

FUTURE HEART

Discover Biblical Premarital Secrets



John Artashastar

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To protect the privacy and confidentiality of those who have shared their stories with the author, some details and names have been changed.

DEDICATION

Dorcas M. Ngowe.

Faraja Jacob, Enock Lawrence, Shadrack Siwavula, Edger Clement, Ellen Yegela, Liberatus Boniventure.

200+ Future Heart Online Community , and every youth that thirst for the word of God.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.

-Psalm 38:2-



THE PENDULUM OF DECISION

Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly. | Proverbs 13:16

The crowning work of creation is mankind, with complex brains. Among all earthly creatures, only humans can reflect on their own thoughts while thinking. Only humans have freedom of choice and, hence, are morally accountable for their actions. Life is shaped by the decisions we make, from the mundane to the most significant. The impact of our decisions spans from temporal to eternal. The choice of a life companion can profoundly affect both our temporal and eternal interests.

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who



can know it? I the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruits of his doings. | Jeremiah 17:9,10

The heart is the center of the will, our true self, the house of our beliefs, and the battlefield between the forces of good and evil. Originally, the mind was designed to operate with reason ruling over feelings, and reason being under the influence of the Holy Spirit. But sin had a baleful impact on the mind. A deceitful and desperately wicked heart leads to an inclination toward sin, a will that is antagonistic to God's will, a skewed sense of self, a flawed, unreliable portal for deciding the issues of life, and a tendency to believe lies. Through the Scripture, God has provided an accurate diagnosis of our hearts:

- o **Self-centeredness:** And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Then the man said, “The woman whom you gave me be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. “And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me and I ate.” Genesis 3:11-13. Our primal instinct is to protect, indulge, and prioritize ourselves. Self-centeredness can manifest in subtle ways, such as neglecting self-care or even actions like suicide, which can bring suffering to those around us. This tendency goes even further to imperceptible perceptions, leading us to assume that God is as selfish and harsh as we are. As a result, we seek to protect ourselves from Him, the very One who can cleanse our hearts. Choosing a godly partner is counterintuitively achieved by first being cleansed at heart.
- o **Short-sightedness:** Now Jacob cooked a stew, and

Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore, his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.” And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; what is this birthright to me?” Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Genesis 25:29-33. We tend to prefer short-term gratification over long-term fortune. Hence, we make hasty, immature decisions that often reduce our lives to a crumb of bread.

- o **Emotions over Reason:** 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 where your great strength lies.” And it came to pass when she **pestered him daily** with her words and pressed him, so that **his soul was vexed to death**, that he told her all his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” Judges 16:15-17. Samson refused three times to reveal the secrets of his strength. However, Delilah persisted, intoxicating him with flattery and nagging until Samson was enraged to death. Under the fog of strong emotions, Samson thought He was relieving his pain by revealing the secret, but he was signing His own death warrant. “Repetition is a form of confirmation” (Navarro, 2017, 107). What people repeatedly do or attempt to do defines who they are. Delilah’s persistent efforts reveal her cunning nature and her role as a spy. But when we let emotion get the best of us, we become oblivious even to the clearest warning before us.

- o **Foiled by Appearances:** So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him!” But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:6-7. We all experience at times what psychologists call “the halo effect”, as Gordon Allport, a prominent early personality psychologist, aptly captured: “The warmth glow of a single virtue illuminates our total impression of the person.” (Allport, 1966, 1-10). The tendency to generalize from one positive trait to others can lead to unfair evaluations and hinder objective decision-making. In our context, being handsome, tall, wealthy, having broad shoulders, a husky voice, or being talented says nothing about a person’s trustworthiness, integrity, or fitness to lead a godly family. Cute, plump lips, curvy, big eyes, thick hair, or a particular vocal range(soprano, mezzo-soprano, or contralto), doesn’t indicate a woman’s competence as a wife. While appearance is not innately evil, it is not a sufficient ground to pitch your decision upon.

These were noble people who achieved great victories. But they

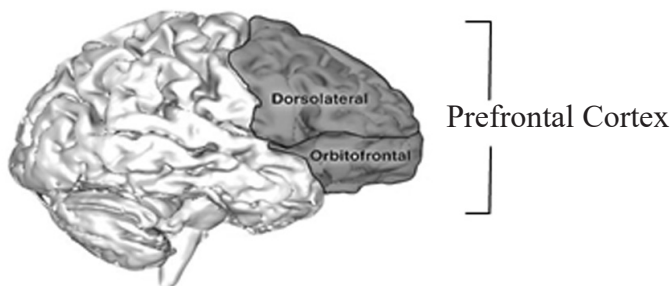
were neither immune to temptation nor free from mental distortions. The first step in becoming a good decision-maker is to become acutely aware of the mental distortions we all struggle with. In his classical book, *The Big Picture*, Dr. Carson says;

The moment we begin to believe we are invincible, we actually become most vulnerable.²⁹

■ The Neurobiology of Decision: Emotions and Decisions

Various internet sources estimate that an average adult makes about 35,000 remotely conscious decisions each day. In contrast, a child makes about 3,000.³⁰ This number may sound absurd, but in fact, we make 226.7 decisions each day on just food alone, according to researchers at Cornell University.³¹

What is the relationship between emotions and decision-making?
Can we make decisions without emotions?



²⁹ Ben, Carson. *The Big Picture: Getting Perspective on What Really Important*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Zondervan, 1999), 136.

³⁰ Sahakian, B. J, & Labuzetta, J. N. *Bad Moves: How Decision Making Goes Wrong, and the Ethics of Smart Drugs*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

³¹ Wansink, B. & Sobal, J.(2007). *Mindless Eating: The 200 Daily Food Decisions We Overlook*. *Environment and Behavior*, 39:1, 106-123.

■ Future Heart

What if God would pronounce a prospective husband or wife to every one of his children? Could it be that He has been doing this all along, but somehow kept a secret from us, and we have to ask for a sign to be shown that person?

The Soulmate Syndrome

Some sincere young people have been influenced by the notion of a soulmate. While the term ‘soulmate’ can mean different things to different people. I will clarify the specific idea I am addressing in relation to soulmate mentality. The basic belief is that *there is one and only person who is destined to be your life companion, and your mission is to find this person*. The soulmate mentality poses the following challenges:

- o **Desperation:** The soulmate mentality as explained above, plays on the concept of scarcity bias, which leads our minds to equate scarcity with value. Since the soulmate is one among eight billion people, losing that person can feel like facing a mere 1 in 8 billion chance of getting another one. How impossible is this! So, most choose to stay in toxic, abusive, and draining relationships because of the implicit fear of never finding another one. Perhaps, Adam couldn’t see the possibility of getting another Eve, which led him to eat the forbidden fruit. However, God could have created another Eve or redeemed Eve if need be. Believe it or not, many people can be compatible with you. You can live without them, and they can live without you. Ironically, choosing to commit to one person despite the equally or seemingly more potential choices makes love sacrificial and meaningful; it is courageous and a great virtue.
- o **Evading Responsibility:** This often happens af-

ter marriage: you find “the one”, then what? Is this enough to guarantee eternal bliss?

The trajectory of any relationship is never founded on a single past decision. This does not nullify the tremendous impact of the choice we made but rather asserts the inevitable necessity to defend that decision afterward. You will have to resolve conflicts, learn to communicate, maintain trust, revive your commitment and reaffirm through your actions, stay faithful in the absence of the other, discover ugly realities about each other, and forgive always.

■ The Model of Isaac | Genesis 24

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with a bit and bridle, else they will not come near you. | Psalms 32:8-9

Despite the mental distortions we all face, the Spirit of God is always near, guiding and leading our decisions. The story of Isaac and Rebekah offers timeless, inspired principles that we can apply in our lives today. There was not a single page of the Bible in the days of Isaac. They relied on the oral truth of creation, the fall, the promise of the Messiah, the flood, the tower of Babel, and the call of



Abram. Isaac knew he was the line through which the Messiah would come, through his lineage, “God will provide” the Savior of mankind. Hence, his choice of a life companion had significant implications for humanity. Under the guidance of God through his father Abraham, Isaac secured a godly bride. Here are biblical principles that will help us make better decisions when choosing a life companion:

- o **Godly and Experienced Third Parties:** Abraham and his servant Eliezer occupied the third-party seat in the case of Isaac. The first phase of romantic love is often fiery and impetuous, obscuring our sight. Most people make lifetime promises and covenants solely on this fleeting ground. To counteract this tendency, we need other godly, experienced, unbiased, and faithful people to help us see clearly. Nevertheless, every counsel must be filtered through the Scriptures.
- o **The Sign:** “And this day I came to the well and said, ‘O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, ‘Please, give me a little water from your pitcher to drink,’ and she says to me, ‘Drink, and I will draw for your camels also’- let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.” Should we ask for a sign like Eliezer did in Genesis 24:42-44? Since the days of Isaac, God has provided much clearer guidance regarding the choice of a life companion, making it almost unnecessary to ask for a sign. Nevertheless, that remains the matter of a personal relationship with God. Every experience must be tested by the Word of God. So, what was the real sign God gave to Eliezer? A camel’s impressive thirst-quenching abil-

ities are legendary. *They can guzzle a whopping 200 liters (53 gallons) of water in three minutes!*³³ The real sign was her character. The sign was not the act of giving water but rather “what that act revealed” about her. Fetching and giving water to a stranger and his ten camels (Genesis 24:10) revealed generosity, kindness, conscientiousness, and self-sacrifice. These are the pillar traits of a prospective wife. They are quite similar to those of the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31. Ladies and gentlemen, it’s time to look for the genuine sign (character).

- o **Family Background:** And said, “Whose daughter are you?” Tell me, please, is there room in your father’s house for us to lodge? So she said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.” Moreover, she said to him, “We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.” Genesis 24:23-25. To women, Ellen White says, “Let the woman who desires a peaceful, happy union, who would escape future misery and sorrow, inquire before she yields her affections, has my lover a mother? Does he recognize his obligations to her? Is he mindful of her wishes and happiness? If he does not respect and honor his mother, will he manifest respect and love, kindness, and attention towards his wife?³⁴ We must be thoroughly acquainted with the family background of our prospective husbands or wives. Our upbringing normalizes specific behaviors, sculpts our perceptions and expectations, and determines our attachment

³⁴ Ellen, White. *The Adventist Home*. (United Kingdom: Stanborough Press Ltd, 1952), 47.

³³ Mukherjee, S., Ghosh, D., & Shah, D. *Physiological Adaptations of Camels (Camelus dromedarius) to desert life*. International Journal of Livestock Research, 3(4), 23-32.

styles. No one has a perfect background, nor are we iron-bound in our family background. Being mindful of each other's background helps us to "consciously navigate" our companionship with grace, wisdom, and tact, which helps us thrive in a lifetime commitment.

- o **You Decide:** The bible does not condone the use of coercion when choosing a life companion. The law of liberty is the only ground for love to blossom. Dr. Jennings, a Christian psychiatrist, says: Whenever liberty is violated, three predictable consequences occur (1) love is always damaged and will eventually be destroyed; (2) a desire to rebel is instilled in the heart and, if one has the option to restore freedom but instead chooses to remain violated, then (3) individuality is slowly eroded and the person becomes...a mere shadow.³⁵ So they (Rebekah's parents) said, "We will call the young woman and **ask her personally.**" Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "**Will you go with this man?**" And she said, "**I will go.**" | Genesis 24:57-58

- o **Fervent Prayer:** Eliezer prayed several times in his endeavor to find a godly wife for his master's son. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening, and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming." Genesis 24:63. Your spouse will reflect your spiritual state by the time you choose him/her. Our spiritual condition determines what we tolerate, influences our perception, and guides our conscience. Meditation—quietly contemplating, listening, and surrendering your thoughts to God's

³⁵ Timothy, Jennings. *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life*. Downer Groves, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2017, 50.

Word—is essential for making a wise choice. Prayers do not change God; we are changed through the experience of praying. Prayers make us more susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. When we pray and believe, we are enabled to transcend our mental distortions and begin to see as God sees. We are empowered to decide and act in godly ways despite what we feel. Loyal angels will be on our side, to minister, warn, and guide us back on track (if we are willing) when we are about to seal our destiny with the wrong people.

The will of God is to end sin in the world. The good news of salvation through Jesus Christ has been commissioned to us; so spread it to the whole world. The family we form has huge implications for that matter. God would have us make families that will increase our love for Him and make it possible for us to share the gospel assertively. Our choice of life companion should be constrained by this.

Before vows are spoken, futures are shaped. Future Heart is your invitation to discover the biblical secrets that prepare your soul, not just your ceremony. With clarity, conviction, and compassion, Artashastar reveals how God-designed thinking builds lasting love, protects identity, and strengthens generations. This book is for leaders, parents, and visionaries who refuse to drift. Whether you're dating, engaged, or guiding others, this book will help you think wisely, love purely, and walk faithfully into marriage. Your future begins now; with a heart shaped by truth.

John Artashastar is a Seventh-Day Adventist theologian and chaplain with a record of spiritual leadership, youth mentorship, and doctrinal integrity. A graduate of Bugema University, he has led evangelistic missions, mentored pastors in training, and transformed lives through faith-based counseling. His work reflects clarity, conviction, and a strong calling to serve Christ.

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