

THE PERFECT MATCH FOR MARRIAGE

Introduction

Marriage is a **God idea!** God said, “It is not good for the man to *be alone*. I will make a helper *suitable* for him.” (Genesis 2:18-22. Consequently, you have an *innate* desire to be in a long-term “*exclusive*” relationship with the opposite sex. Exclusive relationships can be either a “marriage” or a “commitment” to one person outside of marriage. The Bible teaches the best and only long-term exclusive relationship that involves sex between a man and woman is marriage. Therefore, we will be teaching about how to access and recognize the person who is the right match for you to marry.

Definition for Dating

Dating is defined as the *process* whereby couples assess one another’s suitability for marriage. Dating in our culture has become couples **experimenting** with one another through an exclusive relationship. These relationships typically end up with broken minds (hearts) and sexually abused bodies. Do you really want to continue a cycle of *experimental* relationships that are detrimental to your mind and sexually abuse your body? We will discuss how to date based upon *biblical principles*, so you can properly assess another person’s suitability for marriage while protecting your mind from brokenness and your body from sexual abuse.

Principles for Dating

First, *know* that God made you and He knows the right person for you. Who else is better able to match you with the right person than the person who made everyone? He is a matchmaker for His children. Yes, I believe God fixes *prearranged* marriages! **Secondly**, *work* on becoming the *right person* the right person is looking for. Everyone is looking for the right person to marry, but are you the right person the right person is looking for? **Lastly**, *guard* your mind and body while you’re in a long-term dating relationship.

The Perfect Match

God made us **three** in one: spirit, soul, and body. Our **spirit** is the part that relates to God above us, our **soul** relates to the people around us, and our **body** relates to the material world we want for us. Those are the three levels of relationship that you need to assess (match) as a couple when thinking about your suitability for marriage. Most couples while dating do not properly assess their relationship on all three levels before they marry. Marriage can work on two of the three matches, but a couple with less than three matches will experience extreme difficulties. As you’re dating you’re assessing all three matches simultaneously. As you’re going

through the dating and relating process make sure you're open and honest about your relationship so you can properly assess your suitability for marriage.

BODY MATCH

A Body Match is a couple's assessment if they want to live in the same world together.

God placed the first couple in the Garden of Eden to live and grow together. The Garden of Eden symbolizes the type of environment God made for the couple to live in and grow together. In the Garden of Eden the couple had a **purpose** to live for, **provision** (food) to live on, **profession** to live out, **principles** to live by, and the **presence** of God to live with (Eden means the place of God's presence). (Genesis 2:15)

The *first date* symbolizes the invitation to expose another person to a *limited extent* to something about you and the world in which you live. When you're dating someone for an extended amount of time you should both slowly and methodically want to know what kind of world they want to live in. Do you both want to live in the same type of world? I call this the Body Match.

We invite and remove people out of our world. When considering a Body Match you want to know what inspires them, motivates them, and influences them to build the world in which they live. You want to know if you are both stimulated by the same things to live in the same world together.

What inspires them in their world? Our inspiration is our *purpose* for living. Are they living for themselves or for others? Do they seem like they are fulfilled or still searching? Everyone has a purpose to fulfill in this world. Do not marry a person if they don't know their purpose. Purpose *driven* people are *inspired* people who are generally fulfilled in life. You want to know if your purposes are compatible. An occupation becomes some people's purpose. They are inspired and driven to achieve a certain position in their *occupation*. Some people's purpose may keep them travelling or moving. ***A question you want to ask before marriage is, "How do our purposes fit within the context of a marriage?"***

You want to know what motivates them. The material things of the world motivate us to obtain them. Material motivators indicate what kind of *material possessions* you want for your world. Everyone doesn't have the same motivations to achieve certain material possessions. For an example: *"What type of home do you want to live in or car do you want to drive?"* Some people would say, "I don't marry someone for their material wealth." Great! But you better marry someone who is at least motivated to maintain a job to provide things for life; your housing, clothing, and food. For those who want to have more than the necessities of life it is good to know their material motivators. Their *talk* must be compatible with their *action*. They may paint a great picture of things they see in their world but their actions say they will never achieve it. Another way of

saying this is, "Does their work ethic support their vision?" ***A question you want to ask before marriage, "So what type of lifestyle are you trying to obtain?"***

You want to know who influences them. People influence people. Who are the *influencers* (family, friends, co-workers, and etc.) in their lives? As your relationship grows pay close attention to the people they listen to in their world. Are these people good or bad influencers? These people will eventually be for you or against you. A question to ask, "Can you live with the people in their world?" ***A question you want to ask before marriage is, "Do I get along with the influencers in their life?"***

The overall question you want to ask is, "Are we both stimulated by the same thing?"

SOUL MATCH

A Soul Match is a couple's assessment if they like one another.

When you're assessing someone for marriage you want to know if you like one another so you can become best friends. I call this a *soul match*. If you can't be friends before marriage you won't be friends in marriage. Friendship is important because it means you *like* one another.

You share your life (good and bad) with people you like. Did you know *like* should come before you marry someone for *love*? Love is the foundation for all relationships but liking them makes relationships grow. You can actually love someone and not like them. You want to have both *like* and *love* in marriage.

Don't spend your time trying to *impress* one another but *inform* one another about *who you are* as a person. You properly learn about one another through *asking* the *right questions* and *listening* to their responses. Then ask them questions about their responses to get the *right understanding* about the person so you can know them. Here is an important principle to live by, "*When people tell you who they are, believe them!*"

Here is a "*general example*": When someone says, "You're just too good for me." What they're saying is "I'm going to live below your standard and hurt you." Don't be so needy you turn off your *common sense* given to you from God to discern right from wrong.

To find out if you can be soulmates you will need to assess one another's *character traits* and *mutual interests*, so you can first build a friendship before marriage.

Character traits reveal who they are as a person. How do they act in certain situations? Do they have personal control over their emotions? How do they process their thoughts to make right decisions? Do you have frequent disagreements about the little things? You need to allow your differences to be known so you can know if you can live with one another's differences.

Character traits reveal another person's honesty, faithfulness, or personality (likes and dislikes). If a person lies to you one time they will lie to you again. Do not tolerate lying in your relationship. Do not try to change another person's personality. We are inclined to like certain things. Some people like sports and others do not. Some people like being outdoors and others are homebodies. Know if your personalities are compatible enough that you will want to spend enough time together to become best friends.

Mutual interests means you like the same things. It is not how many things you don't like, but do you like enough things that will make you want to spend quality time together. You could have one mutual interest but that interest dominates your relationship and keeps you growing in friendship with one another.

When your friendship grows to the point you are seeing and talking to one another *regularly*, you need to ask this question as soon as possible: "*Where is this relationship going?*" You know what you're thinking and feeling about them and the relationship, so you need to know what they're thinking and feeling about you and the relationship. Could this be moving into mating for marriage? This is not rushing anything, this is called *guarding* your mind and labelling the relationship.

If you're seeing and talking to one another regularly you have a right to know the direction of the relationship. God is not indecisive when matchmaking. Adam was not indecisive when he saw Eve and Eve didn't reject Adam. God is still matchmaking and opening the eyes of couples to see they are one for one another. (Proverbs 18:22) Liking someone and wanting to spend time with them doesn't mean you should get married but it could be an indicator that maybe you have more than friendship.

Spending more time together could lead to *sex before* marriage. Remember, you're first building a friendship. Friends do not have sex! You should *prohibit* the following practices to maintain a platonic friendship: a) do not be alone with one another; b) do not talk sexually to one another; c) do not touch one another sexually nor kiss.

You should **not** make your relationship **exclusive** meaning you can *only see* one another. Exclusive relationships should be only reserved for someone who has made a commitment to *marriage*. You may freely choose not to see another person while you're seeing this person but, neither of you have a right to ask for an exclusive relationship without a commitment to marriage. Friends don't tell other friends they cannot have other friendships. A desire for an *exclusive* relationship could be another indicator for *marriage*.

Here are *seven topics you need to know and talk about over a period of time*:

- **Faith** – *What are your beliefs about God, church and sex before marriage?*
- **Family** – *What is your relationship like with your parents and siblings?*
- **Fellowship** – *Do you share similar interests (fun) that bond you together as friends?*
- **Finance** – *How do you handle your finances?*

- **Fidelity** – *Have you both been loyal, truthful, and dependable?*
- **Future** – *What are your ambitions and can you see one another in your future?*
- **Fights** – *How often do you see things differently from one another?*

These topics should define where this relationship is going (individuals or friendship). Individuals mean you're two *separate* people who do not have enough mutual interests to become friends so you go your separate ways with respect for one another. Friendship means there is enough mutual interests that you want to continue to see one another to further explore the relationship on a friendship basis.

SPIRIT MATCH

A Spirit Match is a couple's assessment of their commitment to God.

A spiritual match is the *most important* indicator a couple needs to assess on their "*initial*" date and "*subsequent*" dates that follow to know if they are suitable for marriage. A spiritual match connects you both to God so you can unite and relate to one another on a spiritual level. I know that sounds so *otherworldly* and *unintelligible* in today's culture. Without your ability to match on a spiritual level the relationship is destined to stay within the physical realm of materialism and sex. Do you believe that is what is best for you? Here is what a spiritual match looks like:

First, a spiritual relationship is transferable. You're able to relate your spiritual beliefs to one another and apply them to your relationship. You both want a relationship that is God-centered *not self-centered*. You're coming together not just for yourselves but to fulfill a purpose from God. Marriages that last a lifetime are those couples who live outside of themselves and live for a higher purpose in their marriage. Your marriage must have more than your love for one another. There must be a purpose for that love.

Second, a spiritual relationship will complement you. God sends a person in your life to *complement* you.

You should be a *whole* person before marriage. Therefore, you don't need a person to come and complete you. This would mean you need someone to come and fix something missing or something broken. You should be a person living out your purpose and the goals that go along with that purpose. So, you don't need a person to come and disrupt you from fulfilling your purpose and the goals that go along with that purpose. This would get you *sidetracked!* God chooses a person who will *complement* your purpose and the *goals* that go along with that purpose.

Last, a spiritual relationship abstains from sex. The couple is intent on going through the process of *accessing* their suitability for marriage while abstaining from sex so they can build a healthy spiritual relationship that avoids the downfall of a physical relationship by uniting their souls and bodies together before marriage. If the person does not match you spiritually then

you need to sever the relationship immediately. Your spiritual match is the primary principle used to protect your mind and body from experimentation.

Sex before Marriage

Most couples engage in *premarital sex* at the Body Match stage. Couples spend most of their time after their *initial* physical attraction *stimulating* one another on a Body Match level. Their assessment is we enjoy one another's company, we have a compatible worldview, and we have no problem with one another's family and friends. Marriage is in our future, we're in love, now let's have sex to consummate our "love" for one another. Stop it! God made sex for marriage only (Genesis 2:24). You have two other matches to assess. The *Body Match* can get you *started* in relationship and *sustain* a relationship for period of time but it will be unable to *endure* a marriage relationship without the other matches.

Sadly, most people are affected with Post Dramatic Relationship Disorder (PDRD). *Sex unites* a man and woman in soul and body together mentally and physically. A couple having sex before marriage distorts their ability to properly access the relationship because they have united their souls and bodies together as one. This makes it more difficult to end the relationship without being affected by P.D.R.D. This *disorder* makes you *dysfunctional* for future relationships because of your past failed relationships. Your mind, heart, and body are damaged. We are not taught to know how to properly exit a relationship, heal, and then enter another relationship without carry some kind of baggage that effects the new relationship.

Sex before marriage is not only a sin before God but a detriment to your mental ability to love, and to forgive the past in your future relationships. Also, sex before marriage exposes your body to the possibility of contacting sexually transmitted diseases (S.T.D.) (I Corinthians 6:18). **DO NOT** have premarital sex.

Here are some questions you need to ask *over time* to help you know if this is a spiritual match:

1. How important is *God to you*?
2. Do you have a *pastoral covering*?
3. What does prayer mean to you?
4. Are you a follower of the teachings of Christ?
5. Do you financially support your church?
6. Do you serve in ministry of your church?
7. Are you in agreement with abstaining from sex before marriage?

A sign of a healthy spiritual relationship is you both *benefit* and *grow* in one another's company. There is no pressure to *compromise* your beliefs or become sidetracked from your purpose and the goals that go along with that purpose.

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The “*first time*” the word “*love*” should be used in a relationship is when the man asks the woman to marry him. This is the *only* time the relationship now can become *exclusive*. Using the word love prematurely has caused many heartbreaks. You have accessed that you are the right match. You are marrying your best friend! If you have not already, you should *immediately* put your relationship under a *covering* (parents, mentors, or church) for mentorship and accountability.

Here is what the man should do to ask a woman to be his wife. *First*, the man asks the woman’s covering (father or pastor) for their approval to marry their daughter or spiritual daughter. *Secondly*, once approved, the man should then ask the woman to go through pre-marital counseling before he formally asks her to marry him for pastoral covering and for a final examination of their relationship. Lastly, after pre-marital counseling has been completed successfully, the man proposes marriage to the woman *privately* with a date the marriage will take place.

If the woman accepts the proposal, they make their intentions for marriage *public* before their church, family, and friends. The woman *should not* commit to marriage without the man *having a date* when the marriage will take place. No woman should be *strung* along waiting for the man to commit to a date for marriage. The relationship has not only been *called* by God, but you are now *covered* by the church before marriage for mentorship and accountability. That is a very important principle to understand.

The time between the proposal and the wedding date is called the *engagement* period. During the *engagement period*, the date of the marriage is set, invitations are sent, and the man and woman prepare for the celebration for their marriage covenant ceremony. (St. John 14:2-3)

MARRIAGE COVENANT

The marriage ceremony symbolizes the covenant between a man and woman: The man *leaves* his father and mother to make his wife his *priority*. He unites with his wife for *permanence* and they both mutually submit to one another so they can fulfill the *purpose* for marriage. (Genesis 2:24) The marriage ceremony also symbolizes the model for your marriage: The husband will love his wife just as Christ loves the church and the wife will submit to her husband just as the church is subject to Christ. (Ephesians 5:25-30) Finally, your marriage ceremony should include your church, family, and friends as your witnesses of your covenant commitment to one another.

LIVING WITH ONE ANOTHER

Your marriage will be sustained when you remain open to one another, and living by the following *five characteristics*(Genesis 2:25):

- **Love** – *you sacrificially serve one another*
- **Trust** – *you keep your word to one another*

- **Friendship** – *you like and spend time with one another*
- **Submission** – *you mutually support one another*
- **Acceptance** – *you forgive and affirm one another*

Warning: It is never too late to stop the ceremony if you find out this is not God’s will. Because this is a spiritually-led relationship founded upon friendship, your hearts may be disappointed but not broken. Since the relationship was not sexual, you will not suffer from personality disorders and you will remain friends because of the integrity the relationship was built upon.

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FAITH LETTERS

Write a *faith letter* to your future spouse. God has already prepared a spouse for you so you will not live life alone. So I encourage you to commit to be faithful to them now, and write them a letter to be opened on your wedding night. We have *two* letters: 1) Letter for someone who has never been married 2) Letter for someone who has been married (divorced or widower).

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NEVER BEEN MARRIED

My Dear (Husband or Wife),

I am writing this letter on (Day, Month and Year), making a commitment to *love, honor* and be *faithful* to you as your (husband or wife) because I married you before I met you. I *prayed* for you, I *prepared* myself for you and I waited *patiently* for you. I am *whole*. There is *nothing missing* and *nothing broken* in my heart. Therefore, I married you *not because I need you to complete me*– but I have been called by God to *complement you* so I can *bless you!*

My faith in God has come to pass. He *joined us* together at our marriage covenant ceremony spiritually and *tonight* we come together as *one physically*. May the Lord bless our *physical expression* of our *love for one another!*

Your loving (husband or wife),

Your Signature

BEEN MARRIED BEFORE

My Dear (Husband or Wife),

I am writing this letter on (Day, Month and Year), making a commitment to *love, honor* and be *faithful* to you as your (husband or wife) because I married you before I met you. I *prayed* for you, I *prepared* myself for you and I waited *patiently* for you. Although I have been previously married, I am now whole. My affections from my (previous marriage, or death of a spouse) have healed, so there is nothing missing and nothing broken in my heart. Therefore, I married you not because I need you to complete me-but because God has called me to complement you so I can bless you!

After my (divorce or becoming a widower), I still believed God for a spouse. My faith in God has come to pass. He *joined us* together at our marriage covenant ceremony spiritually and *tonight* we come together as *one physically*. May the Lord bless our *physical expression* of our *love for one another!*

Your loving (husband or wife)

Your Signature

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HOW TO LIVE A CELIBATE LIFESTYLE

But if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passions. 1 Corinthians 7:9

God not only made us *spiritual* beings but also *sexual*. God created sex between one man and one woman in the beginning and called it good. Sex was created for procreation and for our pleasure. Therefore, your desire for sex is a normal biological behavior given to you at birth. There is nothing wrong with you *spiritually* because you have *sexual* desires.

But God *confined* sex within the context of marriage. This means as a single follower of Christ and single you're supposed to abstain from sexual intercourse until you're married. You are called to live a life of celibacy. Most Christian singles *struggle* with living a celibate lifestyle. Especially if they were sexually active before they committed their life to Christ. Your body craves to continue having sex. I call this "*sexual recall*."

You may be one of those struggling Christians. You have been strong, but fighting the urges for sex is getting more difficult. You just do not know if you can hold out and you can't see marriage in your foreseeable future. Is it possible to live *celibate* within a sexually orientated culture? The answer is yes.

We will discuss the following topics: *fornication*, *masturbation*, and *sanctification* in order to help you live a celibate lifestyle with joy and not grief.

Fornication

Fornication is having a sexual relationship *before* marriage. Fornication is a *sin* before God because it *dishonors* marriage. (Hebrews 13:4) God made sex for one man and one woman confined within the context of a marriage. I know you probably have heard some of the more *simple* solutions we teach in our churches concerning this issue of dealing with sex before marriage such as:

Just Don't Do It! *But that leads to the question, "How do you not do it when you have always done it?"*

Stay away from it! *But that leads to the question, "How can you stay away from something that is working on the inside of you?" You cannot live outside of your body.*

Don't think about it! *Now you know you do not have to consciously think about "it" for the sexual urges to start burning from within.*

Read your Bible! *But that leads to the question, "How long do you have to read the Bible before the sexual feelings go away?"*

Give it to God! *But that leads to the question, "How do you give back to God what He gave to you as a gift to use at the appointed time?"*

These simple solutions do not work within themselves; they lead to more frustration. The church is full of sexually frustrated Christians. Everyone around

them is doing it but they can't. When Christians struggle with fornication they usually turn to masturbation to help them overcome sexual temptations.

Masturbation

Masturbation is a sin. Masturbation is when a person manipulates their own body for sexual pleasure. The bible teaches against this sexual act because it is not God's original intentions for sex. Masturbation is one of the *quiet sins* the church usually does not like to address.

Though the bible does not directly address the issue of masturbation, it does address lustful self-gratification. Jesus was clear that if a man *looks* at a woman with lust in his heart, that man has committed adultery. (Matthew 5:28) You cannot separate masturbation from lustful thoughts or desires. Even though some will say they do not fantasize when masturbating, what caused you to masturbate was a strong desire (lust) to fulfill your fleshly sexual appetite.

I know you say, "Well it is better than getting involved with another individual." This is not a biblical stand but human rationalization. Another objection to masturbation is that it is a solitary act. Sexual intimacy is meant to *share* the deepest expression of love between a husband and wife, not with oneself.

When a person masturbates, he/she is essentially seeking personal sexual relief. It is a self-centered act. If it becomes an addiction, then it becomes even worse. It is like saying, "In the absence of a partner, I will fill that role *myself* to fulfill *myself* sexually and because it is with *myself*, it is all right."

Paul wrote, "Do you not know that *your body* is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Our bodies belong to God, not ourselves. Masturbation is not using our bodies to glorify God.

If you do not take care of the issues of fornication and masturbation, you will soon join the growing underground of the "*Sexually Frustrated Fellowship*" within the Church. This Fellowship is formed by those like-minded members of our

churches who are sexually struggling with fornication and masturbation and feel ashamed to seek help because of their continued failures in this area.

You really do feel convicted by it all and you know it is wrong, but you just cannot overcome it. I have good news: you can be empowered to live a celibate lifestyle through our sanctification in Jesus Christ.

Sanctification

Sanctification means to set apart for holy use. When we accept Christ, we become instantly delivered from sin and its power within our bodies. But when it comes to our sexual desires, you must understand one important truth – there is no cure for it. It is a God-given *biological* response in us for the opposite sex.

Every human being born comes with it. It is called our “sexual nature.” There is nothing wrong with you. You are having a common, natural hormonal response from your body’s sexual nature. The problem is you can only act on your sexual nature within the confines of marriage. So how are you supposed to handle your sexual nature before marriage? Paul never said fast, pray or read your bible: he said *get married*. What are you supposed to do when you’re not ready to get married or you want to get married but you don’t have any prospects?

Here are *three biblical* suggestions on how to live a celibate lifestyle:

Sanctify your body to God. Sanctify the instruments of your *body* unto God for His use (Romans 6:13). Your body belongs to God and should be used to serve Him so you can bring Him glory. The key to sanctification is the more you grow in love with God, the more you will personalize your relationship with Him and not want to be unfaithful to Him with your body. The Scriptures say, “God bought you with a high price. So you *must honor* God with your body.” (I Corinthians 6:20)

Also, make a *faith* commitment to dedicate your body to your future spouse. By faith, be *faithful* to your future spouse before you meet them. You keep your body by faith for your future spouse so you can be pure in spirit and body when you marry them. Even if you have been sexually active or divorced, purify yourself and keep your body from sex for your future mate.

Learn to walk in the Spirit. The Scriptures say, “If you walk in the Spirit you will not *fulfill* the desires of your fleshly passions.” (Galatians 5:16) Walking in the Spirit means growing in the character of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) The Spiritual character of longsuffering and self-control will help you outlast the sexual urges when they come. Your sensitivity to being led by the Spirit will keep you from compromising situations and relationships that are not good for you.

Discipline your body to obey you. Paul said, “I *discipline* my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. (I Corinthians 9:27a). To discipline your body means to *regulate* it by a strict regimen to make it do what you want it to do. This will take time to get used to, but your body will begin to come into subjection to your spiritual desires and the urges for sex will come under the control of your discipline.

Here are some *self-disciplines* to enable you to discipline your body so you can live a celibate lifestyle in order to give glory unto God:

1. **Your EYES:** You discipline *your eyes* by not exposing them to anything (movies, magazines, website, or books) that would arouse your sexual nature.

Proverbs 4:25. Let your *eyes look right on* (with fixed purpose) and let your *gaze be straight* before you. (Amplified Version)

2. **Your HANDS:** You discipline *your hands* and not use them to manipulate your body or someone else’s body for sexual use.

I Corinthians 7:1. Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me; It is good for a man *not to touch* (to manipulate the body to arouse the passion) a woman.

3. **Your MOUTH:** You discipline yourself not to *kiss* and arouse your sexual nature.

Ephesians 4:29. Don’t use *foul* or *abusive* language. Let everything you say be good and helpful so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

4. **Your MIND:** You discipline your mind to think scripturally so you can resist your sexual thoughts practically when they arise.

Romans 12:2. Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by *changing the way you think*. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

5. **Your HEART:** You discipline your affections from falling into premature love so you can avoid a premarital sexual relationship before marriage.

Proverbs 4:23. *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues (literally, the course you take) of life.*

6. **Your FLESH:** You discipline your *flesh* to suffer through your sexual desires so you can bring it under subjection. As you're feeling the sexual urges, you must suffer until they subside.

I Peter 4:1. Therefore, since Christ *suffered* for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has *suffered in the flesh* has ceased from sin.

7. **Your FEET:** – You discipline your feet to move out from compromising places and positions. The bible says *run* from fornication. You cannot overcome your sexual nature; therefore, you must remove yourself from the place of temptation.

I Corinthians 6:18. *Flee* sexual immorality. Every sin that man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

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Ten Topics to Discuss before Marriage:

Before you get married, make sure you are going to be able to be mutually submitted to one another in order to become one person in marriage. Mutual submission in marriage is coming to an agreement that defines how the husband sacrifices to love his wife and cover her as the head, and how the wife submits to respect her husband as his helper.

Here are the ten topics with questions to consider before marriage. These topics and questions will help you decide if you're going to be able to mutually submit to one another in marriage:

1. FAITH – How will you worship together? Discuss your beliefs in God. Your mutual beliefs in God does not automatically transfer into having a successful marriage. People have various beliefs about God and their commitment to the local church. You need to find out if your faith in God will complement one another. You want to know if their belief in God but does their behavior validate their belief.
 - a. Questions to consider: Do your faith complement one another? What church will you attend? How do your belief and behaviors differ from one another? Do they serve in the church? Does their Pastor know them? Do they financially support the church? Do they have a personal relationship with God through prayer and the word?

2. WORK – What is your occupation? Discuss what you do for a living. Sometimes your occupation can interfere with your marriage. If you travel frequently it may cause a distance to grow in the relationship. Your income may be able to support a marriage but not children. If they don't like their occupation they bring their frustrations to the marriage.
 - a. Questions to consider: Are you working in your dream job? How many hours do you work a week? What the hours of your job? Do you consider your job a calling, a career or just a job to pay the bills? What does your job entail (travel, work at home, is it dangerous or unhealthy environment?) Who is the primary worker outside of the home? Will you have to get another job in the future? Will you have to get more education to improve your job situation? If so, when do you plan on going back to school? Can your job support a marriage and children?

3. VISION – What are your goals? Discuss what you expect to accomplish together in marriage and individually as a person. You get married in a moment, but marriage is a lifetime commitment and you must plan for your future together. Therefore, talk about your individual career and marriage

expectations and help one another achieve those goals in order to be fulfilled in the relationship.

- a. Questions to consider: Do you expect to own a home? What do you want to achieve in life? Can I help you achieve your goals? Do you see one another in the future together? What place will your goals have in our marriage? Are their goals realistic? Are they already working on their goals or are they just talking about them? What have they achieved so far?

4. COMMUNICATION – How will you grow together? Discuss how you will grow together as a couple. Marriage works through joint-participation. Both individuals must share their feelings, beliefs, pains, fears, and interests with one another. Communication leads to deep intimacy in marriage. To know someone and be known is how you share your lives together.

- a. Questions to consider: How often will you come together to share with one another? Can you share with one another without being judged or penalized for your beliefs and opinions? What is the longest relationship you have ever had prior to this one? Are you an affectionate person? What makes you feel insecure? What is your greatest limitations? What are your greatest strengths? Can you have outside interest that does not include your spouse? How has your past relationships affected you? What makes you most afraid? What brings you the biggest joy? Are you going to have a date night?

5. DOMESTIC – How will you live together? Discuss what you expect from one another in the home. Marriage difficulties happen because couples do not know how to live with one another. Living with someone is not an easy thing. You must consider how the other person lives within the home and make adjustments to live with one another.

- a. Questions to consider: Are you a morning person or night? Are there household responsibilities you believe to be the sole domain of a man or a woman? Do you believe a woman should defer to the man? Do you believe the man makes the final decisions? What is

your idea of a fair division of labor in your household? What does equality in marriage mean to you? Do you need space in the home that is designated as your spot? Do you share watching programs on television? Who will do the cooking? Who will wash the dishes and clothes? Who will take care of the outside of the home (car maintenance and lawn)?

6. FIGHTS – How will you treat one another? Discuss how you want to treat one another to avoid constant conflicts in marriage. We know men want respect and women want to be loved. You will need to find out what that means so will know how to treat one another in marriage. You will need to learn how to make your differences complement one another. If not, you will have constant fighting in your relationship.

- a. Questions to consider: How do your differences cause conflicts in your relationship? What are your pet peeves? What do you most dislike about me? How do you handle criticism? Do you easily say you're sorry? What can I do to support you? How can I strengthen your masculinity or femininity? How do you define love and respect? How will you solve conflicts? Do you withdraw when you disagree? What do you do when you get really angry? Do you fight fair? How do you know?

7. FINANCES – How will we handle our money? Discuss how you will handle your money marriage. Money problems can lead to serious conflicts in marriage. Finances is one of the leading causes for divorce in marriage. You need to become good stewards to keep money issues out of your marriage. Therefore, you need to know how you both handle money.

- a. Questions to consider: Do you live by a budget? What kind of debt do you owe? Do you have savings and investments? Who is going to handle the money in marriage? Will you have joint and separate accounts? Does it matter who makes the most money? Are you presently supporting anyone? Does your money become our money? How important is money to you? Have you ever been called

cheap or frugal? Do you use money to control people?

8. FAMILY – How will you relate with your families? Families can interfere with your marriage. You need to find out what is their relationship like with their immediate and extended family members. You must establish boundaries before marriage for your families. You must also discuss how you're going to nurture your children and if you're a blended family what is the step-parents role going to be.

a. Questions to consider: Are you close to your family? Do you have trouble setting limits on your family? How much influence do your parents still have on your decisions? Do you have any unresolved issues with your family? Does your family approve of your relationship? How many children do you want? What will be the method of discipline and instruction? Are you going to raise them up according to the Bible? If you are going to become a blended family, it is important to come into mutual agreement in the following areas: how will children show respect for the step-parent, can the step-parent discipline and how, what is the relationship with the child's biological parent, are there any financial obligations (alimony or child support), and what about the religious training of the step-children? How will you honor your parents in the marriage? Do you hold to family traditions around certain holidays with your family? Will you spend your vacation time with your families? Do you expect to eat together as a family?

9. SEX – What does intimacy mean to you? Discuss the importance of sex. If you're by biblical standards you have not had sex with one another. But this does not mean you have never had sex. Sex before marriage diminishes our sexual relationships not improve them. You will need to discuss at the right time your understanding of sex in relationship.

a. Questions to consider: How important will sex be in the marriage? What sexual acts will you not perform? Do you expect the woman to initiate sex? What is sexual to you? Have you ever been sexually

abused? How often do you expect sex in a marriage? How will sexual dissatisfaction hinder our marriage? Is sexual fidelity an absolute necessity in a good marriage? Have you ever been sexually unfaithful in a relationship? How did your family view sex? Who taught you about sex? Do you believe sex is the way to solve problems?

10. SOCIAL-NETWORK – Who will be your friends? Discuss who will be your social network. Your friends or social networks are very important because they are influencers in your lives. Everyone needs an outside friend to turn to in the time of need. You want to make sure you know another's influencers. You want to make sure they will help not hurt your marriage. Separate friendships and social networks can separate your marriage.

- a. Questions to consider: Do you get along with one another's friends? Who are your mutual friends? Who do you go to for counsel? What kind of people turn your ear off? Who is your role model? Who are the people you most admire?