

## **HOW PREPARED ARE YOU FOR MARRIAGE?**

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The preoccupation of many singles is who to marry and how to find a partner that they will share the rest of their lives with. Not many think about preparation for success in marriage, as a result, they do not read, attend seminars or lectures on successful marital relationship or work on their person to improve their character and personality to enable them live in harmony and have marital bliss. When they do get married, the marriage is crippled with many problems and the marriage does not last because they were not prepared for them and didn't know what to do in the circumstances they found themselves.

In selecting a mate, many focus on physical appearance and material possessions rather than the quality of the person's habits, character or personality. They neglect the most important thing in human relationship – the human personality. Allowing yourself to be carried away by the beauty or handsomeness of a person and not look into the character and temperament of the person will turn out to be the greatest mistake of your life so far.

Beauty is charming; a lot of money to spend is very attractive and difficult to turn away from, but must not distract you from considering the most important thing in relationship – compatibility. Compatibility has to do with the personality of the person in comparison with yours.

“He is so cute”, “She is gorgeous”, “She drives me crazy, so much so I can't take my eyes off her, she is just too beautiful”, “Her voice is like the voice of an angel”, he is very nice, he always buys me things every time he comes to see me. He is very generous. He is the right guy for me.” Words like this come from the lips of many singles describing their feelings about the one they admire and have fallen in love with. These words also reveal their sense of judgement and what they focus on when they meet someone of the opposite sex. It is not wrong to look for someone who turns you on or excites you, but to focus only or mainly on that is dangerous for the actualization of the bonding and happiness you seek from that relationship. When you find someone whose looks attract you, look beyond that as you date and get close to see if you are compatible or not. Your decision for or against the relationship should be based on that and not of charms.

You prepare to find the right person by making yourself to be the right person for someone. You are not qualified for a nice guy when you refuse or fail to make yourself a nice person. If you want to marry a virgin, then keep your virginity; for it is not right to sleep around for years and then look for a virgin to settle down with in marriage. Why look for one who does not flirt when you do not yet know how to stay only with one person in relationship. If you are looking for someone who has mastered his or her temper, make sure you have mastered yours. If you desire to marry one who is honest and open and does not keep secrets, be sure you are the same. Why look for the best when you refuse to improve your person in order to become the best for another person.

The question now is how prepared are you for marriage? Preparation involves:

### **1. Knowledge of your person.**

No one is qualified to find a partner until he or she has a working knowledge of him or herself. If you don't know what kind of person you are, how do you know who will fit into your life? Your first assignment in preparation for marriage is to take time to study yourself to know and understand your person. To choose the wrong partner is to sign for failure. You must have a perfect match to have a peaceful and successful relationship. A square peg in a round hole will be a mismatch. It must be a round peg in a round hole to have a perfect match.

*Gen 2:18*

*18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

*NIV*

The search for a true and fitting partner starts with a discovery and understanding of your person. Who are you? What kind of person are you? What is your temperament like? Self-knowledge is recognition of God given abilities, talents, and gifts to profit from. Self-knowledge is an understanding of your potential. Self-knowledge is an understanding of your personality – what makes you who you are. This understanding will make you successful in your relationships. Self-knowledge is the understanding of your temperament, likes, dislikes and areas of strength, weaknesses, limitations, gifts, passions and vision.

Ignorance is deadly. Ignorance perpetuates disease, poverty, and failure. Ignorance produces constant loss in our lives. Ignorance imprisons and destroys. It brings conflicts and makes simple cases difficult to handle. God said,

*Hos 4:6*

*6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*

*NIV*

What kind of person are you? What kind of temperament do you have? What puts you off and what puts you on? What is your attitude to quarrels and arguments? Are you a peace maker and keeper or you like to wait for the other person to beg and apologize to you many times before you forgive and make peace? What is your eating habit like? Are you an outgoing person? Do you easily make friends? Do you love the company of many people or fewer people? What kind of friends do you keep or like to keep? Are you a partying person? Are you a late night person? How expensive are you? Are you a liberal person or a stingy person? Do you like to share with others what you have or you only like to be given by others? Are you a reserved person or do you mix up easily and love the company of people? Do you easily forgive or do you bear a grudge? When you get angry how do you show it? What is your attitude to church activities especially weekly meetings? Have you mastered your temper and emotions? All these questions are necessary in understanding yourself in order to understanding what kind of person that will fit into your life perfectly.

## **2. Development of your character and improving of your person.**

Improvement comes by great effort and determination to become better. It is very clear to all that every man's character needs to be improved upon to become compatible with people they wish

to share their lives with. Development of good character is called maturing. It takes mature people to have a successful marriage.

To mature is to be fully grown, made perfect, ready for use.

1. Marriage is only for the mature.

*Eph 5:31*

*31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."*

*NIV*

2. You need to mature into marriage.

3. Marriage is for the physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally mature.

- You need to mature in age, emotions, psychology, behavior relating with people, spirituality, manner of speech, management (administration) of your thoughts, emotions, temperament, time, vision, resources, people and finance.

*1 Tim 4:12*

*12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*

*NIV*

*1 Tim 4:15*

*15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.*

*NIV*

*Col 3:17*

*17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*NIV*

*Col 4:6*

*6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

*NIV*

*1 Tim 5:1*

*5:1 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers,*

*NIV*

- If you cannot practice these instructions of God now, you may not be able to practice them in your marriage.

4. Maturity has to do with use, training, exercise, practice and perfecting of known and proven godly laws and principles.

*Heb 5:14*

*14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

*NIV*

- Practice make perfect.
- Maturity comes by use.
- Use the word of God now to make yourself mature so you can have a mature marriage. Develop your person.

5. (a) The process of maturing is the knowing, understanding, believing and application of the word of God leading to renewed mentality and transformed character.

*Rom 12:2*

*2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*NIV*

- (b) Maturity involves self-analysis from time to time.
- Self analysis is necessary for change and improvement.

*1 Cor 11:31*

*31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.*

*NIV*

(c) Maturity is progressive improvement in self-analysis, adjustment, change, and application of godly principles to measure up to the fullness of Christ who is our role model.

*Eph 4:11-13*

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*NIV*

This is what God wants you to be doing now as a single-maturing for marriage. Build yourself up. Develop yourself for a fruitful marriage.

Tomorrow will not be an accident but a manifestation of your program. You program tomorrow by the value and habits formed and displayed yesterday and today. Be careful how you live your life now. Build your habits, character and values around the word of God. What you will see in

your marriage will not be an accident, but a manifestation of the fruit of the values, habits, desires and character developed during single life.

Take a good look at yourself to know whether you are mature for marriage or not. Remember, marriage is for the mature.

### **3. Acquisition of knowledge on successful relationship and marriage.**

*Prov 20:5*

*5 The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.*  
NIV

Knowledge is power. Knowledge is the key to success. God Himself declared:

*Hos 4:6*

*6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*  
NIV

Knowledge brings victory and enables one to accomplish great things. The dream of a happy marriage will take understanding to achieve. Understanding comes by knowledge. The more you know, the more you understand. The more you understand, the wiser you become. The wiser you become, the more successful you are. The outcome of your marriage depends on your wise application of the godly knowledge you have about relationships and marriage.

*Prov 4:5-15*

*5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor." 10 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. 11 I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. 13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life. 14 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.*  
NIV

*Prov 14:1*

*The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.*  
NIV

*Prov 9:10-12*

*10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. 11 For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. 12 If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."*  
NIV

Go for knowledge. Take time out and prepare to succeed in your marriage. Why should you go into what you know nothing about? That you see people getting married, and you are getting old, or you are in love is not enough. You must prepare to succeed just as in any other venture.

1. Study relationships that you know around you and are familiar with to know how and why they are succeeding or failing.
2. Study relationships that have been recorded in books to learn from their experiences.
3. Take time to read your Bible to learn what the word of God teaches about relationships and marriage.
4. Invest in books on relationships. Take time to read them as often as you can to learn the principles tested and outlined to produce successful marriages.
5. Attend marriage seminars and teaching sessions on relationships – singles and couples – to learn and prepare for a successful marriage.
6. When engaged and preparing for your wedding, make sure you go through the marriage training and counseling classes organized by your church for those intending to get married, not just to fulfill all righteousness but to learn and position yourself for success in your marriage.

### **CONCLUSION**

If you will give attention to prepare as one working hard to succeed in a chosen career, I am sure you will succeed in your marriage. Finding a partner is not the most important thing in a relationship, but preparation to succeed in it. Go to work on it now and you will have a blissful marriage.