



Outline

1:00 pm God's Design for Marriage

1:30 pm The Relationship Landscape

2:15pm Break

2:30pm God's Design for Sexuality

3:15pm I do or I don't: Coming to the Decision of Marriage

4:00pm Close

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The Center for Christian Study is a Christian education and outreach organization that has been ministering to students, faculty and staff at the University of Virginia as well as to the people in and around central Virginia since 1976. Our vision is two-fold: "to foster serious consideration in the university environment of a biblical worldview" and "to facilitate wise discussion of the Truth in light of the challenges of contemporary culture."

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In Order to Form a More Perfect Union

The biblical view of marriage

Genesis 2:18-25 (ESV)

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.** ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Marriage is three commitments:

1. Specialness (leaving)

2. Permanence (cleaving)

3. One-life experience (one flesh)

Husband headship is the biblical concept that God assigned the husband responsibility for the marriage and resulting family.

Being a Helper is recognizing who is responsible and granting him the freedom to follow his conscience.

In Order to Form a More Perfect Union

Relationship	Biblical Marriage	Secular Marriage	Friendship	Brother and Sister in Christ	Dating	"Friends with Benefits"	An Ideal Christian Courtship
Start/Stop Duration							
Commitment							
Exclusivity							
Intimacy							
Purpose Result							
Notes:							

Song of Songs 1:1-2:7 (ESV)

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

Bride

- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love is better than wine;
3 your anointing oils are fragrant;
your name is oil poured out;
therefore virgins love you.
4 Draw me after you; let us run.
The king has brought me into his chambers.

Chorus

We will exult and rejoice in you;
we will extol your love more than wine;
rightly do they love you.

Bride

- 5 I am very dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar,
like the curtains of Solomon.
6 Do not gaze at me because I am dark,
because the sun has looked upon me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
they made me keeper of the vineyards,
but my own vineyard I have not kept!
7 Tell me, you whom my soul loves,
where you pasture your flock,
where you make it lie down at noon;
for why should I be like one who veils herself
beside the flocks of your companions?

Groom

- 8 If you do not know,
O most beautiful among women,
follow in the tracks of the flock,
and pasture your young goats
beside the shepherds' tents.
9 I compare you, my love,
to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.
10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
your neck with strings of jewels.

Chorus

- 11 We will make for you ornaments of gold,
studded with silver.

Bride

- 12 While the king was on his couch,
my nard gave forth its fragrance.
13 My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh
that lies between my breasts.
14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
in the vineyards of Engedi.

Groom

- 15 Behold, you are beautiful, my love;
behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.

Bride

- 16 Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved,
truly delightful. Our couch is green;
17 the beams of our house are cedar;
our rafters are pine.
2:1 I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

Groom

- 2 As a lily among brambles,
so is my love among the young women.

Bride

- 3 As an apple tree among the trees of the forest,
so is my beloved among the young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.
5 Sustain me with raisins; refresh me with apples,
for I am sick with love.
6 His left hand is under my head,
and his right hand embraces me!
7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the does of the field,
that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.

Song of Songs 4:1 and 6:5 (ESV)

^{4:1/6:5}Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

Song of Songs 6:8-9 (ESV)

⁶Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. ⁷Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised. ⁸We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister on the day when she is spoken for? ⁹If she is a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver, but if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.

Observations: Love is...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1 Corinthians 6:9-20 (ESV)

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

¹²"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. ¹³"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (ESV)

¹Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ²For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

I do or don't: Coming to the Decision of Marriage

Myths

You do not need to be over 30. You do not need to be wealthy. Living together first does not increase your chance of longevity.

The single biggest predictor of a long marriage is your level of commitment.

Questions to pray through:

1. Are you both believers?
2. Do you have the same understanding of the gospel?
3. Are you willing to be the right person for her/him?
4. Are you willing to make the 3 commitments of marriage?
5. Do you encourage each other to godliness?
6. Have you discussed your life goals and important issues (e.g. vocation, finances, children, holidays, chores, etc.) and do you share similar views? Where you differ, are YOU willing to be the one who compromises?
7. Have you spent time with each other's families?
8. Is your communication clear, comfortable and respectful? Can you be honest and real?
9. Are you able to form an independent family?
10. Have you worked together or seen each other when you're not at your "date-night" best?

In the meantime: Expand your time together beyond recreation: Study the Bible. Read & discuss books. Work together. Volunteer on the same project or serve in the same ministry. Get to know each other's families and friends. Join the same small group. Discuss goals, values and issues. Seek wise counsel. Attend pre-marriage counseling. Be real, open and honest. Raise issues, rather than avoid them.

"Just knowing" is not a feeling. It is an intuition based on the result of many small observations and objective, prayerful conclusions.

What will destroy a marriage?

Adultery

Addiction

Abuse

Abandonment

Talk It Out Before You Say, “I Do”

By Julie Ferwerda

[CBN.com](http://www.cbn.com) – You’re thinking about spending the rest of your life with that special person. But do you really know them as well as you think? Are there areas you need to know about (or they need to know about you) that you haven’t discussed? The best time to get down to the nitty-gritty with each other is before you say, “I do.”

You need to know what to expect after the wedding day, and to decide if you really want to spend the rest of your life with this person the way they are now. Chances are they (and you) won’t change that much, so if you really want to know who you are agreeing to love, work through these questions together. There’s no hurry—take all the time you need. But there’s one rule. You must be completely, gut-wrenchingly honest! If you misrepresent yourself...they will remember.

PURPOSE

My biggest goal in life is to...
I find satisfaction in...
Before I die I want to...
I am here because...
My dream is to someday...
I will be ready to die when I’ve...

PAST

The best part about my childhood was...
The worst part about my childhood was...
The scariest thing that ever happened to me was...
Something I’m afraid to tell anyone about my past is...
A past situation that could affect my future is...
I’ve had [] sexual partners before this relationship.
The way I feel about my past relationship history is...

WHO I AM

My biggest fears in life are...
My biggest needs in life are...
My most frequent mood is...
The thing I hate most is...
The thing I worry about most is...
Three things I want to change about myself are...
Three things I really like about myself are...
My most common daydream is...
I get angry when...
My favorite kind of house pet is...
My overall opinion about myself is...
I think my greatest personality asset is...
My greatest personality weakness is...
I find the greatest enjoyment in...
The sin I struggle most with is...
I’m most ashamed about...
Someone I greatly admire is...
The way I feel about death is...
I think war is...
I feel happy when...
I have no use for people who...
When someone acts rude to me, I...
When someone is unfair, I...
I feel jealous of...

My dream vacation would include...
The things I find the most fun are...
My favorite sport(s) is...
Playing sports in my future is a [] on a scale from one to ten.
Watching sports on T.V. is a [] for me on a scale from one to ten.
I am disgusted by...
When I am afraid (substitute sad, angry, happy, lonely, tired), I...
My hobbies include...
I spend [] hours a week at my hobbies.
What I really want when I am sick is...
The part of my body I am most bothered by is...
The part of my body I am most happy with is...
What hurts me most is...
The best (and worst) thing about life is...
The first thing I notice about someone is...
When someone is angry with me, I...
When someone is disappointed in me, I...
The worst (and best) thing about the opposite sex is...
Being teachable means...
People (including me) should say they’re sorry when...

MARRIAGE

My reasons for wanting to get married are...
I think the keys to a good marriage are...
The biggest mistakes I made in past relationships are...
The area I’ve grown the most in relationships is...
Relationships in the past have taught me...
I’ve always viewed marriage as...
My parents had a [] marriage.
I learned [] about marriage from my parents.
I think the things in marriage you should be honest about are...
The areas I’m concerned about being married are...
The areas I’m excited about being married are...
Marriage for me will be giving up...
Marriage for me will be gaining...
I think separate vacations are...
Traveling together is...
When having conflict, I like to: cool off by myself before discussing the problem; discuss and work the problem out

right away; pretend there is no problem and just move on; analyze the problem as to what it is, why it happened, how to avoid it in the future, etc...
Arguing and or fighting is...
The best way to handle disagreements is to...
What I fear most about marriage is...
What I anticipate most about marriage is...
The role of in-laws in marriage is...
The thing that will make me most secure (and insecure) in marriage is...
Dating (each other) after you are married is...
Love is...
"Till death do us part" means...
I think people should be allowed to divorce when...
For me, divorce is...

SEX

I think sex is/will be...
I think a healthy marriage involves sex [] per week or [] per month.
I'm aware that real sex in marriage differs from Hollywood in the following ways...
I think being naked in front of someone is...
On a scale from one to ten, sex is a [] in importance in a good marriage for me.
What sex means to me is...
Talking about sex feels...
Being spontaneous or creative in marriage sex sounds...

MONEY/FINANCES

I think money is...
Spending money is hard/easy for me because...
The biggest waste of money is...
The best investment of money is...
I have [] in personal debt.
I use credit cards for...
I think car loans are...
Saving up to buy big ticket items is...
My savings plan is...
My retirement plan is...
The way I feel about tithing is...
I hope my spouse is a: saver, spender, somewhere in between.
On a scale from one to ten, financial security is [] in importance to me.
I want to save up to buy a...
The kind of house I want to own someday is...
Other items I hope to own are...
Charities I want to contribute to are...

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Is my own appearance important to me?
Is it important that my spouse maintains his/her current physical appearance/weight throughout our marriage?
How important is hygiene to me, i.e. brushing teeth, taking showers, deodorant, etc.?
How do I like to dress for special occasions? For church? For dates? For work?

Do I want to be able to have a say in my spouse's choice of clothing, hairstyle, or general appearance?
Do I care if they have a say in mine?
Is cologne/perfume important to me?
What physical features are attractive to me?

HOUSEHOLD

How clean is a home that is comfortable for me?
What is my favorite thing about home?
What can I not tolerate in my home (noise, clutter, dirt, pets, unmade beds, etc.)?
How many/which jobs do I think I should do to keep my house maintained?
How many/which jobs do I think my spouse should do around the house?
Who should keep the yard maintained (spouse, both, or hired out)?
Who will maintain the cars (spouse, both, or hired out)?
Who will make decisions for and carry out decorating the home (spouse, both, hired out)?
Who will cook family meals?
How many meals do I expect to cook or for my spouse to cook daily?
Who will do the shopping?
Who will do laundry?
Who will do the dishes?
Who will pay bills?

RECREATION

My idea of recreation is...
To me, camping means...
My favorite sports are...
The way I relax on the weekends is by...
What areas of recreation do I want my spouse to accompany me on?
What areas of recreation do I want to do with my friends or alone?
How often will I want to spend time away from the family in my own recreation?

KIDS

I think kids are...
Kids get on my nerves when they...
I love it when kids...
The way I feel about other people's kids is...
The way kids usually feel about me is...
Kids should be disciplined when...
The way I want to discipline my kids is...
The role of a parent is...
I want [] kids someday.
How important is showing physical affection to my kids?
Is telling my kids I love them important?
How much time do I think I should spend with my kids daily?
How important is two-parent interaction and discipline?
I think the bottom line for discipline should be with the (mom or dad)?
How important is it for kids to respect their parents in my home?

When it comes to discipline, I think I will be: lenient, strict, or somewhere in-between?
Where do I want my kids educated (private school, Christian school, home school, etc.)?

HEALTH/HISTORY

Taking care of myself and my health is [] important to me.
I think a healthy lifestyle includes...
Physical exercise is...
To me, eating right means...
My idea of a good work out is...
My life fitness plan is to...
My health problems (present or past) are...
I take medication for...
I think life long-term supports are...
People in my family have a history of the following health problems...
People in my family have died at the ages of...

INTIMACY

I feel loved when...
The way I show love to people is...
Which of the following are ways I feel most loved? Time spent with, words of encouragement/praise, gifts, being touched and hugged in a non-sexual manner, when people do things for (serve) me.
Showing affection in front of kids or friends is...
Intimacy is developed through...
I think a good marriage needs at least [] hours a day (or week) of focused communication to stay connected.

WORK

My idea of a dream job is...
I think the average number of hours a person can regularly work a week and maintain family commitment is...

Providing for the family is whose responsibility?
My career plans are...
How important is a steady job to me?
What kind of work ethic do I want in my mate?
Where do I draw the line with a job that demands too much time?
My plans for retirement are...

SPIRITUALITY/RELIGION

The way I feel about God is...
I think the way God feels about me is...
On a scale of one to ten, going to church is [] in importance for my life and future.
I want to raise my kids in the [] faith.
Will God be the center of my home? Why or why not?
If yes, how will I make Him the center?
Prayer is something I do when...
To me, the Bible is...
Other religions besides Christianity are...
Eternal life is accomplished by...
Select and discuss the following. To me, God is: personal, real, distant, vague, angry, happy, loving, harsh, demanding, gentle, kind, good, make-believe, living, powerful, weak, or other.
The way to have a relationship with God is...
For me, including God in my daily life is...
On a scale from one to ten, obeying God and His word is a [] to me.
When I die, I...

Julie is the author of *The Perfect Fit...Piecing Together True Love* and has written articles for other publications such as *Marriage Partnership, Brio & Beyond, HomeLife, Discipleship Journal*, and *Revolve III* Biblezine Project for teen girls (Thomas Nelson, July 2006). To order the book or to find out more go to: www.JulieFerwerda.com.