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Editorial

Sustaining family and mental health in contemporary societies underscores the point that there is a troubling storm within families. To sustain a healthy family, there must be a healthy family. There is something to sustain. Studies have shown that unresolved challenges in families inevitably lead to stress and mental health issues. They analyse how unstable families lose their social and health balance, whose consequences snowball into individual, family, and societal life. Based on the challenges that confront the family, this volume devotes itself to exploring the causes, dimensions, challenges, effects, and potential panaceas to the increasing ill-health in families across different spaces.

Sajo opens this volume with a critical evaluation of how mental health could be sustained in families in contemporary times. He argues that family mental health is integral to societal well-being. Contemporary pressures demand that families actively cultivate resilience, supportive relationships, and adaptive coping mechanisms. Policymakers, religious organisations, and health institutions must partner with families to reduce stigma, provide resources, and foster environments where families thrive.

The second article by Harold examines the critical intersection between psychology and evangelicalism, drawing biblical normativity and theological resources to establish the place of Christ in the redemptive work. He avers that evangelicalism and psychology are becoming increasingly relevant and effective in helping counselees grow both spiritually and emotionally by acknowledging their Christian values and assisting them in understanding their emotional pain and social issues. The paper offers counsellors and psychologists a Christian worldview rooted in the Evangelical tradition, serving as a framework to support and guide counselees

when they bring religious experiences and concerns into therapy and counselling. Following this is Ayokunle's article, which argues that there is a connection between migration and mental health. For Ayokunle, as humans migrate from place to place, they either encounter health issues in their host communities or carry health challenges. Thus, migrants should have access to information about their health status and the places they migrate to.

On their own, Gire and Oladapo explore the complexities of family mental health and well-being in contemporary society. They argue that despite the scientific and technological advances the world has made, along with all its challenges, biblical principles remain relevant to addressing them. The vagaries of contemporary life are the subject of biblical contemplation. Audu and his colleagues conducted an empirical study to investigate the correlation between poverty and family mental health in Ayingba, central Nigeria. They argue that poverty results in social stigma, which in turn causes mental ill-health. They submit that addressing the viscerogenic needs of the family is a catalyst for sustaining family health. Irewole and Femi-Bamidele further develop this argument by asserting that the effects of poverty on a family cannot be overstated. They conclude that addressing poverty in families will lead to a healthy family life in all ramifications.

Onuchukwu argues that choosing the right marriage partner is fundamental to achieving and sustaining family mental health. A wrong spouse, he argues, would instigate stress and problems that would undermine a family's mental health. He therefore suggests that emotions and physical attractions are not the fundamental values for choosing a spouse; spiritual guidance would be needed to complement them. Bolaji and Balogun argue for the place of children in mainstreaming mental health in a family. They believe that godly children are critical assets to family mental health; thus, guiding them properly and biblically will help them to perform their designated roles in the family. Agboifo further explores the place of

children in the family and their correlation with mental health. Since dysfunctional families could produce unadjusted children, he recommends that the services of pastoral caregivers are crucial in turning the tide around. Closely knitted to Agboifo's view is Babalola's, who vigorously argued that pastoral care and counselling are all too important to maintain and sustain family mental health. Pastoral intervention in stressed families can help restore trust and love, and heal the entire family, he submitted. Ibrahim also follows this trajectory of pastoral care-giving as indispensable to addressing family challenges. He highlighted the causes of family mental health challenges and suggested that bible-based pastoral counselling can serve as a worthy intervention. Oyewole also argued along this line that family health challenges can be addressed through informed pastoral care-giving in addition to other socially approved measures. For Rhodolf, the nexus between family system theory and its implications for mental health and well-being within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context cannot be overemphasised. He advocated for a family-centred, contextually grounded approach, calling for integrated pastoral and psychosocial frameworks that reinforce family systems, mitigate stigma, and promote sustainable mental health interventions within Ghanaian society.

These articles explored critical areas of family mental health and proffer intellectual, spiritual, and practical solutions that can mitigate the challenges. While welcoming you to savour these interesting articulations of ideas, it is essential to acknowledge that the contributors are responsible for the accuracy of the ideas in their articles.

Benson O. Igboin
Editor-in-Chief

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SPOUSE: A PANACEA TO SUSTAINING FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

This paper examines the psychological and societal implications of divorce, especially its effects on family fragmentation and the emotional well-being of children. The thesis of this study posits that the traditional, biblically grounded, and culturally informed approach to spouse selection plays a vital role in fostering marital stability and mental wellness in contemporary families. The study aims to evaluate the significance of intentional pre-marital inquiry, prayer, cultural norms, and counselling in the choice of a spouse. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) What traditional and biblical principles inform healthy spousal selection? (2) How does informed spouse selection contribute to mental well-being and family cohesion? The study employs a qualitative, descriptive approach, utilising biblical exegesis, cultural analysis, and a thematic review of relevant literature. The scope of the research is limited to Christian contexts, with a focus on male roles in marital decisions. Findings reveal that traditional models incorporating spiritual discernment, familial input, and premarital counselling contribute significantly to stable, resilient marriages. The paper identifies a gap in the integration of biblical principles with modern psychological approaches in pre-marital guidance. This research is significant for pastoral care, counselling practice, and youth education, offering a culturally sensitive and theologically grounded framework for marriage preparation. The study contributes to knowledge by bridging the divide between ancient wisdom and contemporary needs, proposing an integrative model of spouse selection that supports mental health, family continuity, and societal stability.

Keywords: Spouse, Tradition, Church, Biblical, Society, Family, Mental Health

Introduction

Around the mid-20th century, partnership became universally and inextricably linked with love. And that has tossed all the jigsaw-puzzle pieces into the air. For the first time, passion – sexual and emotional becomes the primary benchmark for relationship success. A close look at the famous opening line of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.' Then compare that with the 1949 pronouncement by Rev. Herbert Gray, “National Marriage Guidance Council, that 'the only sufficient reason for marrying is that you ... love somebody (Lara Feigel, 2013).

Uche Gabriel insightfully commented on Facebook, “Have you ever wondered why God carefully positioned a membrane of blood in a lady's sexual opening? It is a tiny membrane that partially or completely covers the vaginal entrance, known as the 'hymen'...” (Gabriel, Facebook post, 2025). He continues to describe it as a divinely instituted covenantal seal, symbolising the sanctity of the marital union and affirming God's intention for sexual intimacy only within the bounds of marriage.

This profound analogy underscores the sacredness of sexual purity and the seriousness with which God views the marital covenant, which begins with choosing a spouse. Modernity, however, has distorted this vision. The introduction of match-making, chat dating and other forms of choosing a spouse has made it less focused and more on emotional connection. Women are becoming more educated, highly paid, and able to exit loveless marriages. The rise of social liberalisation, mass education, global communication, decline in religious belief, rise of individual entitlement, and the legalisation of divorce have also contributed to the paradigm shift in choosing a

spouse (Susan, 2026, p. 8). Most contributed to contemporary culture, shaped by rampant sexual promiscuity, and has eroded the traditional and spiritual values associated with choosing a spouse. As a result, many marriages today suffer from brokenness and psychological trauma due to deviation from God's original blueprint. The right choice of a spouse becomes a necessity to avoid divorce and the pain of mental illness.

Consequently, when you make a choice, you change the future (Deepak, 2025). A major task many people face is choosing a romantic spouse. It is one of contemporary life's biggest adventures (Susan, 2016, 6). Embarking on the quest leads one to meet fascinating people, as well as encounter some elements of craziness, resulting in a rollercoaster of emotions, ranging from emotional highs to lows, including fury, fear, and depression. One may lose direction completely before, but in the end, may find a way to love. The challenge is growth. Spouse choice is a self-development journey, driving us to learn more about ourselves, about others, about life, and how we want to live it. Take all that on board, and you begin to realise just how significant an adventure choosing a spouse can be. (Susan, 2016, 6).

In light of this moral crisis, Paul's exhortation becomes even more pertinent: “But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2, ESV). This raises the crucial question: how does one choose a spouse in a manner that fosters mental health and emotional stability in the family? This paper examines modern, traditional, and biblical perspectives on marital choice and their implications for mental health sustainability within the family unit.

Biblical Perspective on Choosing a Spouse

The pivotal question arises: Should one navigate the journey of selecting a spouse independently, or seek counsel from others?

Scripture instructs that whatever we do, it must be to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, the focus should not be on aligning with individuals, consulting prophets or soothsayers, but rather on aligning with the Word of God, maintaining the faith professed, and demonstrating that faith through action and practice. This involves praying, observing, and waiting on the Lord; praying without ceasing, paying attention to subtle details, and relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The road to marriage stands as the cornerstone of this entire conversation. While marriage encompasses social dimensions, it also holds deep sexual and spiritual significance. As Giulia Sissa notes, marriage is “a woman's destination,” representing not merely a legal status change but the initiation into a culturally sanctioned, morally upright sexual union (Sissa, 2013).

In the Genesis creation narrative, God made humankind male and female (Gen. 1:27) and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. Adam's union with Eve was a divine response to his need for companionship (Gen. 2:18, 21–22). This primordial marital union laid the foundation for all subsequent family and societal structures. As humanity expanded, God permitted greater autonomy in marital selection: “*The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose*” (Gen. 6:2, 4, NASB).

Despite this autonomy, Scripture provides guidelines for marital choice. These are found in the Mosaic legal codes (Leviticus and Deuteronomy) and the New Testament. Such guidelines inform the future quality of matrimonial life, emphasising the personal relationship between husband and wife, their mutual behaviour, and shared responsibilities. Michel Foucault underscores the primacy of the conjugal bond, suggesting that marriage is less about governance and more about relational aesthetics and ethics (Foucault, 2013).

a. The Old Tradition: Family Arranged Marriages

Traditionally, the family's role in choosing a spouse safeguarded against mismatches in values, character, and cultural background. As Foucault explains, traditional sexual ethics demanded a form of life that reflected universal values and moral aesthetics, irrespective of one's social class (Foucault, 2013, 165). Investigating a potential spouse's background, family lineage, and character was a matter of great importance, ensuring social harmony and familial honour.

In biblical tradition, Abraham initiated this model by sending his servant to seek a wife for Isaac from his own kindred (Gen. 24:24). Similarly, Moses instructed the Israelites not to intermarry with foreign nations (Deut. 7:3-4, 6). Ishmael was guided by Hagar (Gen. 21:21), and Rebekah received her family's full blessing before marrying Isaac (Gen. 24:50-60). Even Saul's approval of David's marriage to Michal illustrates the familial role in spousal approval (1 Sam. 18:20).

Among devout Christians, particularly within church settings, spouses are often found through godly families and trusted networks. Such practices, rooted in both tradition and Scripture, have proven effective in securing marriages that nurture mutual respect, shared values, and emotional stability—critical ingredients for sustaining mental health in contemporary families.

b. Modern Cultural Influences

In this context, the New Testament instructs that individuals are free to marry whomever they choose, provided the prospective partner is "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). Achieving this requires discernment, godly counsel, and prayer. As the psalmist advises, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" (Psalm 1:1). This principle should be applied when selecting a future spouse, given the long-term commitment and significant consequences involved, including potential medical and psychological implications for future generations.

Scripture does not explicitly state that God chooses a spouse for individuals, apart from the case of Adam. Similarly, it does not suggest that marrying a beautiful woman will prevent attraction to others. God does not choose our jobs, residences, or places of worship. The pertinent question pertains to the nature of divine guidance: "Does the Lord directly guide us today by His Holy Spirit?" If so, does He influence our choices in various aspects of life?

It is crucial to understand that God does not make decisions for us; we bear responsibility for our choices. He guides us through Scripture, with the Holy Spirit providing interpretation as we follow biblical instructions. As stated in John 16:13, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." On the eve of his crucifixion, Christ informed his apostles about the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would reveal the truth to them. The apostles, not contemporary believers, were directly guided by the Spirit in their teachings and missionary journeys (Acts 2:14; 16:9-10). Misinterpretations have led some to believe they receive personal guidance from the Holy Spirit in daily decisions. However, this promise was specific to the apostles. Today, we are guided by the written Word, revealed by the Spirit to the apostles, containing principles for making life decisions (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:14-17). Even when guided by the Holy Spirit, the apostles were not immune to personal errors (Gal. 2:11-14).

God does not directly instruct us on whom to marry, which job to take, or where to live. Nevertheless, He provides principles to aid in these decisions. For instance, Ephesians 4:28 encourages us to work honestly to support ourselves and others. We are free to choose any job that does not involve sinful activities. This freedom does not imply the absence of God's care. By applying His principles, we can trust that He works for our good daily (Matt. 6:19-34; 7:7-12), whereas apart from Him, we are working for our own, which most often is disastrous.

Therefore, believers should continually consult Scripture when choosing a spouse. A thorough consideration of God's Word has a

profound influence on our decisions and worldview regarding potential spouses. The critical question is whether we will follow God's Word or conform to cultural influences, such as those portrayed in Nollywood. Opting for a marriage grounded in God's principles is preferable.

Determinant Factors for Choosing a Spouse

a. Family

Family, as the oldest social institution, remains central to societal survival and development. It serves as the bedrock of cultural transmission, moral instruction, and emotional support. Consequently, the selection of a spouse has always been a family concern, ensuring the continuity of values and collective identity. Traditionally, the family's role in choosing a spouse safeguarded against mismatches in values, character, and cultural background. As Foucault explains, traditional sexual ethics demanded a form of life that reflected universal values and moral aesthetics, irrespective of one's social class (Foucault, 2013, 165). Investigating a potential spouse's background, family lineage, and character was a matter of great importance, ensuring social harmony and familial honour.

Among devout Christians, particularly within church settings, spouses are often found through godly families and trusted networks. Such practices, rooted in both tradition and scripture, have proven effective in securing marriages that nurture mutual respect, shared values, and emotional stability—critical ingredients for sustaining mental health in contemporary families.

b. Belief

Your future spouse should share your beliefs; therefore, if you are a Christian, it is non-negotiable, biblically, to choose a Christian. Scripture advises widows desiring to remarry to do so "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). Marrying "in the Lord" signifies marrying a fellow Christian. Therefore, dating or pursuing a relationship with a

non-Christian is inadvisable, as such individuals are not biblically marriageable. Lemuel's mother imparted wisdom: "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

Believers should continually consult Scripture when choosing a spouse. A thorough consideration of God's Word has a profound influence on our decisions and worldview regarding a potential spouse. The critical question is whether we will follow God's Word or conform to cultural influences, such as those portrayed in Nollywood.

c. Natural Assigned Sex

Your potential spouse must be biologically male or female from birth. In the 21st century, gender issues have become prominent. Scripture is clear: "So God created man in his own image... male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The femaleness of the wife is assumed throughout Scripture (Gen. 2:23-24; Eph. 5:22-33). Christian men must ensure their prospective spouse is a female assigned by God, not altered through medical procedures.

d. Never A Divorcee

A future spouse should not be divorced. The New Testament explicitly states that disciples of Jesus are not permitted to marry a divorced woman. "But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32; cf. Luke 16:18; Mark 10:12).

e. Conscious of Having Children

"Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) indicates the importance of procreation in marriage. Every Christian marriage should aim to fulfil purposes such as companionship, procreation, and sexual purity. A spouse must be willing to have children. If infertility is

known before marriage, the couple may still marry, trusting that God may open the womb.

f. Humble Spirit

"Wives... let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious" (1 Pet. 3:3–4). A Christian man should seek a woman who embodies a gentle and quiet spirit, valuing inner beauty over vanity. Proverbs warns against quarrelsome wives (Prov. 21:9; 27:15–16). "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church..." (Eph. 5:22–24; cf. 1 Pet. 3:1–7). Marriage transcends personal happiness; it reflects the relationship between Christ and the church. In this analogy, the husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church, and the wife submits to her husband as the church submits to Christ.

g. Gracious Life

A godly spouse should be gracious: "She must be well known for her good works, that is, if she has brought up children, shown hospitality..." (1 Tim. 5:9–10). A friendly woman who enjoys entertaining guests contributes to a joyful and fulfilling marriage. A homemaker who manages the household and nurtures children is a blessing: "The heart of her husband trusts in her... She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:11–12; cf. 1 Tim. 5:14). Obedience to God is paramount. "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). An unmitigated fool knows God but refuses to obey Him, making them a liar. Liars are outside God's will (Prov. 6:16–19).

Wrong Approaches for Choosing a Spouse

Modernity has less place for religion in loving relationships, just as it has in the human psyche, to the point where not only is God

absent from partnership, but partnership has become more significant than God. Philosopher Simon May, in his book *Love: A History*, explains that where once we sought meaning in the divine, now that we can no longer find such meaning, we seek it elsewhere. Partnership is now expected to be the source that delivers all the hope and happiness we originally expected to receive from the deity (Stephen, 2006, 10).

a. Permutation

Over-speedy decisions, emotions can lead to being swept off one's feet by beauty and charm, only to realise that one's given house-room to a monster. That said, confessed, not an enemy of a little carefully managed infatuation. Shakespeare puts it, 'These violent delights have violent ends / ... like fire and powder / which as they kiss, consume.' But if instant enchantment makes us want to instantly commit in some comparatively irreversible way (mortgage, marriage, motherhood), then it's best to apply the necessary brakes. A Russian proverb runs, 'Trust, but verify'. Which is why communities have traditionally built in delay: long engagements, no sex before marriage, betrothal for a year and a day before the wedding proper, all so we can verify the information and draw a considered conclusion. Our contemporary, speedy courtship rituals – sleeping together without vows, moving in together without documentation – are only acceptable because we are no longer bound together for life if love turns to hate. Ironically, the most modern method, online dating, has reintroduced some of that traditional delay, with users going through a sometimes lengthy and in-depth process of 'getting to know you'. In contrast, they continue to 'get to know' several others online until they make a commitment. (Susan 2016, 89).

There is a huge belief not only in the possibility but also in the wisdom of falling in love. It's a magical, sparkly feeling. The world seems bright and shiny, the future appears glorious, and everything

seems possible. Yes, being in love can sometimes be hard – as the classic French ballad has it, 'the pleasure of love lasts a moment, the pain of love lasts a lifetime.' But the excitement, the arousal, and the adoration are surely irresistible. Everyone should be love-struck at least once in their life. Given this non-correlation between 'in love' and compatibility, it's therefore wise to avoid making choices from the earthquake zone, wise to wait until the earth has stopped moving before we pitch permanent camp (Susan, 2016, 77). Love is not blind.

b. Appearance and wealth

The advice to marry a beautiful woman to prevent future attractions to others is a flawed notion. An unregenerated heart, devoid of the Holy Spirit, may engage in immoral acts when given the opportunity. It is our reverence for God that restrains us. As stated in Genesis 49:25, God blesses with "the blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb." A woman who understands and lives by these blessings embodies true beauty. As Plato purportedly said, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." God does not promise a wife, but whoever finds a spouse finds favour before me (Pro. 18:22). Only the Holy Spirit can discern whether one is experiencing infatuation or confronting a genuine situation. Is the person before me authentic? Physical attraction and outward appearances can be deceptive; superficial smiles and alluring physiques can be misleading, as many employ strategies to deceive. As Shakespeare noted, "There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face" (Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act 1). A popular adage states that love is blind, but those close to you or your prospective spouse are not. Bob Marley aptly sang, "If you listen carefully, you will hear." In marriage, there is no provision for a refund after commitment; it's a journey of no return. Scripture advises to guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Prov. 4:23). Seek your spouse with integrity and an open heart, as your life depends on it. Favour may be withheld if this is neglected.

There is the opposite danger. It is unhelpful when one chooses to chase the wind instead of a core value. These core values are devoid

of physical appearance, and wealth stands in relation to each other. Many have beautiful houses and cars, but there is no peace in living in those houses and driving those expensive cars. They live in mansions, but in rooms afar, apart in the mansion. Appearance is deceptive, and wealth can conceal evil intentions. Over-speedy decisions on material wealth can lead to being swept off one's feet by beauty and charm, only to realise that one's given house-room to a monster. That said, confessed, not an enemy of a little carefully managed infatuation. Shakespeare puts it, 'These violent delights have violent ends ... like fire and powder, which as they kiss, consume.' But if instant enchantment makes us want to instantly commit in some comparatively irreversible way (mortgage, marriage, motherhood), then it's best to apply the necessary brakes. A Russian proverb runs, 'Trust, but verify'. Which is why communities have traditionally built in delay: long engagements, no sex before marriage, betrothal for a year and a day before the wedding proper, all so we can verify the information and draw a considered conclusion.

c. Lacking self-esteem or self-awareness

The non-knowledge of oneself remains a disaster. One lacks one's value, self-worth, needs, and purpose in life. Infatuation is dangerous...The worst is choosing to meet societal expectations..

Effects of Choosing the Wrong Spouse

Our worldview, shaped by media, often leads to unrealistic expectations. Romantic comedies may evoke strong emotions, but such portrayals make choosing a spouse improbable. These feelings can lead to negative emotions and the wrong choice of spouse. The emotion may lead to fornication and unintended consequences, such as children born out of wedlock, mental illness, emotional trauma, and divorce.

a. Divorce

Our contemporary speedy courtship rituals – sleeping together without vows, moving in together without documentation –

irrevocably lead to divorce if love turns to hate. Ironically, the most modern method, online dating, has reinforced this pattern, which has increased the divorce rate, leaving the children with a dysfunctional life.

b. Mental Health

Choosing a spouse should not be based solely on emotions. While feelings are associated with love, love founded on fleeting emotions can lead to detrimental outcomes, including mental health issues like anger, depression, and internal loneliness. A lack of self-esteem may worsen worry and lead to frequent criticism. It ushers in sentiment, bitterness, and negative feelings towards the spouse, and then a lack of satisfaction sets in. Christ's decision to die for humanity was not based on feelings but on profound love, exemplifying the greatest form of love. Physical health challenges often accompany stress and worry. Psychosomatic illness becomes inevitable, leading to high blood pressure, heart disease, etc.

c. Loss of Faith

Scripture provides profound insights that must not be overlooked: "This mystery [marriage] is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). Consequently, the directive, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14), becomes pertinent. A Christian should not seek a spouse lacking a salvation experience. A suitable spouse should meditate on God's Word daily, actively participate in church, utilise their gifts, listen to godly music, pray, and maintain a strong relationship with God. This does not imply perfection but consistency in living a godly life. The wrong choice of spouse dwarfs spiritual growth and leads to loss of faith.

Initiating a relationship with an unbeliever is a deviation from God's commandments, regardless of emotional inclinations. Such actions have consequences: one's faith may be marginalized to appease the spouse, spiritual gifts may suffer setbacks, church activities may

diminish, and commitments like tithing and missions may be affected. The worst-case scenario involves a breakup, as the unbelieving spouse may lack interest in spiritual matters, leading to demands that detract from one's relationship with God.

Advantages of Choosing the Right Spouse

Opting for a marriage grounded in God's principles sustains family health than preferring to build one on unstable foundations. A marriage built on scriptural standards belongs to Jesus Christ and can withstand life's storms. Our worldview, shaped by media, often leads to unrealistic expectations. Romantic comedies may evoke strong emotions, but such portrayals of marriage are improbable. These feelings can lead to fornication and unintended consequences, such as children born out of wedlock and divorce.

Abraham was determined to prevent his descendants from being entangled in the traditions of the Canaanites, which were contrary to the covenant he had made with God. To preserve the family's lineage, traditions, and culture, he insisted that his son marry within his lineage. This underscores the notion that the choice of a spouse is a significant predictor of one's future happiness. Desiring a spouse is a commendable aspiration, one that is divinely inspired. Trusting in God, exercising patience, and making wise decisions are essential in this pursuit.

a. Sacrificial Love

The core advantage is a sacrificial love, akin to that demonstrated by Sarah. It involves upholding the scriptural covenant with God, exercising patience, and fostering mutual understanding. It necessitates the rejection of the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites and a commitment to pursuing God, even in daily life. Such a tradition encourages spouses to stand together through challenges and triumphs, in safety and risk, and in clarity and uncertainty. It offers the dismissal of alternative spiritual directions and the

establishment of core family values rooted in biblical principles. This includes the development of family discipline, discipleship, and a hospitable and orderly household.

It offers the New Testament's ethical guidelines for marriage, emphasising a direct love between husband and wife: Husbands, love your wife as Christ loves the Church and died for it, and a reciprocal approach: wives, be submissive to your husband.

b. Mental Health

Traditionally, choosing the right spouse safeguarded against mismatches in values and character. As Foucault explains, traditional sexual ethics demanded a form of life that reflected universal values and moral aesthetics, irrespective of one's social class (Foucault, 2013). It offers good mental health that steads physical wellbeing. It keeps psychosomatic illness at bay by putting away stress and high blood pressure. It promotes well-being and reduces stress to the point of no heart disease. Living together as supportive spouses can lead to overall health and a longer life.

c. Culture

Nurturing the children in the fear of the Lord was Abraham's intention in ensuring that his descendants would not become entangled in the traditions of the Canaanites, which were contrary to the covenant he had established with God. To preserve the family's lineage, traditions, and culture, he insisted that his son marry within his lineage. This underscores the notion that the choice of a spouse is a significant predictor of one's future happiness. Desiring a spouse is a commendable aspiration, one that is divinely inspired. Trusting in God, exercising patience, and making wise decisions are essential in this pursuit.

It involves upholding the scriptural covenant with God, exercising patience, and fostering mutual understanding. It necessitates the rejection of idolatrous practices that run contrary to one's beliefs and

a commitment to pursuing God, even in daily life. It encourages spouses to stand together through challenges and triumphs, in safety and risk, and in clarity and uncertainty. It requires the dismissal of alternative spiritual directions and the establishment of core family values rooted in biblical principles. This includes the development of family discipline, discipleship, and a hospitable and orderly household.

Modern society often dismisses tradition as outdated, old-fashioned, or oppressive. However, these traditions remain a formula for attaining joy, peace, and love. God's design for marriage is immutable; it cannot be renovated or improved upon. The Bible should not be regarded as archaic or outdated, for God's ways are just and beyond human comprehension. Those who adhere to these principles often experience fulfilling marriages, free from mental distress.

d. Extramarital Relationship

There is a close-up. The Bible directly mandates that sexual intercourse be confined within marriage, thereby preventing extramarital relations. Reciprocally, the marital bond inherently excludes the pursuit of sexual pleasures outside marriage. This perspective underscores that sexual pleasure is intrinsically tied to the marital relationship and should not be indulged in by unmarried individuals. Thus, Marriage is viewed as a more general practice, public institution, and private existence, as a more potent force for binding spouses and isolating the couple within a unique social context.

Conclusion

Choosing a spouse should not be based solely on emotions. While feelings are associated with love, love founded on fleeting emotions can lead to detrimental outcomes, including mental health issues.

Christ's decision to die for humanity was not based on feelings but on profound love, exemplifying the greatest form of love. The key goal in choosing the right spouse should not be to try to avoid that balancing act – it's inevitable – but to find someone for whose sake one will make the act because we love them so much, someone who loves us so much that they will attempt for our sake. “The target for both sides becomes how to choose a spouse who is so compelling that we're willing to demolish our own house to rebuild a more beautiful mutual home.” (Susan 2016, 85). He that finds a wife, finds a good thing and obtains favour from the Lord (Prov. 18:22). A future spouse should be a favour before God. A spouse, according to Proverbs, is loyal, merry, capable, and strong, the perfect help-meet for her man. Seek a spouse who has the prescription, blueprint, and manual. Ultimately, the choice of a spouse plays a foundational role in determining future peace, happiness, and the mental well-being of the family. The quality of this choice influences the spiritual and emotional stability of the household. It is the only way to avoid mental illness and early death.

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