

How Do I Know “The One”? offers advice on finding true love, and is written with godly and practical wisdom while avoiding the oftentimes overly romanticized or spiritualized take on the topic.

Nelson vividly illustrates his key points with candid humor and relatable stories, including his past courtship mishaps and his love story with his darling wife Lucy (watch out for that chapter!). While being an entertaining read, the book also gently confronts: I was ushered to reflect on my stewardship of my life and relationships. I’m inviting those who are finding (or waiting) for their The One, and even those embracing singlehood, to read this book and have a self-check, too!

Jun Ryan Orbina

Public Health Communications Specialist

Nelson did it again! This time, he helps us navigate through singleness and find The One. No matter what season in life you’re in, this book is for you, your single friends, or your loved ones. He has successfully and simply broken down what we thought were complex ways of finding The One. Now in my own season of singleness, reading this book gave me a whole new perspective on marriage and building an intimate relationship with Jesus. Nelson always points us back to Him as he does in each book he writes. Now, I can relax and enjoy my journey of singleness with the true Lover of my soul and, hopefully, later on, find The One. And I’m sure you will, too. Read on.

Christine Romero

Business Systems Analyst

American Express

Finding The One for most singles has become drudgery. Many people have given up on finding love because it has become a difficult process. The most convenient recourse is to settle for the second best unless a better one comes along.

How Do I Know "The One"? is a valuable resource for singles whose hope has been deferred because of failed relationships and wrong choices in the past. Nelson Dy gives singles renewed hope that in Christ, true romance and finding The One are indeed possible. Finding The One can be a delight and not drudgery.

Tisha Timbang

Single, Owner/Founder of PitchWorks Marketing

I am pleased to introduce Nelson as a friend, a brother, and a prolific writer. *How Do I Know "The One"?* springs from his love story with his wife, Lucy. He writes from experience and thus has shared great principles on how you can find the best person to spend the rest of your life with.

Prudy Mopera Verzo

Life Change Coach and a Care Pastor

How Do I Know The One?



NELSON T. DY

Foreword by Jayson Lo



CHURCH STRENGTHENING MINISTRY

How Do I Know “The One”?

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Dedication

To all my Toastmasters friends,
who are too many to name.
Especially the singles still looking for The One.
May you enjoy The Real One
in this “meantime” season.

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Foreword

Being someone who enjoyed many vices when I was still single—from drinking, smoking, gambling, to having multiple relationships—I would have been easily disqualified from being “The One” to anyone. Yet my testimony shows that God can change a person. If He can do it for me, He can definitely do it for you.

It is late for me to say that I should’ve read this book when I was still single; it would’ve helped me immensely. But even now, I find it just as relevant to married couples as it is to unmarried individuals. *The One* doesn’t claim to offer the right formula to relationship problems. Instead, it is a guide to uncommon wisdom.

Singles might think they’re happy as a “bug in a rug” when they find The One. Nelson has news for you. It requires a lot of hard work and faith in God.

The One is not someone mystical. He or she is not a mystery to be revealed nor a conundrum to be solved.

In the process of trying to find The One, Nelson helps you understand how to get to being The One.

The One is the person that God wants you to be. What a revelation! You won't find it in the NIV or NASB translation of the Bible. Only in the NTD (Nelson Tan Dy) version.

In Revelation 2:4, it says, *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."* This is an admonition by the Apostle John to the church of Ephesus that they have forgotten their experience when they first fell in love with Jesus. For me, the most important facet of the book you are holding now is not just how to find The One and know how to be The One; it is a reminder to be The One—someone who loves God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Nelson is a fantastic storyteller. I know you will learn so much and enjoy this witty book as much as I have.

Jayson Lo
Speaker & Author of *YOUniquely in Love*

Acknowledgments

Getting married can be a lot of fun as you and your beloved involve cherished friends. Who will stand next to the groom and hand him the ring on cue? Who will march behind the bride, making sure she won't trip on the long train of her wedding gown? Who will be the cute flower girls? Who will officiate the wedding? Whom will you invite as the sponsors?

Come to think of it: Who will be the wedding coordinator?

I had a lot of fun writing this book for the same reason: it involved cherished friends.

Here's a great tip I didn't include in this book: your spouse should be your best friend. I'm glad to have found both in the former Lucy Cheng. We can't stand being apart for long. We share joys and sorrows. We seek to find the best in each other. Sixteen years since we exchanged *I do's*, it gets even better.

Fun fact: Soon after Lucy and I settled in our love nest, she found my journals gathering dust somewhere.

“Oh,” she said, “these should be shared with the world!” Long story short, Church Strengthening Ministry (CSM) published my first book, *Finding Comfort*. I wouldn’t be the published author I am now without her.

It is a delight to partner once again with CSM, under the skilled leadership of its CEO, Brother Abner Lacson and its Vice President for Publishing, Joy Solina. Kudos to my editor, Nikka Gonzaga, for polishing the initial manuscript to the highly readable and relatable book you now hold in your hands. It is our second collaboration (the first one being *Soaring High: Your Flight Plan to Your Best Career Ever!*).

I also would like to thank the “entourage”: the proofreader Ruzelle Tan, the layout artist Lyra Villarante, and the book cover artist Mariela Moreno. Without them, this book would just be a bunch of printouts, held together by a bulldog clip.

Most of all, we give glory to the Friend of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. His beauty and splendor make me cry out: “Lord, make Lucy love You more than me.” He is our model of sacrificial love, our fountain of grace, and our standard for righteousness.

Introduction

Janice (not her real name) seemed destined to be forever young. With porcelain skin, bee-stung lips, and a slim figure, she never lacked for suitors. But after she married Teddy, she looked older than her true age.

They met at a corporate event. Janice was a manager for a leading consumer goods company. Teddy was a professional singer. When she saw his dashing good looks and witty charm, she thought she had found “The One.”

After a few months, they decided to get married. Her family and friends expressed grave concerns, but that did not deter her. Love, she insisted, would prevail no matter what.

It wasn't long before those grave concerns were justified. Teddy turned out to be an alcoholic and a drug addict, something Janice never saw before. Or perhaps, closer to the truth, she ignored the warning signs during

their whirlwind courtship: less and less singing gigs for Teddy, her picking up the tabs for most of their dates, and a pervasive yet tolerable moodiness that blanketed her beau.

Time came when nobody was engaging Teddy's services anymore. Janice had a respectable salary, but it didn't help that her husband became a bum. When she resisted his chronic demand for money, he turned her into a punching bag. That was when she began to show up at the office with bruises on her face and arms. Everyone knew what was happening. But when her officemates suggested for her to leave Teddy, she refused, saying it was against her religious beliefs. Besides, won't love prevail no matter what?

Well, the beatings prevailed, even after they had their second child. That's when she looked like she aged a hundred years.

Janice is one of those tragedies that would not have happened had she used her head aside from her heart. There are certain indicators that can tell you if "The One" would make a good spouse or not. If you are a single lady, that Prince Charming can turn out to be

the Prince of Darkness. If you are a single man, that Sleeping Beauty may be the Wicked Witch in disguise.

* * *

Finding true love is like wanting to get rich. There are two basic ways to wealth. One is to push a lot of coins into a slot machine and hope that the next spin wins you the jackpot. The other is to know how to invest wisely and put that same money in, say, a mutual fund.

When you think about it, both are gambles. For all you know, something might happen that would bankrupt the mutual fund. But you don't have to be a financial wizard to know that this is way smarter than going to Las Vegas.

It's the same way with relationships. Many people give their hearts to just about anyone and hope to make it big in the "love lottery." But it is far better to know how to choose a partner wisely, using the same due diligence one does before one pours his life savings into a business venture. It's still a gamble. But if you know the *how*, the likelihood that you will make a wise choice will skyrocket.

Just how can you know if that person is “The One” in the first place? I have used the term *The One* all throughout this book as shorthand for “the man or woman you are seriously considering to marry.” To make this book more readable, I will avoid the awkward “he/she” or “him/her” and use the male pronoun only as a default, unless the advice is about a woman being The One. But both men and women can profit from the tons of advice written in these pages. It’s not foolproof; there is no money-back guarantee. But if you heed the advice well, you will have better chances for the happy marriage you have been dreaming about.

Many lonely heart searchers are told to just pray and trust that God will bring them to the Promised Land of Wedded Bliss. I will not deny that that has been the happy experience of some people. But more often than not, I’ve heard and read a lot of sad stories and received e-mails from my readers, such as:

- A young man who was sure that the woman he was courting was “God’s best” for him, only to be “busted” no matter how ardently he courted her. Now, he wonders if God had deceived him.
- A girl who was surprised when a man told her, “God wants me to marry you,” and fearing that

she would disobey God, indeed married him. Now they are separated.

- A pastor whose fiancée had dumped him only a few days before the wedding.
- A woman who realized that her boyfriend of five years has been cheating on her.
- Another lady who complained that her crush wanted to be “intimate” with her.

You may know of more stories. Maybe one of them is yours.

So, how can you know? In one word, wisdom. Yes, you trust God to bring the right person to you. But you yourself must also know what to look for in Mister or Miss Right.

Consider this book as a “field manual” in the arena of love. I will offer five critical areas on what to look for in The One. You will find many of them practical, even common sense. The funny thing is that when people are in love, common sense flies out of the window. You have heard the saying that love is blind, which makes marriage the institution for the blind. But it doesn't

have to be. This is the time for you to exercise your head and heart, not just your heart.

But first, let's settle one core issue: the very concept of The One.

CHAPTER 1

Is There Really “The One”?

Should I pursue this girl or not? She would make an excellent wife.

She had looks that would turn any man’s head. She was an excellent singer, too. In fact, she and her sisters formed a worship team that went around in singing tours. She was active in her church’s prayer ministry. She once mentioned that she was a member of Homemakers for Jesus... and she was still a bachelorette.

The trouble was that she wasn't the least bit interested in me.

I sought "God's will" as to what to do next. Do I court her or just resign myself to adoring her from a distance?

I did what good Christians were supposed to do: pray, read the Bible, trust God, ask for guidance. Yet I didn't get the clear "yes" or "no" that I thought would come.

Oh yes, I read my Bible. There were a lot of passages that told me what to look for in a wife. But hey, Homemakers for Jesus, remember? What I was looking for, in effect, was a verse that says, "Nelson shall marry Maria." Unsurprisingly, there was none.

I prayed and prayed, but heaven was silent. It was as if God was some cosmic Easter Bunny, stashing His will among the rocks and He'll cue me (somehow) by saying "You're getting near..." or "You're getting far..."

I tried to get "the Spirit's prompting" only to debate whether it's really the Holy Spirit or my own desires. What's more, what if it's the devil prodding me in the wrong direction? My confusion was just beginning.

Advisers or what others call *godly counsel*? I had plenty. Either they gave me some courtship tips or told me what a fine girl she was. But none of them went to the extent of “Thus sayeth the Lord, thou will marry yon fair maiden.” It was more like “Nelson, the final decision is yours.” Gee, thanks a lot. I was back where I started.

Waiting on God? How do I know if I wasn't just being indecisive?

So, I resorted to another method. I asked God for a sign. If this girl would phone my office—without any prompting from my side—then that means that she was The One for me.

Amazingly, a few days later, she did call!

We had a mutual friend who was emigrating to the US and she invited me to the *despedida* party. We spent a few more minutes chatting like old friends.

Believe it or not, I ended our conversation by asking, “Do you know the significance of your call?” (Yes, I used those very words.) She responded with a puzzled

“no.” It didn’t matter. As far as I was concerned, that was God’s sign. She’s gonna marry me! Hooray!

Fast forward to a few weeks later. She sensed that I was courting her. I could still see her hand, palm edge on table, as if she was about to deliver a karate chop, and her telling me, “All I want is pure friendship!”

Then we went on our separate ways.

Wait a minute. What happened to the sign God gave me? I thought she was The One!

After downing my fifth case of beer (just kidding), I pondered over what went wrong. If prayer, the Bible, advisors, and even signs are not guaranteed to tell us who The One is, what will? Are we like lab rats in a maze, groping around until we get lucky and find that one true love?

When many people talk about *God’s will*, *God’s best*, or in this case, The One, they imagine some Master Plan or Blueprint that God has for our lives. And that includes God having one specific man or woman whom He wants us to marry.

No wonder many singles are scared stiff about making a choice! They are afraid that they will marry the wrong person, and thus miss out on God's will and be doomed to a second-best life. If they choose not to marry, what if God wants them to get married? Then, they feel that they are disobeying God!

My search eventually led me to an insightful book entitled *Decision Making and the Will of God* by Garry Friesen and J. Robin Maxson. They argue something like this: Many people see God's will as one point. Hit that one point and you're in God's will. Miss that point and you're not. But the alternative view is to imagine God's will as a circle. Its boundaries are God's moral will and general principles. Good choices are within that circle. Bad choices are outside. It's that simple. And liberating.

Therefore, the question is not "How do I know God's will?" but "How can I make the best choices?" This takes wisdom and accepts the existence of alternatives. If I have three options to achieve a goal, what is the smartest move that I should take?

This takes the pressure off the man who agonizes, “Whom shall I marry? Aida, Lorna, or Fe?” or the woman who pulls at her hair, saying, “I have three eligible suitors! Which one should I accept?”

Any man or woman whom you choose to marry is okay, as long as that person is within those boundaries. In other words, The One is whom you have decided, as long as that person satisfies certain criteria. You had several options, then settled on one and, by definition, closed the door on the rest.

Is it also God’s will? In the sense that He permitted you to arrive at that choice. There is tension here, but think of it this way: We chose to marry so-and-so and if the marriage doesn’t turn out well, we cannot blame God for it.

Many years after my debacle of a “sign,” God led me to a wonderful woman. Her name is Lucy.

Should we get married? This time we sought as much wisdom as we could. During the whole thing, we were not anguished with questions like: “Is this person God’s will for me to marry?” or “What if I will be marrying

the wrong person?” Rather, we came to believe that getting married was the wisest and joyful thing to do. A decision, we are confident to this day, that is within the circle of God’s will. In this sense, we have found The One in each other.

Now, we come to the rationale of this book. What are those boundaries within which we are free to choose The One?

This book proposes five criteria that you must observe when it comes to The One. If the person whom you are considering passes all five, then he or she is a wise choice. You don’t have to worry about missing out on God’s best or not. If you have two or more candidates that meet all the criteria, then you have what I call a good problem.

On the other hand, marry someone who fails in at least one of the five criteria, especially the fifth, then you marry at your own peril.

So, what are those five?

How can we tell if he or she is The One?

Turn the page and let's begin!

Bottom line

Sometimes, the answers to our prayers in finding The One already lie within us. We just have to use our heads alongside our hearts.