

Prescriptions for the Heart

Preparing for Marriage

Marriage is a life long commitment, a covenant relationship that was created and ordained by God. In preparing for the wedding a young couple will often spend much time and effort planning the ceremony and reception, however one of the most important preparations is too often overlooked...spiritual preparation. Starting your marriage off with a strong Biblical foundation is important to insure that you will have the strength and wisdom to weather the storms that will occur in the future.

This prescription for the heart will encourage you to take a spiritual inventory of your readiness for marriage. If you discover that as a couple you have not built this foundation, we encourage you to do so as a part of your preparation for marriage. It is our prayer that God will bless you with a long and fruitful marriage; your work in preparing a strong Biblical foundation for your marriage is the first step.

This information is provided as a free service of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations and your doctor. All of the following biblical quotations are taken from the Living Bible.

A prescription for building a strong marriage

The foundation of a strong marriage is faith and trust in each your spouse and in God. It is important that couples that plan to marry share the same faith in God because sooner or later their faith and trust in each other will be tested. Although we may change, God never changes. He will always love us and want what is best for us. A couple that shares this type of faith in God will always have God to turn to when their spouse disappoints them. Here are a few good questions for you to consider before you get married.

Are you and your future spouse like-minded Christians?

The Bible contains many stories about the problems that arise where individuals marry someone with other religious beliefs. If you are considering marriage with a person that does not share your religious beliefs, it is unwise to think that you can or will change their beliefs after you marry. If your are considering marrying someone who is not a Christian then you should take time now to discuss the differences in your faiths and then decide jointly how you will practice your faith after you are married.

Are you both willing to serve each other?

A good marriage requires quality communication and a willing heart. Married couples must learn to communicate effectively and serve the needs of their spouse before their own needs. This style of self-sacrificing love is very difficult to sustain unless both husband and wife are committed do it.

In the Bible, Paul explains the Biblical basis for the mutual submission of the husband and wife. Paul explains, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."¹ The key is that both husbands and

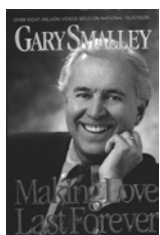
¹ The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (Ephesians 5:22 and 25). Zondervan: Grand Rapids

wives need to learn to submit themselves in love to each other. Are you and your future spouse both willing to humbly serve one another? Have you discussed the importance of this biblical principle as part of the foundation for your marriage relationship?

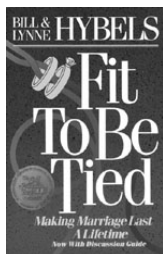
Marriages thrive not only from excitement and passion of the relationship, but from the faith and trust that stems from each other's commitment to the marriage. That is why the Bible says "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."² It is in this life-long commitment to be united as one that couples discover enduring happiness. Here are some additional resources that you may find helpful.

Additional Resources that can help prepare for marriage.

The following resources have been reviewed by the Christian Medical Association and have been found to contain sound Biblical advice that can help you prepare for marriage. These books can be found at your local Christian bookstore or you can order them directly from the Christian Medical Association at **888-231-2637**.



Making Love Last Forever: by Gary Smalley. Gary Smalley shows you how to stay in love through all the stages of life. From first attraction to lifelong commitment, Gary's proven techniques and practical advice show you how to pursue and keep the love you want, and how to energize your relationship with enduring, passion-filled love. With memorable word pictures, Smalley reveals the secrets behind his "love guarantee." Paperback, 289 pages.



Fit To Be Tied: by Bill & Lynn Hybels. Finally there is a book on marriage that combines sound, biblical advice with reality. Knowing from personal experience that marriage can have its ups and downs, Bill and Lynne Hybels avoid quick and easy answers. They write honestly about marriage from each of their own perspectives and give: Ways to court spouses creatively; Checklists for singles; Frank illustrations; Information about family background and temperaments; Helps on Achilles' heels, unhealthy behaviors, and conflict. Now with Discussion Guide! Paperback, 234 pages.



² The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (Matthew 19:5). Zondervan: Grand Rapids