

PREMARITAL COUNSEL Pt.2

Last week I had started covering a wide range of things that should be discussed before a couple gets married. Here are just a few more items:

Discuss your family goals and visions. Talk about communication roles and responsibilities.

Those getting married should share and agree on a wide range of issues touching on your social, economic, political and spiritual matters that will affect you and your children. They say not to discuss religion or politics or else you will wind up in a fight but you better discuss those things with your fiancée.

You should discuss how you see your social lives after getting married. What is agreeable and what is not. You should know each other's friends. Social media can tear a relationship apart if old flames surface and secrecy enters in. You should trust each other enough to share passwords on your phones etc. and have no problem with your fiancée looking at your phone at any given time.

Christians shouldn't be attending clubs. I know my parents were unequally yoked and when they got married my dad would still go out with the guys to beer joints and leave my mom at home with us kids. That's not how you want to start your marriage out. I remember hanging out up town as a teenager and married guys would be up there without their wives. These type of activities will invite trouble into your relationship. Your relationship with your single friends will change.

Last week I mentioned "in sickness and in health" as part of the vows you will take. When you are both young and healthy you don't think much about being sick. Today, we see more and more people of all ages being impacted by various sickness, illness and diseases of all sorts. So many of us have health challenges and some of them are from birth such as congenital birth defects. It is important to share all health challenges to your potential spouse so they understand first of all what you are dealing with on a daily basis. How these things already affect your life and any pain you are living in. Share about special needs or limitations and medications you take. Share about how these things affect your life. It is better to know now if your potential mate is sincere about being loyal even in sickness or if this will scare them off. The longer you date without sharing these things the more your feelings grow and the deeper you will be hurt if they aren't who you think they are.

Discuss economics, how you spend and manage your money. Who will control the purse strings? Will you open charge accounts and where will you bank. Talk about political views.

Have you had arguments? How did you handle them? How is your communication? Do either one of you have quick tempers?

What recreation can you both enjoy together? How will you face discouragement? Are there any problems that bother you?

Do either of you have a felony or something on your record?

Discuss with your fiancé if you have ever been engaged before. If so, what happened. Have you been married before, if so, what happened.

Another thing to consider is your ex's. Are you emotionally and physically over your ex's? What if you run into them and they ask you out or want to see you secretly? Are you sure enough about your relationship to tell them about it and cut communication with them? Or can you be drawn back to them?

If you go ahead with marriage you will be joining into each other's families. How do you feel about your future in-laws should be discussed.

You should talk about your plans or ideas about the wedding itself ie traditional, civil etc. How big, how many guests, the venue, the cost and who's going to pay for it.

You should discuss your church backgrounds. If you come from different faiths, what are you plans for agreement? This is very important. Do each of you have a prayer life? Do you pray over your meals? Do you pray each day? What about reading God's Word? Do you read it daily? Discuss church and faith matters ie where to attend church, spiritual parents, what gifts or ministry each of you have and how to work it out. Discuss family daily devotions, giving towards God's work or people, going for missions etc.

There should be complete transparency and nothing should be off limits between the two of you. Each one of you should be an open book. This is the time for everything to be brought out in the open, lay your cards on the table as they say.

UNEQUALLY YOKED

The Bible speaks about those who are unequally yoked (**1 Cor.7:13-16**), that's not God's desire for His children. If you got married to an unbeliever or you were both unbelievers when you got married and then one of you got saved, as long as the Christian lives out their Christianity openly and the unbeliever has no problems with that, they are to remain in that marriage. God can use the Christian to win over the unbeliever to Christ.

Ezra 9:2 – For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

New Living Translation

For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage.”

NLT – For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage.”

God did not want His people to intermarry with the people of the pagan nations surrounding them. When they did this, it weakened their relationship with God and ultimately caused them to leave God. (**Deut.7:1-4, Exodus 34:12-16, 1 Kings 11:1-11**) It is for this exact reason God warns us not to marry someone who does not love and serve Jesus. There will be all sorts of problems and arguments and the ultimate danger is that the unbeliever may turn the Christian away from God.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND PHYSICAL INTIMACY BEFORE MARRIAGE

I'm going to share some things from Focus on the Family Ministry. It's an illuminati ministry fronting as a Christian ministry but I think they got what I'm going to share exactly right.



How far is too far when it comes to physical expressions of affection before marriage?

My boyfriend and I love each other. But we're struggling to stay pure when it comes to physical intimacy. We're not sure what the Bible means by "sexual immorality." We know that premarital sex doesn't honor God, but where should we draw the line?

ANSWER:

What is sexual immorality?

God tells us in the Bible that sexual immorality is any sexual activity that happens outside of marriage. This includes *adultery* (infidelity) and *fornication* (premarital or extramarital sex). All of these actions are off-limits for those who follow Jesus. **(1 Corinthians 6:9, Acts 15:29, and Hebrews 13:4)** Instead, we should learn to control our own bodies in holiness and honor.

When you are asking how far is too far, you are really reaching for how much you can push the boundaries with God. Even though it can be very hard to abstain from sexual relations before marriage, you should be working together as a team to respect each other and honor God. Don't put yourself in those tempting

situations as much as possible. I did a sermon series entitled “Dating and Chastity” and if you are dating I encourage you to listen to that series.

Sexuality is a powerful thing, and the nature of sexual intimacy is progressive. This means that the longer you and your boyfriend are together and the more physically affectionate you let yourselves become, the more difficult it will be to resist temptation. It’s even harder when hormones rage and culture says *just do it*.

The question of where to draw the line on physical intimacy should be discussed and agreed on by both of you. Staying pure should not come out of left field when you are both Christians. You have to discuss this before you are alone in the dark and hormones are raging and taking over.

So if you want to stay sexually pure while dating, you have to set and live out dating boundaries.

One way to help yourselves is to look at whether marriage is a realistic option.

Are you ready to get married?

You need to consider a lot of things before deciding to get married:

- Are you committed to Christ, to each other, and to God’s design for sexuality?
- How do your parents view your relationship?
- Can you support yourselves financially?
- How old are you? (Research shows that people who marry between the ages of 22 and 30 — without having lived together first — are more likely to have a successful marriage.)

If you have a green light in these areas, then start moving toward marriage. Talk to Christian couples you know that have a healthy marriage. Talk with your pastor.

Maybe you need to stop dating each other.

If you and your boyfriend are *not* ready to get married within the next 12 to 18 months, ask yourselves whether it’s a good idea to keep dating. It might be wise

to put your relationship on hold until you're older and better prepared to step into a lifelong commitment.

Why? Because the more time you spend together, the closer you'll become emotionally — and sexual pressures will only grow. If sexual purity is important to you, there's no reason to place yourselves in the way of daily temptations.

As I said last week, having sex before you are married is not the unpardonable sin. It is not ideal, it is not God's way, but it can be forgiven. I went over the Biblical solutions to fornication last week. In most instances after fornication it was customary for the couple to get married.

INTIMACY

This is important in a marriage. You should discuss how often you want to be intimate and what your potential spouse feels on frequency of intimacy as well. No one wants to get surprised or blind-sided by unrealistic expectations.

1 Cor.7:5 – Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

New Living Translation

Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

NLT – Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Notice the NLT completely left fasting out. It only said so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Fasting is very powerful in a Christian's life. If you need God to move or need a break through or something is weighing heavy on you, fast if you can and watch what God will do.

Intimacy between a husband and wife is a healthy part of the marriage. It is nothing to be ashamed about. Withholding sex as punishment or as leverage or in an argument should not be happening. That goes back to communication and conflict resolution. At the same time, there should be love, respect and understanding for when one or the other does not feel good or isn't in the mood for whatever the reason. There should not be times when violence or force comes into play.

'TIL DEATH DO US PART

God hates divorce. **(Malachi 2:16)** It is not the unpardonable sin but as Christians we are to take our vows seriously. Our vows are just as much to God as they are to our spouse. Marriage is a covenant not just between the man and the woman but also before God.

Matt.19:5-8 – The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

When Moses allowed them to divorce in the Old Testament, that was not what God originally intended. The Old Testament Divorce under Moses was an example of God's permissive will but it was not His perfect will. Your vows to each other and before God are very serious. Take time and think about what it means to commit to another person in every aspect of your life.

Even though God hates divorce, there are certain things that are Biblical grounds for divorce.

Adultery is a huge one. We are to be loyal and faithful to our spouses just as we are to God. If one cheats, that is grounds for divorce. If it is possible to forgive and heal the marriage and go on, then that is best. But if not, then divorce on the

grounds of adultery is justified according to God's Word. **(Matt.5:31-32, Matt.19:3-9)**

Attempt on your life or extreme cruelty – God does not expect you to live in an abusive situation. If you find yourself married and your spouse is physically or verbally abusive and you believed you were equally yoked, they have cleverly fooled you or you did not have very good discernment. Your minister should have been able to see a red flag about this from the start. If that is the case, it goes back to being unequally yoked. They deceived you and were not truly who they said they were or they may have backslidden away from Christ. Either way, God does not intend for you to live in a dangerous situation where your very life is in jeopardy. Nor does He intend for you to be battered verbally. In the heat of the moment saying something ugly is one thing; it isn't godly but can be forgiven. But what I'm talking about is when it becomes the norm, all the time abuse - constant. God doesn't expect you to live like that. When someone is continually abusive, that's not a Christian so the real problem is being unequally yoked. **(1 Corinthians 7:12-16)**

Life-threatening abuse violates the marriage covenant so entirely that separation and divorce are morally justified to protect human life. Scripture consistently places the highest value on human life and the protection of the vulnerable over legalistic structures. For instance, in Proverbs 24:11, God commands us to "Rescue those who are being taken away to death". Marriage was created for the mutual good and flourishing of humans, not to serve as a death trap.

God is against violence. This is laid out plainly in His Word from cover to cover.

Psalms 11:5 - The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth.

God hates the ones who are violent and love violence. In fact in the list of 7 things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19) shedding innocent blood is one, those who plot wicked thoughts and plans is another along with those who race to do evil. Another thing He hates is a person who stirs up strife in a family. Verbal abuse and physical abuse is certainly stirring up strife within a family. All of these things speak directly about an abusive spouse.

Marriage is intended to mimic Christ's sacrificial love for the church (Ephesians 5:25). Attempting to take a spouse's life is a total subversion of this holy covenant into something destructive.

Don't ever think you have to stay in an abusive relationship because of the vows you made. We make every effort to forgive and have things work out but sometimes it just isn't possible. Your safety, well being and peace of mind are most important of all.

Pray for your future mate and once married pray for your spouse. Pray for God's plan to unfold in their lives. Pray for them to know what their gifts and talents are and to use them for God's glory, for more of God's Spirit and for more anointing, to grow in the faith and live an obedient life. Pray for them to read God's Word and pray without ceasing. Pray for them to have more godly knowledge, wisdom and discernment. Ask God to help them to live lives that please Him and for Him to give them good success at all they set their hands to do. To be a strong Christian role model in the home. Ask God to help them to do His will and to do all the things He created them to do. If it's a man, ask God to help them to be a good husband and possibly a future father, to be a good provider and protector and to make godly decisions for their household and to be a good spiritual leader of the home. If it's a woman, ask God to help her to be a good wife and possibly a future mother, to be a good homemaker like the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 **(Proverbs 31:10-31)**.

CLOSING

James 1:19 tells us to be slow to speak, quick to listen and slow to anger. Listen to each other. Put the technology down and listen. Communication is so important in relationships and in marriage. It encompasses patience, understanding, listening, compromise etc. Pray James 1:19 over your life.

Pray together and pray separately and see what God has to say about your possible engagement and future marriage. Take time and wait on Him and do your best to stay in His will with every part of your life.

PRAYER