



## iQuestions Faculty, Greg Smalley

---

Question:

*We've been dating since college. I want her to marry me. How do I know if she's the "one"?*

Answer:

How do we know that the person that we're dating is the right one to marry? Man, that was a question that I struggled with, wrestled with. I didn't even know how to begin to answer that.

As a matter of fact, I remember talking to a good friend of mine, and he said, "Greg, here's the bottom line," he goes, "here it is. Boil it down for you. You can live with anyone, because I don't believe there's this soul-mate thing, that there's one person. You can live with anyone. The question is, when you're thinking about Erin, is that the person who you do not want, under any circumstances, to live without?"

"It's not that you need her to have a great life—you can do that as an individual—but is she the person that, as you think about growing old, that you don't want to do that without her?"

What I love about my wife—you want to know to how I met her? Because, I tell you, I instantly, actually, knew that this was the person that I could marry. I met her in college, Grand Canyon University. It was at an Old Testament theology class. I literally fell sound asleep in the back of class.

I had met her, I'd seen her around, I was sitting next to her, I had some buddies on the other side me. I was sound asleep. And all of a

sudden, the next thing I realize is that this girl I didn't know grabs my arm and shakes me awake, and says, "Greg, quick! You've got to stand up. The professor just called on you to pray."

And I went, "What?"

There was kind of a tradition in this class, being on Old Testament theology, that a student would close the class in prayer. So, I'd been sound asleep, and so she's like, "You gotta stand up!"

And I said, "Are you being serious?"

And she goes, "Yes."

So, the guy looks like he's paused, so I stand up, and I started to pray. If you've never had that sense that you're praying, and you feel like people are looking at you, it's a weird feeling. Trust me.

I could hear people laughing. I kind of peeked a little bit. I don't know what—I'm checking my zipper—I don't what in the world they're laughing about, but I just continued to pray, and I finished and sat down. Now the whole class is laughing at me, and I'm looking at this girl, and she's red in the face. My buddies are on ground, slapping the floor. I don't know what in the world is going on.

Before I could even figure anything out, the professor goes, "Greg, I appreciate your enthusiasm, but," he said, "do you think maybe next time you could wait until I'm finished lecturing before you close us in prayer?"

I'll never forget just going, "I cannot believe that this girl I didn't even know played that joke on me—got me!"

Smalley -2-

At the same time, I remember looking at her, staring at her, and going, “Wow!” I couldn’t believe that she had done that to a total stranger. And I remember thinking, “Now, *that’s* the kind of girl I want to marry someday.”

I had no idea, after that about five years after that experience, she would become my wife.

So, as you really think about, “Is this person the right one for me?” Let me give you a couple of other things, beyond getting a joke played on you in class—which could really do.

The first thing that I would encourage you to do—and this is huge. If you’re not doing this, then I would be worried. You’ve got to spend time getting to know that person. Now, you might be going, “Now *there’s* a great idea,” but listen. This is what you’re wanting to do. You’re wanting to ask as many questions as you possibly can to really, truly get to know that person.

You’d be shocked at how many people know a little bit, they sorta talk, but didn’t really get to know it. Think about it. There’s great stuff out there on thousands of questions to ask one another. Ask, ask, ask as many questions as you can, and spend time doing that.

You know, another big one is to create a list, so you know the character qualities that you really want in a spouse. For me, it was thinking about, “What is it that I really want in a wife? Someone who has a great sense of humor. Someone who has a spiritual relationship. Someone with integrity. Someone who wants to have kids.”

I mean, whatever is on your list, just be real clear about what those things are, and really look and evaluated, “Does this person have those things?”

Smalley -3-



That doesn't mean you're going to find anyone who's perfect and all of those things you've written on your list. But at least, having thought through that list, it allows you an objective evaluation.

You know, another important aspect is to ask your friends and family what they think about this person. You'd be surprised at how many have sat in my counseling office, telling me about their premarital engagement, and how much their family and their friends didn't think that they should get married. And look, they're in my office.

That doesn't mean that you listen to your friends and family. At least be open to hearing what their concerns are—and at least really thinking those through.

And finally, get premarital counseling. Go talk to a counselor. Talk to a pastor. Talk to, maybe it's an older couple—who have been married for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years—about their relationship, and just hear about their challenges, their encouragement. What would they advise you to do? I tell you, that can be so important—because sometimes, simply listening to someone's history of their relationship can be predictive of whether they're going to make it or not.

When the couples say, "I don't know why we're getting married. We've had a really hard time," or, "We have to get married," or, "If I don't get married, I can't get out of my home," those are the reasons you want to stay away from. So, simply going and talking a professional, or an older couple, a pastor—I tell you, it can be powerful.

So, again, I don't think you can ever know 100% that "this the right one," but I tell you, by really doing your due diligence, and really thinking some of these things through—especially creating that list, and getting to know that person—boy, I tell you, that can really help you make that decision.

Smalley -4-