

PRAYING THAT THEY WAIT TO MEET GOD'S PREPARED PARTNER FOR THEM

One of my favorite moments in ministry is when I stand up here with two trembling hearts standing before me at the wedding ceremony. May I remind you of what they agree to be at just one portion called the LIGHTING THE UNITY CANDLE:

The two outside candles have been lighted to represent your lives to this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going its separate way. To bring joy and radiance into your home, there must be the merging of these two flames into one.

From this time onward may your thoughts be for each other rather than for your individual selves; may your plans be mutual, your joys and sorrows shared.

Wow, every time I say that it gives me shivers of joy to think that is what our marriages are all about. The Lord has offered to each of us a choice. We can either choose to follow His plan or ours through life. One of the most visible of all our choices is the person we marry. The choice is either a marriage after our own heart or after God's own heart. The results are either

Remember you only get one chance in life to start with a wonderful Biblical marriage. It is worth the wait. Don't squander one of the greatest areas of life by doing your own thing instead of God's! I think the choice is yours. Where are you headed in your marriage and as a family this morning? You will never get to anywhere you are not headed right now! But if we aren't careful, what is the other choice? It is called unhappiness, unfaithfulness, hardness, and divorce.

There are over 111 Million¹ of us in America who are married. That is the majority or 56% of all over 18-year-old adults. Most of us this morning only faintly realize the dangerous climate we live in. We live in a culture soaked with the stain of divorce that has penetrated to the depths of all our institutions. Listen to a couple paragraphs from a book called **The Divorce Culture**².

"Divorce is now part of everyday American life. It is embedded in our laws and institutions, our manners and mores, our movies and television shows, our novels and children's storybooks, and our closest and most important relationships. Indeed, divorce has become so pervasive that many people naturally assume it has seeped into the social and cultural mainstream over a long period of time. Yet this is not the case. Divorce has become an American way of life only as the result of recent and revolutionary change.

For most of the nation's history, divorce was a rare occurrence and an insignificant feature of family and social relationships. In the first sixty years of the twentieth century, divorce became more common, but it was hardly commonplace. *In 1960, the divorce rate stood at a still relatively modest level of nine per one thousand married couples.* [emphasis added] After 1960, however, the rate accelerated at a dazzling pace. It doubled in roughly a decade and continued its upward climb until the early 1980s, when it stabilized at the highest level among advanced Western societies. As a consequence of this sharp and sustained rise, divorce moved from the margins to the mainstream of American life in the space of three decades.

Beginning in the late 1950s, Americans began to change their ideas about the individual's obligations to family and society. Broadly described, this change was away from an ethic of obligation to others and toward an obligation to self. I do not mean that people suddenly abandoned all responsibilities to others, but rather that they became more acutely conscious of their responsibility to attend to their own individual needs and interests. At least as important as the moral obligation to look after others, *the new thinking suggested, was the moral obligation to look after oneself.* [emphasis added]

¹ Latest Census figures also reflect an average of 950,000 divorces per year, an average of 2.3 million marriages per year and at present 10% of the population of adults in the US are divorced and not remarried.

² THE DIVORCE CULTURE: *Rethinking Our Commitments to Marriage and Family*, by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc. New York 1998

People began to judge the strength and "health" of family bonds according to their capacity to promote individual fulfillment and personal growth. The family began to lose its separate place and distinctive identity as the realm of duty, service, and sacrifice. The conception of divorce as both an individual right and an inner experience merged with and reinforced the new ethic of obligation to the self. In family relationships, one had an obligation to be attentive to one's own feelings and to work toward improving the quality of one's inner life. This conception of divorce strongly argued for removing the social, legal, and moral impediments to the free exercise of the individual right to divorce.

So, how do we pray for our children if we are parents? And how do we direct our lives if we are young people? And how do we live together if we are married today? Or what do we look for if we are single and waiting today? We are studying Prayer as the key to raising, nurturing, and launching children that please the Lord. We are learning how to pray for our children.

WE MUST PRAY FOR REALITY IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE:

- 1. SEEING THEM GENUINELY SAVED.**
- 2. SEEING THEM LOVING GOD'S WORD.**
- 3. SEEING THEM LIVING IN VICTORY.**
- 4. SEEING THEM THINKING OF HEAVEN.**
- 5. SEEING THEM FINDING SIN REPULSIVE.**
- 6. SEEING THEM RESPONDING TO GOD.**

WE MUST PRAY FOR INTEGRITY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE:

- 1. SEEING THEM MAINTAINING A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.**
- 2. SEEING THEM LEARNING TO STAND ALONE.**
- 3. SEEING THEM SEEKING TO STAY PURE.**
- 4. SEEING THEM CULTIVATING A SERVANT'S HEART.**
- 5. SEEING THEM AVOIDING BITTERNESS IN TRIALS.**

WE MUST PRAY FOR STABILTY IN THEIR RELATIONAL LIFE

- 1. SEEING THEM LOVING THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.**

2. **SEEING THEM TRSUTING GOD WITH HARD SITUATIONS AND NOT REBELING.**
3. **SEEING THEM LOVING THE WAY GOD MADE THEM AS MEN AND WOMEN.**
4. **SEEING THEM WAITING TO MEET GOD'S CHOSEN LIFE PARTNER FOR THEM.**
 - o A HUSBAND/WIFE IS A GIFT FROM THE LORD. Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a *wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.* (NIV)
 - o A GOOD HUSBAND/WIFE IS REALLY A GIFT FROM THE LORD. Proverbs 19:13-14 A foolish son is the ruin of his father, And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping. 14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But *a prudent wife is from the LORD.*
 - o A GOOD HUSBAND/WIFE IS PRICELESS. Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can *find a virtuous wife?* For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband *safely trusts her;* So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. (NKJV)
 - o BUT - WE MAY ONLY MARRY A BELIEVER. 2 Corinthians 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;* for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Here we go, into God's Word to find all the answers from the Author and establisher of Marriage Himself. Lets turn back to the 1st book of the Bible Genesis. As parents pray that your children:

1. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON WHO WANTS TO FOLLOW GOD'S RULES FOR A WONDERFUL MARRIAGE. Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."
2. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A GODLY PERSON WHO WILL CORRESPONDS TO A GODLY PARTNER. Genesis 2:20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper **comparable** to him.
3. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A GODLY PERSON WHO WILL BE GLUED TO A GODLY HUSBAND OR WIFE. Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and **be joined** to his wife, and they

shall become one flesh. *By the way a big part of the glue is the sexual intimacy marriage provides. Have you ever licked and envelope or pulled the sealer tape, sealed it and then remembered something else and unsealed it? It doesn't work the second or third time does it? Don't ruin the glue of your marriage by playing with it or you will find that you are not secure in your marriage, glued together as one. Your husband or wife should be the only person you have ever experienced physical intimacy with. The first one you have loved, touched, held, and seen in any intimate way. Anything less than that will spell woes, pains, troubles, and grief for a lifetime.*

4. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON WHO LIKES TO BE AT HOME AND NOT ALWAYS RUNNING. Deuteronomy 6:7 **You shall teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them *when you sit in your house*, when you *walk by the way*, when *you lie down*, and when *you rise up*. *By the way, all of those are hard to do if you don't eat together as a family, you don't spend time together, you don't put them to bed, and don't get them up.*
5. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON WHO LOVES CHILDREN AND WANTS TO TEACH THEM. Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall **teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; **and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.**
6. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON THAT WANTS A PURE HOME. Deuteronomy 6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates; 6:14 **You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you**; 7:25-26 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26 **Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house**, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed

thing. Psalm 106:35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works;

7. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON WHO KEEPS THEIR WORD.. Psalm 15: 4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; **He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;**

8. **BE** (if you are married), **BECOME** (if you are at home or single and waiting) A PERSON COMMITTED TO STAY MILES AWAY FROM THE WICKED PERSON OF PROVERBS. Proverbs 5:1-3 **My son**, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: 2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. 3 **For the lips of a strange woman** drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: Proverbs 7: 1,10-11 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. 10 And, behold, there met him **a woman with the attire of an harlot**, and subtle of heart. 11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

The outlook for a joy filled lifelong marriage is bleak without the Lord! To help us, God has left a colorful guide to marriage; it is a timeless list of personalities to avoided at all costs, and personalities to be attracted toward. This list is in the Bible. Nestled among the 66 books of God's Word are the 31 chapters, 915 verses and over 15,000 words of the Book of Proverbs. This week I poured over this book and found there are over 200 verses that actually declare what good men and women, boys and girls look and act like, and what the ungodly opposites look and act like. Have you refreshed your understanding of what the Lord in His infinite wisdom has said about this very practical and relevant area?

So for us this list would express what we should be and what we should avoid.

God's Word goes so far as to even identify what type of person we should avoid, stay away from, and especially never consider as a viable marriage partner. The list is timeless, and can be your guide to a joyous Biblical marriage. How about taking a look at some of those 200 verses with me this morning? Let's open to Proverbs chapter 1.

GOOD BOYS AND MEN LOOK AND ACT LIKE THIS

Listen to what God says we can be by His grace. This is what you should want to be, what we should want to be around, what we should be drawn toward:

1. **Seek to become a man who is Wise** (1.5) Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel. **The Lord has already told us in James 3.17 that this wise man has wisdom from above. He is characterized as pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to talk things over with, full of mercy and wanting to do good.**
2. **Seek to become a man who is Happy** (3.13) Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. **The Sermon on the Mount says it all. Happy are the pure in heart, Happy are the meek, Happy are the humble, Happy are the peace makers, Happy are the righteous seekers, and Happy are those who are hungry for God.**
3. **Seek to become a man who is Blessed** (8.34) Proverbs 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. **As Psalm 1 says the Blessed Man is rooted deep in God's Word, the Blessed Man is full of God's fruit, and the Blessed Man is won't walk, or stand, or sit with those who mock God. And on that point, parents are you aware that your teen aged children sit week after week whispering, passing notes, laughing, and doing everything but paying attention? They should sit with you until they are mature enough to act honorably and respectfully out of your presence.**
4. **Seek to become a man who is Just** (9.9) Proverbs 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. **This quality of being just is like the English word 'straight'. This man is straight – in his talk, walk, habits, convictions. You know who he is and where he is going.**
5. **Seek to become a man who is Merciful** (11.17) Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man does good for his own soul, But he who is cruel troubles his own flesh. **Hitler surrounded himself with men who were evil, and cruel. Together they made the darkest blot yet seen in history. Stay away from those who delight in cruel words, attitudes, and actions.**
6. **Seek to become a man who is Sowing righteousness** (11.18) Proverbs 11:18 The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward. **What we plant we reap. Sow secret sins and they come back at harvest time. Sow in godliness and life gets sweeter and sweeter.**
7. **Seek to become a man who is Good** (12.2) Proverbs 12:2 A good man obtains favor from the Lord, But a man of wicked intentions He

will condemn. Remember real goodness is a fruit of God present within a person's life. There is no clearer indicator of what a man will be like than his goodness level. Is he drawn toward what is good or evil? Few people turn out very far from where they are headed right now. Change your direction, turn toward the Lord who is good if you are not facing Him and headed toward Him today.

8. **Seek to become a man who is Rooted in righteousness** (12.3) Proverbs 12:3 A man is not established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous cannot be moved. As Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17.8 both say, righteousness holds us firmly in the place where God can make us flourish fruitfully and securely.
9. **Seek to become a man who is Righteous in every day life** (12.10) Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. An animal might have been his transportation – so the Lord should be evident in your car. How you drive, keep up, and decorate your car declares a lot about you. Also an animal might have been his work. God says righteousness invades all of life even the barnyard (or work). A righteous man exhibits the Lord in how he treats the indefensible, the weak, the common.
10. **Seek to become a man who is Prudent** (12.16) Proverbs 12:16 A fool's wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame. Another fruit of God living within is self control. A fool lets it all out, vents, rages, carries on. The prudent man knows how to respond in hard, difficult or shameful times.
11. **Seek to become a man who is Diligent** (12.24) Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor. Proverbs describes the lazy a.k.a. sluggards 14 times. That is a study in itself. How much heartache would be avoided if a lazy man was not an option. Laziness seems to only grow.
12. **Seek to become a man who is Good** (14.14) Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above. The surest sign of danger in a man is when you detect that he is full of himself. He talks about himself, shows himself off, promotes himself, and on and on he goes. This is a life that is sliding backward towards an abyss, don't attach yourself to such a person or you will be pulled down and into his abyss.
13. **Seek to become a man who is Wisely Cautious** (14.16; also 12.8) Proverbs 14:16 A wise man fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident. Brashness, overconfidence, and foolhardiness are not noble virtues.
14. **Seek to become a man who is Following the way of the upright** (15.19) Proverbs 15:19 The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway. Here is

another one of the 14 verses containing 'lazy man' warnings. The way of the righteous is a path that God designs, and the wise follow. It is an exhilarating life of adventure, excitement, and wonders – walking on the high places of the earth as Isaiah describes it. But the wicked in all their seeming gaiety are actually walking through a hedge of thorns. Like cut, scrapes, scratches, and tears them up with every step. Which path do you want to take?

15. **Seek to become a man who is Wise son** (15.20) Proverbs 15:20 A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother. Watch carefully how a boy relates to his parents. What he was at home will touch his life with blessing or lacking all the days of his life.
16. **Seek to become a man who is Humble** (18.12) Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility. The key to God's blessing is a humble life. Haughtiness invites disaster.
17. **Seek to become a man who is Excellent** (22.29) Proverbs 22:29 Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men. The mark of an excellent man, who will excel in whatever he does is that he practices, and perfects a skill in his life. There is no limit God says to what I can do with one who works hard at what he does.
18. **Seek to become a man who is Upright** (29.27) Proverbs 29:27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.

BAD BOYS AND MEN LOOK AND ACT LIKE THIS

Now, for the other side of the fence. What type of man would God say to stay away from, avoid imitating and setting any attention or affection upon? Here is the list:

1. **Beware of becoming a Perverse speaker** (2.12) Proverbs 2:12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things. This is one whose mouth is familiar with words that are off color, smutty, innuendo, vulgar, and crass.
2. **Beware of becoming a Wicked Person**(5.22) Proverbs 5:22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. To this man God, God's Word, God's worship, holiness, purity – are all repulsive and a cause for mockery. A wicked person easily mocks discipline, they mock humility, they mock respect and they mock authority.
3. **Beware of becoming a Worthless Person** (6.12) Proverbs 6:12 A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth. This

type of man has no direction, no purpose, no goals, no plans, they are just wanderers through life looking for and finding bad stuff.

4. **Beware of becoming a Lustful Person** (6.26-27) Proverbs 6:26-27 For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. 27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? **Watch their eyes. What turns their head? If a man can't resist looking at a woman, married or not, he won't stop those wandering eyes, wandering hands, unsatisfied longings. A lustful man chases anyone for merely external appeal, looks for cheap and quick thrills; and will only grow more lustful, more unsatisfied, and more ungodly.**
5. **Beware of becoming an Empty Person** (7.7) Proverbs 7:7 And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding, **This is a person with no substance, no depth, no long term visible growth, no discipline, they work to buy shoes, to prowl the malls, to play video games, to waste their lives doing nothing of substance or worth.**
6. **Beware of becoming a Foolish Person** (10.23) Proverbs 10:23 To do evil is like sport to a fool, But a man of understanding has wisdom. **You can spot this type of fellow because he always clown around, always wants attention, always seeks to dominate conversations, always seeks to catch the spot light, shows off, brags, takes needless risks, always daring others, never respects authority. In fact, a foolish child is a child who cannot control themselves when outside the reach of their parents. Your child should sit with you until they are mature enough to sit alone without talking, writing notes, giggling, poking, and drawing others attention away from the teacher, the pastor, the leader, or the ministry.**
7. **Beware of becoming a Lazy Person** (10.26) Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him. **This is the fellow who lays around, avoids work, loafers, sleeps in, over eats, over sleeps, always late, always behind.**
8. **Beware of becoming a Cruel Person** (11.17) Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man does good for his own soul, But he who is cruel troubles his own flesh. **This type is mean to animals, mean to people, hurts with words, often angry.**
9. **Beware of becoming a Quick Tempered Person** (14.17) Proverbs 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated. **This is the red faced, hot worded, hasty and physical person who shoves, pushes and easily fights with those who get in his way.**
10. **Beware of becoming an Ungodly Person** (16.27) Proverbs 16:27 An ungodly man digs up evil, And it is on his lips like a burning fire. **This fellow rarely show hunger for God's Word, or concern for the**

Spirit of God, or passion for fellowship or worship of God. They have no song from the Lord on their heart, anger and self-centeredness are their habits.

11. **Beware of becoming a Perverse person** (16.28) Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends. *They are drawn to the gross, the violent, the borderline, they are un-shockable, un-embarrassable, unfeeling, and uncaring.*
12. **Beware of becoming a Violent person** (16.29) Proverbs 16:29 A violent man entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good. *They are fighters, argumentative, brash, harsh and hurtful.*
13. **Beware of becoming an Isolated Person** (18.1) Proverbs 18:1 A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. *They aren't socially responsive, withdrawn, introverted, and unwilling to talk to anyone but a few chosen ones. They stonewall parents, teachers, and anyone who seeks to guide them. They follow their own way and are headed to the Pit.*
14. **Beware of becoming a Guilty person** (21.8) Proverbs 21:8 The way of a guilty man is perverse; But as for the pure, his work is right. *They are under the load of guilt for things they have done and often are actually under conviction for disobeying the Lord.*
15. **Beware of becoming an Unfaithful person** (25.19) Proverbs 25:19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint. *They don't keep their word, they change their mind, they stand you up, keep you waiting, and are basically unreliable.*
16. **Beware of becoming a Unsatisfied person** (27.20) Proverbs 27:20 Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied. *They never get enough, never have enough, always want more, and even then – that is never enough. They are listless, restless, and helplessly held by their desires.*