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THE SOULMATE MENTALITY

Many people have been on the quest to find “the one.” Someone of a preferred height, a preferred race, a preferred eye color, a preferred sense of style, a preferred sense of humor, a preferred career, a preferred income, and so on. The hope behind all of these qualities is that they will eventually find their soul mate; the one person that is made for them—who is mostly or completely compatible with them. As ideal as this sounds, this “soulmate mentality” can be deceitful. It turns love into what can I get? What do you offer me?

Selfishness is an unfortunate condition of human nature. We think about ourselves first, and it is difficult for us to consistently have the mindset of selflessness. That is why God is the best model for love. 1 Corinthians 13 does a great job of summing up the love He calls us to have:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV).

Love is not easy. We have to work to love and accept others, especially those who wrong us. Nevertheless, God does that for us. He loves you—no matter who you are, whether you believe in Him or not—no matter how many good or bad things you do. So, it makes sense to turn to God when considering how to love others, because He does it best. .

Looking towards a romantic relationship to fix or satisfy you will set you up for disappointment. People are imperfect, and we fail each other all the time. Idealizing a relationship or marriage lifts another human to a place where you expect him or her to do things humans simply cannot do. People cannot give you permanent happiness, take away your insecurities, or meet your deepest needs.

Do not get me wrong: it is essential to build a relationship with someone who adds value to your life. Allow God to show you which values are the most vital. When you refocus and desire a Christ-centered relationship, all other preferences pale in comparison. The reason why you would consider other preferences is that they do something for you. Again, it is not a bad thing to admire someone who has likeable qualities, but these things cannot be your focus. You might be blinded to evaluating your significant other’s relationship with Christ, his or her shortcomings, or your shortcomings.

Focusing on what someone else can do for you causes you to ignore what you contribute to the relationship. The “soulmate mentality” suggests: “I am fine the way I am. I don’t need to change.” However, we are imperfect and make decisions that help us or hinder us. This means that the “right” person can become the “wrong” person for someone. Even the “wrong” person can become the “right” person. For example, someone who does not have a personal relationship with Christ is not romantically compatible with a Christian, but if he or she becomes born again and lives for God, a desire will develop for someone who does the same.

A soul mate, although an endearing term to describe someone you admire, is misleading. People who love each other must learn to honor each other. If you choose to marry someone, you must learn to become that “right” person for your spouse. You can be compatible with countless people, but with God’s guidance, you can make the most sensible choice. We are drawn to people, and we have desires. The point is that many people throw away relationships and push people away, because of miniscule things that indicate that a person was not “the one.” Little things that were potentially meaningless. It is important to have values and deal-breakers. A significant other should complement the positive qualities you have and encourage you to abandon the negative ones. However, if your deal-breaker comes down to someone not sharing your favorite sports team, maybe it is time to reconsider your standards. Have an open mind and learn to love people. Learn to respect people who are different from you. Learn interesting things about people who do not seem interesting to you. Do not let insignificant preferences blind you. You might surprise yourself with the things you discover.

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