

“Future Brides”

Preparing for Marriage in a Fairy Tale Free Zone

Psalm 45:11

**“The King is enthralled by your beauty;
Honor Him, for He is your Lord.” (NIV)**

“Someday my prince will come”. Snow White

Have you dreamed of Prince Charming?

Name some ways that American culture influences your thinking and ideas about romance & marriage.

Martha Peace Once Said: “In my ministry, I basically counsel just two types of women – Those who are single and desperately wishing to be married, and _____.

The truth is, most all of us dream of our wedding day! We are looking for Prince Charming, who will ride up on a white horse, rescue us from our singleness – and anything else we need rescuing from, and fulfill all our dreams.

As we grow into adulthood, we exchange “fairy tale” fantasies for grown up fantasies. Disney is replaced by Jane Austen.

“The reason I invented Mr. Darcy is because no such man truly exists”. Jane Austen

ROMANCE – The truth is that what we see in our culture, read in books, and see in films is strictly romance.

New American Heritage Dictionary – “a strong, usually short-lived attachment or enthusiasm”

What we call LOVE is usually one set of glands calling to another.

In many cases, it is really LUST – which is the great counterfeit of LOVE.

BETH’S STORY – What I grew up believing and expecting...
My ONE YEAR POLICY

Pause Button –

Before we begin to look at what God has to say about marriage, about our identity, and how His word directs and prepares us to be wives, let’s get some perspective.

Consider the Benefits & Freedom of the time & culture you live in

“For such a time as this...” Esther 4:13

These were the words of Esther’s uncle, Mordecai, who was reminding her that her life and circumstances were in God’s hands for His purposes.

WHAT IS GENUINE LOVE? John 3:13 -
God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son....”

MARRIAGE IS ABOUT THE GOSPEL!!

“The Gospel is the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation *for* the gospel, presentation *of* the Gospel or participation *in* the Gospel. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Gospel provides an ultimate solution for our sin – for today, for tomorrow, for the day we stand before God, and forever.”

Accurately understanding and applying the Gospel *is* the Christian life.
The Gospel is the fountain of a thriving marriage.

Marriage is not just invented by God – it belongs to God. He has unique claim over its design, purpose, and goals. It actually exists for Him more than it exists for you and me and our spouses.

(Dave Harvey)

Psalm 34:3 “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name TOGETHER”!

A pair of sinners, washed by the blood of Jesus Christ, living to extol the transforming power of the Gospel in everyday life is one of the most powerful tools in the hands of the Redeemer. Not only will these partners help to sanctify one another, but they will be a beacon of hope and an example of grace to a lost and dying world that believes in counterfeit love.

That being said – how do you begin to prepare yourself for a marriage that will glorify God??

**TO BE PREPARED TO BE AN EARTHLY BRIDE YOU MUST UNDERSTAND
YOUR IDENTITY -
YOU ARE THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST!!**

“Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father’s house. The King is enthralled by your beauty; honor Him, for He is your Lord.” Psalm 45:10,11

References to us as the Bride of Christ

Jer. 2:2; Hos.2;19; Isa. 62:5; Eph. 5:31,32; Rev. 19:7,9; 21:9

Bridal love for the Lord is not the same as the love between a bride and a bridegroom in human relationship. It is divine love – pure and genuine and truly satisfying.

First love – true bridal love for Jesus...is soundly rooted in repentance, which means seeing your sins. Genuine, pure, ardent love for Jesus grows out of contrition and the experience of His forgiveness, as Holy Scripture demonstrates in the story of the great sinner who came to love her Savior with a deep devotion (Luke 7:47). And this love is a divine gift of grace.

Human love, even if it is genuine, can never be more than a pale shadow of the true bridal love between the soul and our Lord Jesus Christ. This divine love is indescribably deeper and more ardent. It is truly the “pearl of great value”, the “treasure hidden in the field”. No price is too high to gain it.

*Heavenly radiance rest upon
Christ's bride arrayed in splendour.
Cherubim and seraphim
Make haste to pay her honour.
All of heaven beholds in awe
The bride, so pure and lovely,
With reverence saluting her,
Who now reflects God's beauty.*

*But the bride has eyes alone
For Jesus, her Beloved.
Feasting on His countenance,
Her soul is captivated.
She gazes to her heart's content
Upon this sight most lovely,
Lost in worship, awe and praise –
Fulfilled are all her longings
(M. Basilea Schlink)*

I am to love my husband the way that Jesus Christ, who died for me, has loved me. I am to lay down my life for my husband. I am to spend time meditating on the ways the Lord loves me, and then I am to follow in His footsteps. Ephesians 1:3-14 gives us a picture of His love:

- He blessed me with every spiritual blessing.
- He chose me before the world was even founded.
- He called me to holiness and blamelessness.
- He predestined me to be adopted as His child.
- The intention of His will was kind.
- He freely bestowed grace on me through our Beloved.
- He redeemed me by the shedding of His blood.
- He forgave my trespasses.
- He revealed His will and kind intentions to me.
- He gave me an inheritance in Him.

“Being your husband’s companion-helper is much more than making his breakfast and sitting with him as he cheers on his favorite football team. It’s a holy calling and one that you’ve been designed to fulfill, all for your joy and God’s glory.”

(Elyse Fitzpatrick)

Proverbs 31

The Proverbs 31 woman is a wife. (vv. 10-11, 23, 28b) and mother (vv. 15, 18a). She is not autonomous but is part of an extended community. In her domestic role (governing her household) she complements her husband in his public role (governing the city) (v. 23).

- She cares for the needy (v. 20)
- She manages her household (vv. 15,21,27)
- She is someone whose works are recognized in the marketplace and public square (vv. 18,24,31)

She is not a “housewife” – someone who is chained in a kitchen, “barefoot and pregnant.” Her domain extends to the world, and she influences the larger society. With her husband she is a vice regent of creation.

What is she made of?

Her virtues are many:

- Reputation (vv. 12,31)
- Discernment (vv. 13,16)
- Work Ethic (vv. 15-18;27)
- Entrepreneurial (vv. 16,24)
- Profitable (v. 18)
- Compassionate (v. 20)
- Prepared (v. 21,25)
- Personal Strength (v. 25a)
- Dignity (v. 25a)
- Wise (v. 26)
- Fear of the Lord (v. 30b)

Her skills are also many:

- Weaving and Sewing (vv. 13, 19, 22, 24)
- Investing (v. 16)
- Farming (v. 16b)
- Fabrics & Interior Design (v. 22)
- Sales (v. 24)
- Communication (v. 26a)
- Education/Instruction (v. 26b)
- Management (v. 27)
- Parenting (v. 28)

She has dignity because of both her being and her function. This is a woman who understands that her home is the center of creation and culture. Her task is nothing less than helping her husband to build a strong and godly family and society. She is truly *more precious than rubies* - (v. 10). (*Darrow Miller*)

Disciplines of the Future Bride:

Believe Your Bridegroom (Eph. 1: Col. 1-2; Rom. 1, 3, 5, 8)

Each day, remind yourself of God's amazing love for you through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Preach the Gospel to yourself DAILY! Learn to see the glories of God's love!

Embrace Accountability (Prov 19:20; 11:14; 23:23; 13:10)

Listen to Family & Trusted Friends – they often know you better than you know yourself and will truly want God's best for you.

Make sure your friends have the same standards for godliness that you have.

"Show me with whom you walk, and I will show you who you are."

Practice Prayer (Jms. 1:6; Ps. 105:1-4; Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 4:14-16; Jms. 5:16; 1 Thes. 5:17-18)

Discipline yourself to pray daily! Use the Word as your guide & pour out your heart to God! If you haven't already begun to pray for your future husband, begin today!

Passionate About Purity (Rom. 13:14; Jms. 1:21; 1 Thes. 4:3-6; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 16:19-20; Eph. 5:3)

Stay away from films, reading materials and companions who do not honor God in purity.

Every moment of compromised purity will work to rob intimacy & joy from your marriage bed.

C.S. Lewis says: "Eros ceases only to be a devil when it ceases to be a god."

Cultivate Contentment (Hew. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Prov. 16:8; 17:1; Ecc. 2:24; Phil. 4:11-12)

1 Pet. 3:3-4 – For your beauty should not come from outward adornment...

Psalm 139:13-14 – You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

There is no greater "turn off" than vanity!

Model Modesty (Isa. 3:16-23; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; Prov. 31:30; 1 Sam. 16:7; Luke 16:15)

While there is nothing virtuous about being completely unfashionable, the most appealing thing we can do is be feminine. Femininity, not flaunting, should be our goal.

Savor Simplicity (Matt. 6:19-21; 6:33; Mark 4:7,18-20; Prov. 15:16-17)

Seek God's Kingdom first! Learn to live joyfully, gratefully, and with less!

Willing To Wait: (Jer. 29:11; Isa. 40:31; Prov. 3:5-6)

Trust God for His timing! He may have many things to teach you & show you about yourself before He brings you a mate.

What About A Broken Heart? (Ps. 43:18; 147:3; 51:17; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; John 14:1)

Why I Had A “ONE YEAR POLICY”!

Qualities to Look for in a Man:

- He is a genuine believer (2 Cor. 6:14) – To be unequally yoked is a sin against God – no matter how cute the guy is & how well he treats you!!
- He is going toward God! – Prayerfully – your spiritual equal or more!
- He loves the Body of Christ & The Word of God
- He has integrity
- He is trustworthy – mean what you say – do what you promise
- He shows respect for authority
- He is kind to all – even to strangers
- He is teachable
- He has faithful friends and strong accountability
- He is a servant – character is more important than title
- He understands that he – through the Holy Spirit - is preparing you to be a Bride of Christ

Q 14: If the husband is to treat his wife as Christ does the church, does that mean he should govern all the details of her life and that she should clear all her actions with him?

No. We may not press the analogy between Christ and the husband that far. Unlike Christ, all husbands sin. They are finite and fallible in their wisdom. Not only that, but also, unlike Christ, a husband is not preparing a bride merely for himself, but also for another, namely Christ. He does not merely act as Christ, he also acts for Christ. At this point he must not be Christ to his wife, lest he be a traitor to Christ. He must lead in such a way that his wife is encouraged to depend on Christ and not on himself. Practically, that rules out belittling supervision and fastidious oversight.

Even when acting as Christ, the husband must remember that Christ does not lead the church as His daughter, but as his wife. He is preparing her to be a fellow-heir, not a servant girl (Rom. 8:17) Any kind of leadership that, in the name of Christ-like headship, tends to foster in a wife a personal immaturity or spiritual weakness or insecurity through excessive control, picky supervision, or oppressive domination has missed the point of the analogy of Ephesians 5. Christ does not create that kind of wife.

Questions and Answers: John Piper & Wayne Grudem
www.cbmw.com

Resources used for this workshop & others to consider:

“By Design” *Susan Hunt*

“When Sinners Say I Do” *Dave Harvey*

“A Marriage Without Regrets” *Kay Arthur*

“Helper By Design” *Elyse Fitzpatrick*

“Because He Loves Me” *Elyse Fitzpatrick*

“Nurturing the Nations” *Darrow Miller*

“Feminine Appeal” *Carolyn Mahaney*

“Radical Womanhood” *Carolyn McCulley*

“Gift-Wrapped By God” *Linda Dillow & Lorraine Pintus*

“Bride of Jesus Christ” *M. Basilea Schlink*

Beth Hancock – Bride of Jesus Christ, earthly wife of John Hancock

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