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Wrong Motives

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Wrong Motives

Having the right reasons for wanting to marry

- Companionship—wanting to share life with someone else.
- Romance—wanting the excitement of love.
- Care-giving—wanting to meet the needs of someone else.
- Security—wanting someone else to protect and provide for you.
- Self-esteem—wanting others to know you can get a spouse.
- Sex—wanting, well ... “you-know-what.”
- Practicality—wanting help with daily needs.

Most people probably have not just one but a combination of these motivations for wanting to marry. One motivation may predominate over another at any given time. Which motives rise to the top for you?

Consider this: It’s not just which motives you have but also what you’re doing with them.

Good Motives Gone Bad

All of the motives we’ve just looked at can be good or they can be bad, depending on how we approach them.

Whenever our motives for marriage become tainted, there’s one problem at the root: selfishness. So after we ask ourselves the question *What are my motives for marriage?* we also have to ask ourselves, *Are my motives tainted by selfishness?*

God’s Motives for Our Marriage

We’ve discussed why singles are looking for a marriage partner. But what are *God’s* reasons for human marriage? Have you ever asked yourself that? It’s even more important than evaluating one’s own motivation.

We would like to suggest three reasons God has for calling his children into marriage.

- **To make us holy**

Author Gary Thomas wrote a book called *Sacred Marriage* that has an interesting subtitle. The subtitle asks, “What if God designed marriage to make us holy instead of happy?”

Well, we think it’s both: God wants us to be holy *and* happy in marriage. But Thomas is right in that the worldly viewpoint of marriage is just to increase one’s personal happiness, and that is selfish. We need to be mindful that there is an often-overlooked spiritual reason for marriage and it is to become more fully transformed into the image of Christ.

- **To make us more effective in his service**

The apostle Paul wrote repeatedly about the church as a unity that the Holy Spirit puts together, each member bringing complementary spiritual gifts to the whole for greater effectiveness.

In this sense, marriage is a little like a church. The husband and wife each bring different experiences, interests and abilities to the marriage, making them more effective for his service together than either could be individually.

- **To represent him to the world**

In Paul’s well-known writing about marriage in Ephesians 5, he quotes Genesis 2:24 about two becoming one in marriage (see v. 31) and then goes on to say, “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church” (v. 32).

Marriage between a man and a woman is a little picture of the “marriage” between the Bride of Christ (the Church) and the great Bridegroom (Christ). It’s an image of unity with loving self-sacrifice on one side and loving devotion on the other. No other relationship in the universe comes nearly so close as marriage does to reflecting believers’ union with the Lord.

At its best, then, godly marriage is a kind of witness to unbelievers—and a reminder to believers—of what kind of relationship we’re supposed to have with God.

Making us holy, making us more effective, representing him. Besides these three, there are no doubt other reasons that God has for marriage. Certainly one reason would be to bear and raise children (see Genesis 1:28). But the three reasons we’ve focused on are sufficient to show the profoundly spiritual purpose behind marriage.

Before we go further, we want to be clear on one thing: we are *not* saying that single people cannot be holy, cannot be effective for God or cannot represent him well. We *are* saying that marriage offers different and important ways to achieve these spiritual goals, and we need to take these goals into account when we look at why and how we are pursuing a soul mate.

Self-Evaluation

If we want to be the right kind of person who will attract the right person to us, we need to have the right motives for wanting to be married in the first place.

Consider with us an amazing passage from the New Testament, and we think it will all come together for you.

You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. —James 4:2-3

Set aside some time (maybe right now) and get in an attitude of prayer. Ask God to reveal to you by his Holy Spirit if any of your motives for marriage are self-centered or wrong. Then listen to him. Confess sin, if you need to. Embrace God's reasons for marriage and be ready to return to your search for a soul mate with purified motives in your heart.

Be encouraged! You've just taken a big step toward becoming the right person for the right person for you.

The above article is an abridged version of Chapter 9 of the book, *Soul Mate by God* ([Download the free ebook in PDF](#)). Visit SoulMatebyGod.com for more resources.