

THE THREAT OF INCREASE IN UNMARRIED LADIES IN THE CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

Except otherwise commanded by god marriage is good and honourable if done in gods way. The bible says that every man should have his own wife and every woman should have her own husband.

This essay surveys the threat of increase in unmarried ladies in the church .in chapter one basic issues such as research question were posed.

Chapter two examined a broad biblical perspective of marriage, which clearly showed that marriage was instituted by god and as such is very important.

Chapter three spells out the overview of the research methodology employed, namely questionnaire and interviews.

Chapter four is the pivot of this research work .the research questions were answered through data analysis and findings were fully discussed.

Chapter five which is the conclusion clearly stated the fact that increase in unmarried ladies is actually a threat, to curb it everybody has his or her role to play- the church, the individual and the society at large.

Conclusion

Many marriages have failed because initially God's guidance was not sought for direction in the process of choosing the partner. Some homes came into existence because certain factors such as physical appearance, wealth and "achievements" in life, were used either by the man or woman as criteria that could determine a successful marriage.¹⁴

Research carried out revealed that 16:7% of the respondents believed that only God is responsible for their choice in marriage, while 11:7% of them believed only man is responsible 26:7% however said both God and man are responsible. That is to say 73.4% do not believe that both God and man are responsible for choice of marriage. This trend is dangerous and it should be noted that man has to seek God's face for direction when it comes to choosing a partner for marriage.

Another finding from the research is that more of the respondents find it difficult to marry a younger "suitor" if an older one than them is not forthcoming. Some also declined marrying somebody with lower educational qualification. These however are factors that have been hindering them from getting married. Factors such as these and others like blood groups genotype, should not be the number one thing in choosing a marriage partner. Even though they may be taken into consideration, God's will and not man's should be the ultimate. God should be seen as the focus of a successful marriage (or home), and not these physical factors.

¹⁴S. T. Akande, *Prevent Divorce in Your Marriage* (Ibadan: Baptist Press, 1980), 15.

It is lamentable as evident through the research that the older the respondents, the more difficult it was for them to respond to issues concerning broken relationships, sexual molestations by a suitor before, and or actual dates they started dating. Only a few of them were open to the issue of having experienced spiritual husband's sexual contact through dreams. Openness is however a way of getting one's problem half solved. Even though one may have passed through untold disappointments and painful experiences in past relationships, it is not enough for one to suffer in silence thinking that there are no trusted and reliable suitors around.

Some unmarried ladies remain like that because they suffer in silence by refusing to open up their problems first to God (in prayer) and to pastors, counselors and experienced couples they can confide in. Similarly, the spiritual issue of having sexual contact in the dream with a man (spiritual husband) is a matter if kept to oneself, can keep one to remain unmarried for a lifetime. Having sexual contact with a man in a dream is a covenant, if left unbroken, can make a lady remain unmarried and unfulfilled till death.¹⁵ This is also true with sexual molestation, especially if disvirgined by any man or suitor.

It has been found out that 62% had their relationship broken. Some of the reasons given include sexual harassment and molestation, womanizing, unfaithfulness, unresolved issues, jealousy on the part of the suitors. These and more are unhealed wounds debarring the ladies to get married. Some

¹⁵Interview with Adegboyega (Mrs.), Iyaganku, Ibadan: New Reservation Area Baptist Church, 23rd January, 2005.

because of these experiences, generalize that men are the same every where. This makes some prospective suitors uneasy around these unmarried ladies, finding it awkward in trying to fit them into social functions or exchange social visits with them.¹⁶

It has also been found that the church has little or no programmes for these groups of people in the church. Take for instance for Nigerian Baptist Convention that has programmes for different stages of life and groups in the Baptist Churches. The group called Lydia Auxiliary is an organization for unmarried ladies who are seventeen years of age until marriage. The younger girls between the ages 17-22, complain of incompatibility with the older ones between the ages 25 and upwards during Lydia meetings.¹⁷ These older ones are not therefore adequately cared for because, there are no designed programmes written to meet their inner cravings. In some churches as revealed, the available programmes have become outdated.

The kind of job is another aspect the research revealed. In fact, some of them find themselves in a church setting that has little or no suitors. There, they either tend to change their location to attend churches that have suitors that are almost or of the same level' with them, or change their denomination.¹⁸

¹⁶William Lyon. *A Pew for One Please* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), 6-7.

¹⁷Adegboyega, Interview

¹⁸Interview with Aror Ben Geene, Ogbomoso: First Baptist Church, Oke'lerin, 23rd January 2005.

Recommendations.

There is no doubt that unmarried ladies are increasing at an alarming rate in the church today. To reduce or proffer solutions to this, the following recommendations are given first, to the unmarried ladies and second, to the church.

Unmarried Ladies

Unmarried ladies should know that God created them and He has a programme for their lives. However, they need to give their lives to Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of their faith (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus Christ will then be their peace.

Secondly, they should know that they have a role to play in the choice of a marriage partner (suitor). This they can do by seeking God's face for direction and guidance.

Thirdly, they should seek and take God's purpose for their lives (in all facets) and marriage, as the ultimate. With this understanding other criteria will be secondary. They should not take such issues as age, blood group genotype, and physical appearance to the extreme.

Fourthly, every unmarried lady should humble herself to accept the man (suitor) God has destined for her to marry irrespective of age, educational qualification, profession, tribe or language. This is because, no one knows tomorrow except God. Also, God's thoughts are always good (Jer 29:11). And finally, the man (suitor) may be promoted by God in the nearest future, to become an enviable person.

