Prov. 18:22: He who finds a wife finds a good thing & obtains favor from the LORD.

Intro: This is part two of a two part sermon series on this verse. In part one, we focused on the goodness of finding a wife & how it is favor from the LORD. Today, for my last sermon as a single man, LORD willing, we'll focus on the "He who finds a wife" at the beginning of the verse.

- Charles Spurgeon: A true wife is her husband's better half & his heart's treasure. In her company he finds his earthly heaven.
- Prov. 12:4: An excellent wife is the crown of her husband
- Crown: The king's most noticeable, highest, most valuable, most beautiful addition to himself! A crown is a symbol of power, strength, & authority: an excellent wife strengthens her husband to help him accomplish all that God has called him to accomplish! She strengthens him in God!
- Ps. 103:1-5: Bless the LORD, O my soul, & all that is within me, bless his holy name! [2] Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, [3] who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, [4] who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love & mercy, [5] who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Finding a wife is a good gift from the LORD. [God may call some of you to singleness (1 Cor. 7)]

1. Eve Was A Good Gift From The LORD For Adam
2. Ruth Was A Good Gift From The LORD For Boaz
3. The Song Of Solomon Pictures God's Good Gift Of Sexual Intimacy In Marriage
4. The LORD's Good Gift In The Proverbs 31 Wife
5. The Ultimate Marriage And Best Good Gift From The LORD: Christ And The Church
6. Ways I Could Have Done Better Finding A Wife
7. By God's Mercy, The Things I Did Well As I Found A Wife
8. Jesus Always Perfectly Pursued And Found His Wife

6. Ways I Could Have Done Better Finding A Wife
a. Marrying younger is better: I waited too long! Young people, don't follow my example in this! Now, God is sovereign! But as far as man's responsibility goes, I want to encourage you to get married at a younger age! God ordained puberty to be at around the age of 13 for a reason. I'm not saying you should get married at 13 – that's illegal. But 18 to 25 is a good marriage age range.

- Archaeology Scholar: At the time of their marriage, Mary was probably a teenager – & Joseph not much older. According to rabbinic texts, parents were encouraged to engage their girls around age 12, about the time of puberty, & marry them a year later. Fiensy supports this claim with archaeological evidence; first-century inscriptions that list women's age-at-marriage generally indicate ages 12–17, with the majority at age 13.
- John MacArthur: Mary would have been about 13 years of age and Joseph maybe 14 when the incredible word came from God that she would have a child.

b. Being more pure in heart is better: I could have been more pure in heart as I pursued

marriage (this is another good reason to marry young!). From time to time, I battled & failed & gave in to the temptations of lust & pornography when I was in high school, & in college, & in the Navy & even while I was in seminary. Praise God He has delivered me from this because you can't be a pastor & be looking at pornography. But I could have done better. I wish I could say with John Piper that I've never once looked at pornography, but I can't. Praise God for His mercy.

- Job 31:1: I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?
- Matt. 5:27-30: You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out & throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. & if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.
- Matt. 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Only seeing God truly satisfies!: Garrett Kell: But please hear this: sexual pleasure will never ultimately satisfy you. A wonderful spouse will never fulfill you. Neither sex nor spouse can do what only God can. You can have the best spouse on the planet and enjoy the most fulfilling sex life imaginable, yet this fact remains: if your heart is not satisfied in God, it will wander to find satisfaction elsewhere. Spouses can be wonderful helpers, but they are sorry saviors. Jesus alone can satisfy something as complex as the human soul.

c. Guarding others' hearts is better: When you pursue a wife, guard the woman's heart. By that, I mean don't awaken an affection in her for you that you don't intended to reciprocate. Don't woo her to you when you have no intention of being in a serious relationship with her. Don't tell her you love her before you are prepared & ready to ask her to marry you.

The ideal situation: same church, same school, same town, same community, same values, you grow up together, you spend time together at school & church, your families know each other & hang out. And then at some point, you know she's the one you want to marry. So when you ask her father if you can court her, you are already 99% percent sure she's the one you want to marry.

Elisabeth Elliot (*Passion And Purity*; *Quest For Love*): Chapter: "Hook 'Em Throw 'Em Back": Dave & Jim had fun sometimes catching "suckers," large, slow bottom fish that didn't begin to measure up to trout either in fight or flavor. They would hook them for the fun of it & throw them back. This struck me as cruel. They assured me the fish didn't mind. It was sort of a game for fish & fishermen. One day I had lunch with a young woman who poured out her story, a sadly familiar one. When she got to this part I began to think about those fishing trips: "So our relationship grew. He's really a godly man. I found in him everything I've always wanted in a husband. He finally took me out for dinner to a really nice place. We hadn't dated a whole lot, exactly, we'd just spent a lot of time together – quality times, you know? Anyway, this really nice dinner. I was hyped. Maybe this would be it. He told me I was everything he'd ever wanted in a wife. Said he'd never loved anybody the way he loved me. We really did care about each other. I

mean, our relationship was – well, it was very special, to both of us. Or – well, I thought it was, & he certainly gave me the impression that he thought so too. But then . . .” I had no trouble filling in the rest of the story. I couldn’t help wondering how often he’d gone fishing just for fun, how many he’d hooked & thrown back, treated like poor suckers, not as the beauties he was looking for. Suckers aren’t good for much, but they’re fun to hook & – oh well, it doesn’t hurt them. I’ve seen suckers with the scars of old hooks. “From moral weakness of spirit; from timidity; from hesitation; from fear of men & dread of responsibility . . . From weakness of judgment; from the indecision that can make no choice; from the irresolution that carries no choice into act . . . save us & help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord!”

There were relationships along the way in my pursuit of a wife that I should have done a better job guarding my heart & the hearts of the young ladies I was dating. Especially situations in online dating. Meet in person first before you get too serious! Be careful what you say & do! Be careful about the degree of commitment you communicate. Guard your own heart & guard others’ hearts.

- Marshall Segal (The Great Prize in Christian Dating): Pursue clarity & postpone intimacy.
- Richard & Sharon Phillips (*Holding Hands Holding Hearts*): According to the Bible’s perspective, if you are dating you are not just holding hands, you are holding hearts. What you do with your own heart, & what you do with another’s, is a matter of great importance. God’s Word speaks clearly & powerfully: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Prov. 4:23)

d. God works in all my (our) failures for the best: Rom. 8:28: And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- Gen. 50:20: As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Thomas Watson (*All Things For Good*): The Worst things Work for Good to the Godly; 1) The evil of AFFLICTION works for good, to the godly; 2) The evil of TEMPTATION is overruled for good to the godly; 3) The evil of DESERTION works for good to the godly; 4) The evil of SIN works for good to the godly: The sense of their OWN sinfulness, will be overruled for the good of the godly: Sin makes them weary of this life; This indwelling of corruption, makes the saints prize Christ more.

1) Looking back, I’m glad I waited this long! Look at who God has given me! She is worth the wait!
2) Sinful lust is not good at all. It would have been better if I never lusted at all. It’s always better not to sin. But God, in His great mercy, has turned by battles for purity & even my sins for good: to teach me how to fight sin; to show me the emptiness of sin; & to teach me the joy of victory over sin & the joy of purity; to humble me; & to cause me to prize Jesus Christ all the more!
3) In my failures to guard my own heart & to guard the hearts of others, I’ve been sanctified away from marriage idolatry; I’ve been humbled by seeing my own sinfulness & indecisiveness; I’ve been disciplined by God to be more careful in how I guard others’ hearts; & my heart has been broken – which drove me to the arms of a kind, compassionate, merciful, loving, & all-satisfying Savior!

<u>Finding a wife is a good gift from the LORD, & He’s overruled all my sin for good.</u>

Beloved Christian in Christ, God will overrule all your sin for good as well! All your failures! All your indecision! All your waiting too long! All your sexual immorality! All your not guarding of hearts! All your sin! What you meant for evil, God means for good! **Hallelujah! What a Savior!**

7. By God's Mercy, The Things I Did Well As I Found A Wife

a. By God's mercy, I did try to find a wife: You have to go find her single men! I have not been single this long because of lack of effort. I asked ladies out on dates. I had awkward conversations. I took classes at WTS. I visited good churches on Sunday nights. I went to prayer meetings. I was on Christian dating websites. I tried to put myself in positions where I would meet godly single ladies. That's good! Do that! Ladies, put yourself it positions to meet people, but, generally, you are to respond, men should take the initiative & pursue – you find! Ruth! Yes, guard your heart from idolatry & an over preoccupation with these things, but it's not wrong to want to be married!

b. By God's mercy, I wanted a godly woman who would help me follow Christ: Only marry in the Lord: **1 Cor. 7:39:** A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

- 1 Cor. 9:5: Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles & the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

- 2 Cor. 6:14: Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

- My basic prayer has been: Oh Father, please grant me a wife with whom we can glorify You the most, with whom we can help Your church the most, with whom we can help save the most sinners, with whom we can help the most poor, needy, & helpless the most, with whom we can help others become the most like Jesus, & with whom we would make each other the most like Jesus the most!

- Puritan: If you marry a child of the Devil, you will be sure to have trouble with your father-in-law

c. By God's mercy, I kept myself from fornication: Your virginity is a gift you can only give to one person. Save it for the right person – the one you marry.

- Brother: Sex outside of marriage has destroyed more lives than anything else in modern America

Please know that there's mercy in Christ Jesus for all who have failed. I love this story from Pastor Garrett Kell from his wedding night: **Garrett Kell:** On our wedding night, my wife & I settled into our hotel suite. As we sat on the bed, she handed me a well-worn envelope decorated with colorful hearts. Three words were written on the front: "To The One." I opened the seal & unfolded the paper to find a letter she wrote when she was thirteen, to the man she intended to marry. The letter declared that she had saved herself for this special night. I wept as I read it. My tears were stirred by the sweetness of her letter, but also by the sorrow that I couldn't offer the same gift in return . . . On my wedding night, my wife ministered to me in my brokenness. She reminded me of the grace of Jesus & assured me that if God could forgive her, she was willing & desirous to forgive me. **GOSPEL!**

d. By God's mercy, I prayed: Phil. 4:6-7: do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by

prayer & supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. & the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts & your minds in Christ Jesus.

e. By God's mercy, I got lots of godly counsel: Prov. 11:14: Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
- Find a wife in godly, Christian community. Parents, godly friends, pastors, the church, etc.

f. By God's mercy, I sought to focus on my own growth in Christ: Make sure you are the godly spouse that someone else would want to marry. Pursue Christ above all! Seek growth in your own sanctification & holiness. Be a member of a good church, read your Bible, pray.
- Lk. 14:26: If anyone comes to me & does not hate his own father & mother & wife & children & brothers & sisters, yes, & even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. **Psalm 73:25**
- Matt. 6:33: seek first the kingdom of God & his righteousness, & all these things will be added to you.
- Prov. 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, & do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, & he will make straight your paths.

Finding a wife is a good gift from the LORD.

8. Jesus Always Perfectly Pursued And Found His Wife
a. Jesus is always perfectly pure in heart: Heb. 4:15: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

b. Jesus always perfectly cares for your hearts: Jesus will never leave you or disappoint you! In any way! **Jn. 16:33:** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

c. Jesus always perfectly makes His bride godly: Jesus is not picky! He died to save sinners! The O. T. is the account of God's unfaithful bride (Hosea!). Ezek. 16. Jesus is the faithful Groom Who died for you & rose for you & works in you by His Holy Spirit to make you holy & beautiful

d. Jesus always prays perfectly: Jesus prays for you now! He always lives to intercede! (Heb. 7:25)

e. Jesus is always the perfect Wonderful Counselor: Isa. 9:6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; & the government shall be upon his shoulder, & his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **[Follow His Word!]**

f. Jesus always perfectly pursued His Father's glory, & He always pursues us perfectly: There is no one like Jesus! He is the perfectly holy, sinless Husband of all husbands Who pursues perfectly!

Finding a wife is a good gift from the LORD. And Jesus is our great Savior & great example!

Christ Jesus Found His Sinful Bride
Unwanted, Ugly, Cast Outside
No Hope For Her – All Love Denied
The Gates Of Hell For Her Are Wide
But God, By Mercy, Turned The Tide
And Christ With Evil Did Collide
He's Sinless, Holy, Perfect Guide
Yet For His Sinful Bride He Died
Then Rose Again And Death Defied
For All His People – Life Worldwide
By Faith Alone He Does Provide
His Own Righteousness Outside
To Cover You And Then Inside
He Makes You Holy – Kills Your Pride
And Makes You Beautiful - Abide
For You're His Loved And Beauty Bride!