

Preparing for Marriage (Men)

For men who are not married: God's design for marriage and how to prepare to be a godly husband.

What is God's Design for Marriage?

God's design for marriage is rooted in creation. In Genesis 2:24, marriage is described as a lifelong union between one man and one woman, where they leave their families, join together, and become "one flesh." This reflects a deep, intimate, and covenantal relationship ordained by God.

Key principles include:

- **Unity:** A husband and wife are to become one in purpose, commitment, and intimacy.
- **Exclusivity:** Marriage is a unique and exclusive relationship, intended to mirror God's faithful love.
- **Permanence:** Marriage is meant to be a lifelong covenant, not a temporary arrangement.
- **Companionship:** Marriage provides mutual support, love, and care between husband and wife.

Why is Marriage Important to God's Kingdom?

Marriage is important to God's kingdom because it reflects His nature and advances His purposes on earth. Here's how:

- 1 Reflecting God's Image:** In marriage, two distinct individuals come together as one, displaying the unity and diversity within God's own nature (Genesis 1:27).
- 2 Fulfilling His Mandate:** Through marriage, God provides a means for humanity to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28), raising children in a godly environment to continue His mission.
- 3 Building Strong Families:** Marriage forms the foundation of stable, godly families, which are essential for a healthy church and society.
- 4 Demonstrating the Gospel:** Marriage is a visible representation of the Gospel, as it points people to Christ's sacrificial love and the unity He desires with His Church.

How Does Marriage Reflect Christ's Relationship with the Church?

Ephesians 5:31-33 makes it clear that marriage is a profound mystery that reflects Christ's relationship with the Church:

- 1 Sacrificial Love:** Just as Christ gave Himself up for the Church, husbands are called to love their wives sacrificially, prioritizing her well-being above their own desires.
- 2 Unbreakable Covenant:** Marriage mirrors the covenantal relationship between Christ and His Church, demonstrating faithfulness and commitment.
- 3 Sanctification:** In the same way Christ sanctifies the Church, marriage provides a context for spiritual growth, where both husband and wife are refined to become

more Christ-like.

- 4 Unity:** Christ and the Church are one body, just as a husband and wife are united as "one flesh." This unity reflects the depth of God's love and the oneness believers have with Him.

Disclaimer: This is a high-level summary of a vast and profound topic. God's design for marriage encompasses deep theological truths and practical applications that go beyond what is covered here. Further study, prayer, and reflection are encouraged to gain a fuller understanding.

(1) What Does it Mean to Be a Godly Husband?

A godly husband reflects Christ's love for the Church in his relationship with his wife. This means sacrificially loving her, protecting her, and leading her with humility and grace. His role is rooted in God's Word and requires him to display Christ-like character, prioritize his wife's needs, and help her grow spiritually.

Biblical Characteristics of a Godly Husband:

1 Sacrificial Love:

- Ephesians 5:25-28 calls husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, giving Himself up for her. A godly husband prioritizes his wife's needs above his own, willing to make sacrifices for her well-being and spiritual growth.

2 Understanding and Honor:

- 1 Peter 3:7 instructs husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way, showing honor and recognizing them as co-heirs of God's grace. This means

being attentive, patient, and respectful in all interactions.

3 Gentle Leadership:

- Colossians 3:19 warns against harshness, reminding husbands to lead with kindness, not control or anger. A godly husband leads by example, modeling Christ's humility and servant-heartedness.

4 Spiritual Leadership:

- A godly husband is responsible for fostering a Christ-centered home. He leads his wife and family spiritually by prioritizing prayer, studying Scripture, and encouraging their walk with God.

Evaluation Questions for Self-Reflection:

Use these questions to examine your understanding and readiness to fulfill the role of a godly husband:

1 Do you demonstrate sacrificial love?

- Are you willing to put others' needs above your own, especially in your current relationships?
- What sacrifices are you making now to grow as a servant-leader?

2 Are you understanding and patient?

- How do you respond to conflict or frustration?
- Do you strive to understand and honor the women in your life (e.g., family members, friends)?

3 Are you leading with gentleness?

- Do you exhibit kindness, or do you struggle with harshness or impatience?

- How do you handle disagreements or emotional moments?

4 Are you preparing to lead spiritually?

- Are you consistent in your own walk with Christ through prayer, Bible study, and obedience?
- How would you encourage your wife's spiritual growth if you were married today?

Practical Assignment:

1 **Write a Summary:** Based on the Scriptures (Ephesians 5:25-28, 1 Peter 3:7, Colossians 3:19), write a brief summary of the qualities and responsibilities of a biblical husband.

- Include specific traits like sacrificial love, honor, and spiritual leadership.
- Highlight how these traits reflect Christ's love for the Church.

2 **Self-Evaluation:** Reflect on your current season of life. Answer the following:

- What areas do you already demonstrate Christ-like love and leadership?
- What areas do you need to work on to prepare to be a godly husband?

3 **Action Steps:**

- Identify two specific actions you can take this week to grow in one of the areas you feel weakest.
 - Examples: "Pray daily for the women in my life," "Resolve conflicts with kindness," or "Study a passage about Christ's love for the Church."
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For Those Who Are Not Yet Married:

If you are not currently married, consider how you can cultivate these traits now:

- Are you actively growing in patience, humility, and spiritual leadership in your personal life?
- Write a prayer asking God to equip you for this role and to give you wisdom and strength as you prepare for marriage.

By understanding and cultivating these traits, you'll be prepared to honor God as a husband who leads, loves, and serves like Christ.

(2) Dating with Intention (if applicable)

Dating with intention means approaching relationships with a clear purpose that aligns with God's design for marriage. It's not about casual dating or following worldly patterns but about honoring God, yourself, and the person you are dating. This approach seeks to build a Christ-centered relationship that reflects purity, love, and respect.

Principles of God-Honoring Dating:

- 1 Pursue Purpose:** Date with the goal of discovering if the relationship could lead to marriage, rather than dating for fun or convenience.

- 2 **Maintain Purity:** Commit to physical and emotional boundaries that honor God and protect each other's hearts.
- 3 **Communicate Openly:** Be honest about expectations, faith, and goals for the relationship.
- 4 **Encourage Growth:** Build each other up spiritually, prioritizing prayer, Bible study, and serving together.

Evaluation Questions for Dating with Intention:

Use these questions to reflect on how you can approach dating in a way that pleases God:

- 1 What is your goal for dating?
 - Are you dating with marriage in mind, or is it just for companionship or fun?
 - How does your approach to dating align with God's design for relationships?
- 2 Are you prioritizing purity?
 - Have you set clear physical and emotional boundaries?
 - How will you ensure those boundaries are maintained?
 - What steps can you take to avoid temptation?
- 3 Are you leading spiritually?
 - Do you encourage your girlfriend (or future partner) in her faith journey?
 - Are you willing to pray together, discuss Scripture, and attend church together?
 - How are you modeling Christ-like leadership in the relationship?

4 How are you honoring her as a sister in Christ?

- Do you treat her with respect, love, and kindness?
- Are you serving her selflessly and putting her needs above your own?
- Are you guarding her heart by being clear about your intentions and avoiding unnecessary emotional entanglement?

5 Are you involving God in your relationship?

- Do you regularly seek God's guidance in prayer regarding your relationship?
- Are you open to God's will, even if it means walking away from the relationship if it's not right?

Practical Assignment:

Write down three specific ways you can honor God and your girlfriend (or future partner) in a dating relationship. Be as detailed as possible.

Examples:

- 1 **Purity:** "I will set clear boundaries, such as avoiding being alone in private settings, and I will enlist an accountability partner to help us stay pure."

- 2 Communication:** "I will be honest about my intentions and openly share my faith journey, ensuring our conversations glorify God."
- 3 Spiritual Growth:** "I will prioritize praying together before making major decisions and encourage her to grow spiritually through shared Bible studies."

For Those Who Are Not Yet Dating:

If you are not currently dating but hope to in the future:

- Reflect on how you can prepare now to date with God's purpose in mind.
- Write a prayer asking God to guide you in becoming a godly man ready to pursue a relationship according to His will.

Questions to Consider:

- What kind of boundaries do I need to set before entering a relationship?
- How will I pursue a relationship with intentionality and clarity?
- Am I willing to seek wisdom and accountability from mentors or spiritual leaders?

(3) Serving and Honoring Women

God calls men to serve and honor women as sisters in Christ, reflecting His love and care in every interaction. This applies to all women in your life—whether family, friends, coworkers, or fellow believers in your church. Serving and honoring women requires humility, intentionality, and a Christ-centered attitude that seeks their good above your own.

Principles of Serving and Honoring Women:

- 1 See Women as Image-Bearers:** Recognize that every woman is created in God's image and has inherent value and worth (Genesis 1:27).
- 2 Serve with Humility:** Jesus modeled servant leadership, prioritizing the needs of others (Mark 10:45).
- 3 Protect and Respect:** Uphold the dignity of women by treating them with kindness, respect, and integrity.
- 4 Be an Encourager:** Use your words and actions to build them up, not tear them down (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Evaluation Questions for Serving and Honoring Women:

Use these questions to reflect on your current attitude and actions:

- 1** How do you view the women in your life?
 - Do you see them as individuals to honor and serve, or do you take them for granted?
 - Are your interactions with women respectful and Christ-like?
- 2** Are you intentional about serving the women in your life?
 - What practical ways can you meet their needs (e.g., acts of service, emotional support)?
 - Do you make time to listen, encourage, and pray for them?
- 3** Are you leading spiritually?
 - Are you praying regularly for the women in your life?
 - How can you encourage their faith and walk with Christ?

4 Do you honor women in your speech and actions?

- Are your words uplifting and free from gossip, criticism, or inappropriate joking?
- Do your actions reflect respect and care, or do they create frustration or hurt?

5 Are you a godly example to women in your church or community?

- Do you serve women in your church by offering support and using your gifts for God's glory?
- Are you careful to model Christ-like humility and respect in all interactions?

Practical Assignment:

Make a list of specific ways you can serve and honor the women in your life this week. Focus on practical steps such as:

- **Acts of Service:** Helping with chores, errands, or responsibilities for family members or friends.
- **Words of Encouragement:** Writing a note, sending a text, or verbally affirming their value and efforts.
- **Spiritual Support:** Committing to pray for the women in your life and asking how you can pray for them specifically.

Examples:

- 1 **Family:** "I will take time to help my mom with household tasks she struggles with and let her know I appreciate her hard work."
- 2 **Friends:** "I will encourage my female friends in their faith by sending them Bible verses or checking in on their prayer needs."
- 3 **Church Community:** "I will volunteer to support women's ministries in my church, such as helping with childcare during a women's event."

Self-Evaluation:

Reflect on your strengths and areas for growth in this area:

What are you already strong in?

- **Example:** "I'm good at encouraging women in my life by using kind and affirming words."

What do you need to work on?

- **Example:** "I need to be more consistent in praying for the women in my family and taking action to meet their practical needs."

(4) Reflection for Divorced Men (if applicable)

Divorce can be a painful and challenging experience, but it also provides an opportunity for growth, healing, and aligning your life with God's design for relationships. This section is designed to help you reflect on lessons learned, take practical steps toward healing, and prepare for healthier, God-honoring relationships in the future.

Principles for Reflection on Divorce:

- 1 **Seek God's Perspective:** Understand that while divorce may have been part of your story, it does not define your identity or your future. God's grace offers redemption and renewal.
- 2 **Learn from the Past:** Reflect on what went wrong in your previous marriage and how you contributed to those challenges.
- 3 **Pursue Healing and Forgiveness:** Allow God to heal your heart, let go of bitterness, and extend forgiveness to yourself and your former spouse.
- 4 **Align with God's Design:** Use this time to grow spiritually and commit to living out God's design for relationships in the future.

Evaluation Questions for Divorced Men:

- 1 What lessons have you learned from your previous marriage?
 - Reflect on what worked well and what didn't.
 - What patterns or behaviors in yourself contributed to the challenges in your marriage?
- 2 How have you grown since your divorce?
 - Have you sought spiritual growth and wisdom through prayer, Scripture, or counseling?
 - What steps are you taking to become more like Christ in your relationships?
- 3 Are you pursuing healing and forgiveness?
 - Have you forgiven yourself and your former spouse?
 - How are you releasing any bitterness or resentment to God?

- What practical steps (e.g., counseling, prayer, accountability) are you taking to heal emotionally?

4 How will you approach future relationships differently?

- What will you do differently in terms of communication, conflict resolution, or spiritual leadership?
- How will you ensure your next relationship is grounded in God's design and purpose?

5 Are you aligning with God's design for relationships?

- Are you using this season to prepare your heart and mind for God's plan for your future?
- Are you seeking to honor God in your relationships with others, even if you remain single?

Practical Assignment:

1 **Reflect on Lessons Learned:** Create a list for each of the following:

- What did you learn from your previous marriage about yourself and about God's design for marriage?
- How have you grown spiritually and emotionally since your divorce?

2 **Identify Areas for Growth:** Create a list of strengths and weaknesses in your character as it relates to relationships. Be honest with yourself.

- Strengths: What godly traits do you already possess that you can carry into future relationships?
- Weaknesses: What areas do you need to work on to better reflect Christ's character?

3 Plan for Healing and Forgiveness:

- Write down specific steps you are taking to pursue healing. Examples:
- – "I will commit to daily prayer, asking God to help me release bitterness."
- – "I will seek professional counseling to work through unresolved hurt."
- Write a prayer asking God to help you forgive yourself and others, and to guide you toward His plan for future relationships.

(5) Final Section: Defining Your Future Relationship

This section will help you clearly define the qualities you want to bring into a future relationship and the qualities you desire in a future spouse. It will also remind you that becoming the man God calls you to be is essential for building a God-honoring relationship.

Principles for Defining Your Future Relationship:

- 1 **Start with Yourself:** A healthy relationship begins with personal growth. Focus on the qualities you want to bring into a relationship and how you can reflect Christ's love.

- 2 **Seek God's Wisdom:** Your future spouse should share your commitment to Christ and have qualities that align with God's design for marriage.
- 3 **Prepare Intentionally:** Becoming the man God is calling you to be ensures that you are ready to lead, serve, and love well in a future relationship.

Practical Assignment:

- 1 **Make a List of the Qualities You Want to Bring into a Future Relationship:** Reflect on how you can grow into a godly husband and partner. Write down specific qualities and actions that you want to embody. Examples:
 - Spiritual leadership
 - Patience and kindness
 - Commitment to purity and integrity
 - Selflessness and humility
 - Strong communication skills
 - 2 **Make a List of the Qualities You Would Like in a Future Spouse:** Think about the kind of woman you would like to marry and the qualities she should have. Focus on qualities that align with God's Word. Examples:
 - A strong faith and commitment to Christ
 - A heart for serving others
 - Humility and grace
 - A desire for partnership in building a Christ-centered marriage
 - Shared life goals and values
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Reflect on How You Can Become the Man She is Looking For:

- Review the qualities you desire in a spouse and consider:
 - Would a woman with these qualities be drawn to who you are today?
 - What areas of your life need growth to reflect Christ more fully?
- Write down specific steps to work on becoming the man who is ready for the type of relationship you want to build.

General Summary of God's Design for Preparing for a Future Relationship:

- 1 **Marriage is God's Sacred Covenant:** A reflection of Christ's relationship with the Church, marriage is about unity, selflessness, and sacrificial love.
- 2 **The Call to Personal Growth:** Before entering a relationship, focus on becoming the man God has called you to be—one who can lead, love, and serve in alignment with His design.
- 3 **Dating with Intention:** Pursue relationships with purpose, maintaining purity, honesty, and a Christ-centered focus.
- 4 **Reflect on the Past to Prepare for the Future:** Use lessons from your experiences to grow and align yourself with God's expectations for relationships.
- 5 **Pray and Trust God:** Trust in God's timing and guidance as you prepare your heart and life for a future relationship or marriage.

Key Scriptures for Study:

- Genesis 2:24 – God’s original design for marriage.
- Ephesians 5:25-33 – The role of a husband as Christ loves the Church.
- 1 Peter 3:7 – Husbands showing honor to their wives.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – Characteristics of godly love.
- Proverbs 31:10-31 – A picture of a godly woman.