

WHY COMPATIBILITY MATTERS IN MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

1 Cor. 7:1-4

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INTRODUCTION:

Marriage compatibility should be considered *before* you get into a serious relationship. Don't wait until you are emotionally and physically involved before you start logically evaluating the wisdom of such a union.

If you are in a relationship and it is heading toward marriage or if you are attracted to two people at the same time but don't know which one you should pursue, these 7 marriage compatibility categories below will help guide you in making the right decision.

While it is true that you need someone different to complement you, research findings are highly consistent that the most stable marriages are those involving two people with many similarities.

All similarities are assets but what similarities are most critical for marital happiness? These 7 categories will help you assess your marriage compatibility and provide great conversation in your courtship. Here are the areas which strengthen a relationship the most and contribute to the overall health of the marriage:

1. SPIRITUAL BELIEFS:

It is imperative that you are not unequally yoked. This phrase comes from **(2 Cor. 6:14)** which says, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*"

Being “equally yoked” is actually an agricultural term. It has to do with how two oxen which are placed side by side to produce straight plowing. The oxen need to be the same size so one does not pull more weight than the other. If you have ever rowed a boat with someone else you will know that if one person is stronger than the other, you can start going in circles. Oxen can do the same thing if they are unequal in size and strength. Their plowing will then be unproductive.

That is how relationships work. If you are not on the same page spiritually, you will find yourself going in circles. *“Know who your Master is and what your mission is before you select your mate. If your mate cannot support your objective spiritually you will have a mess.”*

2. VALUES, CONVICTIONS AND INTERESTS:

Sometimes both of you can be very strong Christians and yet have huge disagreements when it comes to how you live out your faith in daily life. This is why marrying someone from your particular believe may not guarantee that you are equally yoked.

For example, you may both be convicted that proper nutrition is important. But how far do you carry that when you are on a tight budget – do you buy cheap, low nutrition foods or cut costs somewhere else? When you are traveling – do you pack a lunch or eat out? When you are with relatives and they serve something you believe is not healthy – do you politely decline or compromise because it is a rare occasion? When you go to a party – do you indulge because “it’s part of the experience”? When someone offers your child something to eat, will you let them so you don't appear rude? There are dozens of values on which couples need to agree. This is a strong, fundamental issue that can cause great joy in a relationship if there is compatibility.

Here are some other marriage compatibility questions under this heading to explore with your partner.

- Do you agree upon the same standards in reading and music?
- Do you have the same vision for what we want home life to be?
- Do you have the same convictions on appropriate dress?
- Do you have the same preferences for recreation and amusement?
- Do you have the same expectations for social relations?

3. CHILDREN:

Do both of you love and desire to have children?

Today, children are usually viewed as a burden and hindrance to happiness.

However, when properly prepared for and trained, God can use your children to bless you with future happiness and support.

Spare the arguments and hurt feelings down the road by making sure you both are on the same page in regards to *when* you want children, *how many* children, how you are going to *respond if you cannot take in*, if you conceive *unexpectedly* and *what kind of birth control* (if any) both of you feel comfortable using. This marriage compatibility question is one couples like to put off but it is important to address before you are committed for life.

Is there agreement on ways of child discipline?

If parents are not in total agreement on how they will discipline their children, the children will become insecure and will begin to get what they want by pitting one parent against the other. Parents must agree on the standards they want their children to uphold and then design wise guidelines for them to follow in order to keep those standards. Both parents must be living examples of the behavior they want in their children and realize that discipline is not a periodic action but a growing relationship. Don't wait until you have children to discuss this marriage compatibility question. (***Eph. 6:1-4***).

4. FINANCES:

Both parties need to agree on the handling of their finances. Explore this area carefully before marriage.

Will you have full agreement on major purchases?

Marriage essentially involves a surrender of personal rights for the benefit of each other. Neither the husband nor the wife has the right to make major purchases without the full agreement of the other partner. Your money is our money (even if you feel like you earned it). You can no longer spend it however you please. Make a commitment to postpone spending until you both feel comfortable with the decision.

Do you want to save money for the future or spend money and enjoy life to the fullest now?

Do you want to take risks to multiply your savings, or would you rather invest slowly and regularly?

Are you generous with charities or do you want to save for your future only?

These financial questions do not just deal with the beliefs or standards a person has, but their character. Do you have self-control vs. self-indulgent? Are you

resourceful rather than wasteful? Are you thrifty instead of extravagant? Are you content instead of covetous? Will you show deference and meekness instead of rudeness and anger? Spending often tells you a lot about someone's character.

5. ROLE EXPECTATIONS:

When a man and a woman have compatible ideas about duties and responsibilities in a relationship in the house, there will be greater marital harmony. It is essential to talk about this marriage compatibility question to clarify expectations before marriage.

- ❖ Do you have a traditional view of the male/female roles in the home?
- ❖ Do you have a non-traditional view of marriage roles?
- ❖ Is your idea of an equal partnership in marriage equivalent to an equal division of all the household chores?
- ❖ Do you both agree upon your areas of jurisdiction?
- ❖ Do you agreed on areas of self-control in marriage?

Many young men have the mistaken idea that all their physical desires will be fulfilled in their marriage. If this is true, married men would not be tempted by other women. The fact is that God never designed marriage to satisfy abnormal or perverted drives. There is always a need for self-control. Self-control is a part of genuine love. Love *“suffereth long doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, beareth all things.” (1 Cor. 13:4-7).*

The statement, *“anything goes in marriage,”* is not only inaccurate but also very destructive. A husband must know when to abstain from physical relationships and how to express love and tenderness to his wife in non-physical ways. There are certain activities that may be approved in our society but are physically, mentally, and spiritually damaging to each marriage partner and their marriage relationship.

6. COMMUNICATION:

Are there plans that could bring disagreements between two of you?

There will be times when a husband and wife will have opposing viewpoints about important decisions or situations. These are times to earnestly seek the will of the Lord through a study of His word and times of prayer and fasting. If there is still disagreement, a wise and respected person of authority should be available for counsel. Normally, this could be the parents, the Elder or some other wise brethren or counselor. Discussing this marriage compatibility question and coming to an agreement on who to talk to, will make the hopelessness that conflict can sometimes bring much more bearable solution.

Verbal Intimacy – Both the husband and wife should crave this option. It is *“conversation where each person feels accepted no matter what he or she says reveals and explains feelings. Complete openness to another; absolute honesty that strips one of all pretension, posturing, and protection so that he can present himself naked and vulnerable to the other.”*

Couples who enjoy the same amount of conversation will be more likely to feel a high level of comfort in the relationship.

7. CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY:

Energy Level - Different people have different energy levels. This energy discrepancy may surface in almost any area of life. For example, when you have a day off, will one of you want to laze around the house while the other wants to go on a 10 mile bike ride? Is one of you going to hop out of bed whistling while the other wants to sleep in early hours? It's important that you and your partner have the same level of *“get-up-and-go.”*

Intelligence: If both individuals are similarly endowed intellectually, the marriage seems to have considerably less strain. Research indicates that when IQ scores are within the same general range, stability in marriage is more likely. It doesn't matter so much how smart the partners are, but it does matter how close they are intellectually. Individuals of similar intelligence are able to communicate and understand one another more fully.

Personal Habits - For a more satisfying union, consider the following habits and how compatible you are with your potential mate: punctuality, cleanliness, orderliness, dependability, responsibility, and weight management.

- a. Are you always on time for an appointment, or are you consistently late?
- b. Is your potential mate a meticulous housekeeper, or is that person messy?
- c. Do you enjoy rich and good food, or are you always on a diet?

To any of these, partners who are compactable will always come to terms without conflicts.

CONCLUSION:

Compatibility matters—especially when it comes to the big issues, such as faith, number of children desired, and the way in which the household would be run.

But how important is compatibility when it comes to relatively smaller issues? Maybe the question ought to be, what do you expect your daily married life looks like and how far are you willing to stray from the expectation if you find someone who doesn't share it? Will your family be involved in politics, community service

projects, and various church activities? Or will your family be involved in sports, dance activities, and scout troops?

Married people often say they have to compromise in order to make their marriage work. And they most certainly do. Good compromise is willing to ignore irritating habits and forgo a few lifestyle preferences while taking an interest in some of the things the other person is interested in. If both people in a marriage, practice good compromise, I suspect their marriage will flourish.

Bad compromise, on the other hand, gives up core values. If two people have a different set of core values, then it is best not to get married because eventually one person is going to have to cave in on one or more principles he or she considers sacred. That is never a good idea.

I hope these marriage compatibility questions have helped you further to identify in your relationship. May the Lord continue to guide you in your humble preparation for a compatible marriage partner? You can also use categories to evaluate your character and the character of your potential spouse if Compatibility can be sustained in the prospective matrimonial home.