, unyielding) causing me to fulfill (complete, perfect, satisfy) Your will (desire, plan, purpose, intention) for my life (Rom. 1:11).

Father God, I willingly allow You to minister through me, enabling me to fulfill my assignment to aide and assist the Christian family in victorious living through teaching Your Word, unfolding it, explaining it, and lighting the path to live it—realizing it alone has the power to deliver all who believe (John 8:21-32 & 36).

Father God, I commit to bring glory to You on the earth by completing the assignment You have given me, through Victorious Family Ministry (John 17:4).



FOREWORD BY PASTOR ROSE M. KING

What an honor it is for me to share my heart concerning this book and the precious author, Pamela Ashley.

For many years marriages, families, relationships, and the home, have suffered major attacks for various reasons—all of which are a part of churches, companies, businesses, and every entity that exists. God's heart is people, and it is His desire for His plan and purpose to be carried out in the lives of those chosen by Him; therefore, the choices we make must line up with His will for our lives.

Choosing a Mate God's Way should be read by every single and married person. The topics covered here deal with Biblical principles which, when put into practice, will cause success instead of failure. We cannot say that we perish for lack of knowledge in these areas due to books like this one where information and revelation have been given.

Pamela, woman of God, wife, mother, minister, and my spiritual daughter has diligently put together a masterpiece. She has a heart to see that those seeking a mate do it God's

way and to see that marriages are healed and remain whole and healthy.

I am blessed by Pamela's life of profound wisdom and Godly character. She is an example of what she teaches. I salute and congratulate you, Pam, for staying with it until your goal was accomplished.

May you, too, be blessed as you read *Choosing a Mate God's Way*.



INTRODUCTION

Genesis gives us the guidelines for the first marriage on the earth. First, woman was created because it was not good for the man to be alone and God made for him a suitable companion. Second, the man recognized the woman as a part of himself. Third, the man willingly changed priorities and connections in order to be united and one flesh with his wife. Finally, they had an intimate relationship. (See Genesis 2:18-25)

Through this book we will examine each of these things in greater detail. My hope is that you simply do not read this book but that you examine your dating relationship(s) in the light of the wisdom you find here. Approach this book with an open heart and mind, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart, and then prayerfully be guided by the wisdom of the Word.

Chapter One

DETERMINE SUITABILITY

Marriage is so important that the Bible is filled with references to it and God begins teaching us about it in the very first book! God makes a point to establish marriage early in the book of Genesis and the marriage relationship is referenced repeatedly throughout. If God spends so much time on the subject, it is certainly worth our careful consideration as well. Marriage ultimately affects every area of our lives so making a good decision is vital; therefore, suitability of a marriage partner must be determined before marriage.

Let's begin in Genesis. Woman was created by God in Genesis 2:18 to be a suitable companion for man because He knew it was not good for man to be alone. First and foremost, to be suitable, we must share a faith in Christ with the same core belief system regarding tithing, healing, etc. Beyond our belief in Christ, we must then have similar life beliefs, goals, dreams, and aspirations. Marriages are not made or lived alone, so the person you consider for a life mate must first desire to be in a relationship and, secondly, must desire to be in a relationship with you.

Any relationship requires interaction with another person. If the person you are dating usually wants to be alone or with others more than with you, ask yourself if that person wants to be in a relationship and if they want to be in a relationship with you? To be suitable for each other, the answer to both questions must be yes. If that person desires solitude or the companionship of someone else more than time with you, or if that person is in a relationship with someone else, he or she cannot be suitable for you. That sounds simplistic and it is, but many people, even Christians, choose to date and even marry people with whom they are not suitable.

A Christian and a non-Christian are not suitable marriage partners and are therefore unsuitable dating partners. The Word warns us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). A Christian making a decision to date a non-Christian opens the door to marrying a non-Christian. Dating is not an activity to be taken lightly; it is a process that leads to choosing a marriage partner. Christians should never be in a dating relationship with someone who is not suitable for marriage consideration. I repeat-NEVER!

When both people are Christians, suitability extends into the need for compatibility in your core beliefs. Incompatibility here can hinder agreement. For example, if one person believes tithing has passed away or is optional and the other is a tither and gives willingly to the things of God, there is incompatibility and there will be problems in the relationship.

There should also be suitability of life beliefs, goals, dreams, and aspirations. The only way to know if you are compatible in these areas is to spend time learning about each other, having meaningful discussions about important matters, and observing the life and lifestyles of each other.

Faith without works is dead. Does he act on what he says he believes? Does she say one thing and then do another?

The one thing that most impressed me about my husband when we met in our late teens was the fact he was a man of his word. I could always count on the fact that he would do what he said he would do. Initially, that fact above all others made him someone I could trust at a time when I didn't trust many people. That was the foundation upon which we began a friendship that soon grew into a dating relationship and ultimately marriage.

When we began dating, we spent a lot of time talking about many things. We soon discovered how much we had in common and how similar our beliefs and goals were regarding marriage, family, and children.

We believed marriage was a sacred lifetime commitment and saw ourselves together into our golden years. We believed marriage was between the husband and the wife and recognized the need to keep the interference of others out. We believed a good marriage took time and was worth working at to maintain.

We believed we had a responsibility to God to teach and equip our children for life—including providing the best education, home, and opportunities we could. We believed we had every right to be selective about the people we allowed into their lives. We believed family was important and vowed to develop and maintain good relationships with our children even into adulthood.

We dated for seven years before we married. During that time we felt comfortable talking about anything and we talked about everything, or so we thought. We talked about children but never about the number of children we hoped to have. After we were married, we discovered we were worlds apart on that issue. I wanted two or three and my husband wanted eight.

Although we would be married and have children before we recommitted our lives to God, we discussed the fact that we believed in God and knew we needed to return to our faith and raise our children by Godly principles. We also knew we needed to surround ourselves with other couples who were married, suitable for each other, and were happily enjoying each other's company. We looked for couples who had longevity in their marriages and success in the area of parenting. We understood the importance of having suitable models from which to learn in both marriage and in parenting. We needed people around us to whom we could go when we needed help—people who would encourage us to persevere and not push us toward divorce when we faced problems.

We have found those role models and they have helped us do our marriage God's way. Our marriage is happy, loving, and still going strong after 30 years. If you add to that the seven years we dated, we have been together 37 years. I can still say my husband is my best friend. I enjoy his company and can talk to him about anything, and he can always make me laugh!

If God could help us determine suitability and make it work at a time when we were not honoring Him with our lives, imagine what He can do in our lives when we are already living for Him!

PERSONAL NOTES