

## Chapter 1

# Important Facts and Principles

**God's Original Design**—God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. “Marriage is honorable”; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 46.

**Approved by God Today**—[In 1885 Ellen White stated, “In this age of the world, as the scenes of earth's history are soon to close and we are about to enter upon the time of trouble such as never was, the fewer the marriages contracted, the

better for all, both men and women.”—Testimonies for the Church 5:366. Obviously, she believed that the end of the world was imminent. But Christ’s return has been delayed. In 1901 Ellen White wrote, “We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years.” She continued giving counsel on marital relationships throughout her lifetime.] There is in itself no sin in eating and drinking, or in marrying and giving in marriage. It was lawful to marry in the time of noah, and it is lawful to marry now, if that which is lawful is properly treated, and not carried to sinful excess.—The Review and Herald, September 25, 1888.

In regard to marriage, I would say, Read the Word of God. Even in this time, the last days of this world’s history, marriages take place among Seventh-day Adventists....

We have, as a people, never forbidden marriage, except in cases where there were obvious reasons that marriage would be misery to both parties. And even then, we have only advised and

counseled.—Letter 60, 1900.

**A Preparation for Heaven**—Let them remember that the home on earth is to be a symbol of and a preparation for the home in heaven.—The Ministry of Healing, 363.

God wants the home to be the happiest place on earth, the very symbol of the home in heaven. Bearing the marriage responsibilities in the home, linking their interests with Jesus Christ, leaning upon His arm and His assurance, husband and wife may share a happiness in this union that angels of God commend.—The Adventist Home, 102.

**A Lifelong Union.** Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church.—Testimonies for the Church 7:46.

In the youthful mind marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This

vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever.

Every marriage engagement should be carefully considered, for marriage is a step taken for life. Both the man and the woman should carefully consider whether they can cleave to each other through the vicissitudes of life as long as they both shall live.—The Adventist Home, 340.

**From an Elevated Standpoint**—Those professing to be Christians should not enter the marriage relation until the matter has been carefully and prayerfully considered from an elevated standpoint, to see if God can be glorified by the union. Then they should duly consider the result of every privilege of the marriage relation, and sanctified principle should be the basis of every action.—The Review and Herald, September 19, 1899.

Examine carefully to see if your married life would be happy or inharmonious and wretched. Let

the questions be raised, Will this union help me heavenward? Will it increase my love for God? And will it enlarge my sphere of usefulness in this life? If these reflections present no drawback, then in the fear of God move forward.—Fundamentals of Christian Education, 104, 105.

**All in the Name of the Lord Jesus**—One about to marry a wife should stop to consider candidly why he takes this step. Is his wife to be his helper, his companion, his equal, or will he pursue toward her such a course that she cannot have an eye single to the glory of God? Will he venture to give loose rein to his passions and see how much care and taxation he can subject his wife to without extinguishing life, or will he study the meaning of the words, “Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”?—Ms 152, 1899.

**The Necessity of Careful Preparation**—Before assuming the responsibilities involved in marriage, young men and young women should have such an experience in practical life as will

prepare them for its duties and its burdens. Early marriages are not to be encouraged. A relation so important as marriage and so far-reaching in its results should not be entered upon hastily, without sufficient preparation, and before the mental and physical powers are well developed.—The Ministry of Healing, 358.

My dear Emma, [Written June 27, 1869, to Emma McDearmon, who was 21 when she married Ellen White's son, Edson, on his 21st birthday, July 28, 1870. Emma was born on November 16, 1848. Ellen White's son, William C. White, was 21 when he married Mary Kelsy, who was not quite 19.] There is not a person I could take to my heart as heartily as yourself. Yet I advise you ... to ... Move cautiously, weigh every move. You are making a move which will be lasting. Therefore do not move hastily. Do not get entirely swallowed up in this one matter, marriage.—Letter 7, 1869.

**Consultation With God**—The words of Christ should ever be borne in mind: “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the

Son of man.” They married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. We see the same infatuation in regard to marriage. Youth, and even men and women, who ought to be wise and discerning, act as if bewitched upon this question. Satanic power seems to take possession of them. Courtship and marriage is the all-absorbing theme. The most indiscreet marriages are formed. God is not consulted. Human feelings, desires, and passions bear down everything before them, until the die is cast. Untold misery is the result of this state of things, and God is dishonored. The marriage bed is not sanctified or holy. Shall there not be a decided change in reference to this important matter?—Letter 6a, 1888.

With Believers Only. The wife of Lot was a selfish, irreligious woman, and her influence was exerted to separate her husband from Abraham. But for her, Lot would not have remained in Sodom, deprived of the counsel of the wise, God-fearing patriarch. The influence of his wife and the associations of that wicked city would have led

him to apostatize from God had it not been for the faithful instruction he had early received from Abraham. The marriage of Lot and his choice of Sodom for a home were the first links in a chain of events fraught with evil to the world for many generations.

No one who fears God can without danger connect himself with one who fears Him not. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depend upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one’s principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God.... The marriage of Christians with the ungodly is forbidden in the Bible. The Lord’s direction is, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, 18.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 174, 175.



Let not unholy bonds be formed between the children of God and the friends of the world. Let there not be marriages made between believers and unbelievers. Let the people of God take their stand firmly for truth and righteousness.—The Review and Herald, July 31, 1894.

Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Take heed, lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. Worldly associations tend to place obstructions in the way of your service to God, and many souls are ruined by unhappy unions, either business or matrimonial, with those who can never elevate or ennoble. Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed. Because of this, many men and women are without hope and without God in the world. Their noble aspirations are dead; by a chain of circumstances they are held in Satan's net.—The Review and

Herald, February 1, 1906.

**God's Claims First**—Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction.... To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan's ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life?

You may say: "But I have given my promise, and shall I now retract it?" I answer: If you have made a promise contrary to the Scriptures, by all means retract it without delay, and in humility before God repent of the infatuation that led you to make so rash a pledge. Far better take back such a promise, in the fear of God, than keep it and thereby dishonor your Maker.—Testimonies for the Church 5:364, 365.

The Lord has in His Word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love and fear before them. Such companions will seldom be satisfied with the love and respect which are justly theirs. They will constantly seek to gain from the God-fearing wife or husband some favor which shall involve a disregard of the divine requirements. To a godly man, and to the church with which he is connected, a worldly wife or a worldly friend is as a spy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray the servant of Christ, and expose him to the enemy's attacks.

Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen his power over the people of God by inducing them to enter into alliance with the hosts of darkness.—The Signs of the Times, October 6, 1881.