

BEFORE YOU GET ENGAGED

Workbook

Chapter 1 - Would You Marry You?

A dating or engagement relationship, or ultimately a marriage, is only as healthy as the individuals in it. Jesus boiled the essence of personal and relational health down to these three relationships:

Mark 12:30-31 – *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Three readiness considerations:

- **The Vertical Dimension**

Key question: Is your relationship with God healthy?

Key measure: Are you surrendered to God? (Romans 12:1-2)

- **The Horizontal Dimension**

Key question: Is your relationship with others healthy?

Key measure: Are you demonstrating a life of sacrifice? (Romans 12:9-21)

- **The Personal Dimension**

Key question: Is your relationship with yourself healthy?

Key measure: Are you stable? (Romans 12:3)

- Do you have a balanced biblical view of your self? Not too high or too low?
- Is your worth grounded in your value to God? (Eph. 2:10; Prov. 23:7a)
- Are your emotions in check? Do you see signs of balance? (Gal. 5:22-23)
- Are your thoughts constructive or destructive? Do you process your thoughts through a biblical grid? (2 Cor. 10:5)

Chapter 2 - Are you ALL Dated Out?

If you get married before you're done dating, you will be susceptible to past and future dating dangers. You can be burned by an old flame or fall into a new fling. If you're not done with dating, you're not ready to get engaged or married.

- Are you ready to make a “one-man” or “one-woman” commitment?

- Are you ready to give up the possibility of a relationship with someone you might meet in the future?
- When you see a woman you are physically or emotionally attracted to, what do you do? Do you entertain the thought of being with her, or do you react as if your heart is already taken?

Key Consideration: Marriage is meant to be a one-man-one-woman “till death do us part” unconditional commitment – for life! If you are a person who still enjoys the whole meeting...flirting... dating scene, you may need to examine your motives and reasons for dating. You could be trapped in the two most common dating dangers: First, the view that dating is all about you. To gratify your desires. To fulfill your wants. Your needs. Without a dating focus shift from *me* to *you*, you can fall into a second dating danger – endless spousal shopping. Stuck in the belief that somewhere out there is a perfect person who will satisfy *you*, you keep on shopping. If that’s what you want, you’re not ready to pop the question. Anyone who is truly done dating is ready to make a selfless commitment to one person for life.

Chapter 3 - How Does “Till Death Do Us Part” Sound?

Marriage is intended to be a lifelong unconditional commitment. This covenant commitment is clearly defined in a wedding ceremony when the couple looks lovingly into each other’s eyes and promises to be faithful for life. *For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.* Now that’s about as serious as commitments come!

- Are you ready to make a lifelong commitment to this person? No matter what?
- How do you feel about Jesus’ view on how long a marriage is meant to last?

Matthew 19:3-10 - Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" ⁴"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

- How do you feel about the disciples' reply?

Matthew 19:10 - The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

- Are you ready to make...
 1. An **exclusive** commitment? *To one person...*
 2. A **lifelong** commitment? *For the rest of your life...*
 3. A **covenant** commitment? *For better, or worse...till death do us part*

Key question: What does a "for better, for worse" commitment mean to you?

Chapter 4 - Is Now the Right Time or NOT?

They say timing is everything. That certainly applies to getting engaged. Since marriage has huge lifetime ramifications, you need to be sure you're ready and that it's the right time.

Four important considerations:

1. What things in your life reflect personal maturity?

Proverbs 5:18 - *May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.*

2. Are you financially ready for marriage?

1 Timothy 5:8 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

3. Will your time limitations allow you to focus on building your marriage?

Deuteronomy 24:5 - *When a man takes a new wife, he is not to go out with the army or be given any business or work duties. He gets one year off simply to be at home*

making his wife happy. (MSG)

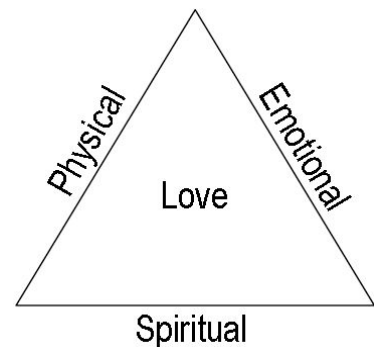
4. Is it getting more and more difficult for you to have sexual control?

1 Corinthians 7:9 - *But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

Key Question: Is now the right time for you to get engaged, or should you give it more time, or move on?

Chapter 5 - Are you "In Love"?

Falling in love is not enough to give you a happy marriage. If you're going to marry one day, you need three kinds of love – the love of physical attraction, the love of emotional connection, and the love of sacrificial action. Large amounts of eros, phileo, and agape will yield large amounts of relational love.



- What signs do you see of physical attraction?

Lover - How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.

Beloved - How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming!

Song of Solomon 1:15-16a

- What signs do you see of emotional connection?

My lover is mine and I am his.

Song of Solomon 2:16a

- What signs do you see of sacrificial action?

He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

Song of Solomon 2:4

Key Question: How do you think physical attraction, emotional connection, and sacrificial action, will play out if you were to marry?

Chapter 6 - Do You Communicate Effectively?

Healthy communication is absolutely essential for a great marriage. Without it couples are probably headed toward a train wreck. In fact, poor communication is one of the most common causes for divorce. That's why it's so important for you to carefully consider your communication as a couple.

When it comes to your communication style, are you more like...

- An Arrogant **Boss**? If so, why?
Proverbs 18:2 - A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.

- A Professional **Counselor**? If so, why?
Isaiah 5:21 - Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

- An Indispensable **Teammate**? If so, why?
Ephesians 4:25 - Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Key Question: Do you share with each other the last 10%? (The stuff that needs to be said, but often isn't due to fear).

Chapter 7 - Are You On the Same Page?

2 Corinthians 6:14 - Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

Three essential considerations:

1. Are your spiritual beliefs in agreement?

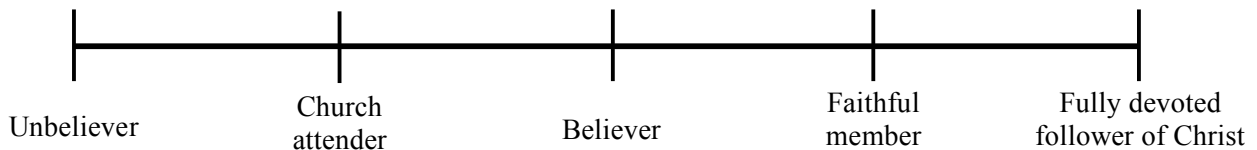
Ephesians 4:4-6a - There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.

1. Are your spiritual practices in agreement?

Romans 14:22 - So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.

1. Are your spiritual commitments in agreement?

Romans 12:1 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.



Key Question: What importance does God have in your life now and in the future?

Chapter 9 - Are You Better Together Than Apart?

God created a man and woman to complement each other—in body, soul, and spirit. Man needed “a helper.” Together they could *do more* and *be more* than they would have if they had lived life alone. Their differences and similarities mold them each into better people.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 - Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work.

Ask yourself:

1. In what ways do you see that you as a couple are compatible?

2. In what ways do you see that you as a couple complement each other?

3. In what ways do you see that you as a couple challenge each other?

Key Question: Do your differences and similarities make you better together than you would be apart?

Chapter 10 – What Does Your Heart Say?

Peace must be the final authority in your heart. If your heart feels heavy, tense, confused, uneasy, or pressured, you need to find out what's wrong. Peace is like a relational green flag that tells you to keep on moving forward—full speed ahead. A lack of peace should be like a yellow caution flag. For safety's sake, you need to slow down and proceed with caution. A red flag could be telling you to pull over and stop before you put yourself in harm's way.

Colossians 3:15 - *Let the peace of Christ **rule** in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

1. Can you honestly say you feel peace in your heart about getting engaged?

2. If yes, what factors can you point to that are giving you peace?

3. If no, what factors are causing you to have doubts about getting engaged?

4. If you were to pop the question today, would you have peace about doing so?

Chapter 11 – Do You Believe It's God's Will?

The best way to know God's *unrevealed will* (should you get married?) is found in doing God's *revealed will*. If you seek to do God's *revealed will*, your desires will be in line with His desires. At that point, you can act on your desires with full assurance that they are in line with God's will.

Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart.
Psalm 37:4

1. Are you delighting yourself in the Lord?

- Are you saved?

2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not **willing** that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

- Are you Spirit-filled?

Ephesians 5:17-18 - *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what **the Lord's will** is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

- Are you sanctified?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 - *It is **God's will** that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable.*

2. What desires do you have right now that you feel are God-given?

3. Do you have confidence that if you were to act on your desires, you'd be acting on God's will?

Chapter 12 – Are Your Friends and Family Supportive?

Wise people, in contrast to fools, seek out others' input and counsel. They know they don't have all the answers or have everything all together. They know they have blind spots and need the valuable input that others can give.

Consider this...

- Have you sought others' input?

Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

- What are your friends and family telling you to do?

Proverbs 27:9 (NLT) - The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.

Proverbs 1:8 - Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

- When you carefully weigh what others are saying, do you have a green, yellow, or red light?

Proverbs 14:15 - A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.

