

February 29, 2020

“GOD FIRST” DATING

“Two more months and this relationship will be broken,” said Cleide to her neighbor, Marcos, making fun of him after seeing him talking to a girl. She was right. His longest “serious” relationships lasted no more than three months, mostly due to his emotional immaturity and inability to love.

Then during a Week of Prayer at the Adventist boarding school in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Marcos heard about the “God First” principle: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Even though the context of the text is about finances, those principles could apply to other areas of life as well, he thought. “Start everything with a prayer, and your chances of succeeding will be greater,” said the pastor.

So, the first time Marcos invited Mari to an outing, he was very unsure about what to do. He wanted to put God first by inviting Him to go with them on the outing, but he had never prayed with a girl before! Would she think he was weird? Would she reject him because of that? Clearly, the Spirit was inviting him to confess Christ, and it was a turning point in his life. “If she leaves me because of a prayer,” he finally decided, “then

the sooner the better.”

So, even though a little embarrassed, he invited Mari to pray with him before starting the engine of that small Volkswagen Passat borrowed from his father. He believed his chances would be greater if he put God first. And this was the beginning of a relationship that would mature into marriage three years later, on May 13, 1986. Since then, Marcos and Mari have committed their lives to serve God as Adventist missionaries in their country and abroad.

Appeal: God is calling us to put Him first in all aspects of life, including our relationships, and even finances. And we put God first in our finances when we set apart His tithe and our Promise (regular, percentage-based offerings), even before any other expenses are met. God’s assurance is that all the other things we need “shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

PRAYER: Dear God, we recognize You as our heavenly Provider and Sustainer. Please teach us to put You first in every area of life and accept the tithes and offerings that we bring today, after recognizing that You care for us. Amen.

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