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Text: Proverbs 18:22

Title: When are you Ready for Marriage?

Place: Cloverdale

It is obvious that some people may enter into marriage too quickly.

Some are not prepared for all the changes that marriage demands.

It is no light thing for two people to cease all other attachments, pledge to live to live in a covenant of **love, faithfulness and loyalty** to each other while they live under the same roof.

Be not deceived by the movie world, which gives the impression that the story ends at the wedding ceremony and the couple always live happily ever after.

Today, in North America, 50% of marriages end up in separation or divorce. The stats among evangelical Christians are not much better.

Then there are marriages where both man and wife they choose to stay together and stick it out, but are totally miserable,

The marital difficulties of the Greek Philosopher, Socrates' are well known. Out of them he coined the sage advice:

"By all means marry, If you get a good wife, you will become very happy; if you get a bad one you will become a philosopher - and that is good for every man."

This is a good reason for premarital counseling, which, if nothing else, is to put the brakes on any couple whose eyes are filled with moonshine, and to make them plan properly for married life.

Most couples are consumed about plans for their marriage day, but do not plan much on how to live together afterwards.

When the honeymoon is over, routine soon kicks in and most meals mean beans, and when the rent bills and the car bills pile up, things can turn sour, - especially if you have pooled your money and the bank account is empty.

When you put two sinners in such close proximity you must expect that there will be issues to work through.

George Ade was fond of telling the following story,

"I was sitting with a little girl of eight one afternoon. She looked up from the copy of Hans Andersen she was reading, and asked innocently, "Does m-i-r-a-g-e spell marriage, Mr. Ade? "Yes, my child," said he."

The best hope for a Christian married couple is the Lord in the midst. There is hope when two hearts that are surrendered to seek the will of the Lord through His word.

But this demands maturity in God's truth. It requires that both husband and wife have an open mind to what God is saying in His word on how to live together.

I pray that this talk will help each one here to do some straight thinking on this subject of **When are you ready for marriage.**

<p>1. YOU ARE READY FOR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU HAVE STUDIED AND PRAYED THE MATTER THROUGH.</p>
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You will not find book chapter and verse for when to marry nor for whom to marry, but you will find definite Biblical principles which you must follow.

[1] **It is the general will of God to be married. Prov. 18:22.** The general command is to **"be fruitful and multiply"** - have children. Exceptions may be due to ill-health, War, Or Vocation - some choose not to marry in order to serve the Lord as missionaries. One big rule **is never say, "never"**.

[2] **The Lord promises special guidance to help find a wife.** Remember the story of Abraham's servant going to find a wife for Isaac.*** **Genesis 24.***** That is God at work in providence. Every happily married couple has their own story of God's **Prov. 3:5,6.** There is no greater issue for guidance than to find a godly wife/ husband.

[3] **In seeking a wife general rules of compatibility are to be followed.** The more similarities you share in all the small stuff of life the better - food, fun, sports, life's interests.

Many young people find their life's partners at school or work for this reason - they have their world of employment to talk about.

That is called "match making". Some think they are pro's at match making. It is a dangerous past time. Why take the wrap for the pain inflicted on couples who turn out to be miserable!

Go to the Bible. Go to well tried and tested methods of godly advice.

2.	YOU ARE READY FOR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU HAVE FOUND A WIFE WHO IS A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN
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[1] A Christian is only to marry a believer - seek a partner who is in the Lord (1Cor. 7:39).

Amos 3:3 plainly teaches that two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. This will require much more than a lip profession to Christianity. It will demand that you find a wife who is a Biblical Christian with all the marks of conversion and growth as an earnest believer in the Lord Jesus.

[2] Beware of 'rice' Christian's who will profess anything to have their desired partner. This term comes from missionary work where the poor peasants would agree to any teaching in order to receive a bowl of rice.

Even if the person, who may be a future potential partner for you makes a profession of faith, be sure to make no marital commitments until sufficient time passes to produce good solid fruit.

The question to ask is this: **Does this person truly look to the Bible for all of life's answers?**

[3] Beware that all churches are not equal. When the person comes from another church family where doctrine and worship is different you must be very careful and be slow to ascertain if he or she is truly a Biblical Christian.

(5CS of marriage)

Marriage

Be greed on Amos 3:3, Ephesians 5:18 - 33, Colossians 3:12-21

1. Christ

2. Covenant of marriage. God ordained.

Life long

Roles

Morals - Fidelity - Trust - Testimony of your marriage

3. Church - united on doctrine and practice

4. Children - will of God

5. Calling - work service, location.

3. YOU ARE READY FOR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU ARE READY TO BE A SPIRITUAL LEADER

A greater degree of maturity is required to be a husband than to be a single man. You are no longer free to run your own life as you please. A husband has to step up to lead and be a spiritual head of the new family he is instrumental in forming.

[1] **This will require time.**

You cannot be consumed with a life of sports, or hanging out with old friends while your wife is at home, or forced to go find her own alternate friendship. Every marriage demands time. The number one reason for marriage failure is lack of time investment.***

[2] **This will require steadfastness in life's habits.**

Dare I use the word routine? When two people get married and they follow such topsy-turvy schedules that they don't know from one day to the next when or where they might see each other, they were not ready for the homelife that marriage requires.

Every new marriage requires a new home. Home life should be central and the focal point of the new life they are establishing.***

I would also add in **the family budget here.**

The husband is normally the prime breadwinner. He will therefore determine the income he brings into the home. He needs to be able to organise in reasonable detail the spending pattern of the monthly expenses.

The wife might do the bookkeeping and indeed it is healthy for her to be involved in some way to understand the finances of the home. Too many wives have been widowed and left with no notion on where to start.

- **If you cannot manage money you are not ready for marriage.** That doesn't mean great income at this time. Some proceed to marry before there is much income, but money management is a definite requirement for a happy and secure marriage.

If the wife can add to that - good and fine, but each person needs to know what the budget permits and have the discipline to keep to it. It is not an easy thing for a banker, or a husband to have to chop up credit cards!

[3] **This will require earnest Christian living.**

Eph. 5:25 calls you to love your wife as Christ loved the church. That is to care for her and give due attention to her needs. Next study we will look at the duties of husbands, then duties of wives. As head of the home, you will need to be the example and lead in the **discipline of Bible study and prayer** carrying the burden of ministering in the home.

To look at the flip side of this question, the question to any Christian woman is, 'Are you ready to submit to the leadership of that man whom you would consider marrying?'

The Bible calls you to submit to his guidance and lifestyle. The Bible calls you to support his goals, dreams, aspirations and his desire for God.

Where there is no respect, or confidence that the husband will lead you in a godly direction submission may well be impossible for you, therefore, marriage to that man would be wrong for you.

4. YOU ARE READY FOR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU ARE SETTLED ON YOUR CHURCH HOME AND ITS DOCTRINAL VALUES

This may seem secondary to marriage, but it is essential to have unity of purpose on church fellowship and church discipline. This will act as a test of each person's spiritual state.

Where church doctrine and values are sacrificed on the altar of marriage, that marriage is already in spiritual trouble.

Usually the man will give the lead in this matter, so the wife needs to be sure that she can fully support the form of worship and doctrine in the church where he asks her to attend. This becomes a very important aspect of submission as a conflict may arise here.

Is the wife going to submit to her Saviour as her head, or to her earthly head, her new husband?

While there may be toleration for things that are not fundamental to the faith it would be **impossible for a wife to agree to marry a man who would ask her to worship in an apostate church** or in a Charismatic church where the Word of God is misused. Even to attend a contemporary church with CCM and liberal worship styles would be a compromise of conscience.

5. YOU ARE READY FOR MARRIAGE WHEN YOU ARE READY TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS BIBLICALLY.

You might ask, What conflicts? You may be saying, there won't be any conflicts in my marriage. Well I don't want to burst your bubble and I pray that your marriage will be the best ever, but it is nigh impossible for two fallen human beings to live together and not have differences.

Usually it comes down to pride, or selfishness and in some cases it is down-right sin.

So, there has to be a willingness and a true desire to face the issues in light of what the Bible teaches.

Where both husband and wife are willing to do that there is hope for a way forward. And that readiness should be in place as a prevention against stress and strain. Otherwise things may boil to the point where each are frustrated and mad at each other.

The Bible gives answers to the great issues of life. The Bible keeps us on the same page on the great issues.

The Bible's answers are:

- a. **Submission**
- b. **Self-denial - What could be more Christ-like?**
- c. **Seeking God's glory first and foremost.**
- d. **Patience - what is not clear today may be much clearer in days to come. Give it time. Some difficult things in life you may pray over for a year before the way becomes clear.**
- e. **Pray for the Lord's grace to bear the difficulty and bring about unity.**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity. He leads to reconcile and heal our hurts. Division is Satan's work.

Conc:

1. MARRIAGE IS HONOURABLE AND IS GOD'S GENERAL WILL
2. MARRIAGE IS THE UNION OF MAN AND WOMAN UNITED IN STEP WITH GODLY LIVING.
3. MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE.
4. MARRIAGE NEEDS INVESTMEMNT, OF TIME, TRUST TRIUMPH IN CHRIST. HE CAN MAKE YOU THE HUSBAND AND WIFE YOU NEED TO BE.

