

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL GUIDELINES IN PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

I. OVERALL CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

A. EIGHT POINTS

1. Prepare first and look to God to provide the right mate.
 - a. Exercise faith and stand by this principle.
 - b. Embark on a quality program of thorough preparation.
 - c. Make this your first priority.
 - d. Be patient and faithful — God will reward you richly in the end.
 - e. He will provide if you stand by His side.
 - f. Ps. 37:3-4 — "*Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*"
2. Study to understand your God-appointed role.
 - a. Realize that God had a specific purpose in creating the woman — to serve and be a helpmeet to the man.
 - b. To step out of this realm is contrary to God's divine plan and will lead to frustration, misery and condemnation.
 - c. Study the Bible until this point becomes firmly fixed in your mind.
 - d. Take special note of the following key scriptures defining your role.

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| 1. <u>Gen. 2:18-24</u> | 5. <u>Tit. 2:4-5</u> |
| 2. <u>I Cor. 11:3, 7-9</u> | 6. <u>I Cor. 14:34-35</u> |
| 3. <u>Eph. 5:24-25, 33</u> | 7. <u>I Pet. 3:1-6</u> |
| 4. <u>I Tim. 2:9-13</u> | 8. <u>Prov. 31:10-31</u> |
 - e. All other physical functions of the woman come under, and are secondary to, this number one priority.
NOTE: It is to be assumed that the woman's first duty and calling is to serve God and be in His Kingdom. But on the physical plane, God specifically created her to be man's helpmeet and companion (as the above scriptures prove). All her other roles logically follow.
3. Keep a notebook of ideas.
 - a. This could prove to be one of your best investments.
 - b. As you learn key lessons and pick up important concepts in preparing for marriage, record them in this notebook for reinforcement and future reference.
 - c. Do this quickly — while the iron is hot and the memory is fresh.
 - d. Since your notebook will not always be readily accessible, keep paper and pen handy to jot down thoughts and ideas. Transfer to your notebook later.
 - e. Reviewing this notebook regularly will aid you greatly in bringing important points into focus.
4. Seek the advice of older women.
 - a. This is in keeping with God's instruction in Titus 2:1-5.
 - b. Consider what a priceless storehouse of information they have to share.
 - c. It's yours free for the asking.
 - d. We have many such qualified women in the Church who would be glad to help.
5. Prepare yourself as though marrying Christ.
 - a. In effect, this is what Ephesians 5:22 implies.
 - b. This verse says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

- c. Let this sobering thought sink deep into your heart and mind and truly live it in your everyday life.
- d. Prepare diligently and conscientiously for your future marriage with this spiritual focus in mind.
- 6. Strive to develop good judgment, wisdom and common sense.
 - a. One of the lofty characteristics of the virtuous woman is wisdom.
 - b. Prov. 31:26 says, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom...."
 - c. Make it your aim to pray for this priceless gift (Jas. 1:5).
 - d. Observe the example of others who have it.
 - e. Search it out as though you are looking for hidden treasure (Prov. 3:13-18).
 - f. To the degree that you acquire godly wisdom, good judgment and common sense, is the degree that you will build a successful marriage.
- 7. Develop the graces and virtues of Christian character.
 - a. Make it a goal to study the lives of the virtuous women of the Bible to see what made them holy, righteous and great in God's eyes.
 - b. Pray for God's Spirit and the ability to express His Word through your life as a refined, dignified and cultured lady.
 - c. Read and study again 1 Peter 3:1-6.
- 8. Prepare for motherhood.
 - a. This involves a wide scope of knowledge.
 - 1) Build up your health through proper nutrition and regular exercise.
 - 2) Become knowledgeable about childbirth.
 - 3) Start learning all you can about God's principles of childrearing.
 - b. Don't wait until you're married to acquire this vital information.
 - c. Develop a curiosity, sensitivity and consciousness in preparing as a potential future mother.

II. PRACTICAL TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. SEVEN POINTS

1. Try to be free of debt.
 - a. If at all possible, avoid starting your marriage under heavy financial burdens.
 - b. If deep in debt, it would be wise to postpone marriage until you are financially solvent.
 - c. Don't become ensnared by the use of credit cards.
 - d. One of the major causes of divorce today is poor financial management and being in debt.
2. Make it a goal to have money in savings.
 - a. There will be many unexpected and hidden expenses that you will not anticipate.
 - b. Having disciplined yourself to put aside a savings will show your future husband that you are a wise steward of money.
3. Learn how to balance a checkbook and keep records.
 - a. This knowledge and experience will be a valuable asset to your husband.
 - b. Learn to keep records and receipts in a secure place for quick and ready reference.
4. Start building a dowry of basic essentials that can easily be stored.
 - a. This goal may apply more to after graduation than while in college.
 - b. Look for quality bargains on sale and at discount stores.
 - c. Examples may include: linens, blankets, cookware, Tupperware, etc.
 - d. This kind of initiative indicates that you are a responsible, thrifty and discriminating homemaker.
5. Develop orderly and tidy housekeeping habits.
 - a. Titus 2:5 says that a good wife should be a keeper of the home.
 - b. Although this means more than simple housekeeping, it certainly includes that duty.
 - c. Don't desecrate the sanctity of your marriage by becoming sloppy, dirty and illorganized in the way you keep your home.
 - d. Start now to develop these habits in your present living quarters so that they will carry over automatically into marriage.
 - e. You should never bring dishonor to your husband or children by being a sloppy housekeeper.
 - f. Practice Benjamin Franklin's philosophy — "a place for everything and everything in its place."

6. Experiment with new recipes and menus and develop cooking skills.
 - a. This kind of dedication and diligence will win a man's heart.
 - b. The time and skill that you put into your meals says "I care."
 - c. It also indicates that you are a master of your craft — a well-disciplined helpmeet.
 - d. With every opportunity you have, practice home cooking so as to develop skill and confidence.
7. Learn to be frugal by being creative.
 - a. In these inflationary times, pennies, dimes and quarters do count.
 - b. Study and search for ways to cut costs in all of your homemaking responsibilities.
 - c. All women's magazines run articles regularly on how to stretch the family budget.
 - d. Learn the art of making things with your hands rather than buying ready-made commodities.
 - 1) Curtains and drapes.
 - 2) Clothing
 - 3) Flower arrangements.
 - 4) Crocheting, knitting, etc.
 - 5) Baking.

III. HOW TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT MAN.

a. POINTS

1. Work on grooming, appearance and making yourself attractive.
 - a. A woman's attire and appearance reveal her inner feelings and attitudes about herself.
 - b. These outward signs show whether she's well-bred, educated and knowledgeable of proper fashions.
 - c. Sloppy and careless grooming habits carry negative connotations to a man.
 - d. They imply carelessness, laziness and a lack of self-respect.
 - e. Your appearance is the first impression you make. Try always to make the best one you can.
2. Live the kind of life that will lead to self-respect.
 - a. Keep up your standards in the whole of your life.
 - b. Maintain a clean and pure conscience before God and man.
 - c. Make walking with God your supreme desire.
 - d. Practice the law of love — true agape love — until it becomes an ingrained habit.
 - e. Guilt and sin destroy self-respect.
 - f. Repent quickly, therefore, the moment you begin to stray.
 - g. Eph. 1:4 — *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."*
3. Learn how to show honor and be submissive.
 - a. This attitude is the hallmark of a virtuous woman.
 - b. When properly expressed, it will intensify and heighten a man's respect for you as a real lady.
 - c. Virtually all the key scriptures describing your role as a woman underscore the need to practice this attitude.
 - d. Notice Eph. 5.22-24 — *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."*
 - e. Get into the habit of practicing submission so that it will carry over into your marriage.
 - f. If you are unsure of how to practice submission, seek counsel and ask God to reveal the answer.
4. Learn the art of giving encouragement and being supportive.
 - a. This is one of the most important areas of being a helpmeet.
 - b. It has been said, "A woman can make or break a man."
 - c. There's a great deal of truth to this.
 - d. A man wants and needs his wife by his side through thick and thin — through good times and tough times.
 - e. Enter into his life, thoughts and dreams — lend support when he needs you the most.
 - f. When he's down, discouraged or defeated, point him to God and express confidence in his ability to forge ahead.
 - g. Be strong, deny yourself and stand by him until death.

5. Develop emotional maturity and learn how to handle conflict.
 - a. Man's days are full of woes and tribulation (Job 14:1).
 - b. Satan is forever waging war against the saints.
 - c. One of the areas where he works most violently is in human relationships.
 - d. He creates strife and discord at every turn.
 - e. Be on guard! Resist these attitudes and urges.
 - f. Start practicing self-control and learn the delicate art of making peace.
 - g. Start fine tuning your life now so that you will know how to handle conflict in marriage should it arise.
6. Acquire a good sense of humor.
 - a. No one enjoys the company of a sourpuss.
 - b. Laughing with others (not at them) makes one personable, warm and friendly.
 - c. Learn to laugh at yourself in fun and lightheartedness.
 - d. Try to see the humorous side of situations — take things in stride.
 - e. Being able to appreciate clean and wholesome humor will enhance the quality of your personality.
7. Be positive and enthusiastic.
 - a. God's basic outlook and disposition is one of joy and good cheer (Ps. 16:11).
 - b. As a begotten child of God, you should radiate these same qualities.
 - c. Such an attitude is contagious.
 - d. Men by and large are highly attracted to this type of personality — not so much romantically but in giving them a sense of courage and motivation.
 - e. Make being positive a natural and spontaneous approach to life.
8. Build trust and responsibility into your life.
 - a. One of the most noble characteristics of the virtuous woman is that she is reliable and trustworthy.
 - b. Prov. 31:11 — "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her...."
 - c. Keep your word; carry through with your commitments.
 - d. Jot down requests or little favors others may ask of you.
 - e. Establish a good reputation and build a solid name for yourself.
 - f. Prov. 22:1 — "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.*"
9. Never marry a man you don't respect
 - a. This is not to say, "Disrespect him or treat him dishonorably."
 - b. It simply means, don't allow yourself to get involved with someone you have reservations about.
 - c. Make sure that he's deeply converted, supports the Work and lives God's way.
 - d. Also make sure that he's strong enough to lead you in right paths.
 - e. That he will make a good father and be a responsible provider.
 - f. Marry only someone you can look up to with deep love, admiration and awe.
 - g. Remember, your salvation may rest in part on the choice you make for a husband.

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