



Marriage Preparation Newsletter

Heaven Ministries
Marriage Preparation
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Issue 1

What Dating Did to Prepare Me For Marriage

What did dating do to prepare me for marriage? Absolutely nothing! The truth is if I had known then what I know now, I simply would not have dated! But then I may not have learned the valuable lessons I am sharing with you today and which Frank and I share with our own sons.

One thing that I think dating does is it creates a callous, cold heart. If a young person keeps getting dumped or even is the “dumper” (is that even a word?) it develops a hardened heart within him or her. Then the next time he or she becomes involved in a sexual relationship, which is what dating is, they will be prepared for being dumped.

99% of all dating relationships do not end in marriage. After many subsequent dating relationships the couples that do manage to get married half of them end in divorce, while most of the rest are unhappily married and having numerous marital problems. Statistics don't lie. United States leads the world in divorce rates. Here are some eye-opening statistics on divorce rates of all the countries in the world.

http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_div_rat-people-divorce-rate

We believe it is important for young people and parents to know all of the marriage/divorce statistics before getting married because there are very good reasons why divorce is so high in America. **America has lost sight of family values and many Christian churches do not teach the importance of God being the glue that holds marriage together.** Sadly, the Christian culture of today is hardly a good example. This is why we must understand and realize that separation from the beliefs and views of even well meaning Christians must be a priority.

Heartache Does Not Happen When We Don't Give Our Heart Away!

Quite often I hear of tragic events that happen from a romantic relationship breakup—suicide. This happens in the celebrity circles too. What happens is the young couple become so bonded emotionally and sexually with one another that they “feel” like it is the “end of the world” when one of them breaks up the relationship. They cannot fathom any other fish in the sea but being with the person who broke off the relationship. Usually the one who is dumped feels they cannot live without him or her. Some of these young people are unstable emotionally and end up taking drastic measures. This is very sad indeed and it breaks our heart to read of such tragic events.

I don't like to bring up such tragedy, but this is what can happen when we give our heart away, at the wrong time and to the wrong people! The great news is it can be prevented!!

What Dating Did to
Prepare Me for
Marriage

Heartache Won't
Happen if You Don't
Give Your Heart Away!

What is the Purpose of
Sex Before Marriage?

Waiting on God

Romance and sex without commitment means nothing! So does that mean if there is commitment to get married and a couple is betrothed / engaged it is ok for them to have sex? Absolutely not! But at this stage of the relationship, especially with parent's blessings, it is safe to court one another by remembering to have friends and family present with you during your outings. Not that you cannot be trusted, but why take chances of being tempted in the first place?

As Christians we are accountable to God and we know what God asks of us. A couple in a committed relationship, who want to do what is right will continue to respect each other and not have sex until marriage.

What is the Purpose of Sex Before Marriage

The only reason for having sex outside of marriage would be for selfish personal reasons. Having sex before marriage disregards the principles that God has outlined in the bible for our emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. Our emotions have a way of running away from us and controlling how we think about a person, *but only if we allow them to*. We can have wrong thoughts and lustful intentions that take away from seeing the real person inside. The true character of a person, even if it is not-so-good is not taken into consideration because of emotions leading the relationship. But we do not have to allow our emotions to lead our relationships, we can let them follow behind our relationships instead.

Any relationship that seeks to use one another for sexual and emotional reasons is not going to amount to anything other than what it can, sex. **These kinds of relationships rarely end in marriage and when they do, the marriage will be very rocky indeed because they will be based on the feelings they had during the dating process.**

Friendships based on respect of each other's mind and body is a beautiful relationship indeed. God helps those who have the faith to go to Him and ask Him for the guidance and protection they need during the single years. When we are young and single our prayers are different than when we are married. We invite God to be number one in our life and allow Him to show us His ways and to lead us into His ways through our growth process with Him.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and Godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2:11-12)

When we get married God is still number one in our marriage but we ask God to help us to be good spouses to the man or woman we marry and to *serve and honor Him with our marriage*. In fact older women are instructed to *train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.* (Titus 2:4-5)

Waiting on God

God wants Christian single people to have all the friendships they want based on respect and common interests and friends. In fact the more friendships, the better. God doesn't want us to not have friends, because we're always ready for friendships, but He doesn't want us to have romantic friendships because we're not always ready for those. Rushing into a relationship and rushing into marriage is another big reason for the high divorce rates.

God wants us to meet like-minded friends through our activities, church groups, hobbies, arts, events, and social occasions and to get to know them **based on principled Godly love**, which is brotherly and sisterly love. **It is God's will for Christian men and women to love one another as if they were his sisters, (her brothers) with sisterly (brotherly) love and with absolute purity.**
(1 Timothy 5:2)

God teaches us to not give away our mind (emotions) or body (sexual intimacy) to another because it is fraud. **That no man should go beyond (arouse lust and sexual desire) and defraud his brother in any matter:** because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, **as we also have forewarned you and testified.** (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

Our feelings are ok to have, it is not a sin to have a feeling for someone, but that feeling should not lead the progression of the relationship, but rather follow behind. Why give your heart and mind to another if they are not to be your wife or husband? With friendships, when you wait on the Lord, you get to know someone in the right way and can see his or her full character revealed...

And if that person is "not right for you", so what, no one gets hurt? At least you did not give your whole being away to them. There will be no hurt, no heartache, nothing to say to them, and nothing to do. You do not owe them anything whatsoever because you did not give yourself away to them. You continue to remain friends in the Lord. On the other hand what do you do if this person, so far, seems to have all the qualities you are looking for in a person and you both share the same interests?

You still do nothing. Remain friends. **Pray about it and wait on God!** Remember do not allow your feelings to lead the relationship. If you are a single Christian woman this is especially important for you to keep your emotions in check and remain focused on Christ. If you are a single Christian man and are ready to commit yourself to a lifelong marriage with a woman you have been friends with, then the next step is to **pray about it and wait on God.** Never jump into anything without heartfelt communication and reflection with God.

If the time is ready, in every which way, to move forward in a relationship, then God will certainly give you a sign to move forward. Then talk to your parents and her parents and get their blessing for a courtship that ultimately will lead to marriage or you can skip the courtship stage and just get married if you are financially able to do so. Every situation is different.

The bottom line is “the preparation to marriage” is about being ready for the commitment of marriage and basing your relationship on respect, honor and sisterly and brotherly love. If we want to have Godly marriages, it starts with what we base our relationships now on—it starts with Jesus Christ being the center of our relationships and understanding that God-honored romance can only form when we follow Godly principles and patterns for our lives now!

May God Bless each and every one of you in His Kingdom

In Christ,

Angie and Frank

<http://www.heavenministries.org>

<http://www.heavenministries.com>

<http://www.godlycourtship.proboards.com>

Our Forums need you! We decided to add more categories to the forums about health and Kingdom Living so parents can also have an active involvement on the forums. We’re working on making these forums a place for families to go and enjoy interacting, getting encouragement and giving encouragement in the ways of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We hope to see you there!

Heaven Ministries ~ Scriptural Romance in Preparation to Marriage
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