

Choosing God's Best: Wisdom for Lifelong Romance

By Dr. Don Raunikar

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Make a God Choice, Not Just a Good Choice Many Christian singles today are in pain. Wounded from past relationships, overwhelmed at being single longer than they expected, devastated at finding themselves single again. Eighteen- to sixty-year-olds will welcome the timely, biblically based approach Dr. Raunikar offers as he encourages them along the path to Choosing God's Best: healing from the past; learning how to avoid the pain of "counterfeit oneness" physically, emotionally, and spiritually; and much more. This attractive, repackaged edition delves into the real issues Christian singles face today and offers sound, proven advice for creating deeply satisfying godly relationships.

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Dr. Don Raunikar was the director of New Life Clinics in Houston, Texas, where he worked as a psychotherapist specializing in singles' issues. He led Christian singles' seminars nationwide and oversaw Lifehouse, a Christian home for young women experiencing crisis pregnancies. Dr. Raunikar passed away in 2004.

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INTRODUCTION

"*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*
JEREMIAH 29:11

If dating is so wonderful, why does it hurt so much? Whether you're sixteen and single or seventy and single again, dating is much more likely to lead you to anxiety and disappointment than to your marriage partner. If that's the case, why do so many people keep at it? The ten most common answers are:

1. they're lonesome;
2. they're impatient;
3. they want to find a marriage partner;
4. they want to have fun and feel good;
5. they want to learn how to relate to the opposite sex;
6. their parents, peers, and the world tell them they should;
7. they're determined to live life according to their own schedule, not God's;
8. they want to develop social skills and emotional health;
9. they want to have certain needs met until a marriage partner is found;
10. they believe it will prepare them for marriage.

Even the secular world has started to admit there must be something wrong with a dating system that creates so much pain in people's lives. Some of the best evidence of this is the astounding success of a book entitled The Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right. With some 900,000 copies in print, The Rules soared to No. 1 on the New York Times' How-To Bestseller List in 1996. This little paperback lists thirty-five oldfashioned courting tips that essentially advise women to play hard to get: don't call him, don't see him more than once or twice a week, don't open up too fast, don't live with him before marriage. Why is this book such a phenomenal success? "Because the rules work, and friends tell their friends," explains coauthor Ellen Fein, who has a Rules hotline, a monthly newsletter, twenty-five support groups nationwide, a movie deal, one or two seminars a week, and a personal consultation service.

But in fact, Fein and coauthor Sherrie Schneider were scooped by an even more popular book. God published His rules long before these two writers discovered "old-fashioned" courting tips. We might be even more surprised to learn that Fein and Schneider's motives for their rules are very similar to God's motives for His rules: protection and guidance. God isn't out to spoil our fun. (Remember, He created our desire for companionship in the first place.) His purpose is to keep us from the pain, heartbreak, and disappointment that come from trying to satisfy our needs out of selfishness instead of godliness.

Fein and Schneider developed their rules by trying to solve the relational hurts and dating problems of their single friends. “Ellen and I started telling our friends what we thought they were doing wrong,” Schneider says. Eventually they put their advice in print. God did that thousands of years ago and called it the Bible. We talk casually about “breaking” God’s commandments, but the truth is that when we sin it’s not the rules that are broken. It’s us.

Singles looking for an alternative to dating have usually already experienced the pain of a broken relationship firsthand, or know someone who has. Perhaps you’ve wanted to find your marriage partner according to God’s way, but failed. Or you’ve never fully understood what God’s way was. Or maybe you’re a new Christian and this is one part of your life you’ve just recently decided to put in God’s hands.

This book is for you. It will help you understand what plans God has for your life now. And it will help you see how your attitude toward today’s relationships will affect your marriage and family in the future.

COUNTERFEIT ONENESS, GENUINE PAIN

But why talk about married oneness in a book intended for singles? Easy answer. The lasting consequences of your beginning will affect your ending. Many singles allow themselves to develop a counterfeit oneness with another person only to find their hearts ripped apart when the dating relationship ends. They feel as if they are losing part of themselves. Without a lasting commitment between two people, the rare and wonderful feeling of oneness with another person is artificial, counterfeit, and temporary.

As a young boy growing up in St. Louis, I watched as construction workers built the enormous stainless steel Gateway Arch on the western bank of the Mississippi River. With its massive arms stretching 630 feet above ground to meet in the middle, the arch was intended to be an impressive symbol of the city’s reputation as the “Gateway to the West.”

Construction started on the ground at two separate bases 630 feet apart. Like children playing with building blocks, the workers placed one stainless steel section on top of another. As the arms of the arch grew longer, everyone had the same thought: Will they meet in the middle?

Engineers calculated that if the two base sections were only 1/64 inch out of line, the center sections would completely miss each other at the top. In other words, the final result would depend on how they started. I never forgot the lesson.

In my practice as a psychotherapist, many of the couples I counsel just aren’t meeting in the middle. Their marriages show the strain of not having spiritual, emotional, and physical oneness. Some marriage partners never experience the oneness God intended because their relationship was “out of line” with God’s will from the beginning.
Their marital problems actually began in their dating life and ended in divorce years later. Even in lasting marriages, the baggage left over from previous dating relationships can be frustrating and painful.

True oneness in a couple is like two sheets of plywood that are glued together: the bond is stronger than either of the pieces. If anyone or anything attempts to pull apart those two sheets, the result will be permanent damage to both pieces. Oneness in marriage was meant to be lasting, but counterfeit oneness will cause a dating couple to bond and break. Many singles are beginning to realize that the principles inherent in dating are not the same as God’s principles. When we follow God’s plan for relationships, we are healed and whole, not scarred and shattered.

THE COURTSHIP OPTION

Ned Ryun was a sixteen-year-old teenager who saw that the pain of dating was greater than the payoff. Ned's story appeared in a November 1995 Focus on the Family magazine article entitled "Courtship: The Comeback of the 90s."

In the article Ned's father, Jim Ryun—former Olympic champion and world record holder in the mile, and now a U.S. Congressman from Kansas—and his wife, Anne, describe how Ned made the decision not to date before the rest of the family embraced the concept of courtship. He and his twin brother, Drew, prayed to know God's will for their lives regarding friendships and dating. Ned was the first of the children to look at all the broken hearts and hurt feelings of the dating couples he knew and choose to practice biblically based courtship instead of play the dating game. His decision led the way for the rest of the family as each child in turn also chose to court rather than date.

That was six years ago. Since then, there have been no casual "tryouts" of dating partners as each of the four Ryun children waits for God to reveal His choice of a marriage partner. It has meant waiting for God to move, and believing that He will.

"That decision may seem hopelessly old-fashioned to you," says Anne in the article, "but our choice grew partly out of personal experience; as teenagers ourselves, we had encountered some of the drawbacks and dangers of dating. When I dated, my heart became emotionally tied to my steady, which created wounds of rejection that lasted for years. We wanted something better for our children."

"Dating waves good-bye at the door and says 'Be home by midnight,'" notes Jim, "but courtship includes time spent with the entire family. In our home, a young man interested in Heather or Catherine is apt to find himself playing basketball with Ned and Drew or helping out in the kitchen after dinner."

For singles like Ned Ryun, courtship encourages group activities and ministry opportunities that allow couples practical and productive time together without spending lengthy periods of one-on-one time alone in isolated locations. Courtship enables a couple to look beyond physical attraction and focus on things that are truly important.

"GOOD" CHOICE OR "GOD'S " CHOICE?

"It sounds good," Jenny said, "but I don't understand how we are supposed to find this person—the one God has for us." I had been trying to explain the courtship concept to Jenny. She was thirty-six years old, single and worried. Her biological clock was ticking. She was certain there was something she should be doing to maximize her opportunities—places she should go, things she should do, people she should see.

"You don't have to do anything but concentrate on being the right person—the person God wants you to be—instead of finding the right person," I said. "Godly marriages are made by first living godly lives. It's God's responsibility to reveal whether you will marry and whom you will marry. The arrangement is up to Him."

How simple it sounded—God the matchmaker!

But what if God is "late"? Jenny was thirty-six. How much longer would she have to wait? She wants to have a family. For Jenny the "what ifs" were endless. Would it comfort her to know hard facts like those of a recent study indicating the most stable

marriages of all occur at age twenty-eight and later? Would that make God any more on target or on time? God would not force Jenny to marry His choice, but He would not prevent her from marrying her choice.

If Jenny could see God as a matchmaker, she would discover a much deeper, more fundamental truth: God has a plan and purpose for our lives. But that plan is under constant attack, and the enemy isn't always dressed in black. As Oswald Chambers writes in *My Utmost for His Highest*, "It is the things that are right and noble and good from the natural standpoint that keep us back from God's best." The greatest enemy in choosing God's best is our own strong compulsion to choose what's good. But not every *good* choice is *God's* choice, and the difference can radically affect your future happiness.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Tillery:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book titled Choosing God's Best: Wisdom for Lifelong Romance? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have some other opinion?

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Connie Curtis:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make

someone to understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to your account is Choosing God's Best: Wisdom for Lifelong Romance this book consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The words styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Here is why this book appropriate all of you.

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