

Before You Say “I Do”

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Summary

Marriage is not for the faint of heart. God created this type of relationship for the husband and wife to unite together as one; however, both parties considering getting married must examine themselves and each other before making such a huge commitment. Some of the things required for successful marriages include wise money management, a willingness to accept the other person with the full knowledge that they will probably change over time, constant communication, and a full commitment to stay together and work things out when the inevitable conflicts arise. If we are planning a wedding, we may also need to change our priorities and mindsets from the single lifestyle to married life, examine ourselves to determine if our intended spouse is someone we cannot live without, and prepare to go into the relationship willing to give one hundred percent to make it work. We should also consider whether the other person wants children, if they support our dreams and goals, and whether or not they are abusive or manipulative. Successful marriages are never perfect and they require constant work. What cements them is keeping Jesus Christ at the center of the marriage, a willingness to love the other person the way Christ loved the church, and a having a personal relationship with Him.

A. Marriage is a big step. There are ten things to understand before getting married:

1. Do not ignore the experience of the single life.
 - a. We need to enjoy our lives while we are still single, work out any issues we may have, and get to know ourselves before knowing someone else.
2. Become financially sound.
 - a. One of the worst things for a relationship is to bring debt into the marriage. Bad financial habits burden the marriage.
3. Understand that people change.
 - a. A spouse can change over time because of circumstances, events, and various influences; the key to a successful marriage is the ability to adapt to those changes.
4. Put your priorities in order.
 - a. Marriage means major lifestyle changes for both parties; spouses come before friends. Making your spouse a higher priority than your friends adds value to the marriage.
5. Remember that communication in marriage is essential.
 - a. Communicating with your spouse is the lifeblood of marriage; it must be deliberate and intentional.
6. Ensure that both parties understand the importance of respecting each other.
 - a. Mutual respect determines how often and how severe conflict will be in the relationship. A healthy sense of self-respect allows a person to adequately respect someone else.
7. Know that quitting is not an option.
 - a. Divorce should not be seen as a convenient, easy way out. We need a mindset that enables us to forgive the other person regardless of what happens. Commitment is crucial.
8. Ask yourself if the other person is someone you cannot live without; this is different than simply acknowledging that you can live with them.

- a. Marriage is a covenant between two people; the relationship should begin with them being best friends who simply cannot stay apart.
- 9. Be willing to give the marriage one hundred percent effort; this is how it succeeds.
 - a. The idea that marriage is a fifty-fifty split is a myth; both spouses must give one hundred percent.
- 10. Do not stop dating.
 - a. Dating is a celebration of each other and an opportunity to be together; that should not stop after marriage.

B. There are five questions we must ask ourselves before tying the knot in matrimony.

- 1. Does this person support my dreams and goals, and can I talk openly and honestly to them about my hopes for the future?
 - a. Part of loving someone else involves supporting their goals while putting up with their quirks and flaws. You become their loudest cheerleader and their biggest advocate.
- 2. Does this person want children, and how do they want to raise them?
 - a. This is a major influence on the couple's future together. Talking about it before getting married gives clarity on whether they share the same vision in this area; this discussion is necessary.
- 3. Does this person know how to manage money?
 - a. Successful marriages involve sound financial planning and quality budget decisions. Finances are a top cause of arguments among many husbands and wives; engaged couples should talk about money early and plan ahead.
- 4. Is this person abusive or manipulative?
 - a. A successful marriage must be a safe place. Both parties must watch for the warning signs of a toxic relationship *before* getting married; ignoring the red flags is dangerous.
- 5. Do they have a relationship with Jesus?
 - a. A relationship with God is not the same as simply going to church.
 - b. There is no such thing as a perfect marriage; however, making Christ the center of the marriage relationship reflects selflessness and allows godly love to flow through both spouses.

Category: relationships

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