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The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Can You Wait Too Long to Get Married?

***By
Norman Bales***

Most responsible professionals in the field of marriage and family therapy would agree that it is inadvisable for people to marry in their teens. We rarely stop to think that it hasn't been long since teenage marriages were much more common than they are today. I can remember when high school girls hoped to get a "ring before spring." Many of my college classmates (both males and females) were married long before they received their degrees. Today such liaisons are frowned upon and with good reason. However, the replacement may not always be that positive.

Norvall D. Glen is a professor of sociology and American studies at the University of Texas. He recently presented a paper at the meeting of the American Sociology Association in San Francisco. He gave the results of a study from five data sets, which were designed to measure how well people fare when they first marry at an older

age as compared with those who marry young. His conclusions are rather startling. He noted that those who marry at a later age (past their mid-twenties), are more likely to stay married than those who marry between the ages of 22 and 25. That probably doesn't surprise you, but here's the fly in the ointment. "...the later marriages fare very well in survival but rather poorly in quality." His research would suggest that chances for marriage satisfaction are not improved if couples put it off beyond a certain age. You can get a full copy of his paper by sending an e-mail request to ndglenn@austin.utexas.edu

Mark Regnerus is also a sociology professor at the same university. He's been taking a lot of heat because he has suggested that Christians ought to consider encouraging earlier marriage. When he wrote an article for the Washington Post, many readers thought he was not only out of touch with today's values, but wrote him off as some kind of lunatic-fringe sexist, who is totally out of touch with twenty-first century values.

In reality, Regnerus makes a strong case for not postponing marriage too long. He's highly critical of contemporary Christians who emphasize sexual ab-

stinence, even though he believes that sex should be postponed until marriage. Unfortunately, we have not been highly successful in convincing our young people that Paul's advice is good in 1 Corinthians 7:1-4, when he urged Christians to marry in order to avoid fornication (1 Corinthians 7:1-4).

Regenerus says that 90 per cent of American adults experience sexual intercourse prior to marriage, then he shocks his readers when he says, "In a nationally representative study of young adults, just under 80 per cent of unmarried, church-going, conservative Protestants, who are currently dating someone, are having sex of some sort."

If he's right that means a large number of our younger people aren't agreeing with us when we say that sex needs to be deferred until marriage. But he doesn't stop there. He believes the church has been so preoccupied with promoting abstinence that it has failed to speak positively, practically, and effectively about marriage. He points to a number of factors that complicate the problem. For example, we tell our young people that they need to marry those who share their spiritual perspectives, but we ignore the fact that in most churches there

are about three single women for every two single men. What's going to happen to that rather large group of women, who can't find a marriageable male with the same perspective? The problem is further exacerbated by the tendency of today's young men to attempt to maintain an adolescent mindset long after their teens – a phenomenon that has even been observed in the work place. Many Christian young women are forced to wait for the right person, who may not show up for years or they will have to settle for remaining single. It also helps to explain why women often marry men who are several years their senior.

I'm not advocating marriage among immature people. All the studies indicate that for the most part marriages formed among teenagers is a recipe for disaster, but we should not think that people have a better chance for marriage success if they wait until they are 35 to get married. There are many other issues that we don't have space to discuss.

—Via **All About Families**

The following article was written by Scott Bond, of Martin, TN following the birth of his first child. I think Scott has a great point to share with all of us and displays amazing insight from a young father. I commend his article for your consideration—L.C.

Marbles Matter

Claire is three days old (She's beautiful, by the way). And this weekend will be our very first one together. Roughly 52 weekends will pass us each calendar year. And after 18 years, we will have spent 936 Saturdays together. I'm going to the store. I am buying a big jar and 936 marbles. Every Saturday of Claire's growing up years, Kaci and I will throw away one marble to remind us that time is running out. And even though we may have hundreds left, we'll remember another week of our lives is gone forever.

Let me put it in perspective...

If you have a **5-year old**, you have **675** marbles left.

If you have an **11-year-old**, you have **365** marbles left.

If you have a **15-year old**, you have **150** marbles left.

And if you have a **high school senior**, you're down to **50** marbles or less.

Right now, I'm holding a marble in my hand... It's this Saturday's marble. It holds a lot of potential. A lot of promise. And we parents hold these precious moments in our hand. We decide what we'll do with them, how we'll use them and with whom we'll spend them. *"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time..."* (Ephesians 5:16)

What are we doing with opportunities we have to connect with our children, to demonstrate love, show encouragement, teach them about life, and point

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them to an eternal Father?

Do a little math. Count your marbles left with your child. And then make this "marble" a good one. Take the lesson to heart. In today's world, we need reminders that each day—and each moment—is precious.

It really all boils down to a jar full of marbles. I'll set this jar on my desk and remind myself that *marbles* really do *matter*.

Already Losing My
Marbles,
Scott Bond
Martin, TN

Walking with Grandpa

I like to walk with Grandpa;
His steps are short like mine.
He doesn't always say, "Now
Hurry up!"
He always takes his time.

I like to walk with Grandpa;
His eyes see things mine do;
Wee pebbles bright, a funny
cloud,
Half hidden drops of dew.

Most people have to hurry;
They just don't stop and see.
I'm glad that God made
grandpas
Unrushed and young like me!

—Via **The Wisdom Box**
by Jack Exum