

# The Folly of Drifting Into Marriage

by J.R. Miller

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*Marriage should not be entered into lightly or without careful consideration, but rather with deliberate preparation and a thoughtful evaluation of one's partner and oneself.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 18:22, Ephesians 5:25

**Topics:** "Marriage Preparation", "Responsibilities in Marriage"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the dangers of drifting into marriage without serious consideration, highlighting that many young people enter this significant commitment without understanding its responsibilities and implications. He argues that unlike other life decisions, marriage should not be approached lightly or as a game of chance, but rather with thoughtful preparation and guidance. Miller calls for parents to educate their children about the true nature of marriage, encouraging young men and women to reflect on their readiness and compatibility before making such a profound commitment. He stresses the importance of mutual respect, selflessness, and the ability to provide for one another in a marriage. Ultimately, he warns that drifting into marriage can lead to unforeseen hardships and regrets, urging young people to be deliberate in their choices.

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## Transcript

Among the other drifts of life, many young people merely drift into marriage. The childhood friendships, or the casual associations of youth, are nourished until at length the potent spell of love falls upon the young man and maiden, and by and by there is a wedding. Or, the beginning of the attachment may be a great deal more sudden -- "love at first sight!" a speedy engagement, a marriage in a little while -- a marriage drifted into, or whirled into, as when a boat is swept down the wild rapids.

The matter of time, longer or shorter, makes little difference -- in any case, the marriage is drifted into. There was no serious thought about the meaning of the step and what it involved; no weighing of the responsibilities to be assumed; no questioning as to whether the parties were ready for the serious work before them; no thoughtful study of the way to make the love dreams come true. Yet of all things in life, marriage surely is one of the very last that should ever be drifted into. If there is any step for the taking of which young people ought to make deliberate preparation -- this is the step.

If a young man discovers that he has made a mistake in his business, trade, or profession -- he can change and take something else, without serious detriment to his future. If a young woman buys a new dress and then concludes that she does not like it -- she can discard it, hang it away in the storeroom and

get another. If one takes a position, and afterward finds that the place is not satisfactory, nor the work congenial -- it is easy to seek another place. But marriage is "for better, for worse, until death us do part." Therefore it should not be entered into unadvisedly or lightly -- but reverently, discreetly, in the fear of God, and after most serious thought. It never should be drifted into.

Yet it would seem that for nearly every other step in life, there is more deliberation. For nearly all other duties there is instruction, training. Why should there not be for marriage? Why should not mothers talk thoughtfully to their daughters of the meaning of marriage, of the principles which should guide them in entering the relation, and of the duties which will be theirs when they become wives? Why should not fathers have quiet talks with their sons on the subject, telling them what a husband's duties are, how he must forget himself and live for the happiness of the woman he chooses for his wife, giving up his own selfish ways and unlearning habits he has formed, which prove hindrances to the blending which alone makes wholesome marriage?

Such wise instruction, given in youth, would certainly lead to more thoughtfulness on the subject -- and thoughtfulness would prevent many inconsiderate marriages. It is often said that "marriage is a lottery," as if it were necessarily a sort of game of chance.

But there need not be such uncertainty about its outcome, if only young people would give serious attention to the subject before entering into it.

For example, the young man should consider whether the young woman he is interested in is fitted to be his wife. Perhaps it will be necessary for him to live economically, at least for a time. Has this girl had the training which will make her a good poor man's wife? Will she be able so to manage her household affairs, that they can live on the small income he will have? Then will she be willing to live in a plain way, befitting their circumstances, and will she be contented in doing so?

Then, has she the other abilities and qualifications that will make her the dearest woman in the world to him? Are her attractions such as will wear? There is a vast deal more required to make a woman interesting to a man, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, for forty years or more -- than to make her pleasing or winning for an evening, two or three times a week, for a few months.

Then a young man's questioning should not be all on the side of the girl's ability to make him happy, and to be a good, faithful, helpful wife. He ought to be quite as severe regarding himself -- whether he is the man to make this woman the husband she needs, whether he can make her happy, and whether he is able to devote himself to the holy task. This should be a really serious question with every young man who asks a girl to be his wife. It means that he must make himself worthy of her in every way; that he must be ready to give up his own preferences in many matters, and live for her.

Then while he makes sure that the girl he is thinking of so warmly, will be ready sweetly to share a plain home and close economy with him as his wife -- he must also make sure that he is ready and that he will be able to provide for her in a way that will not lay too heavy a burden of sacrifice upon her. Too many young men never give serious thought to this phase of the marriage problem. The result is that many a noble girl, willing to share privation and close economies with the man she loves, is taken out of a home of comfort -- to endure pinching experiences, and even wretched poverty -- because the man who promised to keep, comfort, and cherish her, lacks either the capacity or the energy to provide a comfortable home for her.

Whatever other drifting you do, dear young people, don't drift into marriage!! Know what you are doing!

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