

For young individuals preparing for marriage

Preparation for Marriage

**“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him”
(Psalms 34:8).**

Marriage is one of the greatest and most important events in our lives, so it cannot be anything less than a matter of great concern for young people about to embark on this journey. However, the reality we face is that proper preparation for marriage is not taking place despite the immense interest in it. Many people are more focused on emotions like "love" and practical wedding preparations rather than laying the true foundation of marriage. Yet, a marriage built on such non-essential and weak foundations easily crumbles when faced with the storms of hardship. The foundation of marriage is knowing that Jesus Christ is our Lord. It is believing and acknowledging the fact that our marriage is within the rule of our Father God and that our Lord, who knows and loves us best, gives us the best. On this foundation, practicing the commandments of Jesus Christ, such as the love of God and neighbor, as a married couple signifies a dedication to loving God and each other. Based on this dedication, experiencing the continuous grace of the Holy Spirit throughout married life is the essence. Only when we know Christ as our Lord does our marriage stand firmly on a solid rock.

Four P's to Keep in Mind Regarding Marriage

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:7-16).

1. Purpose: For the Glory of God
2. Principle: The Love of God the Father
3. Pattern: The Suffering of God the Son Jesus
4. Power: Fellowship with the God the Holy Spirit

More important than the act of marriage itself is understanding the sovereign plan and work of God in the encounter between the two individuals before they decide to marry. Knowing the providence, goodness, faithfulness, and grace of God in bringing two people together, as described in the Bible, is crucial. A marriage that lacks the experience of God's touch and goodness, carried out without recognizing His sovereign providence, is like a sailboat floating on a stormy sea. The Bible testifies that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8, 16) and, therefore, our marriages should be a process of applying and manifesting God's love for us. The principle of this love involves spouses dedicating themselves to each other, bearing the burdens of suffering together, and walking the path of the cross that Jesus walked. Marriage should be a vow to live

for the glory of God, expressing His love, committing to walk the path of Jesus' suffering together, and resolving to fulfill God's will in deep fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Only marriages built on such a solid foundation stand strong.

Importance of Being

“Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:21-24).

The first thing that men and women contemplating marriage should do is cultivate their own being. Only then can they truly see the essence of the other person, not just their outward actions but their very being (e.g., their humanity). Cultivating one's own being is something that should be done continuously even after marriage. Before marriage, when conflicts are scarce, the true nature of each other's being may be somewhat concealed. However, as couples live together and encounter numerous conflicts, the hidden aspects of each other gradually become exposed. It is through this process that we can better see each other's being. Focusing on preparing for marriage by striving to resemble each other in humanity and in the likeness of Jesus, and then living out married life with a focus on the presence of one another, we can witness, through God's grace, how sinners can navigate married life. Our being as Christians cannot be separated from the love of God. It is only when we practice the commandments of Jesus, such as the love of God and of neighbor, as an expression of our being of love, that we can truly experience joy and happiness. However, all superficial actions arising from a deficient being are meaningless and only shake the foundation of marriage. We need to seriously acknowledge the importance of being. Just as I find my being in the presence of God and strive to resemble Him, I must also treat my spouse in marriage as God treats me, learning from Him as we navigate the journey of married life.

Model of a Healthy Marriage Relationship

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior” (Ephesians 5:22-23).

In the current era, finding a model of a healthy marriage and family is challenging. Consequently, many Christian young people harbor negative thoughts about marriage. However, the fundamental reason for such negative thoughts stems from the curse resulting from the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the first couple in human history, as described in Genesis. Adam and Eve, who were supposed to be role models, brought destruction to the family by disobeying God's command and succumbing to sin.

Nevertheless, Christian couples should realize that they are no longer under that curse. We are followers of Jesus, who becomes the second or last Adam, and we, as “the church,” become His bride. This is the blessing we receive in the era of the New Covenant. Ephesians 5:22-33 describes the beautiful marriage that God intended before the fall of Adam and Eve, portraying the model of a marriage relationship that we, living in the era of the New Covenant, should aspire to.

Balanced Relationship

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Spouses are designed to rely on each other. However, if one relies more on their spouse than on God, it is impossible to build a healthy family. In relying on our spouses, we need to maintain balance. Over-reliance on each other to the extent of becoming independent from God is not a healthy marital relationship. There should be a certain degree of freedom between husband and wife. The purpose of this freedom is to allow each other the freedom to approach God. It means that while spouses rely on each other, there is a need for independent aspects.

Thinking of a triangle, it is easy to understand that giving each other space means creating a free space. If we label the top corner as God, the left corner as the husband, and the right corner as the wife, the husband respects the wife's personal relationship with God, allowing her the freedom to approach Him. Similarly, the wife allows the husband the freedom to build a relationship with God. When each spouse restrains excessive dependence on each other and allows space for relying on God first, a balanced and healthy marriage can thrive on a foundation of true intimacy and connection.

Purpose of Marriage 1

“The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:18-24).

“neither was man created for woman, but woman for man” (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Christian young people need to understand the clear reasons and purposes for "why they should get married." Genesis 2:18-24 and 1 Corinthians 11:9 both state that God created woman with the purpose of being a suitable helper for man. As a result, men and women naturally have different orientations – men

needing help and women having the need to provide that help. Marriage is not simply about men and women coming together to love each other and live happily. The reason God joins us in marriage is so that the two individuals, as a united body, can fulfill the divine mission of marriage and collaborate in carrying out God's will.

Husbands should recognize the need for help from their wives, while wives should clearly understand the need to help their husbands. God's intention in bringing two individuals together in marriage is for them to cooperate in fulfilling the divine purpose of marriage. Couples should acknowledge that mutual help is crucial – husbands recognizing the need for help from their wives, and wives understanding the importance of helping their husbands.

Purpose of Marriage 2

“Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth” (Malachi 2:15).

The second purpose of marriage is to raise godly children. Malachi 2:15 states that God desires to have godly offspring. It is our responsibility to bear children intentionally. Couples who deliberately choose not to have children are committing a sin. Raising the children we bear into godly individuals is a challenging and significant responsibility. If the process of married life involves realizing how challenging it is for a man and a woman to love each other according to the teachings of the Bible, then raising children in a manner aligned with God's will after having them is also a realization of how difficult and challenging it is in married life.

Through this process, as husbands and wives, and as parents, we come to understand the immense and heavy responsibility placed on us. We cannot help but lean on God and pray, recognizing the enormity of our role. Living in an era where the second purpose of marriage, "raising godly children," is challenged under the guise of economic reasons or self-fulfillment, Christian young people must approach marriage with prayer, seeking to live in obedience to God's will, and embracing the responsibilities of married and family life.

Purpose of Marriage 3

“But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2-3).

The third purpose of marriage is to avoid sexual immorality. In 1 Corinthians 7:2-3, it states, “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.” The issue of sexual immorality is often associated with physical union before or outside of marriage, but it can also be seen as a matter of the heart and thoughts prior to physical connection. This is because immorality that arises in the heart and thoughts precedes physical union.

In our current society, like Sodom and Gomorrah, people seek sexual pleasure outside the beautiful marital relationship that God has created, pursuing their own desires. Christian young people preparing for marriage must safeguard their purity for the spouse that God has prepared for them. Married Christian couples should responsibly fulfill each other's needs and obligations. They should become individuals who understand and meet each other's sexual satisfaction needs. Husbands should strive to understand their wives and make efforts to satisfy their needs, while wives should acknowledge their husbands' sexual needs and strive to satisfy them. This is what Paul is referring to as mutual obligations in 1 Corinthians 7:3.