

**BEFORE I SAY:  
"I DO"**



# PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SUCCESS

## **GOD HATES DIVORCE!** Malachi 2:13-16

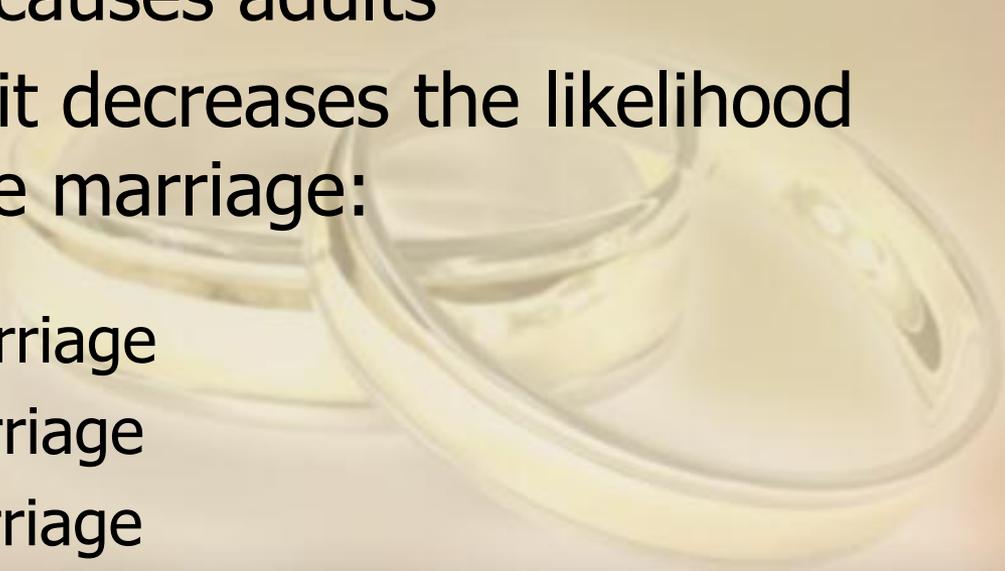
1. Yet in US: 48% divorce rate
2. For first time married couples: 41%!

## **THESIS:**

1. Why does God hate divorce?
2. How do we avoid divorce?

Marks of a Successful Dating and Courtship!

# ♥ WHY DOES GOD HATE DIVORCE? ♥

1. Violation of His covenant (Matthew 19:6)
  2. He loves children (Matthew 19:13-15)
  3. He hates division (I Corinthians 14:33)
  4. He hates the hurt it causes adults
  5. He hates it because it decreases the likelihood of a successful future marriage:
    - 60% divorce 2nd marriage
    - 73% divorce 3rd marriage
    - 90% divorce 4th marriage
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# HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

## PREVENTION IS THE KEY!

- Too much emphasis on MDR instead of *MARRIAGE!*
- Parents need to guide their children and *start early.*
- Young people need to be prudent and careful in *selecting and laying the foundation* for a successful marriage!

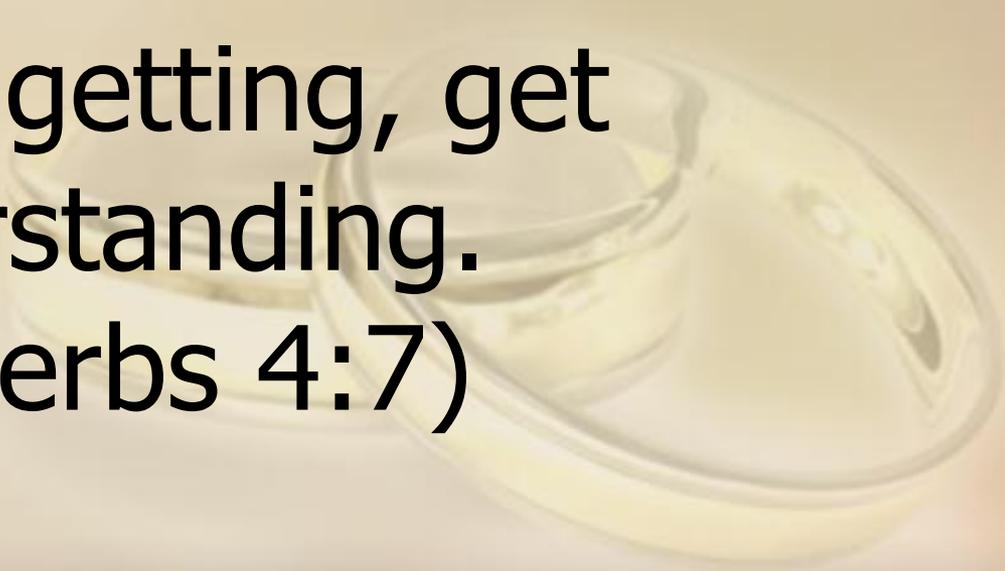
## DILIGENCE!

- You can't just go with the flow. Matthew 7:13-14
- The *average* marriage only last seven years!

## WISDOM! Proverbs 4:7

# LEARN FROM SOLOMON: *BE WISE!*

Wisdom is the principal thing;  
Therefore get wisdom. And in  
all your getting, get  
understanding.  
(Proverbs 4:7)



# THE PATH OF WISDOM: *THE BIBLE + RESEARCH*

1. Some of these guidelines are Biblical moral issues.
2. Some are matters of judgment that sociologists have found to be the path of wisdom!

Taken from:

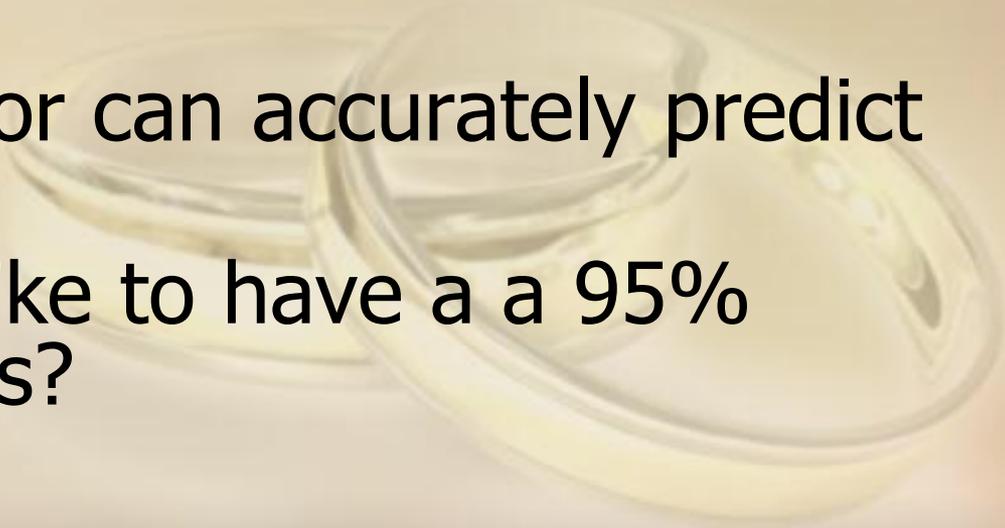
- Building a Successful Marriage (Landis)
- New Problems, New Opportunities (Havemann and Lehtinen).

3. Together they make for a winning combination!

# THE PATH OF WISDOM

## THE GOOD NEWS IS:

*You can put the odds in your favor!*

1. Divorces, like auto accidents, are predictable!
  2. Courtship behavior can accurately predict future success!
  3. How would you like to have a a 95% chance of success?
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# #1: THE PREMARITAL CONFIDENCE

***Commit yourselves unto Jehovah and your purposes will be established.***

(Proverbs 16:3)

1. 94% successful marriages...no doubts!
2. Problems don't go away they get worse!
3. Time is your friend! Don't rush it!

***Do not be anxious for the morrow.***

(Matthew 6:34)

## #2: DATED TWO YEARS OR MORE

*Everything is beautiful in its time.*

(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

1. Don't short circuit the mate selection process.
2. James Dobson: "One-half of all couples who date into the second year break up sometime during that second year."
3. Don't get stuck with someone that if you had known them better, you would not have chosen to marry!

# #3: SOUGHT SUPPORT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

***"In a multitude of counselors..."***

(Proverbs 15:22)

1. Cultures with arranged marriages are more successful.
2. Recognize that you are blending two families together!

## **YOUR CHOICE AFFECTS YOUR PARENTS!**

1. Esau's choices "brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah"  
(Genesis 26:35)
2. Rebecca says, "I am weary for my life!" (Genesis 27:46)
3. You can't honor them and ignore their wishes (Ephesians 6:4)

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## **SOLUTION:**

Place a high value on parental input (Ephesians 6:2)

## **RED FLAG:**

If friends and family are skeptical.

## #4: A FORMAL CHURCH WEDDING



### WHY IS ELOPING A NEGATIVE THING?

1. Lose the support of family
2. Rarely have serious vows

***Is that what you would  
want?***

## #5: A FORMAL ENGAGEMENT

Couples should choose to have a *formal engagement* rather than an *informal "understanding."*



**Only 1 of 3  
engagements end in  
marriage!**

***Make it count! Make a memory!***

## #6: PRESERVED PURITY

**Let marriage be held in honor among all,  
and let the bed be undefiled...**

(Hebrews 13:4)

***I was in his eyes as one that found peace.***

(Song of Solomon 8:10)

- Sex outside of marriage produces guilt and goes into the long-term memory.
- Cohabitation “trial” before marriage is a miserable failure. It cheapens sex and harms the relationship!

# #7: SHARED VALUES, ESPECIALLY FAITH

***Only marry a Christian!***

**I Corinthians 15:33**

“Evil companions corrupt good morals.”

**Journal of Psychiatry**

“Regular church attendance is one of the most critical factors in marital stability.”

**Charlie Shed**

“1/2 divorce, 1/4 attend church regularly,  
1/500 pray together.”

# #8: UNDERWENT PREMARITAL COUNSELING

## Prepare/Enrich Test

This test can gauge with 85% accuracy whether a couple will be happily married, unhappily married, or likely to divorce.

Couples who seek counseling before marriage  
are more likely to seek help early after marriage.

## #9: MARRIED AFTER TEEN YEARS



The divorce rate for teen marriages is twice as high as those over twenty.

➔ 40% of the time, the divorced wife is left with a baby and the single parent result lives in poverty.

# #10: CAME FROM STABLE HOME

## Divorce Is Contagious!

If both spouses are from divorced homes, they have an 80% chance of divorcing.



# #11: TEND TO FINISH WHAT THEY START

*Those who graduated from college stay together more often than those who drop out of school.*

## Why?

The key is not education as much as the character quality of “stick-to-itiveness.”

## #12: MENTALLY STABLE; FREE FROM ADDICTIONS

### Neither Partner

should be a substance abuser, an alcoholic, or have psychological problems for which he has not sought help.

***You must avoid the person who will make your life miserable.***

## #13: WILLING TO SEEK HELP EARLY

### When Both Spouses

seek counseling as soon as problems develop, they increased their chance of success to 87%.

No one has shame in getting assistance for unresolved physical problems. Why should one have shame in getting assistance with unresolved relationship problems?

# SUMMARY

Married folks are happier on average than any other group. But, if it goes wrong, they are the most unhappy! Stakes are high.

It is worth counting the cost!

Let's stop the parade of broken marriages, families, vows, and hearts!

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