



Young, Reformed, and Single: a Calvinist's Guide to Dating

Thomas and Jocelyn Booher, Thomas Booher

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From the Introduction:

There is a hope I want to remind you of my single friends. Remember that God sets us free from having to compete with others in order to win the girl or catch the guy's eye. Yes, the liberating truth of real Christian marriage is that in Christ you have been accepted as His bride, and because of that, you can be acceptable to any likeminded believer.

There. That's my thesis for this book.

So what am I saying? Am I saying that we can cut through all the red tape of having to find the person with the perfect personality, gorgeous eyes, financial stability, similar sense of humor, and same career goals?

The short answer is... yes. Yes. Because Christ did not accept you because of your personality, eyes, money, charm, or personal aspirations. He did not accept you for your theological prowess, how passionately you preach the gospel, or how often you feed the hungry. He chose you for His own name's sake, for His own glory. He chose you in order to reveal His glory to you, and part of His glory is cleaning up your sins and imperfections through sacrificial love. And He says the best earthly picture of His love for you is your love for your spouse, and your spouse's love for you.

There is hope for single believers because you don't have to be rich or beautiful or charming or a super-saint in order to be eligible to marry another Christian. You have freedom to marry any likeminded believer. So on the one hand, that's great freedom. On the other hand, if you are of the wrong mind, then you will almost certainly be looking for someone else who is wrong-minded because you will be looking for someone who thinks just like you. And if you have certain "requirements" that go beyond Scripture in choosing who you will marry then you have missed the true joy and purpose of marriage itself. There is no freedom in dating (much less in marriage itself) where man and woman have legalistic lists of requirements. Two sinners demanding things that neither can deliver in this fallen world spells one ugly marriage. There is no freedom in that and therefore no hope. But God's design for marriage gives great freedom in dating and marriage, and that is where we find delight.

Friends, marriage itself is the delight of marriage. Entering into a marriage covenant which was predestined from before the foundation of the world to represent Christ's love for the Church and the Church's love for Christ, a love which itself was predestined from before the foundation of the world, is the delight of marriage. Simply put, it's that covenanting love that makes marriage so lovely, in the same way that it is the covenanting love you share with Christ that makes being a Christian so lovely. In marriage, you have freedom to love within the structure of God's covenant. So the key is to find a spouse that is pursuing this freedom of loving within the marriage covenant and is doing so according to Scripture. In that framework all the other things will fall into their proper place, and it will likely become clear that some things you desired have no place in Christian dating or marriage.

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