



Family Christian Center

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CLASS NAME: Prep for Marriage – Ring Rights | Lesson 2: Ring Rights: Alarm Bells Ringing!

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“Alarm Bells Ringing!”

Discerning the Red Flags in Dating Leading to Marriage

There are **4 stages** of emotions within relationships leading to marriage. *We have coined the four stages as the following, “**The Honeymoon Stage, The Reality Stage, The Power Struggle Stage** and the **Into-Me-See Stage**”. Keep in mind, most divorces occur between the Reality & Power Struggle stage. Today’s lesson will focus on the **Honeymoon and Reality Stage** leading to marital relationships:*

- **The Honeymoon Stage** – *A dopamine effect of physical attraction, where partners present their best selves. Their differences are minimized, overlooked and in some instances not noticed at all. Little discovery often occurs during the honeymoon stage, and all aspects of conflict are easily accepted over eye-pleasing physical qualities led by:*
 - ✓ *Sexual attraction*
 - ✓ *Social-status perception*
 - ✓ *Void-fillers*
 - ✓ *Biological clock Fears.*

We also call this phase “**the see no evil**” phase which means to purposely ignore bad behavior by pretending not to see it or hear it. This is the negative effect of the honeymoon phase, meaning by recognizing faults of your love interest, it shatters the illusion of **perfect harmony**, that one mate needs to believe, to keep a constant yet false sense of happiness. The “look” of love is more important than having it. Causing those in the negative phase of the **Honeymoon Stage** to have a superficial relationship that quickly fades as soon as appearances, finances, or social status change in life.

If Looks Could Kill!

The Honeymoon Stage: "See No Evil"

Judges 14:1-4

Amplified Bible

Samson's Marriage

14 Samson went down to Timnah and at Timnah he saw a woman, one of the daughters of the Philistines. ² So he went back and told his father and his mother, **"I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines; now get her for me as a wife."** ³ But his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take **a wife from the uncircumcised (pagan) Philistines?**" And Samson said to his father, **"Get her for me, because she ^{is} looks pleasing to me."**

⁴ His father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD, and that He was seeking an occasion [to take action] against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

In the book of Judges 14:1-3, Samson was given immeasurable strength and power from God and part of his covenant was to be completely devoted to God. He was also a judge and was sent to break-up the 40-year rule of Israel's strongest enemy the Philistines (modern day Palestine). Prior to his birth Sampson was ordained to be a Nazirite for life. **Meaning:**

"...Before he was born, his mother was told by a messenger from God that she was to dedicate the child to God as a Nazirite for life. This meant that Samson was not to drink wine, touch anything dead, or cut his hair. These restrictions were to be a constant reminder to him and to others that he was totally dedicated to the service of God ([Numbers 6:1-21](#))." **Bridgeway Bible Commentary**

- **What characteristics of the Honeymoon Phase did Samson exhibit when choosing his wife from Timnah of the Philistines?**
- **Why did Samson's parents find issue with Samson marrying from the uncircumcised Philistines? How would this contradict Samson's dedication to God, as a Nazirite?**

Equal Rights*

Ring Right #1 – The Right to Equal Rights in Marriage!

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

New International Version

Warning Against Idolatry

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial^[a]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said:

“I will live with them
and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my people.”^[b]

17 Therefore,

**“Come out from them
and be separate,
says the Lord.**

Touch no unclean thing,

and I will receive you.”^[c]

18 And,

“I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.”^[d]

Equally Yoked Mandate*

In the Bible, the apostle Paul explained being unequally yoked to unbelievers of Christ as having two oxen attached to a yoke (a wooden crosspiece attached to two animals) as an uneven match. The Amplified Bible refers to this as making mismatched alliances with unbelievers. Marriage is an ultimate alliance. Furthermore, to be linked to someone that does not match your marital weight causes not only resentment, but it drains the resources of the stronger mate while trying to pull the weight of a marriage. It's too large of a burden to bear.

Apostle Paul's Example

Picture this. Using Paul's example, one ox is tall, and the other is small. Better yet, imagine that one ox is stronger, and the other is weaker. **Both are assigned an equal task to pull their own weight on the unbridled path to marriage.** Do you really believe that the weaker ox is doing its fair share? The answer is no! The reason is simple: the weaker ox is incapable of completing the task based on its own limited resources. It literally does not have the goods needed to complete the task at hand. Additionally, it benefits from this arrangement and can continue looking as if it's working hard when really, it's only along for the ride. The burden is laid solely on the stronger ox, who is clearly doing all the work and reaping none of the reward.

Equal Carat-er (The Weight of the Diamond)

Now imagine a lifelong commitment called marriage—try pulling all the weight in that relationship! If you want to cripple faith in a steadfast believer, watch the aftereffect of an unequally yoked union. It's absolutely devastating to watch. According to *Strong's Concordance Dictionary*, unequally yoked is derived from the root word heterozygous. This is a compound of: **héteros**, "another of a different kind" and **zygós**, "a yoke, joining two to a single plow" – properly, different kinds of people joined together but unevenly matched; hence "unequally yoked" (not aptly joined).

Take it a step further and recognize that this union is not only mismatched, but it's attaching or binding yourself to someone in marriage who is running contrary to faith. Why start your marriage off on the wrong foot? Imagine two individuals running in two different directions at a high rate of speed while tethered together. What would the aftereffect be? Both people would reach the end of their rope and come crashing back into one another, neither accomplishing anything. One would be too tired to fight and the other too stubborn to win.

- **Is this what you want for your marriage?**
- **Did you know dating and/or marrying an unbeliever is disobedience?**

A Coal versus A Diamond

Uniting ourselves to people who do not love, follow, or submit to Christ is direct disobedience. God did not put this mandate to restrict you from love but as a protection from pain and the continuous discord that has led many to divorce. It is not because unbelievers aren't good enough, or worthy of our love, or that they are somehow inherently incapable of being a good marriage partner. In fact, they are often more loveable than believers! God is calling us to love *Him* more than we love our own desire for a relationship. No matter, how beautiful or handsome he or she is, you disagree on the most important things in life: **The love of the one and only true God.**

Create A Diamond Standard

If you marry someone whose core beliefs are in complete opposition from your own, then expect toxic conflict. The Bible says it best: ***Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? (Amos 3:3 NKJV)***. Over the years, many new couples have misconstrued this Scripture reference, often believing that they must be in complete agreement with one another to be happily married. No, in fact, it doesn't mean absolute agreement. It simply means, for you and your mate, that if you are walking together, then you must have agreed to take the same path. This implies you agree to walk in the same direction but not in the same way.

So, it's fair to say that you have agreed to run the same marriage race by the obvious fact you are running it together. We encourage you to adjust—consider the earlier metaphor of starting off on the wrong foot. We urge you to take an even deeper look. Marrying an unbeliever is more like having one broken right foot in the race for your life.

Realize that throughout your "marriage race," a broken right foot is a painful, cumbersome burden. Even more, the longer you attempt to stand upright injured, the less likely it is that right foot will be able to heal properly. Over time, it will become infected and will not only hold you back but will contaminate your entire bloodstream. We encourage you to be wise and recognize that some relationships, no matter how promising they appear to be, will never work—believers and nonbelievers are an unhealthy mix.

James 3:11-12

New International Version

¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

A Cubic Zirconia Disguised as a Diamond

Well, you have heard of the adage, “**A wolf in sheep’s clothing**”, right? What about a Cubic Zirconia posing as a Diamond? It happens every day. Plus, there’s more to this. Do not believe that just because your mate sparkles that he or she will shine. In fact, just because your spouse identifies as a Christian, does not mean that you are **automatically** equally yoked. The appearance of being equally yoked is by far the most dangerous illusion affecting modern couples and marriages today. The appearance or the falsehood of legitimacy can place a new couple—a marriage—faced with the weight of the world on their shoulders—left standing on thin ice.

For example, the belief that just because both you and your mate attend church services and have an understanding there is a God, somehow this means you are equally yoked. This a common mistaken understanding in new relationships. In fact, attending church services and stating the obvious fact that there is a God doesn’t mean you believe in God. It simply means you know the address to the church, and you know that God resides there, but God does not reside in you.

Knowing that you can find the Lord in church but never having a relationship with the Lord of that church proves you are only an attender, not a member of the body of Christ. Sentiments of faith without active service in the body of Christ—including “**I believe there is God**” or “**God knows my heart**”—shows a **lukewarm** relationship with Christ. To be clear, understanding there is a God doesn’t prove spiritual maturity, nor does it provide a clearly defined individual relationship with Christ. It doesn’t mean that God is known to you, and most importantly, it doesn’t mean you are known to God.

- **In what ways, has your significant other/spouse (past or present) established their covenant with the Lord to you?**
- **Are you under the authority of a Pastor or a Faith Leader for the body of Christ (church)?**
- **If applicable, is your mate/spouse an active contributor to the House of God?**
- **Does your Faith Leader know you; know of your service or that of your mate/spouse? In what ministry? In what capacity?**
- **Has previous, “church hurt” limited your desire to serve in the house of God? Is your hurt greater than your love for God?**

For example, in the book of John, the Lord explains the call of Christianity to a believer:

John 10:14 New King James Version

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

A Diamond...Cut!

Judges 14:12-17 Amplified Bible

Samson's Riddle

¹² Then Samson said to them, "Let me now ask you a riddle; if you can tell me what it is within the seven days of the feast, and solve it, then I will give you thirty linen tunics (undergarments) and thirty changes of [outer] clothing. ¹³ But if you are unable to tell me [the answer], then you shall give me thirty linen tunics (undergarments) and thirty changes of [outer] clothing." And they said to him, "Ask your riddle, so that we may hear it." ¹⁴ So he said to them,

**"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."**

And they could not solve the riddle in three days.

¹⁵ Then on the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Persuade your husband to tell us [through you] the [answer to the] riddle, or we will burn you and your father's household with fire. Have you invited us to make us poor? Is this not *true*?" ¹⁶ **So Samson's wife wept before him and said, "You only hate me, you do not love me; you have asked my countrymen a riddle, and have not told [the answer] to me."** And he said to her, "Listen, I have not told my father or my mother [either], so [why] should I tell you?" ¹⁷ However Samson's wife wept before him seven days while their [wedding] feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her because she pressed him so hard. **Then she told the [answer to the] riddle to her countrymen.**

The Reality Stage

Samson received a reality check, the moment he learned his own wife betrayed him and embarrassed him for and in front of her own people. To be deceived by a spouse, is a deeper cut than one can imagine. The more witnesses—the deeper the cut! In anger, after this moment, Samson, kills 30 men of Ashkelon and gives their garments to the men who correctly answered his riddle (**Judg 14:18–19**). He then leaves his wife and returns to his father's house; his wife is given to Samson's friend while he is away (**Judg 14:19–20**). After some time away, Samson returns to see his wife after his anger subsides. Then another betrayal is discovered as he learns his wife has been given to another man...his

friend! (**Judg 15:1**), Samson burns the fields of the Philistines as retribution for losing his wife to another man. (**Judg 15:2–5**). In retaliation, the Philistines burn Samson's wife and her father (**Judg 15:6**). She is not mentioned again in the biblical text. Samson is often at the other end of betrayal due to his lack of discernment.

- **The Reality Stage:** *Were partners become aware of differences not noticed previously and work to develop strategies for dealing with them. Couples learn about give and take, negotiation and accommodation. But after the stark face to face reality that their fantasies of perfection are shattered, the aftereffects start to take a toll on the marriage. Faults are seen as more egregious, and forgiveness is less accepted. The items that were once considered cute or alluring are downright annoying or infuriating.*
- ✓ ***Special note:** *Often during the **Reality Stage**, couples begin to seek God, counseling, and pastoral care about their missed opportunities to uncover the real aspects about their mate. Some draw nearer to God while others repel God. In some instances, they begin to blame God for their poor choices.*

How Many Times Does a Diamond Have to Be Cut?

Red Flag #1: The Delilah Spirit

Judges 16:4-9 Amplified Bible

⁴ After this he fell in love with a [Philistine] woman [living] in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵ So the [five] lords (governors) of the Philistines came to her and said to her, "**Persuade him, and see where his great strength lies and [find out] how we may overpower him so that we may bind him to subdue him.** And each of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver." ⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "**Please tell me where your great strength lies and with what you may be bound and subdued.**" ⁷ Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh cords (Ⓜtendons) that have not been dried, then I will be weak and be like any [other] man." ⁸ Then the Philistine lords brought her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. ⁹ **Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner room.** And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he broke the cords as a Ⓜstring of tow breaks when it touches fire. So [the secret of] his strength was not discovered.

Red Flag #2: "Fool Me Once Shame on You...Fool Me Twice Shame on Me"

Judges 16:10-12 Amplified Bible

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "See now, you have mocked me and told me lies; now please tell me [truthfully] how you may be bound." ¹¹ He said to her, "If they bind me tightly with new ropes that have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any [other] man." ¹² So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And the men lying in ambush were in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like [sewing] thread.

Red Flag #3: Is 3 Times Really a Charm?

Judges 16:13-14 Amplified Bible

¹³ Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies; tell me [truthfully] with what you may be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven braids of my hair with the web ^[a][and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man." ¹⁴ So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks (braids) of his hair and wove them into the web]. And she fastened it with the pin [of the loom] and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the [weaver's] loom and the web.

A Precision Cut

Delilah Steals Samson Treasure

Judges 16:15-22

Amplified Bible

Delilah Extracts His Secret

¹⁵ Then she said to him, "**How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times and have not told me where your great strength lies.**" ¹⁶ When she pressured him day after day with her words and pleaded with him, he was annoyed to death. ¹⁷ Then [finally] he told her everything that was in his heart and said to her, "A razor has never been used on

my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any [other] man."

18 Then Delilah realized that he had told her everything in his heart, so she sent and called for the Philistine lords, saying, **"Come up this once, because he has told me everything in his heart."** Then the Philistine lords came up to her and brought the money [they had promised] in their hands. **19 She made Samson sleep on her knees, and she called a man and had him shave off the seven braids of his head. Then she began to abuse Samson, and his strength left him.** **20** She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as I have time after time and shake myself free." For Samson did not know that the LORD had departed from him. **21** Then the Philistines seized him and **gouged out his eyes**; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with [two] bronze chains; and he was *forced to be* a grinder [of grain into flour at the mill] in the prison. **22** But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved off.

- **How were Samson's wife from Timnah and Delilah Similar?**
- **How many times in total was Samson betrayed?**
- **Why wasn't Samson alarmed by Delilah's many questions regarding the source of his strength?**
- **How many questions did Samson ask of Delilah to discern her true intentions?**
- **In what ways, did Samson not learn from his first wife, that led him not to discern Delilah's manipulation and final betrayal?**

A Dead Ringer...

When we don't learn from a painful relationship and especially after a divorce, we leave an opportunity to making the same mistake again. In fact, a second chance of love is the perfect ending to a fairytale. Second chances do indeed occur successfully with the love of God present, professional therapy and clear actions of change. However, if you do not take responsibility for your own actions, are not an advocate for your mental health and that of your new spouse and most importantly, take the appropriate time to heal than you are more likely to repeat the same mistake at a more damaging level than the first.

Keep in mind, a soul-tie has been created between you and the person you were intimate with or previously married to. One that is intended never to be broken. If you don't forgive yourself assuming you were the only one to blame your 2nd marriage can be a dead ringer of your 1st marriage. In fact, second marriages have an even higher divorce rate: **60%** of second marriages end in divorce, and 73% of all third marriages also end in divorce. So, the odds are against you...but it doesn't have to be. (Luke 18:27) The Bible states, ***“Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God”.*** That is why we need God more than ever! Allow God to direct you to wise counsel, to heal you from the inside out and watch a better love evolve far exceeding your first!

The key is not leaning into the **“familiar”**. We encourage you not to follow a **“familiar”** pattern in dating and especially in your marriage. In fact, familiar spirits can travel from between prior sexual partners right into the bed of your marriage. If a relationship consistently tempts you into sin, or the person on the other end of the relationship pressures you to do things that dishonor the Lord, it's unhealthy. This tends to be most common in dating relationships, where one person fears the other person will leave them if they don't conform or give in. Thus, creating the same cycle of toxicity and leaving way for the unclean spirits to come back larger and stronger than ever before.

Matthew 12:43-45 Amplified Bible

43 “Now when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it roams through waterless (dry, arid) places in search of rest, but it does not find it. 44 Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it arrives, it finds the place unoccupied, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and make their home there. And the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first. So will it also be with this wicked generation.”

Red Flags Before & After Marriage*

“When we're excited about a relationship, it's easy to overlook the red flags that at least need to be explored. We want to be married; this special person makes us feel wonderful (at least most of the time). We know some things about this person, but we sometimes fill in the gaps with what we want him or her to be like. Yet we often don't fill in the gaps with what we want him or her to be like. Yet we often don't fill them in accurately.”

Red Flags in a Relationship | Author Glen Lutchens

