

# SUMMERDALE YOUTH NEWS

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### DATING, LOVE & MARRIAGE

There are many difficult obstacles we are trying to overcome in today's society. One of the most common is marital problems, which often leads to divorce. Many people are living in broken families or unhealthy relationships. We cannot, and should not, try to ignore these issues. Most of us realize that one of the most important things in having a great relationship, and eventually a blessed marriage, is choosing the right spouse. After having a long conversation with a friend this past week, I thought I would share some personal insight from a biblical context. What does the Bible say about dating, love and marriage?

In Old Testament times, the parents chose the mate for their son. The primary reason for this was that the bride became part of the family grouping which was a community in and of itself. Therefore, his parents knew what would be best for the entire family, and put their collective needs into the equation. How would you like to marry under that scenario? Then, when the two were married, and became "one flesh" together, the couple still remained under the authority of the bridegroom's father! The parents made a choice based on who would best fit into their clan and work harmoniously with the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law to create a perfect family unit. Not exactly the stuff Hallmark movies are made of, right? However, we can learn something important... parents should share insight to whom their children date, because you will end up marrying someone you date. Unless, you end up on "Married at First Sight." Don't get angry when your parents, or family members, share insight on your relationships.

What might shock you is that in biblical times sometimes parents made the decisions on dating! Sometimes they consulted with their children to see if they approved of the choice, but many did not. For example, Rebekah was asked if she wanted to marry Isaac (Genesis 24:58), but she had never met him. On the other hand, Samson demanded that a girl be acquired for him, and even though his parents protested, they completed the marriage contract for him (Judges 14:1-4). Frequently people married at a young age, a fact that made the parents' choice a practical matter and would have given the children less rights for refusal. How would that suit you?

By New Testament times, the Jewish leaders had decided to establish a minimum age for which a marriage contract could be drawn up. Tradition says that the age was set at 13 for boys and 12 for girls! Even if the young wife lost her husband in war or accident, and was childless, she remained within the family and was wed to her brother-in-law or next of kin (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Therefore, the family unit was not compromised and it protected the wife from being shipped to her parents, or kicked out entirely. This arrangement was known as a Levite Marriage. This is the basis for the story of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 3:13, 4:1-12) as it reveals the position of the kinsman redeemer. Luckily for Ruth, Boaz loved her and was more than willing to make arrangements to take in both Ruth and Naomi.

Some of us wonder about how these marriages could work when based on concepts foreign to our modern ways. Did they experience love? How did they make it work out? Would you believe that romance before marriage was rare in Old Testament times! Romance and "falling in love" played a minor role in the life of teenagers of that era. They did not marry the person they loved... they just learned to love the person they married! Love began at marriage, not at dating. When Isaac married Rebekah, the Bible records that "she became his wife, and he loved her" (Genesis 24:67).

You might be thinking, why write this article? The point is that love is important in marriage, but other factors must also be considered to make a healthy relationship. With all the dating, online romance, and promiscuity in today's "enlightened" society we are seeing a divorce rate at nearly 60%. Those numbers do not include common law marriages and co-habitation. In Bible times experts believe divorce only happened in about 3-5% of marriages. Please do not think I want us to revert to arranged marriages, and moving in with the in-laws for the rest of our lives, but we can see that our marriages should be nurtured after we tie the knot.

Today we need to find a balance. Choose your love and then love your choice! When is the last time you had a date night? How well have you tried to cement your relationships with your spouse's family? Are you willing to put others before yourself?

We would do well to consider the teachings of the Bible on love and marriage.

You might be surprised to see just how much there is there to study.

Keep growing in love! Have a great week!

*You are loved,  
Ray*



# SYG NEWS & EVENTS



We offer two opportunities for our children during the week for Bible study. On Sunday mornings we meet on the front pew for a "Pew Packers" style class before worship. SONSHINE STUDIES will have singing, Bible reading, and an object lesson for pre-K to 5th grade. We also have Wednesday night Bible classes for all ages! The teenagers will be studying the L2L material to prepare for the 2021 convention in Orlando, FL. Please bring your children and teens to Bible study and worship.



On Sunday, March 14, we will be leaving immediately after morning services for a youth trip. We will make a quick stop at Buc-ee's, eat lunch in Pensacola, and then attend the Ice Flyers hockey game at 4:00 PM. Please let Ray know by Wednesday the 10th if you will be attending.

We always have fun on our Youth & Young Adult Game Night. We usually have these events in the fellowship hall on the last Friday of the month. However, this month we are moving it to the last Sunday afternoon/night, which will be February 28th. See Ray or Misty for more details.



We need to start getting prepared for the convention in Orlando - April 1-4. If you want to participate as a student, a coach, a judge, a donor or in any other way, please see Ray ASAP. The deadline for registration of events will be then end of February. We are VERY excited about participating this year at convention!

We've got questions. You've got answers. Don't throw us shade. It's time to spill the tea. This is an interview with one of our teens in a series of random questions. We call it "7 Groovy Questions." You can find it on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. The next video will be with Chase Joiner.



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