

Praying for a Godly Marriage Partner

II Corinthians 6:11-18

God loves things to be according to His specifications. He likes us to follow the code He has established in His Word. When Moses went up the mountain in Exodus 24:18-25:40, God showed him the detailed plans for the Tabernacle, the most written about physical building in the Universe. More chapters are devoted to the detailed descriptions of this building than any other in the Bible. God spent more time on the Tabernacle than He does on the Creation of the Cosmos, the Flood and even the last week of Christ's life.

The Tabernacle was so important to God that He wanted it built and operated just right. God wanted His Glory and plan to be reflected by everything done in that tent. The same is true in another temple He has built.

Did you know that there is another building that has even more detailed instructions than even the Old Testament Tabernacle? It is your New Testament body, the temple of the Living God. God has a very special way He wants you to take care of and use that building He lives in.

We are God's Building

As we turn to II Corinthians, listen to how clearly God speaks as to His desires about who you marry and how you live your life in this body, this temple, this building not made with hands but designed by God to be His earthly habitation.

II Corinthians 6:11-18 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. 13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open. 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

" I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore

" Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."

18 " I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty."

God delights when we choose to conform our lives to His plans. He loves to see us seeking Him, finding Him, and loving Him so much we want to become like Him.

Since God loves us to follow His Word, wouldn't it be nice if God gave us a set of plans like He gave Moses for the Tabernacle, so that we would know how to be the best husband or wife? And wouldn't it be great to have a set of guidelines to know just who we should marry: what they would look like, act like, and so on?

Well the great news is that God has provided a completely detailed set of instructions for how to recognize the absolutely right person to marry if you are looking, or the exact set of operating instructions to become the best husband or wife if you are already married. That is what so much of God's Word is written about: How we can please and serve God in the relationship and activity that will span most of our earthly lives.

Today, whoever we are, and where ever we are in our life, we can be praying about our life and marriage and the lives and marriages of those we love—from God's Word!

Again, let me remind you that we are in the midst of a look at:

How to Pray For Those You Love

We can prayerfully seek for our own lives, and the lives of those we love the general guidelines God has given us for lives and families that please Him. These four elements can measure the strength of a church, the power of the lives of individuals, and the depth of discipleship. These areas we are examining one-by-one are:

1. We need to experience and pray for *reality in our spiritual life*:

- Spiritual reality starts when they are ***genuinely saved***. Acts 26:18
- Spiritual reality is seen when they are ***loving God's Word***. Job 23:12
- Spiritual reality results in them ***living in victory***. John 8:32, 36
- Spiritual reality causes them to be ***thinking of heaven***. Colossians 3:1-2

- Spiritual reality is seen when they are **finding sin repulsive**. Psalm 38:18
- Spiritual reality means we see them **responding to God**. Psalm 51:17 O God, You will not despise.

2. We need to experience and pray for **integrity in our personal life**:

- ***Maintaining a clear conscience*** (I Timothy 1:5).
- Seeing them ***learning to stand alone*** (Daniel 1:8).
- Seeing them ***seeking to stay pure*** (I Peter 2:11).
- Seeing them ***cultivating a servant's heart*** (Mark 10:44-45).
- Seeing them ***avoiding bitterness in trials*** (Ephesians 4:30-32).

3. Thirdly, we need to experience and pray for **stability in our relational life**. While our children are at home we seek to guide them in ways of godliness and pray that these ways become theirs from the heart.

- Seeing them ***loving their brothers and sisters*** (I John 4:7-8). Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- Seeing them ***trusting God with hard situations and not rebelling*** (I Samuel 15:23a). For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being king*."
- Seeing them ***loving the way God made them as men and women*** (Psalm 27:11). Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.
- Seeing them ***waiting to meet God's chosen life partner for them*** (II Corinthians 6:14). Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

For most of us, most of our life will be spent in marriage¹; and God has designed a person that will complete our life and help us be useful all our days for God's Glory. That person is our marriage partner. Marriage is our second biggest choice in life, and the one that impacts everything else after salvation.

How you feel, how you serve, how you live most moments of your life—all are tied to the person you decide to share your life with in marriage. Seeking out a person that agrees

¹ 020908AM GDGW-30

with God's plan, seeks to follow God's plan, and wants to be a godly partner in following the Lord is:

What a Godly Partner Looks Like

God's Word says much about men and women. The Lord goes so far as to even identify what type of person we should avoid, stay away from, and especially never consider as a viable marriage partner. The list is timeless, and can be your guide to a joyous Biblical marriage.

The following list is either what you should be praying for and heading towards if you are married. Or, what you are prayerfully looking for in a partner if you are not yet married.

1. **A godly marriage partner is:** a person who wants to follow God's rules for a wonderful marriage.

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

God wants us to marry someone who also wants to follow God's directions. That is one of the most important qualifications. A willing and seeking heart for God makes all the difference in a marriage.

This type of person believes that God designed marriage and so their highest authority on a good marriage is God's Word. A godly marriage partner wants to follow God's Word and His plan for marriage. Look for a person that regularly listens to God in His Word.

2. **A godly marriage partner is:** a person who sees the home as their primary ministry.

Deuteronomy 6:7 **You shall teach them diligently to your children,** and shall talk of them ***when you sit in your house,*** when you ***walk by the way,*** when ***you lie down,*** and when ***you rise up.***

If God doesn't judge me by how they turn out, but rather by how I raise them, then pick someone who wants to raise children, not farm them out at every possible time for someone else to raise. By the way, all of those are hard to do if you don't eat together as a family, and if you don't spend time together, or you never put them to bed, and you never get them up.

3. **A godly marriage partner is:** a person who loves children and wants to teach them.

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall **teach them diligently to your children,** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way,

when you lie down, and when you rise up. Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; **and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.**

4. **A godly marriage partner is:** a person that wants a pure home.

Deuteronomy 6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates;

Deuteronomy 6:14 **You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you;**

Deuteronomy 7:25-26 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26 **Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house,** lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

Psalms 106:35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works;

And now becoming very specific, here are some of the general practices that make for a godly marriage, one that follows God's plan. A woman in tune with what God's Word teaches, will begin to cultivate intentional priorities that reflect God's desires for her as a woman. I like to call these:

God's Specifications For a Godly Wife

1. **A PRIORITY OF THE IRRESISTABLE HOME.**

Proverbs 31:11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain.

A godly wife will be making her home a safe place-a place of encouragement, comfort, understanding and refuge. Your home can be that shining beacon on the hill that beckons your husband to come. It should be the place he would rather be when he is at work and at play. It is his place of refreshment, renewal, and refocus. You are the guardian of that place. When activities and the urgent over run this priority all must be stopped and the home reset to be the place of refuge your husband needs.

2. **A PRIORITY OF REVERENCE.**

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

A wife who believes her primary ministry is marriage will not joke about her husband or make cutting remarks to him. She won't constantly remind him of his faults, mistakes, and failures. Rather she will correct him only if it is absolutely necessary. She will avoid the danger of allowing the home to be in shambles and full of disorder and confusion. But also avoid the danger of making the house a show place where everything must always be neat and immaculate. Husbands want homes to live in, not show places to visit. This is all bound up in her being trustworthy and dependable

3. **A PRIORITY OF CHEERFULNESS.**

A godly wife will be maintaining a good attitude.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Proverbs 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.

4. **A PRIORITY OF CONTENTMENT. A godly wife will** be satisfied with her position, her possessions, her tasks

Philippians 4:6-7, 11-13 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

5. **A PRIORITY OF DEVOTION. A godly wife will** be maintaining a good spiritual life I Pet. 3:1,2,7 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

So here are some descriptions we can see in God's Word of His specifications for a wife that will please and honor Him. She is a woman who has:

1. A PRIORITY OF THE IRRESISTABLE HOME.
2. A PRIORITY OF REVERENCE.
3. A PRIORITY OF CHEERFULNESS
4. A PRIORITY OF CONTENTMENT.
5. A PRIORITY OF DEVOTION.

And now for men and husbands, here are some of the general practices that make for a godly marriage, one that follows God's plan. A man in tune with what God's Word teaches, will begin to cultivate intentional priorities that reflect God's desires for him as a man. I like to call these:

God's Specifications For a Godly Husband

A man who reflects God's Word will seek these elements that make him a useful and powerful tool in God's Hands.

1. **A PRIORITY OF HUMILITY. A godly husband will** be like Jesus. Jesus as a leader was first and foremost a servant. John 13:1-15 gives us the same picture of what it means to be a leader. In this passage, the emblem of leadership is not a throne or a club but a big towel and a basin. In other words, a leader must have a servant's heart. And if he has a servant's heart, he will act like a servant and react like a servant - when he is treated like a servant. 1 Peter 5:3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;
2. **A PRIORITY OF SERVANTHOOD. A godly husband will** be the family's biggest servant. He is to be the head of his wife even as Christ is the head of the church {Eph. 5:23}. His great model in leadership is Jesus Christ, who made Himself a servant (Phil. 2: 6-8); who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45); who is head over all things for the sake of the church (Eph. 1:22, 23). Whatever Jesus Christ does, He does for our sake; He does with our best interests at heart. In similar fashion, the husband is to live for the sake of his wife, always keeping her best interests at heart. He is to be his wife's servant-leader.
 - o **A servant stays close to those he serves.** Jesus Christ practiced the principle of continuous association with those whom He led. He did not lead His disciples by long distance telephone calls, or by writing them a few letters or by infrequent visits. For over three years, He spent great amounts of time with them. (Compare John 1:39,43; Mark 1:17; 3:14; 4:10; 5:1,30,31,40; 6:1,30,31,32,35; 8:1,10,27,34; 9:2,30; 10:13,23,46; 11:1.) Biblical leadership requires association with those who are being led.
 - o **A servant clearly talks to those he serves.** Jesus Christ carefully and relevantly instructed His disciples.
 - o **A servant clearly lives before those he serves.** Jesus Christ led His disciples by being a good example.
 - o **A servant clearly does his job for those he serves.** Jesus Christ led His disciples by making decisions and delegating responsibility to them. Compare John 4:1,2; Mark 1:35-39; 6:7; 6:35-43; John 11:39-44; Matt. 10:1-14; 16:21-23; 21:1,2; 28:18-20, where Jesus made decisions and delegated responsibilities to His disciples. Similarly, Christian husbands are called upon to lead their wives by making decisions and by delegating

responsibility. To be the leader does not mean that he must bear all the responsibility and do all the work while his wife bears nothing and does nothing. It does mean that he will see to it that the work gets done and that everyone knows who does what. In marriage someone has to be the final decision maker. Someone has to delegate responsibility, and God has ordained that this should be the husband. Indeed, the husbands must make decisions and delegate responsibility as a servant of his wife.

3. **A PRIORITY OF KIND WORDS. A godly husband will** practice one of the simplest, yet most neglected, ways of communicating love - by way of words spoken kindly, warmly, and directly toward his wife. John 7:46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Remember those words in the hymn In the Garden? "He speaks and the sound of His voice..."
4. **A PRIORITY OF TENDERNESS. A husband who believes his primary ministry is marriage will** express his love by giving her a lot of tenderness, respect, chivalry, and courtesy (Eh. 5:28; Col. 3:19; 1 Cor. 13:4, 5). Do not use jokes about her or make cutting remarks to her in front of other people. Speak to her in a gentle and respectful way. Treat her as you would a valuable jewel rather than a piece of cinder or a garbage can.
5. **A PRIORITY OF PRAISING HER. A husband who believes his primary ministry is marriage will** love her by expressing appreciation and praise generously and in large doses (1 Pet. 3:7; Prov. 31:28).

So here are some descriptions we can see in God's Word of His specifications for a husband that will please and honor Him. He is a man who has:

1. A PRIORITY OF HUMILITY.
2. A PRIORITY OF SERVANTHOOD.
3. A PRIORITY OF KIND WORDS.
4. A PRIORITY OF TENDERNESS.
5. A PRIORITY OF PRAISING HER.

Isn't it wonderful that God gave us a set of plans so that we would know how to be the best husband or wife? We have a set of guidelines to know just who we should marry: what they would look like, act like, and so on.

God has provided a completely detailed set of instructions for how to recognize the absolutely right person to marry if you are looking, or the exact set of operating instructions to become the best husband or wife if you are already married. That is what so much of God's Word is written about: How we can please and serve God in the relationship and activity that will span most of our earthly lives.

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