

The Oracle of King Lemuel's Mother

"The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him..." (Proverbs 31:1)

King Lemuel's mom wanted her son to find someone that would help him, that he could trust, a person of quality and character. Few things in life bring more misery than being stuck in a terrible marriage. Things can stink at work, but home can be a refuge, if things are the way God wants them to be. The same is true with things down at the church house. Home can be a relief from tension, problems and a source of love and peace. That is, when home is as it ought to be. When it's not, there doesn't seem to be any relief, anywhere. It seems that some don't do well with the "picking" process. They marry trouble and have trouble the entire time the relationship lasts. Most often, that marriage ends ugly. Then the person turns around and picks another person who has just as much baggage, conflicts and struggles as the first one. This cycle repeats itself over and over.

One of the roles of parents is to help their children find quality people to date and marry. Quality, meaning the inside. Quality meaning character. Quality meaning someone who is responsible, thoughtful, honest, and spiritual. These discussions do not start when your teenager is heading out the door for a date. It must start long before that. The type of friends that they choose is a starting place. Later, instructions about the value of spiritual things is important. The man is supposed to be the spiritual leader in the home. Some guys are not leaders at all, let alone spiritually. Some do not have their spiritual radar even turned on. Such a guy may be kind, sweet and makes a person feel special, but where this will lead to, unless he becomes interested spiritually, is you getting the kids ready for church and he stays home in bed. That gets old fast.

There have been many who have been converted by their spouse. It started with showing some interests in God. The dating process ought to be an eye opener. You are seeing what the person is like. Far too many marry what they hope will happen instead of what is reality. They marry, hoping he'll stop his drinking. They marry, with the hope that he will start going to church services with her. He doesn't while they date. She hopes he will once they marry. Probably won't. Dating is showing the best behavior. What you see is what you get. Don't marry an expectation, a promise, or a hope. Marry what you see. If he won't go to church now, while dating, why will he once he's married? Red flags need to be flying about this.

But along before a person gets to that point, mom and dad should have been talking about the value of marrying a spiritual giant who will help you get to Heaven. That's one of the roles of the husband. The head doesn't mean he gets first dibs on the remote, nor that he gets to bark orders and the rest of the family runs to serve him. Head means direction. Our bodies do not do anything without our head telling it to. Head of the house is about direction, leadership and involvement. God is interested in the spiritual wellbeing of the family. God wants us to be living towards His glory and honor. God wants us involved in His kingdom and living according to His word. Home leadership means seeing that the family is moving that direction. Honesty, values, kindness, prayers, and moving toward righteous living is what this involves. Home leadership means taking a tough stance. Certain movies are off limits. Certain friends are off limits. Dad's job is to see that the girls are modest, even if they are in a wedding or going to the prom. The family sails under the flag

THE FATHER KNOWS BEST

of Christ. That's what the head of the house means. We certainly miss that too often. Dad has the veto on things because his concern is spiritual. Now, what happens when dad has zero spiritual interest? What happens when dad isn't walking with Christ? Will he care what shows, what friends, what clothing the family is involved in? He may spend family time glued to the TV, zoned out to what is happening in the family and the bulk of moral training falls to mom. There are many absentee fathers who happen to live in the same house with the rest of the family but they don't want to be bothered, they don't want any hassles, they don't want to have their shows interrupted. They are out of touch and so busy being selfish that the family is floundering with no one at the helm. I see such moms. They are tired and stretched thin. They want help from their husbands but can't get it. These men are not interested in character, moral training or God. The family is dying spiritually. Far too many times I have been told, "I love him, but..." Somehow they didn't see this in dating. Somehow they missed something. People change. Some who were not interested, become interested. Others, who seem to have it all together, fall off the map. Those things happen. But what about a person who in the dating process shows no interests or love for the Lord? Why continue with such a person? Their lack of concern spiritually, means that they will not care what God says about divorce. They will not step up to do what they ought to as a husband and leader. Such a relationship is inviting years of heartache.

This is why parents must be involved in helping the kids to see the value of who to pick for friends, who to date, and later, who to marry. For years, it was preached, marry a Christian. Many did. Many thought that was all that was necessary. They found out that the person they married wasn't interested in church, God or such things. They came, filled a pew and that was about it. They never got involved. They showed no interest. They were a Christian, but barely. Look at how a person worships. Do they love the Lord and talk about spiritual things outside the church building? Do they have a concept of what God wants? Are they interested in the congregation and the people? Do they volunteer to help out where they can? Those are signs. They are the beginning things to look for.

The red flags that ought to cause a person to slow down, reconsider and think things out, must happen before rings are purchased and a wedding is being planned. By then, the heart no longer listens to the head. They are emotionally engaged and nothing will turn them. Again, this is why parents must be on top of things and teaching their kids what to do long before the dating gets too serious.

Parenting isn't for cowards. It doesn't stop once the kids can dress themselves. Some of the hardest lessons involve finance, dating and marriage. It helps the kids to see a living example of what is right, good and wholesome at home. Kids that witness dysfunctional marriages see that as the example. They find dysfunctional people to marry and the dysfunctional patterns are repeated generation after generation.

The oracle of King Lemuel's mother was given to him long before he found his wife. She was guiding him. She was teaching him. It stuck. He remembered. He repeated this oracle from mom. This is what mom taught. Mom was wanting someone of quality for her son.

Time to get busy parents. Are your kids dating? Get talking. Are they too young to date? Great! Get talking. Remind them. Teach them. Show them. Help them. Answer their tough questions.

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What kind of person would you pick out for your child's life long mate? Work that direction.
That's your goal. -- **Roger Shouse**