

question&answers

series: "the top 10 things I wish I knew before I said I do"

sermon title: pt. 6 - "we'll take your questions now"

scripture: selected bible passages

speaker: segun "shegz" aiyegbusi

When did you know prior to, "I do" that your spouse was the person you were going to marry?

I had met with one of my mentors to ask how one could be certain they were ready to be married, and he explained that marriage wasn't first and foremost about, "feeling" in love, but about commitment. That was the first time anyone had explained the difference to me and I instantly knew I was onto something with Dupe, (my wife). I knew this because a week earlier I had said to myself, "I am done dating, and I want Dupe to be the last and only girl I ever take out on a date." My mentor further confirmed my thoughts when he said, "I will know she's, "the one" when I'm willing to commit (before God and to myself) to spend the rest of my life with her and her alone. That was exactly how I felt about Dupe, so a few months later, I asked her to marry me.

Is it realistic to believe in someday finding "THE ONE"? In other words is there one person out there whom God has specifically ordained for me to marry?

Though I believe there are times when God orchestrates events so that two people end up together (like in Genesis 24 with Isaac & Rebekah), I think it's more prudent to believe that when you meet someone you love, can commit to, and enjoy being with – they become, "the one"

What if I have a great guy I'm seeing and he still doesn't feel like "THE ONE"?

Then release him and let another girl have him! I'm sure she'll appreciate his, "greatness." The worst thing you can do is base such an important decision on your, "feelings" (Try trusting your head instead of your heart). Only you can tell exactly what it is you want in a partner, perhaps it will help if you wrote down what negotiable and non-negotiable qualities you want in a partner? That way, you'll have something tangible to go off, instead of your fleeting feelings.

When will I know if it is the right time to get married or if she is the one?

I'll defer to my response in question one, when you are willing to commit before God and to yourself, to spend the rest of your life with this one person, then they become the one.

I've known Christian couples who loved Jesus and did everything right but still got divorced, is there any hope for me?

I would back up a little and challenge that question because it's impossible to have two Christians who genuinely love Jesus and do everything right, end up in a divorce. That's not to say Christian couples don't fight or have troubling seasons in their marriage, they do, but those two assumptions don't go together. Somebody (or both of them) at some point, either stopped loving Jesus, (ergo, stopped loving each other), or one or both of them stopped doing the right thing in the marriage.

Perhaps a better way to ask the question is, what must I begin doing to divorce-proof my marriage, even before I get married?

One, begin working on character flaws that might prove problematic in your future marriage? (Hint: what character flaws have your closest friends or family members complained about?). Two, you must improve your conflict resolution skills. If you are accustomed to being aggressive, or passive, or passive aggressive during every conflict, you need to start learning how to fight CLEAN. Three; marry someone who is also working on number one and two. Marrying a committed follower of Jesus Christ goes without saying.

What do we do if the sun is about to go down and we haven't yet reconciled our relationship?

Sometimes, (and unfortunately) the sun will go down before a conflict is resolved in a marriage! I don't believe the biblical instruction demands that you literally stay awake till it is resolved, (you'd never sleep!). The truth is, sometimes, you might need to stay up late into the night discussing the issue, other times, you might find it in your best interest to get some sleep and some perspective before readdressing the issue the next day. The big idea is not to let the hurt/conflict linger too long before it is addressed. I would say, wait no longer than 36 hours max before you reengage.

I think I might have an addiction to sex and pornography, I know it's hurting my relationship with Jesus, I've tried praying but can't break it – how do I change?

Pastor and teacher, Matt Chandler made this statement in one of his sermons about this issue and it really stuck with me. He said, "the right way to deal with sin (in this case, porn) in your life is not to develop new strategies to avoid sin. It's to press into Jesus Christ more and more, push headlong into Him, keep doing it, and let Jesus Christ break the power of that sin in your life"

I agree with him. So the first step is to do some theological mental gymnastics and remind yourself that not only are you a new creation in Christ, and free in Him to live a life of joy, but Christ Himself has broken the power of sin/porn over your life! It no longer controls you nor should you always feel compelled to, "release pressure" through masturbation.

Along with that battlefield in the mind, put some very sensible boundaries around you to help you avoid those same temptations. (www.covenanteyes.com) is a great online accountability software that keeps track of sites you visit. Two, identify what your triggers are and stay away from them. And last but not least, surround yourself with people who bring out the best in you, because porn loves isolation.

It's not always easy, nor is addiction broken overnight, it takes persistent and a willingness to keep pressing on through Christ working in you,

Is it ok for a girl to ask a guy out?

If by, "ask out", you mean going on a casual date to the movies or lunch at Panera bread, then in my humble opinion, it's okay. But if you're thinking of a real date and hoping it leads to something more serious, then I would urge you to let the guy pursue. Men prefer to pursue, it's part of their DNA given by God. If you take that away from him, the chances of him losing interest increases rapidly because he never had to work to earn your love. Let him pursue and ask you out, you will find that he's more romantic and purposeful in all he says and does.

How can I tell when a guy is interested in me, and not just being a good friend? What do I do when the guy I'm interested in is not asking me out?

Ladies, trust me on this, if a guy is interested in you, he will find a way to tell you. It might take a month, a year, or a slap in the face by his buddies; eventually he will say something. If you suspect that he likes you, but seems to be taking forever to get to it, feel free to give him a nudge, (without being slutty) to let him know it's okay for him to pursue. Remember ladies, it can sometimes be a nerve-wracking task for a guy to walk up to a girl and tell her exactly how he feels, so be patient and drop subtle hints.

What if you get married and find out that you don't click sexually with your husband, what do you do?

An unfulfilling sex life is an indication that there is a lack of open communication about sex in the marriage. Great sex in marriage does not come easily; you both need to be invested in it and you both need to bring your A-game into it. You both have to be willing to sit and discuss openly what the other person enjoys sexually, and then become students of each other's bodies. At which point, sex not only becomes fulfilling, but deeply intimate.

Besides those sexual acts prohibited by the bible (homosexuality, bestiality, pornography e.t.c); what is the extent to which sexual acts may be performed in a marriage relationship (e.g: sex toys, role play...etc)?

Well first of all, it's important that you understand that God is pro-sex. He invented it, along with the organs used to perform it, along with the experience of having an orgasm. So let's not view this question with any kind of uneasiness as if we've just crossed into some unbiblical territory.

Though the bible doesn't have any verses on sex toys, it does have some general principles that can serve as a guide for sexual activity in your marriage bed.

Number one, you have to ask, is this kinky sexual act I want to engage in with my wife a sin? If you're thinking of having a ménage-a-trios (bringing in a 3rd person), you've just strayed into the realm of adultery. The same goes for pornography; it would be lust because you've just invited a digital third person into your bed). So first question, is this sexual act a sin?

The second thing has to do with shame. Genesis 2:24 says at the beginning of time in the Garden of Eden, Adam & Eve were both naked, and there was no shame. If whatever you're going to do in your marriage bed causes one of you to feel shame, disrespected, hurt, abused or uncomfortable, then the answer is NO! It is not permissible in your marriage bed. The goal of sex in marriage is to foster intimacy with your spouse all the days of your life, not to leave emotional scars. Beyond those guidelines, you and your spouse are free to be as playful, creative, and adventurous as you want with each other's bodies, talk about it, have fun, and go nuts in bed!

Is it realistic to think I can change my spouse? Is my desire to do so necessarily evil even though I desire to change them for the better? What if I simply want them to be more romantic?

Com'on, let's be honest here, there is a huge difference between wanting your spouse to be more romantic and wanting to change them into who you thought they'd be before you got married. You know whom you married, and hopefully shared your dreams and expectations for the future with

with each other before you got engaged. If what you intend to, “change” them into is drastically different from what you married or what you both agreed upfront to accomplish in your lives, then I think it’s unfair to try and change them (or anyone for that matter!)

Having said that, I do think it’s okay to encourage your spouse to strive for more, especially if they possess the raw materials/talents to achieve more than they currently are doing. However, you must be careful never to lay on them unrealistic expectations that have been shaped by your exposure to culture or other people’s opinion.

How can I encourage my significant other in a godly way so that his/her spirit is lifted?

I’ll sneak in a little bit of the response I gave in question 10 into this answer. You have to become students of each other’s lives. Ask yourself, what does my spouse really enjoy doing and excels at? Whatever it is, encourage it verbally, and through your actions. Go out of your way and surprise them by studying more about, “their thing” and surprise them with your knowledge of it. If you really want to crank up the fun, and can afford it, purchase whatever their, “thing” is and drop it off for them at work as a surprise.

How do I tell someone I am not interested in a relationship? And how do I do it in a way that doesn’t crush their spirits?

Honesty is the best policy. Be polite, but firm. Thank them for asking you out, but let them know in no uncertain terms that you are not interested.

How do I still honor my parents if they don’t approve of the person I’m dating and would like to marry?

Something to consider here is that there is a significant difference between obeying one’s parents and honoring one’s parent. Prior to getting married, and as long as you still live under their roof, you are to respectfully obey their instructions and honor them as the ones to whom God entrusted your life. In fact that’s when the commandment to honor one’s parents is most applicable.

However, once you move out of their house and especially as you start planning to get married, the parent-child dynamic needs to change. You are no longer obligated to obey their every instruction, but your role now becomes to honor them as your parents.

Honoring them means that when they advise you about not getting married to a particular person, you should genuinely consider their advice to see if it’s biblical or just prejudiced. Thank them for their input, but at the end of the day, make your own decision recognizing that you are the one who has to live with it

Is it wrong to be attracted to others while you are engaged or married?

Yes, and no. Yes it is clearly wrong if you act on it or linger on the attraction in your mind for any amount of time. No, if it’s just a fleeting acknowledgment of one’s beauty (which is rarely the case); so essentially, yes it is wrong!

Is masturbation a sin? What if pornography is not involved?

Yes. It is rare that pornography is not involved in masturbation. But even if it isn't, it still defies what God designed sex for. Sex was designed to be enjoyed in the realm of two, porn and masturbation is sex in the realm of one. Besides that, the bible says, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." I Corinthians 6:18

Aside of that all-important biblical mandate, keep in mind that masturbation and porn are deeply addictive and as powerful as a drug. They have the power to sap away the fulfillment you'll get in sex when you do get married because they train you to expect selfish sex that's catered to your exact needs.

Unfortunately, when you get married and your spouse can't give you the immediate rush and satisfaction you're used to getting from online, "designer-sex", you'll both end up disappointed and sexually frustrated.

I am dating someone who has been previously married, but didn't work out. How do I go about making our relationship work without having this problem in our future?

Before I respond to the question, let me say this. The chances of divorce a in marriage where one or both spouse have been married before is significantly higher than when two single people get married. It's even higher in couples where one or both parties have been divorced or remarried twice. I could reference some statistics, but it's something I've observed even within our own congregation. So you should be aware of that before you tie the knot with a divorcee.

Secondly, I would probably need to know the full context of the circumstances surrounding the first divorce before I can give you an accurate answer. Biblically speaking though, God Himself says He hates divorce, (Malachi 2:16), but makes exceptions for certain situations. Divorce is only permissible where sexual immorality has been present (Matthew 5:32) or an unbelieving spouse abandons their partner, (1 Corinthians 7:15). I would also add to that list, domestic abuse; especially in a marriage where the perpetrator is unrepentant, and physical life or mental health is threatened. Any divorce outside of those circumstances enters the realm of sin.

Assuming that the person you want to marry falls within those exceptions, then I would counsel that you become familiar with the circumstances surrounding the divorce before you get married so you know what you're getting yourself into. Though 2nd marriages work in some situations and the scripture does make allowance for it, also keep in mind that divorce leaves lots of invisible scars and emotional wounds. If kept unchecked, those wounds can spill over into the new marriage.

Lastly, I've observed that many divorcees quickly look to remarry after a divorce to fill a painful void, when in reality; God might desire them to remain single. Being single for an extended period can help them heal, or help them refocus on more important goals in life and ministry.

That might not answer all your question, but hopefully it gives you some thoughts to work through as you consider tying the knot.

Should a couple get engaged/married if the intellectual gulf between them is great?

You're basically asking if a plumber should marry a brain surgeon? You can marry anyone you want, but having commonalities in a marriage comes in incredibly handy. A large chunk of building intimacy in a marriage comes from communication, the ability to articulate things as complex as your innermost thoughts, and as simple as how your day went.

Though a plumber and a surgeon might have a lot in common in other areas of life, (faith, ethnicity, hobbies, etc), your day to day activity is kind of an important point of connection that you need to be able to share daily. Though I believe they can make it work, I have to assume that there will be tension on occasion when the intellectual gap becomes obvious, especially at social functions like family gatherings, and work gatherings, etc.

It would take very secure man or woman to live and thrive in a marriage where the intellectual gulf is wide. If you can both stomach the occasional tension, then go for it. But if you're going to spend your weekends whining about how much more money your wife makes, then release her during the dating stage and let her marry someone else.

How long would you advise I date before I propose or get proposed to?

There was a time when I would have been adamant about a couple allowing a minimum of four seasons, (1 year) under their belt before they tie the knot, but honestly I think the issue here comes down to emotional maturity. If you've both sat through biblical counseling, have both become aware of each other's strengths and shortcomings, and are both willing to commit to each other till death do you part, then time frame shouldn't be too much of an issue.

I will however say this, time is your friend. Your future marriage can only benefit from you both taking the time to know each other in the years leading up to the wedding. You'll find fewer shocking surprises in marriage if you do so.

Was there ever a point in your marriage when you considered calling it quits? If so, how did you press on? Are you still happy in your marriage? And how do you keep things spicy? Fun?

At this point in my marriage (3 years plus), I know and love my wife more now than I did when we first began. We've really grown together, not only as a couple, but as friends. We were hanging out a while back and I commented to her that, "even if we were not married, I would really enjoy hanging out with you, and would have totally put the moves on you"

My wife's love language is quality time and she loves drop-in surprises, so on occasion, I'll leave work in the middle of the day, show up at home with a meal, or take her out. The rest of what we do is none of your business!!

Is it wrong to say NO to sex with your husband if you don't feel like it?

Yes. In fact, it's a sin to deny your spouse sex. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 says, "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt

you because of your lack of self-control.”

Of course there will be times in the marriage where one partner is just too physically drained to engage in sex, or mentally unable (due to stress) to bring themselves into the mood. In those situations, there should be a loving explanation, and a “rain check” for another time, however, those are the exceptions and should be rare in marriage. Depriving one's partner of sex as a form of punishment is not only sinful, but it leaves a wide open door for sinful temptation to slip into the marriage.

What kind of counseling is available at Grace for people who have been abused sexually in the past? Or suffered a lot of emotional wounds in past relationships?

Director of women's ministry - Sherri MacDonald (sherri@grace4families.com), (973.347.0667 ext. 15). Director of Family Ministries - Tim Leonard, (tim@grace4families.com), (973.347.0667 ext. 17). Both ministry directors would be available to meet, or refer you to one of our trained counselors within the church.

Can a single woman be a Christian and still dress sexy? How can I be visually generous without sinning?

That would depend on how you define sexy.

In my opinion, the place to be visually generous (or sexy) is behind closed curtains with your spouse. There you can get as kinky and frisky as you want with him without causing anyone to stumble. Should you take it out of that realm, you will find yourself objectified by the very person you're trying to attract. When most guys see a girl who's exposing more skin than modesty requires, their minds will only allow them to go as far as what's beneath the outfit she's wearing. Which means, he's not really interested in who you are, what you have to say, what you enjoy doing, or what you'd like to accomplish in life. His biggest interest is your body, because that's what you've offered him.

Ladies, your greatest asset is the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which carries great value not only in God's sight, but also in the eyes of the man whom God will place in your path to be deeply attracted to you.

What are your views on online dating? And is it advisable? Is it ok to go to sites like eharmony.com, or match.com dating sites to meet a potential mate?

For the best response to this question, I have to defer to pastor Rick Holland's blog because he does a finer job of explaining this issue than I ever could, (http://www.shepherdsconference.org/pulpit/4017/online_dating_and_accountability/). But here are the cliff notes.

When romance blossoms in the context of the church or social environments, a couple has the benefit of having friends and family around to observe the relationship and offer counsel or give helpful feedback. But when you date primarily online, you are entering into an accountability-free world. Because a couple is in isolation online, they can develop a sense of anonymity that gives the heart a greater sense of freedom in expressing that which might never have been said in real life. So one must be cautious at all times with online dating.

However, if a Christian single has a balanced head on their shoulders and is a maturing student of Jesus Christ, they might find the online dating world easier to navigate through. If these dating sites are used primarily as a, "front door" to meet new people you're compatible with that you might otherwise never meet, then it seems safe. Just ensure that you aren't making life long decisions based solely on your online conversations, especially if you've never met them face-to-face or interacted with their friends and family.

How far is too far?

Keep your zippers zipped, your buttons buttoned, and leave your tongue in your mouth. The fact of the matter is that foreplay, and any form of heavy petting is designed to lead to sexual intercourse.

I know the bible says not to be unequally yoked, in other words i shouldn't marry non-christians. But what about dating Catholics, Jehovah witnesses, and people who believe in God?

By, "unequally yoked", the bible means you should not get into, or begin the process of a marriage transaction with someone who is not on the same spiritual plane with you. For the Christian, it means your allegiance and faith is in Jesus Christ alone as the Lord and savior of your life. If the person you plan to marry does not agree wholeheartedly with that biblical assertion (Romans 10:9 and John 3:16), then you are unequally yoked.

The bible talks about wives submitting, what does that look like practically in a dating relationship and eventually in my marriage? (I don't want to get walked all over).

The text you're thinking of is Ephesians 5:24 where Paul says, "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." What ladies need to understand about this passage is that submission in marriage is not a one-sided subjection to a domineering or abusive, self-centered man. Biblical submission is first and foremost rooted in a mutual submission to Jesus Christ. When a husband walks in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over his life, his love for his wife grows, and she in turn finds it not only easy, but even desirable to submit to his leadership in the marriage.

The question I think most people are asking is, "am I still obligated to submit to my husband's leadership if he does not fully submit to Jesus Christ, or if he's a super jerk?" Before I respond to that query, I have to ask first, "was he a super-jerk when you married him, or did the, "super" part come later on?" If it was your personal choice to marry him, (which is usually the case, unless you're in an arranged marriage), then the question is moot because it was of your own freewill that you signed up for his program!

With that said, the answer to the question is still - yes. Human behavior does not change the biblical mandate. However you might find some relief in the knowledge that the verse in questions only requires you to submit to your husband in everything that is right and lawful. Should he ever require you to do or go along with actions that are unbiblical or unlawful, then you are not under obligation to submit to him.

But once again, that should not even be the attitude in your marriage. Husbands should love their wives sacrificially just as Jesus Christ loved the church and gave His very own life for her, and wives are to respect and submit to their husbands out of reverence for Jesus Christ, (not because it feels

good or comes easy).

What if I want to be a stay-at-home dad? Are there any biblical objections to that? What's your personal opinion?

For clarity sake, I understand a, "stay-at-home-dad" as referring to a man who has chosen to stay at home and raise the children while his wife goes to work and brings in the income. This isn't due to a physical disability or a lack of job opportunities, but a conscious choice on his part to let his wife be the sole breadwinner, perhaps because she has greater income-producing abilities?

If that's the case, then the biblical text that immediately comes to mind, (maybe not necessarily a homerun objection) is 1 Timothy 5:8 where the apostle Paul says, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." The problem with using this text to counter the stay-at-home-dad argument is that the immediate context of Paul's word is not about husbands providing for their families, but about making provisions for widows. I'm also well aware that providing for one's family cannot be relegated simply to finances, which is what proponents of dads staying home would argue.

Having said that, I still land on the traditional end of the debate. Though the bible has nothing explicitly written on dads staying home, I believe a case can be made from biblical narratives that a Christian man has a mandated responsibility to provide financially for the members of his home, as well as being the spiritual head of his home. If the former role is abdicated and yielded to the wife because she can bring in more money to support the family, then I think a man is straying away from the biblical framework of what He has been called to do as a man.

I confess I might have a cultural bias since such an act is unheard of in Nigerian communities, but if I'm being honest, it would be hard to respect a man who relinquishes that role completely to his wife. I have no problem with a workingwoman making significantly more income than her spouse; my personal objection is with the man who would agree to give up working.

I don't know about your household, but I'm glad I wasn't raised full time by my dad because I would be a different man today. The dynamic of having her lovingly care for us during the day and having him come home at night is an experience unlike no other. Some couples might be able to pull it off, but I would strongly advise against it. I know it's the not most perfect answer, but that's where I land.

Should spouses confess to each other every single sin?

Though I'm of the opinion that honesty is the best policy, and it's best if couples are completely open and honest with each other, I might caution against confessing, "every" single sin. It might be worth asking yourself, (before confessing), will this revelation bring us closer as a couple or divide us further?

Is living with my girlfriend or boyfriend wrong? What if we plan to get married really soon? Or what if it will save us money?

Here's what I've found, men and women choose to live together before marriage for different reasons. Women see it as a preparation and a closer step towards marriage. Men on the other hand view it as accessible sex, and available companionship and financial saving. The reality however

is that living together before marriage is not a trial run for marriage as many suppose, but in fact a training for divorce.

Renita J. Weems from beliefnet.com writes this, "If you have any illusions that living together before marriage increases your chances of staying married, forget that too. On the contrary, some research suggests that couples increase their chances of divorce when they cohabitate before marriage."

The reason why she explains, "cohabitating couples are less likely to tackle the tough, thorny issues confronting their tenuous relationship when they are living together, and as such are at a disadvantage later on when they marry and are forced to see their mates in the new light that marriage casts upon the relationship. It's not unusual to feel deceived and dismayed once you marry after living together."

Another lady's comment captures this sentiment best when she writes, "Living together may seem wonderful initially ... but eventually it creates more problems than you can imagine.... I lived with my boyfriend for two years before we got married.... The 'this-is-yours, that-is-mine mentality that enabled us to "successfully" live together (before marriage) completely unraveled once we got married. We had become too separate and selfish, making it nearly impossible to become "one flesh." The honeymoon was over before the wedding day ever arrived. (Excerpt from letter printed in "Family Feedback," Focus on the Family, May 1994, p.23).

That's from a social standpoint. From a biblical perspective, the issue is exposure to sexual temptation. Let's face it, living together before marriage is easiest way to have sex regularly without any commitment. In which case, you are clearly living in sin because any form of sex outside of the marriage bed/commitment is in violation of Hebrews 13:4, where it says, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

There is a way that seems right to some people, probably because everyone else in culture is, "doing it", but it's end is misery and a lifetime of regrets. So don't be foolish, wait till you've both made commitments to one another before God and family before you decide to play house!

If we're at the mall and my girlfriend sees an attractive woman walking by and asks me what I think? What's the right response that won't get me killed?

Propose to your girlfriend right on the spot and you'll live!

If I was previously sexually active, what practical steps can I take today in my relationship to feel pure again?

There have been discussions about secondary virginity or born-again virginity; which is basically a claim that a person can be restored to virginity by a spiritual renewal if they commit to stay pure till marriage and ask for God's forgiveness.

Though that's a comforting thought for those who long to start with a clean slate, I don't believe there is a need to seek such things. The bible says, not only is a Christian a new creation when they trust in Jesus Christ, (2 Corinthians 5:17), but God Himself has removed all our past, current, and future sins (including sexual sins) from us as far as the east is from the west, (Psalm 103:12). That means God will never condemn you, and nothing in all of creation will ever be able to separate you

from the love of Christ Jesus. Hence you don't need to seek a secondary virginity; you are already pure, clean, and fully accepted by God just as you are.

The struggle for most people who perhaps were sexually abused or have been promiscuous is the guilt-filled mind games. It's at this juncture that you have to put on what the bible calls, "your helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17), and block out any mental lies the, "accuser of the brothers" (Revelation 12:10) might whisper in your ears. Continually remind yourself and the enemy that you are not who you once were because Jesus Christ has begun a mighty new work in you, (Romans 6:11).

On a very practical level, you will need to forgive anyone who sinned against you sexually, and who you might hold a grudge against. Two, intentionally commit (And stick to) saving yourself sexually till marriage. Three, you will need get away from people, places, things and situations that weaken your self-control. And four, get yourself around people who encourage you and stir your affections for Jesus Christ.

Does the bible say anything about interracial dating/marriage? Is it advisable?

In the O.T book of Deuteronomy 7:3-4, God commanded the Israelites not to marry citizens of other races, but that command was not racial in nature, it was religious. The concern was that those pagan nations would mislead His people into idolatry if they intermarried, (which eventually happened). This principle of not intermarrying with people of other faiths, or lack thereof is repeated in the New Testament when Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" Once again, you'll note that the concern is inter-religion, not interracial.

So the answer to your questions is NO, the bible does not say anything about interracial marriage, it's greatest concern is that followers of Jesus Christ enter into a marriage with other followers of Jesus Christ. Whether that person has the same skin color or the same ethnic background is totally up to you.

However, interracial couples should always enter into marriage with an awareness that others in their community, or even family members might have a hard time accepting them. Though times have changed, there are still pockets of people who would rather keep the races separate. So just be aware of the reality of the some of the difficulties that might arise. If you're both on the same page and willing to work through it, then set a date and start a family.

Do girls like guys with facial hair or clean-shaven and short hair or long hair? Why can't God let me read their minds?

Don't we all? A better question to ask is, "what look are you most comfortable with?" I have known some very hairy bearded guys who felt very comfortable in their, "beardedness" and were found very attractive by certain girls. The same has held true for some guys I've known who were clean-shaven with a dome shinier than Michael's Jordan's head. Be who you were created to be and wear the look that you are most comfortable with, and a girl who digs you will be drawn to you.

Having said that, there are some basic, "attraction rules" everyone has to follow. By all means, please take a shower everyday and wear some deodorant. Wash your clothes, and wear a different

outfit, (at a minimum), every other day. Brush your teeth and shampoo your hair or goatee. If you want to throw in a bonus, put on a little bit of cologne after-shave.

I don't know of any communities in the States where, dirt or messiness is attractive. If a girl ever finds you attractive because of your filthiness, get as far away from her as possible!