

Single-minded Devotion

Read Hosea 4:7-13; Matthew 16:1-4

Since God views His relationship with His people as a marriage, He considers it adultery when we chase other “gods”, other loves. In the Old Testament, when Israel worshipped other gods, God accused her of playing the harlot. For example:

*My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them;
For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray,
And they have played the harlot, departing from their God. (Hosea 4:12, NASB)*

Jesus took the same view. When the Jewish leaders saw Jesus' miracles and heard His words, yet still demanded other proofs of who He was, He called them “*an evil and adulterous generation*” (Matthew 16:4, NASB). Their hearts weren't satisfied with Him or with their God. They were putting their love and trust elsewhere.

As believers, we need to guard our hearts against the same danger, against the same unfaithfulness to our Bridegroom. In writing to the church in Corinth, Paul expressed his concern for them this way:

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2-3, NASB)

Since Jesus is the Bridegroom, we believers are engaged to Him. What is expected of us as we approach our marriage to Him?

- Like any bride-to-be, we are to keep ourselves pure, devoted to Him alone. In our hearts and in our lives, we cannot chase other loves. We are His. We are to love Him alone. All our loves for anyone and anything must flow from our one love of Him. He is now the center of all our relationships and all our desires.
- The word in 2 Corinthians 11:3 translated as “simplicity” is particularly meaningful. It has a variety of shades of meaning, depending on its context: simplicity...sincerity...generosity. But the one word that seems to sum it up is “single-mindedness”. Our groom, our husband-to-be expects us to be single-mindedly devoted to Him.

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