

SHOULD I PROCEED TO MARRY WHEN PARENTS DISAGREE?

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

Another problem that would-be couple sometimes faces is parental disapproval. Almost every person has a family and so the importance of parental approval in marriage cannot be overlooked. In this study we shall consider the importance of parental approval in marriage and how to handle the problem of parental disapproval to a marriage. Let us begin with some three cases from the Bible.

1. THE MARRIAGE OF ADAM AND EVE

In Genesis 2:22 Scripture says; "then the LORD God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man." Now the marriage of Adam and Eve is the first marriage in the history of humanity. By that time Adam and Eve were the only people in existence and therefore had no human parents. However, God demonstrated the importance of parental approval in marriage by acting as a Father to both Adam and Eve.

When God created Eve, He did not just leave her somewhere in the garden for Adam to go and take her, Scripture says; "He brought her to the man." So here we see God in the first marriage acting as a father to present His daughter to Adam as his wife as it's done in some cultures today, and this act of God demonstrates the importance of parental approval in marriage.

2. SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINE WOMAN

The second case study to look at is the marriage between Samson and the Philistine woman in Judges 14:1-20. Though Samson chose an unsuitable helper, he did it right to inform his parents about his intention to marry her.

The respond of his parents; “Isn’t there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?” showed that a Philistine woman was not suitable for Samson, but Samson insisted and said to his father; “Get her for me. She’s the right one for me.” In other words, she is the suitable helper for me.

Later, Samson married the woman, but she betrayed him even at the beginning of their marriage and consequently Samson’s wife was given to his ‘best man’ and the marriage collapsed. If Samson had listened to his parents, he wouldn’t have suffered all that.

3. ISAAC AND REBEKAH

The third case study to consider is the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, very fascinating. Now in Genesis 24 Abraham sent his chief servant to go and get a wife for his son Isaac. This servant on reaching the place prayed to God and before he had finished praying God answered him. God answered his prayer and gave him the signs he requested. The servant therefore found Rebekah as the answer to his prayer.

However, the servant needed approval from Rebekah’s parents and so went to her family. He narrated his journey and how he had found Rebekah as the answer to his prayers, after which he asked; "Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn. Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed"" (Gen 24:49-51).

So we see the family of Rebekah approved the marriage. The servant didn't say because God had answered his prayers he must take Rebekah by force. Instead, he narrated how God revealed Rebekah to him and asked their response whether they will approve the marriage or not. Glory be to God they approved it saying; "Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

Now, could the servant have married Rebekah by force to Isaac if the family had disapproved it? Certainly not. He couldn't have married her by force, but because it was the will of God the family could say nothing than to approve it.

WHAT TO DO

Having looked at the importance of parental approval in marriage, let us now consider some two things a person can do when confronted with parental disapproval in marriage.

PRAY AND TRUST GOD

A Person who can stand before God in prayers can stand before every challenge. The first thing to do as a Christian confronted with such a challenge is to pray about it and trust God. Don't use emotional blackmail on your parents just to get them to approve the marriage. And even if you can't talk to your parents about your partner, talk to God about your parents, if the marriage is the will of God, then I believe through prayers God will work in both parents to approve it. For all hearts are in God's hands.

TALK AND LISTEN TO YOUR PARENTS

Have a sincere conversation with your parents about why they don't want to approve the marriage. Be calm and respectfully allow them to speak out their opinions. It may turn out that they don't really know your partner or maybe just have a misconception. If you can get to the bottom of the problem, you may be able to assure them that your partner will make a good spouse.

It may also happen that your parents have a legitimate opinion. Maybe your partner has cheated on you in the past or has been too controlling or demanding. In such cases you realize that their disapproval is valid and therefore you should consider them seriously. Except you are very sure your partner has changed, then you may talk to them with a Pastor, marriage counselor, family member or a trusted friend to get their approval.

Indeed it's sad when you think you have found the suitable partner and your parents disapprove the marriage, but God sometimes save us from unhealthy relationships and marriages through our parents. It is therefore advisable not to proceed to marry when parents disapprove it, except in some special cases, like when a parent disapproving has a mental illness and any other special cases. Otherwise, it will be good to accept the opinions of your parents, because their advice comes from a heart of love and protection.