

PREMARITAL COUNSEL Pt. 1

Don't tune out thinking this isn't for you because you are already married. Your unmarried children and grandchildren or unmarried friends can benefit from this sermon series.

For those of you out there who are contemplating marriage or will one day get married this sermon is really for you. Many have lost focus and moral values as far as marriage and family is concerned. I want to show you what God intended for marriage. For those of you who are engaged or thinking of getting engaged, I want to give you things to talk about and pray about before you take that next step of getting married. When you decide to get married you should sit down with your pastor and talk with them. You should be open and honest with them and your fiancé before God.

I am going to cover things that you should discuss and many things you should be in agreement about before getting married.

The marriage altar begins in the church and flows out to the home. A marriage ceremony is sacred before the Lord and should be founded in prayer and blessing over the couple.

Today, here in America, we have people that just want a quick marriage. Don't want the minister to minister at all. Don't want to sit and talk with the minister. As a matter of fact Americans are largely shaped by what they see on tv. The movies make premarital counsel look like punishment or a joke. Usually the guy never wants to do it and it's all left up to the girl to go by herself. No, both of you need to sit down and talk with your minister and each other. Scott and I didn't do premarital counsel but we weren't truly saved back then either. We were Christian in lip service only and that's no Christian at all.

Today, many couples don't want prayers or much of anything to do with God in the service at all. Don't want to hamper their style or bore their guests. The service is less than 10 minutes so that the "party" can begin. Many times people who are not even Christians are getting ordained online so they can perform the

service. They are not even true servants of the Lord. How shameful. Many couples go to the justice of the peace to be married.

Pastor Erustus said: We have really lost sight of what marriage is. Pastor, not all weddings we witness are godly, they have lost the true spiritual meaning and are now just ceremonial and some just do it to get certificates or passports to travel or some jobs.

When the marriage is not founded upon Jesus Christ, it will not succeed, will not be blessed until the couple comes to Him and repents and asks forgiveness for doing things all wrong. Not until they ask Him to be the Head of their lives and marriage and ask Him to bless their marriage, only then will their marriage be blessed.

God is The One Who instituted the covenant of marriage.

Genesis 2:18-23 - And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

So God made a suitable helper or mate for Adam. There is only one man and one woman mentioned here. God never intended on either the man or the woman to have multiple mates, but only one and to be faithful to that one.

Genesis 2:24 – Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The joining of two lives together, spiritually they are one and that is how God sees them. One man and one woman. Marriage was instituted by God for one man and one woman. This nation which repeatedly says it's a Christian nation, has passed ungodly laws where two men can marry each other or two women can marry each other. Those are not godly marriages.

Amos 3:3 – Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

You need to have time to get to know each other. That is what dating is for. Do your personalities gel well together. Do you click? Do you get along in general and have things in common. Is there respect on both sides? How do you handle your technology around each other? Are the two of you an open book with each other or are there secretive things. Would you get mad if your boyfriend or girlfriend looked at your phone?

Do you see godly fruit in your potential spouse's life? Discuss God's Word, worship, pray and go to church together. Do you feel comfortable talking about Jesus and discussing God's Word. If not, those are red flags. Do you agree on God's Word? If you are not in agreement on God's Word, on salvation, on Christ, on obedience etc. then you should not continue the relationship unless one is a baby Christian and needs time to grow. But if it's been years and they are not growing and not seeking to mature in the faith then you need to walk away, they are already showing you what you need to know.

As Christians you do not want to enter into marriage lightly. Christians are to be equally yoked.

2 Cor.6:14-18 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The man or woman you will marry should be an obedient Christian. For those of you wanting to be married, you should be praying for God to bring your mate into your life. Praying for God to show you the one He has chosen for you. Your relationship should be founded on Christ and by the time you are contemplating getting engaged you both should have prayed many prayers about it already. You want to be on the same page and in agreement about what you both expect out of the marriage and as husband and wife.

No one was ever stoned in The Old Testament for fornication but they were expected to get married. The man was expected to make it right with the father for the honor of his daughter. It was a sin that was punishable by death if a young woman was said to be a virgin and found not to be so upon her wedding night. Sexual sins were a huge deal and still are today.

According to Exodus 22:16-17, if a man seduced a virgin who was not engaged, he was expected to pay the standard bride price and marry her. However, her father had the ultimate right to refuse the marriage, though the man still had to pay the bride-price.

According to Deuteronomy 22:28-29, if a man assaulted/raped an unbetrothed woman and they were discovered, he was forced to pay her father \50\ shekels of silver. He was legally required to marry her, and he lost the right to divorce her for the rest of his life.

I said all that to say, sometimes couples give in to hormones and the heat of the moment. In those cases there may be an unexpected pregnancy. Often times it seems the best solution is for the couple is to get married. I know of a few couples that this happened to and the marriages failed. Sometimes we learn things the hard way and all we can do is do better with God's help and growing and maturing in the faith. The best thing to do is wait until you are married before you have sex. That's how God intended it to be. We will talk more on this next week.

THINGS to DISCUSS

A lot of people rush into getting married and then have problems afterward. They don't really get to know each other or they didn't take the time to discuss important subjects ahead of time and know where they stand on key matters.

Here are some issues to discuss before getting married so that each person's expectations are made clear right up front. Finances ie source, share bank

accounts or not, employment, both to work or not, investments, business, who will meet monthly bills or will you share them, etc. Discuss your careers and sacrifices that will need to be made on either party's part in order to get where you want to go.

Sex - intimacy how frequent do you want it to be etc. If there are std's that needs to be discussed as well. Discuss children ie do you want children, if so, how many children, how far between each child, sex of children. You cannot determine the sex of your children, you can try certain methods but in the end you should both be ok with whatever sex the child turns out to be. Some marriages have broken up over the sex of the child they had. For example the man only wanted a son but they had a daughter. You need to know what your fiancée thinks about this. You should talk about how you would handle not being able to have biologic children of your own should either of you be infertile. If that is the case, what does your fiancée think about adoption, is that an option. Maybe you want both biologic children and adopted children. It's best to have this conversation before you get married. You should talk about family planning methods.

Discuss education, possibly your own as well as the education of your future children. Do you want to further your studies and education or not. How will all of this be paid for.

Discuss settlement - where to live and what type of house. Health challenges, what will you do if one of you gets sick and the other one is in a position of having to take care of them long term. Discuss how to handle & support relatives and friends from both sides.

Talk about how you will resolve conflicts. This next passage of Scripture is about husbands and wives living together and treating each other the way God wants us to treat each other.

1 Peter 3:7 - Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

New Living Translation

In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

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Remember you are now seen as one in God's eyes spiritually. The husband is the head of the household and if you cannot reach an agreement on an issue, then the husband has final say. Usually, in a godly marriage you can reach agreement amicably without fighting.

The effectiveness of a husband's prayers is linked to his treatment of his wife, suggesting that relational harmony impacts spiritual life. This reflects the biblical principle that unresolved conflict can obstruct one's relationship with God, as seen in Matthew 5:23-24, where reconciliation is prioritized before offering gifts at the altar. The warning serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of human relationships and spiritual well-being.

The broader context involves the conduct within Christian households, emphasizing mutual respect and understanding. The effectiveness of prayer is mentioned as being contingent upon the husband's treatment of his wife, highlighting the spiritual implications of marital relationships.

The husband's spiritual authority does not bypass accountability. Marital discord creates a barrier between a husband and God, choking his prayer life. God ties our relationships on earth to our fellowship with Him: "Whatever you did for one of the least...you did for Me" (**Matthew 25:40**). A husband who neglects these commands forfeits intimacy with the Lord until repentance and reconciliation occur.

CLOSING

A good rule of thumb to uphold in your marriage and even in your dating relationship is:

Ephesians 4:26 - Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Don't let anger control you. If you do, that's a sin. You want to have a tender heart toward one another and don't go to bed angry. This applies to our Christian lives period, not just with our spouses. We are to be a peaceful people, not argumentative and angry. **(Matt.5:9, Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14).**

PRAYER