

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

AN INSIGHT INTO BUILDING A GREAT MARRIAGE



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CHARLES & LAYO EMMANUEL

PREPARING

For **THE FUTURE**

... An Insight Into Building A Great Family

Charles & Layo Emmanuel

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: *An Insight Into Building A Great Family*

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Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ...

“This is a landmark book on Demonology and spiritual warfare. This book spotlights the universal principles of spiritual warfare. Since a believer's life is a life of warfare against the kingdom of darkness, you need this well researched, articulated book with you.”

Dr. Samuel Akpan,

Assistant General Superintendent (Education),

Int'l Pentecostal Holiness Church, Nigeria

“Impressed....It's clear, concise and true to the scriptures. A perfect introduction to spiritual warfare. Honestly, it's the best I've read and I am blessed and honored to have read it. The author did a good job presenting the basic truths necessary to be understood by anybody hoping to be successful in spiritual warfare.

FOREWORD

There are many relevant books on the Relationships & Marriage but probably “Preparing For The Future: An Insight Into Building A Great Family” is one that is thorough and all-encompassing on the subject. This is a very practical handbook for the body of Christ, yet full of insight, explanation, and revelation!

Pastors Charles & Layo have truly received divine revelation concerning building godly families. Every believer should study this book if he/she wants to have a family that will support the fulfillment of their God-given mission on earth. It is truly a cutting edge present truth presentation and revelation from the heart and mind of God.

I have known Pastor Charles and his amazing wife, Pastor Layo for several years now and I have not only visited his headquarters in the city of Lugansk in Ukraine, but I also spent quality time with him as a son in the Lord. I know that they have a message by the grace and favor of God for the body of Christ.

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Having read this book, I am happy to recommend it to the hungry searcher after truth. I trust that “Preparing For The Future” helps you to understand God’s purpose relating to Relationships and Marriage.

May the rich favor of the Lord rest upon this work and may its words change hearts all around the world for Kingdom advance.

Rev (Dr.) Albert S. L. Kitcher

Founder and President; *Today's Family*

Senior Pastor and Overseer; *World Transformation Center* and

Kingdom Resource International Community.

INTRODUCTION

I was barely a teenager when my dad started hammering the importance of getting it right in marriage to me. Having had friends who missed it in their marriages and lived the rest of their lives unhappy, daddy didn't want that for his own children. Nothing sends a man to hell while still on earth like marrying the wrong woman, he would say.

Fast forward to over ten years later, I was now married to my university sweetheart. I knew I loved her to pieces and wanted to be with no one else but her. Even as a young pastor of a campus ministry with several ladies from different continents and backgrounds, nothing was enough to make me think otherwise.

After dating for 3 years, I proposed to her and we ended up getting married a few months later. I felt like my dreams had come through, I had the finest babe the world over. We were a power couple and people could hardly do without mentioning us as examples.

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I treated her like the queen she is to me and she treated me like the king I am. It was all fun and rosy until things began to shake. It started as simple but frequent misunderstandings. Then these soon grew into more serious quarrels.

By the second year of our marriage, we are both feeling like we made the biggest mistakes of our lives getting married! We kept trying to patch and manage the situation but sometime in 2012, I couldn't take it anymore.

So on the last night of our Annual Summer Camp meeting that year, I called together a meeting of the Executive Council Members of our ministry and made the announcement none of them saw coming ... "My wife and I are going our separate ways because of unreconcilable differences," I said.

I could see and feel the disappointment in their faces that night. One of the pastors later told me that she had been hearing of pastors marriages breaking but never saw that happening with her pastor. The same pastor had once told me she prayed to get married to a man like me!

What happened to my wife and I? Why couldn't we make this marriage work? Weren't we in love in the first place? Didn't we hear from God before going on to get married? How did we get to this point? All these and more were the questions I tried to answer as I regretted championing a course that was heading for the rocks.

The next couple of weeks and months saw us going back to the drawing board. This time, we were not ready to learn marriage from any book or expert. We knew marriage is a good thing designed by God for a good purpose. So we went into what I now call a "Rediscovery Period" And trust me when I say, we learnt a whole lot from our own failed marriage.

We learnt how God expects a marriage to function and how it is not supposed to function. We saw different conditions that would guarantee a failed home even when love was present, but we had encouraged them in our home. And with all that wisdom, we bounced back, put the word to work and have never looked back again!

Now, by the special grace of God given to us, we want to share our lessons with you. We begin from sharing what relationships really are, to identifying the roles of the man and woman in the relationship and then climax by sharing tips for finding the right partner.

We also touch on the all-important subject of maturity and show you five areas you must grow in if you want to have a blissful home. In all, we have laid the antidote to our 3 years of hellish marriage and the prerequisite for our 7+ years of heaven on earth. Same man, same woman but different marriages!

Not only are we having a blissful marriage with an amazing daughter between us today, but we have also traveled the

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world sharing these same principles with thousands of people all over. My wife also holds a version of that training for Pastors' wives around the world and the results have been overwhelming.

The testimonies that we have received have truly been a consolation for all that we went through and today, we are glad to share a bit of that with you too in this book. We hope you not only get blessed by this but that you probably join us for our online training or one of our offline seminars someday.

Without further ado, let's look at how you can begin to prepare for a great family right now. And if you are already married, it is still a good time to get it right. Like us, you can get into a "rediscovery period" and set things right for the months, years and decades ahead.

Thanks for joining us on this journey. Happy reading!

Pastor Dr. Charles &

Pastor Dr. Layo Emmanuel

Senior Pastors: Divine Life Ministries Int'l

New York, USA

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my first grandson,
Prince Nathanael Gamaliel Morah-Aimahian

October 21, 1998-March 23, 2000

And

A dear friend, brother and prayer partner.

David James Yonkman (Jan. 26, 1960-Nov. 2018)

David was a former wiccan and occult grandmaster. He had a personal encounter with Christ that completely changed his life. He impressed upon my heart the great need to write *Demons Deactivated* so that victims of the devil will be set free. He died of complications from heart surgery shortly after the second edit. One of the last things he said to me was, 'I would so love to read this book, when are you sending it?'

Adieu my friend, till resurrection day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Our profound gratitude goes to our father in the ministry – Rev (Dr) Albert Kitcher and his precious wife Pastor Beatrice Kitcher for their wisdom, tutelage and guidance through the years. Indeed, great people are raised by great people and we are so sure of what the future holds for us and our ministry because of this divine connection with you Sir and Ma. It is our heartfelt prayer that the Lord will increase you on every side and multiply the harvest of your seed of love sown and shown to us in many folds in Jesus’ name.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the indomitable, unstoppable, unconquerable and most supportive members of the Divine Life Ministries International family the world over! Indeed you are a proof of that scripture that says

“God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.”

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We can't fail to admit that this is really the congregation of the mighty. We also love to especially thank the pastoral council members, all leaders, and workers of the ministry. Your dedication and involvement over the years is indeed amazing. Thank you for standing by us through it all.

You are indeed heaven class leaders! And like I always say, if we were given the opportunity to choose a congregation to pastor again, we would most gladly choose you over and over again!

Charles & Layo Emmanuel

Senior Pastors: Divine Life Ministries Int'l

CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS

In order to begin to look at how to prepare for the future where it concerns the family, it is important that we consider the origin of families.

You must recognize that families are not the idea of man, the society or culture. Families are and will always be God's idea. It is therefore pertinent that we get back to the author and originator of families to discover what was on His mind when He decided to make the family come into existence.

For instance, one time the Pharisees came to Jesus tempting Him and saying unto Him "Is it lawful for a man to put

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away his wife for every cause?” (Matt 19:3) In response, the Bible records:

*“He said to them, because of the hardness
(stubbornness and perversity) of your hearts
Moses permitted you to dismiss and repudiate
and divorce your wives; but from the beginning
it has not been so [ordained]”*

(Matt 19:8 – AMP)

Jesus was saying that it was because of the hardness and concession of the people’s heart that Moses permitted them to divorce their wives. However, it was not so intended from the very beginning. In other words, it wasn’t God’s idea or thought that marriages should break up, end in divorce or separate for any reason in this world. Just like any manufacturer in the world today, He never planned for His product (marriage) to flop. He had bigger and greater dreams in mind when he instituted the marriage relationship.

You will agree with me that where the purpose of a thing is not known, abuse is inevitable. It is therefore imperative that we get to discover His agenda for marriages and families if we are ever going to make the most out of them.

This brings to mind an occasion where I was on set at a certain show and the topic of discourse was relationships. I was asked a particular question about relationships and

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marriages but before I could even begin answering, the interviewer added that I should answer apart from God and the bible! I wonder what in the world they wanted me to say about this subject without making reference to God and the bible.

How can you ask an Apple engineer to come and describe a malfunction in their product without making reference to the manual or the manufacturer? This alone is indicative of why many relationships are in trouble today. Beloved, please settle in your mind that you will follow the manufacturer's manual no matter the pressure from your peers or society.

When Purpose Is Not Known, Abuse Is Inevitable

I remember a certain day I decided to help my wife wash up a few things in the kitchen. I picked the blender and washed it the best way I knew how to only for the blender to stop working afterward! We tried everything we knew to do to get it to work again but it was all to no avail so we ended up buying another one. This time around I decided to read through the manufacturer's manual and guess what I discovered?

The manufacturer stated categorically that a particular part of it should never come in contact with water for any reason. Then I observed that the part in question was also the part that I innocently washed in our former blender.

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While I intended to help out in the kitchen that day, my ignorance of the intricacies of that apparatus spoiled it and cost us some money to replace it. This might be what you have been doing with your relationship all along. You might have been doing the exact thing that the manufacturer of the relationship product has clearly stated should never be done and are there wondering why it's not working! Why don't you get to the manual instead?

What's God's intention for families? What was on His mind when He started the marriage institution? The Bible tells us:

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

(Gen 2:18)

Please recall that man was the last of God's creation. Everything else had been created before man was created. The bible says that on the sixth day (after creating man) God saw everything that He had made and behold; they were very good. This statement points to the fact that everything God made (including man) were in perfect order after they were made.

However, somewhere along the line, God changed His confession and said “it is not good that the man should be alone” At some point, it was no longer good that the man should be alone even though it had been good all the while. What made the difference?

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How come it was no longer good that man should be alone? The answer to this question is in itself the purpose of marriage and families! Until a man is able to find the answer, he has no reason to be in a relationship and until a sister is found by a man who knows the answer, she hasn't been found by a man fit to be married!

Marriage Is Not For The Lonely!

Now, let me categorically state that there is a great difference between being alone and being lonely. God didn't say "it is not good that the man should be lonely" but "it is not good that the man should be alone" This is to point out that God's primary idea for families and marriages wasn't to solve the problem of loneliness!

The most unqualified man or woman to consider getting into a marriage relationship, therefore, will be the one that is lonely. Marriage was never designed to be a cure for loneliness.

A lonely man or woman is not the right candidate for God's kind of marriage and one sure way to get a disaster out of a marriage is to join the wrongs!

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The difference between being alone and being lonely is expressed in the solution God proffered for the condition. If man had been lonely, God would have said “I will make him a companion or a friend” but that wasn’t the problem. What God saw was that the man was “alone”. So He decided to make him a “suitable help!” This tells us something ...

If the solution to being alone was a suitable "help", it must mean that the being alone was in relation to not having a suitable help for something that the man should have been doing.

Let’s refresh our minds a little. Remember that as soon as God was done forming the man out of the dust, the Bible records that He planted a garden and put the man whom He had made there. He gave the man the responsibility to “dress” and “keep” the garden. It was afterward that he saw that the man was “alone”

The man was alone about God’s assignment for him and God saw that it was not good for the man that He made to be without a suitable helper. Hence the Lord thought of the woman! This points to the fact that the idea of the woman was only conceived when it was discovered that the man was alone about his divinely appointed assignment.

All the woman was designed to do is to help the man with the fulfillment of this assignment he must have received from God. This means that the woman wasn’t created to be the supervisor of the man or the one to tell him what to do.

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She is simply there to help him do what God has already asked him to do. She doesn't come in with her own vision or agenda for the family. Rather, she comes "factory fitted" and loaded with all that it will take to help see to the fulfillment of the assignment God gave the man.

If the first woman (Eve) had understood this, she would have been the one to stop Adam from considering eating the fruits of the tree God had asked him not to eat. Rather than being the one to eat first and then serve him some as well!

So young man, when you say somebody is wife material, you must mean that she has what it takes (talent, personality, and passion) to be relevant help in the course of life that the Lord has chosen for you. Suffice it to say therefore that according to the word of God (the manufacturer's manual) the only man that it is not good for him to be alone is the man that is already about divinely appointed assignment from the Ls already about some divine assignment committed to him by the Lord, he is the wrong candidate to build a family with.

As far as the manufacturer is concerned, such a man will only make a disaster the marriage institution. So it is good for such a man to be alone. After all, he is not really doing

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anything significant with his life for which he requires a helpmeet!

On the other hand, I will like you to observe that God was very specific about the kind of help he was going to give the man. He didn't just say "I will make him a helper" but "I will make him a help meet" The Amplified version puts it better when it says:

"Now the Lord God said, it is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him."

(Gen 2:18 – AMP)

In other words, upon observing that it was not okay or satisfactory for man to be alone, God considered the creation of a special help that would be suitable, adapted and complementary for him.

While there may be several helps out there, the help that God designs for his man is that one that is suitable, adapted and complementary for him. God's idea of a help meet is someone that is custom made to be a perfect and complementary assistant to the fulfillment of the assignment that the man must have received from the Lord.

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This, therefore, destroys the notion and idea of a marriage of convenience where a husband considers his marriage to a lady as a great favor! The moment a marriage is contracted as a favor from one party to the other, it destroys the very reason for which marriages were instituted and as such cannot fulfill the manufacturer's purpose.

So ladies beware! You don't want to marry a man who thinks he is doing you a favor by marrying you. He obviously doesn't have the right perception of who you are and definitely won't make a right man for you. The word of God declares that:

*"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,
and obtaineth favour of the LORD."*

(Prov 18:22)

The man is supposed to search and find the woman he will call his wife. No matter how they met, the man must see and treat the woman he marries as a priced and precious person that he searched all his life to find. If he doesn't see her as someone that he found after a diligent search then he doesn't understand who a wife is and better still, should not be marrying her.

The truth is that there may be several women out there who could be of help to him in different areas of his life but only the woman he will call "wife", will fit into the description of a suitable, adapted and complementary help.

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A Suitable, Adapted And Complementary Help

As soon as God identified the need to get the man a suitable help, He went on to forming every beast of the field, every fowl of the air and indeed every living creature on the face of the earth. Then, He brought them all to Adam (the first man) to see what He would call them.

“And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.”

(Gen 2:20)

After the “naming ceremony” it was discovered that of all that God had earlier made, nothing was found that could fit into His description of the kind of helpmeet man required. Nothing was suitable or adapted to the purpose that the man had in life. Nothing could complement this man as he went about his life’s assignment. Then the Lord applied one of the greatest and deepest principles of life today. This principle is the fact that anything you require that you can’t seem to find outside of you is definitely inside you!

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

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And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

(Gen 2:21-22)

Looking from within man, God found material with which to build a suitable, adapted and complementary help for man. When He was through making her, He brought her to Adam to see what he would call her. Soon as Adam saw her, his heart leaped for joy as he spoke out saying:

"... This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

(Gen 2:23)

In other words, Adam was saying "Lord, of all that you have brought to me all this while, it is just now that you have brought a creature with bones just as mine and flesh just like mine! She shall be called woman (a man with a womb) for she was taken out of a man" If you had been there while Adam was speaking, you could have heard God saying "that's it – a suitable, adapted and complementary help"

Now, you see why a marriage cannot be between two males or two females? It was never so intended in the beginning.

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The master's plan was for a male and a female and no other way. Adam went on to say about the woman:

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

(Gen 2:24)

Oh, how I love this! Do you know what the man was saying here? He is saying that the creature he saw when God presented the woman to him was enough reason for any man to leave his father and mother! I mean a man can decide to leave anybody just to be with her! This must have been love talking. Come on ladies, if the man can't leave father and mother to be with you, he is not a man yet. At least, not God's definition of a man for marriage or family.

Let's look at it this way, the word father in itself refers to a source and sustainer. So what Adam was telling us here is that a man can afford to leave his earthly or natural source and sustainer just to be with the woman! In other words, the man that is the right candidate for marriage is not the man that is yet dependent on his natural parents. As long as he still requires daddy to pay his bills and make decisions for him, he is still a boy and marriage is not for boys!

It is a man and not a boy that leaves his father and mother. The man that is going into the marriage institution must himself be a father

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(source and sustainer) for his new family. Until he is ready for that, he should stick very closely to father and mother while he is preparing for it.

If any man or woman, therefore, intends to have a marriage that will fulfill the function or role of the one that God had in mind in the beginning, he/she must endeavor to follow the prescriptions and set down guide of the author.

Why Marriage?

The major problem with families today is the fact that different people have varying ideas of what the norm should be. Everyone carves out his own personal and selfish definitions of his/her roles in the marriage. Some have even “modernized” it to suit their generation and time!

This explains why divorce and separations are increasingly rising every day. The U.S. marriage rate has been reported to be at 6.8 per1000 total population while the divorce rate was 3.6 per 1000 population. This amounts to a divorce rate that is over 52% of the marriage rate.

It is even more interesting to know that this is reported to be rapidly increasing today for reasons that include but are not limited to: incompatibility between couples, infidelity issues, lack of trust and understanding. How do we solve

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the problem of incompatibility without going back to the beginning? How do we begin to look at a way out of marital infidelity without looking at what the original intent for marriage was?

This brings me to the question “Why marriage?” No one who cannot answer this question according to the standard of the Word of God has any business getting married no matter how old they are at the time? Come on here, stop carrying on like it’s a taboo not to be married two years after graduation from the university. Marriage is not a compulsion for ladies within the ages of twenty-five and thirty either.

Marriage is the coming together of two individuals who have discovered and are about their life’s assignment for the achievement of a result greater than the summation of their individual results.

Let me also state at once that even though the idea for marriage is for two individuals to join forces in producing a result in life greater than their individual results, this is not always the case. Most times, this coming together produces a result less than their individual results because of the joining together of the wrong people!

We will later talk in details about the qualities of the kind of materials (male and female) that make up a correct marriage

but for now, let's finish up with this idea of incompatibility and the likes.

The term incompatible means to be incapable of being associated or blended because of disharmony and incongruity. It means to be unable to exist together in harmony or to be contrary or opposed in character.

In other words, the statistic has proven that marriages break up because couples are incapable to associate, blend or exist together in harmony. They are too contrary and opposed to each other for them to stay together. This brings us back to the importance of understanding God's purpose for the marriage relationship. Compatibility wouldn't be an issue in a marriage that follows the criteria of the manufacturer defined to us in the Word of God.

If the man had been all about what God asked him to do and found a woman who is suitable, adapted and complementary to him for his assignment, how then can they be talking about incompatibility? The only reason we will be talking about incompatibility will be that the marriage wasn't contracted in accordance with God's description for a marriage.

It is either the man wasn't about something at the time they got married and then it became difficult for the woman to fit into what he later came up with as his assignment in life or the woman he married wasn't relevant to what he was all

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about in the first place. Marriage is based on the law of attraction which states that: like attracts like. Until a man finds that woman, he doesn't have any business being married.

What About Love?

I am certain that a very important question may be popping up in your mind right now. What about love? Shouldn't it be a factor in the determination of the person you marry? Isn't marriage all about love? Don't people marry for love? Well, let me tell you a short story first. There was a certain lady named Alice who was in love with a certain young man called Joshua. In her words, he was all she ever wanted in a guy and more. She didn't need anyone to prophesy about her future with this guy to her. She just knew beyond every iota of doubt that they were good to go.

Every other guy no matter who he was and what he had vanished before her in comparison to this guy. In her words, he was her prince charming! She even added that she never thought she could love any other person besides him in her entire life. It was, therefore, saddening to her when five years later, the already turbulent relationship came to a final close as the guy broke up with her.

Oh! Alice cried and sorrowed for several days into weeks and months but eventually summoned the courage and moved on after several months. Over a year later, she met or let me say hooked up with (because she already knew

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him for over six years) a guy named David. This guy literally swept her off her feet! Something was ignited between these two as they discovered a path of life that they were both fitted to follow. She discovered a purpose in David that she was factory fitted to fulfill.

It all blended with her talent, personality, and passion in life. About two years into their relationship, Joshua comes back asking her forgiveness. He even proposed to marry her with immediate effect if she would give him a second chance. In her words, she forgave him of course but couldn't bring herself to see him in the light she saw him years ago. A year later she got married to David and they lived happily ever after as they fulfilled their mission in life together!

What happened between Alice, Joshua and David was a clear proof of the greater place of purpose over love in a relationship as serious as marriage.

Listen dear, love is not enough reason for marriage even though there cannot be a successful marriage without love. It takes much more than love to keep a marriage over the years and decades.

You have to understand that what God said was to love the person you marry and not to marry the person you love. Now, don't get me wrong here; it's not like you get married without some sort of attraction between you and your

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partner. The word only shows us that the feeling shouldn't be the basis for the marriage because whether you like it or not, feelings don't keep a marriage alive. It is the greater picture that the partners are seeing that keeps them going even when they don't seem to feel the goosebumps!

What do you think happened to Adam after he met Eve? What made him say for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife? He definitely saw somebody worth the trouble! He was talking on the basis of what he was seeing and feeling at the moment. He felt he could leave just anyone to be with this woman. That is some attraction there! Definitely, there was a bond between them both.

The point is just that you don't get into a marriage relationship on account of your feelings! A purpose-driven marriage is more guaranteed to succeed than a feeling driven one. A marriage that follows the order of a man getting to know and begin working on his reason for being as defined by God before enlisting the services of a suitable and adapted help is better positioned to succeed than one that was contracted because the parties involved felt some form of chemistry between each other.

Understand The Big Picture!

Let me remind you at this point that marriage is not an eternal relationship. The idea of marriage is to help us maximize our effectiveness and relevance down here before

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the Master returns. The moment rapture occurs, all marriages will literally be dissolved as we all will be joined to the Lord. Every member of the church of Jesus Christ will be joined to him as our husband. Remember the bible says:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

(2 Cor 11:2)

I said this to point to the fact that since marriage is only in the interim, it wouldn't be wise to destroy the eternal plan with something that is only for a while. A marriage that does not result in the spiritual development of the parties involved is definitely not fulfilling its divine purpose because part of what the church is here for today is to prepare herself for the groom.

Therefore one of the major reasons why marriages and families are important to God is because of their role in kingdom building and expansion. Take for example; the apostle Peter one time wrote saying:

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.”

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(1 Pet 3:1-2)

He points out to the women that in God's mind, the family is one of His evangelistic tools. With the wives living in subjection or submission to their husbands, it is the plan of the Father that husbands who may have been adamant about the gospel may be converted. God intends that just by beholding the mannerism of the godly women, unsaved men should have a rethink about their stand on the gospel of Christ.

The word is pointing out to us that the family God had in mind is capable of winning others to Christ without any formal message being preached. The Message translation puts it clearly when it says:

“The same goes for you wives: be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty.”

(1 Pet 3:1 – MSG)

Just as the case is with every venture that we get involved with here in this world, only the eternal impact that results from your marriage will count as soon as the trumpet sounds.

Understanding Relationships

The question is going to be: how did your marriage affect the kingdom of God? How relevant was your marriage to the salvation of the souls of the people around you? Was your marriage a source of encouragement and succor in this world? Or was it a complete mess? Were unbelievers inspired by your marriage or were they always on hand to help resolve your differences?

It is therefore important that you plan and prepare for a marriage that will be of immense impact on this world beginning with your children. As a matter of fact, there is nothing as appalling as for Christian couples to give birth to children who never get to know the Lord from home.

How can Christian couples give birth to children who will end up increasing the number of unbelievers in the world? In the mind of the Father, He shouldn't be concerned with networking your children with other believers so they can hear the gospel message when you as the parents are believers yourselves.

His intention is that you teach and bring them up in His ways. So as a family or intending couples, do you have a set down plan on how you intend to bring up your children in the Lord? Do you have a set down plan of how you will bring them to the Lord as soon as they come to that age of accountability? See what God told the Israelites:

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and

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shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

(Deut 6:6-7)

Something very interesting I will like to bring to your notice here is that the Lord started by asking the parents to ensure that the word is in their hearts. It is only after then that He went on to ask them to teach it to their children. This means that the couple must first be a people of the word if they are going to raise kids who will be the same. The way God says to teach the children is really different from what you have out there.

It is not a matter of what you tell your kids to do this time but what they grow up to find you doing! It's more of a modeling kind of education rather than a telling or instructing one. He said you shall talk of them (the word) when you sit in your house and when you walk in the way; when you lay down and when you wake up. In fact, it should be your very life!

In essence, you can't have a language in the house that is different from that of the word and expect to raise your children to talk right. You can't be a Sunday-Sunday Christian and hope to raise godly kids either. You must first be godly and "worded" parents if you are ever going to instill the same in your kids

Understanding Relationships

Summarily, God's idea of the family is a place where there is a man who knows what God has assigned to him and has enlisted the help of a suitable, adapted and complementary helper to achieve this goal. Marriage is about two individuals coming together to combine their talents, efforts, abilities, personalities, passion, and resources together for the purpose of producing results that are way greater than their individual efforts can achieve. Marriage is God's idea for natural kingdom expansion and development. You are not prepared for marriage until these points are clear to you.

However, even if you were already married now, it's not late at all. Both of you should check yourselves against the checklist of the word standard and start working on being who God designed for you to be in the marriage. So let's move on to begin to see the individual qualities of the right man and woman for marriage.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAN IN THE RELATIONSHIP

Most of the time, the problems in the home can be traced to the wrong perception of who the man is. Though this wrong perception often comes from the woman, it could also be from the man as well. So while we teach and expect the women to understand that the man in the family is not just the male partner in the marriage, the men also have to understand their roles. They have to understand who God has made them and why he made them so.

For example, did you know that the moment a man leaves his father and mother to be joined to his wife, he is no longer a man? He automatically becomes a father as well

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even though they may have no children yet! He becomes the father in the new family.

In other words, the man in the marriage is not just the male counterpart in the relationship but the father in the family. The word “father” connotes that he is the source and sustainer of the family. Everything the family will ever be in this world must come from within the man. Remember that in the beginning, even the woman came out of the man because God already put in the man all that is required for him to function as the source for the family.

God designed the man and put in him all that will ever be required to carry the weight of his entire family no matter how large it is.

So it's high time the men stopped running or shying away from their responsibilities.

A true man who understands who God has made him will not abandon his wife or domestic responsibilities for any reason, leave the training and upbringing of the kids to the woman alone, leave devotions and bible study in the home for the children to conduct and drop the children in church while he goes off to the golf court!

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Even if it appears like a load of responsibility is too much for you to bear as a man, stop complaining. Don't take it out on the lives you are supposed to be protecting. Start saying:

"Father I thank you for giving me all that it takes to sustain this family. I have all that I require to cater for my family and raise them in the way of the Lord in Jesus name. There is no lack in this home because there is a man at home and that man is me!"

The Priest of the Home

It is important to note that after the woman was presented to the man, God didn't have any special teaching sessions with her. He didn't have to sit her down to tell her the same things He had told the man because He expected the man to teach his wife and the entire family His ways. The man is the priest of the family charged with the responsibility of the teaching of the word of God in that home.

So if as a lady you aren't married yet, rather than praying to be found by a man with V-chest, here is one of the things you should consider. Is he able to teach you the word of God? Can you guarantee your growth in the

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*word of God by your association and union
with him?*

I re account of a certain sister who due to some pressure from her parents went ahead to marry a man who wasn't a believer. Not only was he not able to teach her the word, but he also wouldn't even allow her to go to church!

*Listen to me dear sister, to marry a man that
you cannot trust with your development in the
things of God is to mortgage your future.*

Like I said in the previous chapter, one reason we are here in this world is to get ourselves prepared for life after here. We are here to train ourselves in the things of God for the life beyond. This preparation takes place through the ministry of the word as we study, learn, meditate and are conformed to the very image of His dear son. And if you remember very clearly, I did say that marriage must of necessity be geared towards the achievement of this objective.

So dear sister, you must consider your development in the word before you say "I Do" You don't want to say "I Do" to a man who is not trained to wash you clean with the water of the word. More so, let me pull out a portion of scripture that is sometimes seen as controversial even though it really isn't.

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“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

(1 Cor 14:34-35)

I like for you to bear in mind that this book was particularly written to the churches in Corinthians to help solve some of the many problems they were having at the time. Paul noted that one of the problems was that of disorderliness during worship services. It appeared that several people wanted to speak at the same time to the same congregation of believers.

So Paul communicates the wisdom of the Spirit on how to handle such matters here. To start with he says that instead of everyone raising their hands to ask questions about what they didn't understand in church, let the ones that are married be silent. They should reserve their questions for their husbands at home. That way, the number of people that have to be heard in the service can be reduced.

In other words, the husbands have a ministry to their wives and indeed the entire family. It is the husband's role to teach his wife the word of God. This was why God didn't bother telling Eve not to eat of the tree in the midst of the

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garden. Soon as she came into Adam's life, he was responsible for updating her with "what thus saith the Lord" When it comes to marriage, God is not obligated to speak to the woman especially where it concerns the family. Most of the time. He will rather talk to the man and give him directions for the marriage and family.

Listen, ladies, the man you say "I Do" to will determine your destiny in life. No matter where you were going as a lady, once you join yourself to a man in marriage, you both head the same place!

Just like we give our hearts to Christ in absolute trust, you should only allow yourself to get into marriage with someone whose character has been proven. You need to make assurance doubly sure that he is capable of receiving directions for the family and steering the family in the direction that the Lord has designed.

This is why I really don't understand why some ladies are so short-sighted in their lives. All they care about is what he has to offer them right now without any consideration for the days ahead. You cannot afford to get married to a man whom you can't trust with your future.

The only man you should consider marrying is one who knows and loves the Lord. Your man has to have a clear relationship with his God because he can't be a perfect

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source or sustainer for the family if he weren't connected to his source as well.

So dear sister, throw away that world-standard list of what you want in a man and develop a word-standard list. Stop looking for six packs, V-chests, bank account statements, and the likes. There is more to look for in the man you are going to commit yourself to spend the rest of your precious life with. Except of course if all that life means to you is V-chest and some money in the bank.

At this point, I will like to give you a few characteristics of the kind of man that God made the marriage institution for in the beginning. Whether I communicate like I was talking to the men or ladies, it is a lesson for both genders. The lady can see what her man ought to be like while the men can see what God designed them to be like.

I actually recommend that couples (courting or married) should get a copy of this book each, read through it and carry out the exercises in the workbook together. You will be amazed at what a lift it will be to the future you are building together.

Long before God considered giving the man a woman to help him in fulfilling his life's assignment, He put him in the Garden of Eden. I like for you to understand that the

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Garden of Eden wasn't really a geographical location as it were. It referred to an atmosphere and a presence. It referred to that presence of God that was with man and within which God fellowshiped with man on a regular basis.

It was that presence of God that was man's prescribed environment from the beginning. Therefore, the man that is suitable for God's idea of marriage is the man that is in the presence of God and loves the Lord. This means that your man must have given his heart to Christ before you consider tangling with him.

Your life ought to be really precious to you as a young woman. It shouldn't be something you are so eager to throw away just because you are thirty-two years already. If Jesus doesn't have the man's heart yet, he is not worthy of yours period!

CHAPTER THREE

QUALITIES OF THE IDEAL MAN

To further elucidate on who the man is and should be, let's look at a few characteristics of that word "husband" I will take the word as an acronym and look at them one by one:

H – Head

I said a while ago that some ladies carry on as though the man in the marriage were just the male partner of the union and that's all! However, the Bible shows us that the man is not just a partner in the marriage but the head of the marriage. He is both the head of the woman and the head

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of the entire family. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church saying:

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

(1 Cor 11:3)

I like you to note the technicalities here. He said the head of “every” man is Christ but didn’t say the head of “every” woman is the man. This is to point to the fact that while Jesus is the head of every man whether married or unmarried, the man is only the head of the woman to whom he is married. So only married women were referred to here.

That was why he used the definite article “the” So women, every man out there is not your head because he is a man! Don’t let the men tell you that they are superior or have an advantage over you simply because you are a woman. Only your man fits the description of the word of God here. He puts it more plainly in his letter to the Ephesians church where he said:

“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 saviour of the body.”

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(Eph 5:22-23)

You see that wives are not to submit to every man on the street. The submission of a woman is in relation to her man who he describes to her as her head. It is really interesting to see that the relationship between the man and the woman is likened to that of Christ and the church. He says the man is the head of the woman in the exact manner in which Christ is the head of the church. So before the man goes about bragging and oppressing the woman in the name of being the head, he has to find out what kind of a head Christ is to the church.

This word “head” means master and lord. This means that just as Christ is the Lord and Master of the church, the man is the lord and master of the woman. And as such, just in the same way that the church is submitted to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the woman must be submitted to the authority of the man.

Do you see why the family cannot be run by democracy? Decisions cannot be made on the basis of majority vote. The man must take the responsibility of the leadership of the family and the woman should voluntarily submit to that leadership. This is the manufacturer's description of marriage!

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This brings me again to the same point about women being careful of whom they marry. If you can't trust his leadership then you shouldn't be married to him. If peradventure you are already married to this guy whose leadership you just can't trust, then you will have to take the matter to God in prayer and discuss with your pastor who can better counsel you on account of the peculiarity of your case but however; challenging his authority or rebelling is still not an option!

Furthermore, the word head can be used to refer to the principal, chief or cornerstone. This refers to the man as the seat of responsibility or what I call the "responsible head". No matter what goes on in the family, the man is responsible. Whether in conflict resolution or decision making or provision, the head (man) is responsible.

The man must take responsibility for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the family. The lack of this understanding is one of the major problems of the families today. The men are not responsible, so the women take over their responsibility!

Look at Christ for example, He is everything to the church. You don't find Him relaxing while his bride takes over the responsibility in the union. He is called the "savior of the body" He finds the body in any kind of trouble and He swings into action at once even at the cost of His own life! That is what it means to be the responsible head.

*Being a man is not about issuing commands
everywhere and oppressing the women and kids*

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with your baritone voice. The fact that you walk in and everyone in the house goes to bed doesn't make you a man. You are just a bully!

Consider the natural body for example; the head is the responsible part for virtually everything that the body has to do. It is the coordination center of the whole body. Ingestion of nutrients, intake of air, use of the senses, communication, monitoring and controlling of the entire working of the body all rely on the functioning of the head.

I even learnt that during the census, the amputated are counted as part of the population but the mentally deranged are never counted. This is because they believe that a man without limbs but has his brain intact, is of better use to the nation than a man who has no mind! In like manner, a family without a responsible head is of no use!

It is often said that communication is the fuel of every relationship. The man in the house should know that he is responsible for keeping the communication lines open. Don't be the first to "check out" at the slightest provocation. Don't be the one to say "I don't want to talk about it" either. Even when she doesn't want to talk about it, you should be able to lovingly get her to speak and resolve whatever the differences may be.

Did you know that you can replace or completely remove certain parts of the body and still have the body living? But the moment the head is off, life ceases! This is why the men

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are to blame for most of the troubles in the homes today. If they had maintained their roles as the responsible head, most broken homes will still be standing today.

Medically, there is something referred to as brain death. It is noted that even after brain death, the working of the heart may continue at a slow pace but there will be no respiration because it takes the brain's activity for respiration and other activities that sustain life to continue. When the head (man) of the family is not responsible, the family is as good as dead!

U – Umbrella

The umbrella is a kind of canopy designed to protect against rain or sunlight. The man in the family is the protector of the family. He is the one charged with the responsibility for the safety and security of his home. This is one reason it is absolutely wrong for the man to be the one oppressing and bullying his wife or children. The advantage of his physical strength is specifically for him to come to the aid of the wife rather than to intimidate and oppress her.

Irrespective of the man's size or stature, he was designed and fashioned by Almighty God to be a protector. Remember the first man in Gen 2. The Bible tells us that God put this man in the garden to dress and to keep it. The word "keep" means to "guard, observe, have charge of, watch, protect, preserve and to keep from evil". Here is

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God's idea of who a man really is. He is the guardian, observer, watchman, and so on. The man, in the beginning, was already given responsibility to guard and protect before he was given a wife.

Dear brother, you can't be a man without being observant. You can't be a man and not be able to tell when your little boy comes back home with his friend's shoes or a note that you didn't buy for him. A man that is too busy to observe what goes on in his home is not a man. I dare say he is not the right candidate for God's kind of marriage. In all honesty, such a man has no business getting married to a woman at all. He would just be better off single!

Anyways, there is more to protecting the family than the proverbial taking of the bullet in place of the wife or kids. Let's look again at that portion of scripture in Eph 5:23 again:

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

(Eph 5:23)

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In describing the role of the husband to the wife, the bible says he is as much the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. It, therefore, follows that Christ's going all out to save the church should be applicable to the man too. Not just is the man the head but he is equally the protector.

He is such a protector that he should be willing to lay down his life for the interests of his family. If there was a sudden noise in the house, the man is not the one that should cross his legs, reading the newspaper or watching soccer on television while he commands the woman to go and find out what the matter is.

Dear sister, if the man you are rolling with places himself before you and doesn't even think you are worth the trouble, you might as well take a long walk! He is not ready to be a husband. He is definitely not ready to mingle!

S – Sanctify

The word sanctify means to render or acknowledge something to be hallowed or separate from ordinary things. It means to consecrate or dedicate something as unto God. Therefore, when we say that the husband has a role to sanctify the wife, we are talking about how it is the responsibility of the man to render and acknowledge his wife to be hallow.

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The man must see his wife separately and differently from all other women and people in the whole world. He cannot treat his wife as commonplace and expect to have the kind of marriage that the Lord instituted Himself. What Adam saw was a real special woman for whom he could leave anyone in the entire universe. The man should see his wife like that one person who means more than a million others put together.

This in the first place is the basis for the man's protective role over his wife. When this is in place, we will not have to preach to the man to protect his wife or family. Or do you need a sermon to know you ought to protect something that means the world to you?

You just can't find a real man folding his arms and doing nothing while harm or discomfort comes to what matters to him. He will go to any extent to do something about it. Unfortunately, most men have made this thing that matters the most to them anything but their wives and families! When you understand your role as the sanctifier of the woman, you want to make sure she is alright at all times even when you don't really feel alright yourself. After all, that is what love means isn't it?

So dear unmarried sister, you don't want to say yes to the man who places every other person

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before you. You don't want to say "I Do" to the man who thinks you are just one of the many women he could have likely married! You need to be sure that he really does value and consider you a hallowed personality!

When we read further in the letter of Paul the apostle to the Ephesians church, he said:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"

(Eph 5:25-26)

Using the relationship between Christ and the church as the model for marriage relationships, Paul says that the husband ought to love his wife just as Christ loved the church. He then went on to describe Christ's love for the church as one that was strong enough to make Him give Himself in order to sanctify and cleanse her. To sanctify also means to purify and to cleanse.

This means that the love of the husband for the wife ought to be more than mere words. His love should naturally result in the purifying and cleansing of the woman. A love that does not lead the man to take active roles and responsibilities towards the purifying (improvement) and

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cleansing (upgrading) of the woman to the extent that she becomes a better person is not good enough for the marriage institution.

B – Breadwinner (Provider)

Recall that we said marriage is for that boy who has grown into a man. And one of the yardsticks for measuring whether or not a boy is now a man is whether or not he is still financially dependent on his parents. A man that is willing to leave father and mother must be able to live up to his responsibilities as the source and sustainer of the new family.

This does not mean he must have a house by the seaside in the Caribbean Island or be the CEO of a multinational company. What I am saying is that he must be able to take care of himself and the new family! He should be capable of providing food, shelter, and clothing to his new family. He should be able to bear the financial needs of the family.

Remember the man in the garden had a job before God made the woman. As a matter of fact, he had two jobs! The bible says God placed him in the garden to “dress” and to “keep” it!

We talk more about jobs and the likes in our other book - Preparing For The Future (... An Insight Into Building Wealth) and recommend that you get it!

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Don't you listen to that brother who has got no job or business doing and is telling you that you will survive by faith! You should be able to see proof of what his faith has produced for him all the while he has been applying it to himself. This is very important because if that faith hasn't provided for him alone yet, adding you to his responsibilities might just cripple whatever he had left of the faith!

Worse off sister, don't you dive into the marriage saying "I have a well-paying job and can take care of the both of us" You weren't designed for that! Your role is that of a helper not to do the work of the man. You are there to support what the man is doing and not to give him enough reason not to do anything! Don't say "it's nothing, I love him and we can manage like that" The manufacturer said you should help not the other way round.

This is not to undermine the fact that a man may at some point in his life have certain challenges that make it difficult for him to take care of his family at a given instance. Of course, under such circumstance, there couldn't be a better help than the wife of the man.

What I am saying is particularly when the man is yet without a job and wants to add on the responsibility of being a father to his joblessness. God gave Adam one before Eve showed up so if a marriage is going to fulfill the original plan and excel in it, it has to be patterned after that one.

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If you have been around Bible studies for a while now, I suppose that a certain scripture should have come to your mind. You should have been wondering why I didn't quote it as we spoke about the man being the breadwinner. I will, however, bring it up here for the purpose of clarifying something there.

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

(1 Tim 5:8)

The word translated “provide” here means to “consider in advance, take thought for, perceive or look out for beforehand”. It also means for “foresee a need” In its usage, it refers more to a plan for action than the action itself. So the Word is telling us about the man that has no plan or preparation for the maintenance of his family rather than the man who does not take care of the family.

This differentiates between the man who doesn't do so because of limited resources at the moment and the one who doesn't do so because he has no intention of doing so. It is the man without intentions that is referred to as an infidel and not the one without resources.

For the man without resources, get the finance part of this book. I have something to tell you about building kingdom wealth.

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God is referring here to the man who irrespective of how much he may have, has decided that he is not going to pay his son's fees or get something that his wife so earnestly desires for her. This includes those who make denial of a right to upkeep part of their ways of punishing their spouses or children.

This also includes those who for bad financial management skills cause their families to go through untold hardship in the midst of supply! The bible says those who do these have already denied the faith because it is so not Christ-like to behave in this manner. Look at the relationship between Jesus and the church, He goes out of His way to provide for and take care of His bride so do the same brother!

A – Adore

One of the simplest definitions for "adore" you can find anywhere is "to like or admire very much" It also means "to regard with utmost esteem". A husband, therefore, is that man who adores, likes and admires his wife very much. A man who has no regard or value for his wife is not worthy to be called her husband.

As a matter of fact, a woman should never find more value anywhere than that which her husband bestows upon her. If there is only one person in the whole world who thinks highly of a woman, it should be her husband. I once heard a man of God say that there are certain things he can't allow his wife to do because she is too royal for that!

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Dear sister, you don't want to marry a man who thinks you aren't worth much. The apostle Peter puts it as:

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

(1 Pet 3:7)

At this point, I like to reiterate the fact that marriage is not a societal phenomenon and as such cannot be run on societal ideologies. I said this to say that irrespective of the society you have found yourself, you should never let society form your basis for determining what is right and what is not. For example, I know that a man with the African mentality will struggle with the fact that he is supposed to give honor to his wife. It would have made more sense to him if it were the other way round! Well, sorry brother, God has it all balanced!

The word honor used here means to value, esteem, dignify, consider precious and priceless. So God knowing that the women were physically the weaker ones, asks the men to value them. He says that in all that the man does, he should place a price on his wife and not treat her like she were worthless.

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This is why I don't understand how a man will have a car that his wife must not consider driving or dishes that his wife can't use. I once heard of a man who had a cup his grandmother gave him that no one else in the house could ever consider using! In fact, some have beaten their wives for breaking a cup in the house! This only points to one thing – the cup was more valuable than the woman!

Dear sister, if you are still single but involved with someone who has demonstrated traits of not really valuing you, you better talk to your legs really fast. Don't wait there saying that it will be better in marriage. The only thing that is guaranteed in the marriage as at yet is that he will get better in treat you like nothing!

N – Nourish

For certain ladies, being nourished doesn't mean more than eating well and adding reasonable weight. They wish I would say that a husband must have a discount card with every eatery in town but I am sorry sister, that is not what I am talking about. You have to understand and live with the consciousness of the fact that man is a spirit being that has a soul and lives in a body.

So when we talk about nourishment, your first consideration shouldn't be your natural belly. This accounts for the reason why the gospel tackles the inner man rather than the outer man. When Jesus spoke concerning His mission, He said:

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*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he
hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the
poor; ...”*

(Luke 4:18)

There is a great difference between giving money to the poor and preaching the gospel to them. Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel to them rather than to give them money because poverty was a thing of the spirit and no amount of money given to a man in the natural can change his spirit.

It is therefore important for you as a lady that you consider the nourishment of your inner man in deciding who to say “I do” to. You must be able to ascertain that he is grounded in the word enough to provide the spiritual leadership necessary for the family to run smoothly. He must be able to teach you the word of God and take you with him to the place of worship. He must have proven to be able to cultivate, bring the best out of, develop, advance, and improve your value.

*Sister, only marry a man who will increase and
improve your value not one who feeds
parasitically on your person.*

Do you remember that the first job God gave man in the garden was to dress it? The man was created to be a tender

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and a cultivator. In fact, he already had that going before the woman came on board. Actually, the expression “dress” here is from the same root word where we derived “husbandman” And as you already know, the word "husbandman" is a synonym of a farmer.

*The man is, therefore, the cultivator of the home
and the woman is the farmland.*

And just as in the case of the relationship between Jesus and the church, the husband has the responsibility to wash his wife and family clean with the word. She may have a few blemishes here and there when he marries her but she ought to be getting better for being married to him.

In the case of a natural farmer, it is what he does with the farmland that will determine what it will produce for him. So the effectiveness of the woman as a suitable help is completely dependent on what the man does with his responsibility for equipping and making her better.

*“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the
washing of water by the word, That he might
present it to himself a glorious church, not
having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but
that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

(Eph 5:26-27)

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You will notice that Jesus didn't ask the church to go and get rid of her spots and wrinkles. He did something about it. He cleanses her with the washing of water by the word of God. The Bible says He did this so He can present to Himself a glorious church. Dear brother, it's up to you what you make of your wife. If she is all spotty and blemished, it's your fault because God has made you her nourisher! He has equipped you with what it takes to nourish her into His dream. He has put His word in your mouth for the same purpose.

Now you see why you cannot be ignorant of the word of God as a man. Your wife's future and that of your entire family depends largely on the reserve of God's word in your spirit. So brother, stop spending time on the things that matter less and give yourself wholly to the ministry of the word.

D – Direct

As an extension of the role of the husband as the head of the union, it is his responsibility to direct the family. It is the man's job to steer the ship of the family in the direction that God has shown him.

*The easiest way to get nowhere is to follow
somebody who doesn't know where he is going!*

Qualities Of The Ideal Man

The man should, therefore, know for sure where the family is headed. He must be able to answer in clear terms questions that concern the future of the family. Where you are going to live, what you are going to be doing and the likes should not be a guesswork for you. You have to have a clear enough vision that can be made plain enough for your wife and children to follow through with.

Meanwhile, I will like to emphasize the fact that directions are not the same thing as ambition. We are not talking about you leading the family to achieve your ambition but leading the family in the path that has been written of you. There is a path that has been written of you dear husband. There is a path you were called to walk through for which you required a suitable help in the first place.

You should, therefore, be able to carry the entire family along in that direction. The knowledge of this should be the basis for decision making in the family rather than personal interests. I mean, the leadership of the man doesn't mean that his wife is to follow like a dummy. He makes the vision plain to her and allows her to run as fast as she can. If she has an idea or suggestion that will help take the family to that destination, then she should be free enough to suggest it and the man should be wise enough to listen and implement them.

Every wise man listens to wise counsel and who else could be the primary source of that counsel than the woman that has been called to

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*walk alongside you? Wise men listen to their
wives!*

In a nutshell, if a man has not identified the reason why he is alive; he is not about that divine assignment; he does not take the role or the responsible head; does not shield and protect; sanctify and cleanse; provide for and sustain; adore and honor; nourish and bring direction to his wife and family; it is good that the man should be alone. He is definitely not the right kind of man for the kind of marriage that God intends to be a blessing.

So dear sister, you will be doing yourself and your future a world of good if you will gently and lovingly walk away from such a man!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WOMAN IN THE RELATIONSHIP

All the while we have been on the trail of the men and now it's time for the women. It's time to look into who a woman really is and what she was made for. We want to begin to see how the equation balances between the man and the woman in the marriage.

For starters dear sister, I like for you to know there is no such thing as the twenty-first century model of marriage. If you want to have peace in your home and fulfill your purpose in the home, you will have to listen to God's standard for marriages rather than that of the world or society.

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“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”

(Prov 14:1)

While the man is responsible for leadership in the home, the woman is the builder of the home. The man supplies the direction that the family is going and the woman builds on it. The woman, therefore, is not supposed to have her own ideas, vision or interests separate from what has been revealed by her husband.

She cannot be walking in a different direction from that of her husband and expect the family to do well. The simplest way to create commotion in the home is for any of the partners to stay away from their responsibilities or to pervert their roles. When the scripture declares that every wise woman builds her house, the word used for build means to “establish, rebuild or cause to continue”

Establish, Rebuild, Cause to Continue!

To establish here refers to making permanent as in the restoration of exiles. This means to plant and make firm. So the woman in the home is the one responsible for the establishment of the family! She comes factory fitted with all the machinery (talent, personalit, and passion) that will be required to establish the home but she cannot do this without the leading of her man. Once given the leading, she is responsible for the establishment of the idea.

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So the strength and stability of the family are in the hands of the woman of the home. Even if peradventure, there was a distortion somewhere in the family and it looks like things were coming crashing, it is her role to repair and rebuild according to the pattern given or shown her by her husband. This is why I maintain that there should never be a marriage where there are varying individual interests.

Marriages should be contracted on grounds of a purpose that has become clear to both parties rather than emotions and so on. This is because even within the marriage, it will take an understanding of purpose to keep it going.

Dear sister, do not marry a man whose vision and purpose for life you do not fully understand because you can only rebuild in accordance with the original pattern you have seen. If you didn't see the pattern clearly, you can never be useful to him in the event that there has to be a rebuilding!

Let me also add that the woman should not get married to a man whose vision does not comply with her talents, personality or passion. She will forever struggle to be useful to that man!

Brothers, we already established that you have no business getting married if you haven't discovered where you are heading, in the same way, you don't have any reason to

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marry a woman who hasn't caught the vision yet! She must have caught and already be running with that vision if she is ever going to fulfill her roles to you as a wife.

If she will ever be useful in the building of that life you see, she must see what you see.

The last synonym for the word build here is to cause to continue. Oh, I love this so much. The word shows us that the woman is the one to cause the family and all it stands for to continue. Whether the man “fires on” after the marriage or slows down is completely up to the woman. Nevertheless, she was designed to make him continue in greater dimensions. According to God's design, women multiply stuff and make them continue.

Have you ever tried to resolve a conflict between two men before? Its resolution is almost instant but when women are involved, dear God! Or if it were between a man and a woman, then you are in for the time of your life because when the man would have said “it's okay let's forget about it” that is when the woman is just about to begin! That's why you don't find real men gossiping! It is women who are natural evangelists!

Of course, there is a positive side to it. Let's take, for example, the man has made a new year resolution to attend every service including Sunday services to mid-week services, home group meetings and so on. If this man ever

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intends not to keep it for too long, then he should not make the mistake of telling his wife!

The moment she is in the know, he better starts planning on how to ensure he doesn't relent on his decision because she will police him all through. He will start hearing things like "honey, but you said we would not miss out on service this year, its only three weeks since you made that decision" God help the man and he says he forgot that day was a service day; by the next week, she will begin reminding him of Sunday service from Thursday evening!

This is something the Lord has put in the women to ensure that they are useful in helping their husbands continue in the path God has called them for. And brothers, don't decide to keep quiet because you don't want her on your trail, that's actually what she is there for.

It is better she trails you to your destiny than sits back and watch you while you make a mess of your life and the entire family. So don't you label her a nag because she wouldn't let you relent on what you are supposed to be doing! She is just being the continuity manager that God has made her.

When Jesus arose from the dead and wanted to spread the news of his resurrection, He did not appear to Peter or James first. He didn't even appear to the beloved John. He chose a woman! He knew that the news was sure to spread faster with the woman because of their design for continuation. While a man may see something, get terrified

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and decide to be mute about it, the woman can't. She must tell it!

Submission is Beauty

It is important however for the woman to understand that the fact that she is the continuity manager in the home doesn't make her an overseer or a supervisor. She must understand that everything has to be done in the spirit of meekness. Trust me, there is no man who doesn't like to listen to wise counsel. At least not one that is born again! The problem is always in the way that the counsel is presented. As a woman, you have to understand that no matter how correct what you are saying is, it has to be correctly presented for it to make sense to your husband.

This brings me back to the idea of purpose in marriage. If the purpose is clear before the woman and she is making a suggestion in the interest of the purpose, she should be willing to communicate it in a manner that it can be received rather than with the lackadaisical attitude of one who doesn't care whether her suggestions are received or not. If your suggestion is really important to you and you believe it will help the family, then present it correctly!

"In like manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands [subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to them], so that

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even if any do not obey the word [of God] they may be won over not by discussion but by the [godly] lives of their wives. ”

(1 Pet 3:1 – AMP)

The scripture admonishes the woman to be subject to her own husband. And I specifically love the amplified version for shedding more light on the matter. It says for the women to subordinate themselves to their husbands. In other words, this is not something the husband should be struggling to get the wife to do. Your husband doesn't have to always remind you that he is the head of the family.

In fact, if he offered you to be coequal with him in the sense of being co-heads, you ought to know better than to take that offer. Don't say “baby I always knew you are a modern-day husband” That modern-day husband style has never kept a marriage and sure enough, it wouldn't begin with yours! The scripture says for the wives to subordinate themselves as being secondary to and dependent on their husbands.

A woman who has any problems with being second to her husband is definitely not ready for marriage. You can be sure enough that even if she gets married that way, it is going to be real war! That marriage is going to have the character of a monster because anything with two heads is a monster.

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Some time ago, they used to say “behind every successful man is a woman”. In recent times, they have modified it and now say “beside every successful man is a woman”. Before long, they will advance to “before every successful man is a woman”!

Dear sister, don't build your life and future around all these philosophies and ideologies of men who are themselves a mega failure. Learn to submit to your own husbands. Don't let anyone tell you that it is disparaging for you to submit to your husband. As a matter of fact, your real beauty is in your submission.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

(1 Pet 3:3-4)

Still admonishing the woman to be submissive to her husband, Peter says her real adorning or beauty has absolutely nothing to do with her hairdo, her makeup or her accessories. He says her beauty is in the quality and value of her spirit man. It is all about the condition of her inner man. He even makes it more serious by saying that what he is talking about is the ornament of a meek and

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quiet spirit. In other words, a woman shouldn't bother making her hair if she is not adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. It doesn't matter that she wears Brazilian or Peruvian hair, she doesn't amount to much as a wife!

He affirmed that this (meek and quiet spirit) in the sight of God is of great price. The meek woman without make-up is of greater price before God than the all made-up one who wouldn't submit to her husband. This is why I said that the beauty of the woman is in her submission to her husband. The more submissive you as a woman, the more beautiful you are to him.

Get this dear woman, it doesn't matter what you do or who you are out there in the world, if your home is a disaster, then you are one big failure. And this is the primary reason behind this book – helping you develop in the three major areas of life so you can have a truly tremendous life!

A woman who is not submissive to her husband is more like the people about whom Jesus said:

*“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not
the things which I say?”*

(Luke 6:46)

Bear in mind that the word husband also means lord. So in the context of what Jesus was saying here, you can't call a man your husband and not do what he tells you to do. You can't call a man your husband and want to dictate to him

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what he should do and what he shouldn't. You can't be married to a man and make statements like "everybody should know their boundaries in this house" This would sure mean disaster in that home.

Woman; Know Your Man ...

A dear sister once walked into the pastor's office with her husband to receive counsel for their already tearing apart marriage. As soon as the pastor asked them what the problem was, she quickly spoke up saying "pastor, the problem is that my husband doesn't listen to what I tell him to do" What do you think? Isn't the problem in the home already glaring?

I once heard a woman say that the problem they were having in their marriage was that her husband has refused to study and understand her. How funny! Who is supposed to understand the other here? The man or the woman? For Christ's sake, the woman was made for the man. She was made to help the man.

Okay, look at it this way. In a working environment, if you were employed in a place, do you expect your boss to understand you or you try to understand him? It's your job as the employee to find out what the employer wants and to please him. Marriage is in a sense like that. Since the woman came to help the man, she has to endeavor to understand him. She has to make efforts to understand the one that she

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has been employed to help! Remember how the Amplified Version renders what Peter said.

“In like manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands [subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to them],”

(1 Pet 3:1 - AMP)

It is the woman who should adapt herself to the man and not the man adapting to her. She should find out what he wants and do just what he wants. If he wants a red dress then red it is even if you feel like wearing green! Nevertheless, if you will play your cards well, you might just be able to get him to go for green instead of red. Just make sure that he knows that your primary concern is to please him. A good woman studies her husband and doesn't irritate or criticize him.

Ahab and Jezebel

From our study of the fact that the woman makes the home, we arrived at the fact that she has a responsibility to establish, rebuild and cause the vision of her man to continue. This means that even if the man were missing the mark, she should be able to lovingly influence him back into the purpose of God for his life. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case for many women today. A perfect example is the couple Ahab and Jezebel!

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“But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”
(1 Kings 21:25)

What a description this was! Ahab was described as the man who had no rivals when it comes to evil dealings. He was completely sold out to doing wickedness in the sight of the Lord. And the worse part of the matter was that his wife stirred him up in this direction! Oh! What a woman she was. Imagine that someone who should have been there to help him actualize his purpose as the king of the land ended up stirring her husband to do wickedness. She so stirred him that he excelled above all others in wicked deeds.

I mean from one evil to the other, Jezebel engineered Ahab until he earned the title of the chief in works of wickedness. Like in a race, Ahab began to overtake his predecessors in wrongdoing one after the other. He went on until he outclassed every one of them while being stirred by his wife who could have stirred him to do righteousness above all others as well? This is where men have to be very careful.

Dear brother, the fact that she has pointed nose, spotless face, straight legs or very prominent curves is not enough reason to take her to the altar. Marriage is about the content and not the

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*container so you need to be sure the content
you are marrying.*

If Jezebel had been a good woman, she would have been a good influence on her husband because every good woman is always a positive influence on her husband.

On one occasion, the Bible tells us how that there was a man by the name Naboth who had a piece of land close to Ahab's land. So Ahab went to him to request that this land be given over to him for some agricultural practices that he had intended. Ahab also offered to give Naboth another piece of land that was better than the one he wanted to collect from him.

This is where I begin to wonder how far this king was willing to go just to satisfy his greed. Who gives away something better to have a lesser one? It's either he was just saying that to convince Naboth or he was a real covetous man who could go to any extent to have what he wanted. Let me quickly add here that the most unqualified partner to be in a marriage relationship is Mr. Covetous or Mrs. Covetous. Greed and covetousness are deadly characters in a marriage partner.

Anyway, Naboth refused Ahab's offer and then his real character was revealed. The Bible records that Ahab became very heavy and displeased. He was so displeased that he wouldn't eat anything! In fact, when he laid down upon his bed, he turned his face away from his wife. What

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kind of a man was this king? How come was so heavy to this point because a man refused to give him his land? This was greed of the highest order. Well, his wife had to ask him what the matter was and he told her.

Now, remember that we are actually looking at the role of the woman here. And I specifically brought up an example of where the man already missed it to show you how the woman could help save a man's destiny if she were a good woman.

After Ahab spoke to his wife, she asked him to go and eat and let his heart be merry. She assured him that she was going to get him that land – the same land the king tried to get and didn't! When you read the twenty-first chapter of the first book of kings, you will get the whole story there. She ended up killing Naboth and offering her husband to go ahead and take possession of the land. No wonder the prophet Elijah took ran for his dear life when he heard this same woman was after his life! She was really a principality.

*Listen, dear sister, all that you are and will ever
become must be tailored to making the dream of
the man you call husband come through
otherwise you would be a mistake for a wife!*

Let me also point something out here concerning the role of the man as the responsible head of the family. The moment Ahab went to take possession of Naboth's land after his wife killed him, the Bible records:

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“And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.”

(1 Kings 21:17-19)

You will observe that God said “have you killed and also taken possession?” even though it was his wife that killed! This points to something. It shows you the way God expects the family to run. Mr. Husband can’t claim ignorance of what is going on in the home. The fact that it is your wife or children that did it doesn’t exempt you from what they have done because you are the responsible head. God will always ask the man first before he gets to the woman.

So let’s take this further by looking at the qualities and characters of the woman in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUALITIES OF THE IDEAL WOMAN

Just the way we took a detailed look at the qualities of the ideal man in a relationship, I like to break down that of the woman a bit further. By so doing, it is my hope that the men will know what to look for while the women know what to aspire to.

W - Womb

When you study carefully the account of Adam and Eve, you will discover that the moment Adam saw her, he said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. And

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like I said earlier, he referred to the fact that this creature was the only one that looked exactly like him. She had bones just as he had and flesh just as he had.

However, there was something unique God put in her to make her different because if she was a hundred percent like him, she would just have been a duplicate and not an original. So God being an originator put a womb in the woman to distinguish her from the man. This is why they have said that a woman is a man with a womb!

The womb is that organ that helps the seed of the man to develop, and multiply over a period of time until a full human is born. It has the ability to carry and bear the weight of the growing fetus. It supplies everything that the fetus will require to grow and develop normally. As a matter of fact, it has the ability to bring every seed planted into it to maturity!

This means that the womb makes the woman a multiplier and a sustainer of life. So looking beyond babies now, I like for you to see that every woman is an incubator! Every woman has the ability to multiply and sustain life. Just as everything the fetus needs to grow is supplied to it in the womb, the woman can bring in all that is required for every vision she receives to grow and develop. The moment the real woman buys into the vision, you can start celebrating its accomplishment brother!

No wonder someone rightly said if you give a woman a word, she will give you a sentence.

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Give her a sentence, she will give you a paragraph. Give her a paragraph, she gives you a book!

So what we are saying is that women make things grow. They make them progress and increase even beyond the imagination of men sometimes. And they are given to help the men grow their vision. They are there to see to it that the course for which God has called the man increases all the way. So young man, before you make that proposal for marriage; you must be certain that this particular woman is factory fitted with what it will take in terms of talent, personality and passion to help your dream grow and come through.

You need to check and cross check to see that she has developed the skill and quality of character to be of help in the furtherance of your purpose in life. And if peradventure you are already married, don't say it's too late already. Start training her to become that woman that will help your vision to grow and expand.

The same thing applies to you sister, don't just sit there praying and waiting for Mr. Right. Take the time to develop yourself. Add some qualitative value to yourself. Distinguish yourself from the women out there. May I say to ladies who appear pretty or at least know how to make themselves appear that way that no man wants to marry the container. The content matters more because it is more about what you have to offer than what you look like. So

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your greatest selling point as a woman is not the outer man but the inner man! Nonetheless, you have to invest in looking good as well.

O – Organizational & Managerial Skills

Personally, I would have preferred to talk about the organizational and managerial skills of the woman here but on the basis of importance, the Spirit of God will have me represent “O” with “obedience” This is not to be a surprise because more homes are in trouble over women who aren’t obedient to their husbands than those who haven’t explored their organizational skills in the house.

Furthermore, we might be able to employ someone to take care of the organizational aspect of the home if the woman is “deficient” in that area but no one can be employed to obey a husband on behalf of the wife!

Paul in his letter to Titus instructed him on how to handle issues within the church. He asked him to endeavor to teach those things that are consistent with sound doctrine. Then he gave him specific instructions for the aged women. Among other things, he charged the aged women to particularly teach the young women how to be sober, love their husbands and love their children. He added that they should also teach young women:

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*“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good,
obedient to their own husbands, that the word
of God be not blasphemed.”*

(Titus 2:5)

The word obedient used here goes beyond just doing what you are told to do as a woman. It refers to being subject or in submission to. That means that the real woman who is going to have a blissful home should never create room for questioning who the head in the family is.

As a matter of fact, when you agreed to marry a man, you expressly said you agreed to come under his leadership and authority. So why should it be a problem submitting to him? Why are you looking for someone to preach to him that you are equal partners in the marriage?

Paul was very strategic when he said the aged women should teach this to the young women. He knew that for any aged woman to still be married at her old age, she must of necessity have grasped and applied these truths in her marriage. He could, therefore, trust them to communicate the same to the younger one.

Understand that it doesn't matter who you are out there, it doesn't matter that you earn more than the man you call your husband earns, by virtue of the union between you two, you have no reason under heaven to disregard him. It makes no difference that you are age mates or you are even older than him.

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As long as he is the one you have married, you must remain in sub-mission to him. This means that you must submit your entire being to his mission. After all, you came to help him accomplish that mission in the first place!

So sister, if you think you are going to have problems being submitted to this guy, then you have seen ahead of time that you are going to have problems being his wife. Do the smarter thing by moving on!

Now, let me add that in most cases, it is in deciding to move on that many ladies bring in their managerial skill. You will find them saying “I will manage him like that” when they should be saying “no it won’t work” Sister, don’t plan to live the rest of your life managing what God designed to be enjoyed. It is often said that a broken relationship is better than a broken marriage but let me add that a single woman is better than a managing wife!

M – Manufacturer and Maker

This is somewhat related to the woman having a womb and being able to incubate on ideas and things and bring forth something really amazing out of it. But I will like to look at it from the perspective of the virtuous woman described by the proverb writer. Let me add that this writer had approximately 1000 women in his life. So if he is telling you about one that is virtuous you better listen to him. He sure knows what he is talking about. He said:

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*“She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh
willingly with her hands.”*

(Prov 31:13)

I like for you to remember that Solomon who was talking here was the wealthiest king ever. He had more than enough money than you can possibly think of today. The temple he built for God is valued in billions of dollars. So he wasn't talking from the perspective of lack when he says that a virtuous woman works willingly with her hands.

He is showing us that a woman who is willing to work with her hands and not be dependent on another for her living is by far a better woman to consider in marriage. Of course, this is not to say that the men should shelve their responsibilities towards their wives or family. He is only highlighting the character of the sister here.

Dear brother, no matter how much you are worth and are able to provide, a woman who does not have the willingness to do anything is not going to be of any value to you. She will not bring any value into the marriage at all. And dear sisters, stop looking for an “already made man” to attach to. Understand that you are a maker.

So you must be willing to help make the man what his vision reveals to you that he is. Have the willingness to do whatever it might take to help him. You must determine that he will become better at what he was born to be because of your involvement with his life.

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A – Assistant

Someone once said that when things go well with a man people often praise him but when things go wrong, they are quick to accuse his wife. Well, when I look at that in the light of the role of the woman as an assistant it seems to make some sense to me. Look at it this way, when you say someone is an assistant, it means the person has certain roles to fulfill in the life of the one that is assisted.

It means the one that requires that assistance definitely has a few functions that he cannot carry out himself. Therefore, if his assistant is good and effective, the laxities will never be revealed or noticed but if that assistant is an incompetent one, oh the whole world will see it all.

This is who the woman is to her husband. She fills in for him where he is not able to. Takes up a few responsibilities for him, steps in his shoes when he is off running other things. In occasions where his job doesn't permit him to spend so much time at home, she is the one to ensure that his absence is almost never felt.

That means she must be willing to consider a job or career that affords her some more time than her husband has to spend at home. She can't be busier than her husband is and hope to assist him. This is why statistics have shown that the homes where the women are busier than the men are at a greater risk of marital issues.

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Please note that this is not to say the woman's role is at home. I am only saying she should be able to make adjustments for the family where necessary.

N- Nurture

While the man has the responsibility of nurturing his wife, the wife has the role to nurture the family, beginning from her husband. This nurturing in my opinion might be the reason why most men who are married to good women tend to begin adding weight after marriage! Solomon also said:

*"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth
meat to her household, and a portion to her
maidens."*

(Prov 31:15)

Contrary to what we have in this day, Solomon says it is the woman of the house who rises up early to prepare food for her husband and her maidens. This was because according to the tradition of the day, maidens were not exactly slaves. They were simply domestic staff that were supposed to assist the woman around the house and not the ones to take over the roles of the woman while she crosses her legs, paints her nails and watches television. The maids are to assist her in the kitchen and not to give her a reason to remain in bed.

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So as a woman, it doesn't matter how you have been brought up. It doesn't matter what the cultures and society you have been used to teaches. You want to follow the manual of the author of marriages. You want to follow the description that the word has given. You shouldn't make it a norm for your maids to prepare your husband and children's food. Worse off, you shouldn't make it a norm for your husband to prepare his food either.

Besides physical food, the woman also nurtures her home with the words of her mouth. No member of the family should here kinder words from anywhere else than the ones the woman of the house says. Your husband shouldn't find more encouragement anywhere else than the one you give him. He might come under the pressure sometimes but it's the role of the woman to make the home his safe haven.

The teachers in school and even the colleagues of the children might say all sort of things to them but they shouldn't hear the same from home. It will completely paralyze their will to go on. Until a sister has been fully prepared for these and more, she has no business getting married!

Even if all the men in the world were lining up at your parents' house seeking your hand in marriage, you are not under compulsion to say "yes" to anyone until you are ready. Always remember that every minute spent in preparation saves ten in execution and the more prepared you are, the less likely it is that you make a mess of the marriage.

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It is my heartfelt prayer that the revelations in here will help you prepare to be the best mate and build the best family like it has helped us I in Jesus name.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW TO FIND A LIFE PARTNER

It won't be surprising to me if the unmarried folks get to be more interested in this chapter than the previous ones. This is because, for all you care, many of them are more concerned about finding a mate or being found by one than anything else you can possibly imagine. Well, I have good news for you here and I will like to begin from a very interesting scripture in the book of Proverbs!

*“A man that hath friends must shew himself
friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh
closer than a brother.”*

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(Prov 18:24)

He says a man that has friends “must” of necessity show himself to be friendly. This can equally be said as ‘for a man to have friends, he must first be friendly’ Except the man is friendly, he does not qualify to have friends – at least not real ones! So in the context of our study now, it means that for you to begin to think about a marriage partner, you must first become a “marry-able” person.

In order to qualify to have a real and correct marriage partner, you must become the correct marriage material for someone else. If you are yet “un-marry-able”, then you have no business looking for or hoping to be found by a marriage partner!

Work on Being

I remember a dear sister who walked up to me several years ago asking for prayer. When I asked her to tell me what the matter was, she busted out in tears saying that she believed she had been cursed. I managed to calm her down and got her to speak with me.

Then she said “Pastor, I am in my late twenties now and no reasonable guy has ever asked me “how are you” not to talk of tasking me for a date or a relationship.” Before I could

say anything, she added “all those that come to ask me out are either dropouts, touts, hoodlums or something close”

I asked her a few other questions and then it was revealed that these were the kind of people she hung around. These were the kinds of people in her world of contact. Most of her awake periods were spent among this group of people and she had the guts to turn around to say she is under a curse? Well, the only curse I saw here was a self-imposed one! No one but herself had placed a curse on her.

The curse she placed on herself was to refuse to develop herself. And make no mistakes about it, if she wouldn't work on developing herself, she is guaranteed to end up with one of such men if not worse! Remember the law of attraction we quoted earlier that says “like attracts like”

There is no way under heaven that you are going to attract anything or anyone that is not in your class or league. As a matter of fact, if for any reason we succeed in putting two people who aren't alike, the only guaranteed reaction is repulsion. Therefore, you shouldn't hope to attract someone better than you really are right now.

Before you get all engrossed in the business of trying to get you married, you should find out how prepared you are. The bible says husbands should live with their wives

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according to knowledge. This means that they should be considerate of their wives. So as long as you are still full of self, you are not ready to be a married man! As long as you haven't learnt to sacrifice for others, you definitely aren't ready for marriage. However, if you will decide to work on your personality and improve your personal value and worth, you will be amazed at what level of partners you will begin to attract.

We can, therefore, settle that being the right partner is more important than searching for or hoping to be found by the right partner. If you are the right partner, you will of necessity attract the right partner.

Daisy Osborn once said, "work on being and not on having for with what you are, you will have." Beloved, this is a principle of life. You will always attract who you are. So rather than chasing shadows, why not invest your time, energy and resources into being the right person?

The Omelet Is Only As Good As the Eggs

You know I once said that singleness is more important than marriage and almost got crucified for it. But then, when I went on to explain, the people began to understand where I was coming from and where I was going. It has been said that your omelet is only as good as the eggs! No

matter the size of the eggs or the expertise of the chef, a rotten egg will definitely make a bad omelet.

The same is true about the marriage relationship. Your marriage will only be as good as your singleness because marriage is only as good as the partners in the union. An irresponsible chap will definitely be an irresponsible husband and a wayward girl will certainly be a wayward wife. So which is more important then? The ingredient that makes up the marriage or the marriage itself?

Wouldn't it be better to spend time, energy and resources developing the marriage ingredient so we can make a great marriage? Or would you rather join just any kind of ingredient only to begin patching things up in the marriage? I think it is smarter to take the first option. Therefore Mr. and Mrs. Single, where to begin your search for a life partner is to develop yourself into the suitable partner of the kind of partner you hope for.

Don't Make The Same Mistake Twice!

Dear single, please do not allow your age or circle of friends to lead you into what you can't walk out of. Don't let them tell you that your biological clock is ticking and you have to rush into making a decision as crucial as marriage.

The fact that all your friends are getting married doesn't mean that something is wrong with you. Therefore, I want to plead with you

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*to avoid the pressure to rush into a marriage
when you are not fully prepared for it.*

The book of Proverbs tells us:

*“It is a snare to a man to utter a vow [of
consecration] rashly and [not until] afterward
inquire [whether he can fulfill it]”*

(Prov 20:25 - AMP)

Come on here, the word is telling us that it is suicidal to rush into making a decision as serious as that of consecration. You don't rush into deciding to consecrate yourself to a partner for the rest of your life. You don't hurry into this kind of a decision that has a direct impact on your destiny in life. He says it is better to first make the necessary enquires. Take your time and examine the partner (of course after ensuring that you are already prepared).

*As we saw in the example of the omelet, it takes
just one bad egg to ruin the whole thing. So it's
not enough that you have prepared yourself for
the marriage institution. Joining a partner who
has got cracks in his/her character will
definitely ruin it all! Joining a partner who
isn't really ready is not in the best of your
interest.*

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Let me also use this opportunity to correct a very common but costly mistake here. Never say you will change your partner when you get married. More often than not, it never turns out that way. And please don't plan to be the first it will work for! Your life should be worth more to you than the gamble of hoping to change someone that you have established isn't exactly right for you.

When I said this to a lady some time ago, she asked "pastor, do you mean that he has to be perfect? I am not sure there is any perfect man out there." In responding to her questions, I shared something with her about nutrients. They say that nutrients are classified into essentials and non-essentials. The essential ones are those ones that the body cannot make on its own while the non-essential ones are the ones your body can make on its own.

This means that the essential nutrients are the ones that you have to make efforts to take in yourself because except you do, they can't be manufactured within the body.

In choosing a life partner, the opposite tends to be the case. If you discover that those things that are most important to you (based on your life's purpose) in a marriage partner are the ones that he doesn't have at all, please take a walk! If those character traits that you can't do without in your partner are the ones almost invisible or rather unavailable in them at the time, that is enough indication that you need to move on. If the sum total of the person's character traits are those you can afford to do without in a partner, please do not continue!

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I once read of a college professor who told of the most honest funeral sermon he had ever heard. The man who had died was a drunk, a failure as a father and a miserable husband. Everyone listened intently to the words of the preacher; wondering what he could possibly say that was good about this drunkard. To their surprise, the preacher leaned over the pulpit and spoke directly to the widow. His message to her was clear and simple – “don’t make the same mistake twice”

No Tinted Glasses ...

If you have the slightest inclination that you might be making a mistake if you ended up with this one, then hold for a while. Give it some time and have your doubts cleared before you proceed. This is the reason you must be very careful about getting too physical when you are in a relationship with someone.

Petting, fondling, and sex guarantee you of a beclouded sense of judgment. While every other person is seeing the obvious, you will be seeing from a different point of view because you have eaten the “forbidden fruit”. You will just find yourself seeing the angel in the partner rather than the reality of the fact that it just wouldn’t work between you both!

Beloved, if marriage is ever in view during a relationship, then neither of you should be in a

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hurry to have sex. Always remember that you just have one opportunity to make the right decision after which you will spend the rest of your life savoring that decision. Saying “no” to sex at this stage shouldn’t be a “fight of faith” like someone once put it.

If your future ever means anything to you; if your destiny is worth anything to you; then this is something you should gladly do. After all, while you were in school, you probably didn’t feel like going to school on a few occasions but the degree that was ahead of you motivated you to keep at it until you graduated. You probably don’t feel like going to work on some Fridays but knowing that the next day was a work-free day motivated you to get out of bed.

Let the marital bliss that lies ahead be your motivation and driving force to persevere and keep your head straight all the way. You want to be able to remain rational about this person all through the relationship. You want to be able to see him the way he really is without lying to yourself.

First Things First

Since we have established that it is better to become the right partner before you start talking about having the right partner, where do you begin from? Where do you start training yourself for the future from? How do you start

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getting yourself ready for the right partner? The answer is what I refer to as self-discovery.

You have to discover who you really are. You have to discover this complex personality called "you" You have to discover why you are here; your abilities and capabilities, as well as your talents. You must find out your interests and so on. This is extremely important because except you know all these as a man, you wouldn't know what kind of a helpmate you require and as a woman, you wouldn't know what kind of man you were born to help!

Remember that what we are talking about here is a life partner and not just a business partner. You need to know everything about yourself to be able to tell what kind of person will be right to partner with you through the journey of life. Until you do this, you have no business being in a relationship!

This is why the question of whether a sixteen-year-old girl or boy can go into a relationship shouldn't rise at all. What are they getting into a relationship for at that age? Teenagers who haven't even discovered themselves? That's why many of them break other's hearts and have their hearts broken. By the time they should be really ready for a relationship, there is no heart left in them!

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So the first thing the young chap should be considering is finding accurate answers to the questions I have outlined. Discovering his/her purpose should be his priority. And the earlier that discovery, the better the future that lies ahead of them.

Imagine for a moment, that a guy was born to be a footballer and he never knew. Let's say he finished high school and went to study law. After studying law, he began his legal practice and began raising his family. Then when he got to sixty years, he looked back at all the great things he had done through the years but still wasn't fulfilled. Then he decided to make some enquiries.

Somehow, he got to discover that he should have been a footballer instead! What do you think would be happening to that man from then forward? Would it ever be possible for him to retrace his steps? Which club is going to take in a sixty-year-old man to play for them? Wouldn't his late discovery have ruined everything? That is how important it is to quickly discover what you were born for.

The kind of partner you may require to walk through life with you as a medical doctor may not be the kind you would need as an actor. The woman who is fitted to assist an accountant in life may not do exactly the same with being the wife of a pastor. So if the medical doctor takes on a partner that is best suited for a pastor,

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*they are definitely going to have a tough time
making things happen in that home.*

Therefore, the most important thing is to find out exactly where you are headed before you begin to define the kind of help you will be needing “if you need one”! The Bible declares to us in the book of Amos:

*“Do two people walk hand in hand if they
aren’t going to the same place?”*

(Amos 3:3 - MSG)

*“Can two people walk together without
agreeing on the direction?”*

(Amos 3:3 - NLT)

This is so true about the marriage relationship dear. Looking at the Message Translation and consider for yourself, is it possible for two people to walk “hand in hand” if they are not headed for the same direction? What do you think will happen if people who are not headed the same direction decided to walk hand in hand?

Most likely, none of them will get to his/her destination because even if they were headed the direction of one of them, the other will always pull them away from that direction. However, the best they can have is that one person will get to his destination while the other doesn’t. So

who wants to give up his/her destiny just to walk hand in hand with another? I am sure you are not that person.

Another thing you should consider in other to know whether you are really going to the same place with this person is their values. By this, I am looking at the things that really matter to them. Does the things that matter to you matter to him? Does she see things from the same angle you see them? What is her stand on your priorities in life? Do his priorities match up with yours?

Varying views in matters like parenting, career and so on might pose a problem in marriage if not clearly ironed out. Answering these questions will help you tell exactly where this person is headed for in life.

For example, we know there are men who don't want their women working and there are women who can't imagine the idea of being home all day. People from these two worlds should therefore never get married no matter what chemistry they feel for each other. Marriage is much more than a chemical reaction.

The New Living Translation echoes the same thought by asking "can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?" This means that for any two people to walk together on the journey of life, they have to agree on the direction they are headed for. Except the directions tally, it is impossible for them to walk together. This explains the reason for many of the disagreements and so on in the marriage.

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*When two people headed different directions
come together in marriage, we have the perfect
recipe for disaster!*

This farther explains why I said the first thing is to discover yourself. The discovery of your life purpose defines the direction you should go in life. For the ladies, the discovery of your direction in life should govern your decision as to who to say “yes” to.

As for the guys, only after that direction has been discovered should you now search for that partner who is headed the same place as you. Stop asking everything in a skirt out for a date. Have a greater purpose and passion for your life!

CHAPTER SEVEN

FIVE TESTS TO PASS BEFORE MARRIAGE

Sometimes ago, I heard a certain guy advising a couple who had problems in their marriage on what to do. He said a successful marriage is one that is between a blind woman and a deaf man! I immediately understood what he was talking about even though his choice of words weren't exactly nice.

He was pointing out the fact that it will take a woman who doesn't say everything she sees and a man who doesn't respond to everything he hears for a marriage to work. The woman must learn and know when to shut her eyes and mouth while the man learns to shut his ears.

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There is a tribe somewhere in Africa where only men who pass the endurance test were permitted to go ahead with their marriage intentions. I learnt that they bring the intending man to the village square and get the warriors together there. Then they would strip the man of his shirt and lie him down with his back facing up. The warriors would then begin to flog this man!

As they did, his bride and her family will be there to watch. If he reacts to the pain from the strokes, he was disqualified from going on with the marriage but if he doesn't, then the bride and her family began to rejoice that they had gotten a man! The flogging was a test to prove his endurance capacity because they believed that the man that will marry a woman must be able to endure all manner of things.

In other words, after the purpose of a couple has been clearly defined and they are good to go in terms of their life's vision, the other areas of preparation necessary can best be described by the word "maturity" No matter how much purposes tally, if the partners are not mature enough for the marriage institution, they will only end up making a mess of it all.

Since maturity is quite a broad word, I will break it down a bit. In no particular order, I will like to talk about maturity in the following areas: spiritual, emotional, financial, intellectual, and sexual.

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1) Spiritual Maturity:

Many times, people do not understand how important this is but you really have to get it here. Marriage is not for the spiritually immature! It takes individuals who have not only given their lives to Christ but have made the word of God their anchor to make a marriage work.

Remember that the individuals involved in the marriage are two adults from varying backgrounds. Both of them have grown up doing things in a certain way all their lives. So except we have a new order that they are both responsive to, you will end up having a marriage where each partner wants things done his or her way. That is where you start hearing things like “in my father’s house we don’t ...” and so on.

So by spiritual maturity, I am looking at individuals who have come to study, learn and understand God’s word. I am looking at people who have come to realize that God’s word and not their family background is the standard for a godly marriage. I am talking about a lady who though had done something in a certain way all her life will be ready and willing to change it at once upon seeing that the word holds a different opinion.

I am looking at a man who doesn’t just want his opinion to stand because he is the man but is willing to change his stand upon the revelation of a different stand by the word of God without any feeling of inferiority.

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*As long as a man or woman can still hold on to
their stands even when the word shows
otherwise, they are not spiritually prepared for
marriage and should endeavor not to get
married just yet!*

Also, any individual who claims to be so madly in love that he/she is willing to go ahead with a marriage that his pastor has expressly said no to is not spiritually ready for marriage. It means he is not subject to the authority of the church and by extension not under the authority of the Lord Jesus. Come one here, how can a man be a member of a church for several years and when it gets to marrying someone, the pastor says no and he runs off to another church?

As a pastor, I will personally never conduct a wedding between two individuals whose pastors haven't given the express permission to go ahead. If one were my disciple and the other wasn't, I will have to speak with the other pastor personally before I go on with that marriage.

In like manner, an individual who undermines the place of parental consent in marriage is still a babe in the things of the spirit and should be given some time to grow. Please don't misunderstand me here. There is a difference between parental consent and parental choice. I am not saying that the parents should choose the partner but they should approve of it. If they brought you up from day one up to the moment when you have come to the age of marriage,

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shouldn't you think that they might just have some wisdom to lend you in that process; especially if they are born again?

2) Emotional Maturity:

When we were talking about the place of self-discovery before delving into a relationship, I explained that it was one of the reasons teenagers should stay away from relationships. Another reason is emotional development. A relationship as serious and committing as marriage requires a lot of emotional involvement. Many times, your all is put into the relationship. This is why most times, young people become distracted sort of when they get into a new relationship.

For some of them, their grades in school begin to drop while others just begin to lose concentration in their businesses or whatever they are involved with. So, as long as you can't seem to handle the emotional strain of the relationship with all that you are already involved with, give it some time.

As long as a misunderstanding with your partner gets to you so much that you can do nothing else, you just are not ready. The fact that you or your partner are willing to take each other's lives in the event that the relationship doesn't work is proof positive that you are not ready for marriage.

As a matter of fact, it is my candid advice that you stay clear of a partner who claims to be ready to take his/her life if you leave them. It

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simply means that his/her life isn't worth much to them after all! It means you were just about to get married to a worthless life. It also indicates that you might just become a widow or widower anytime something goes wrong in the marriage! You might just need to give them some time.

Let me add that love is a good thing and relationships are good. They are designed to improve the output of those involved and not to reduce it. So once you are not exactly able to manage it at the time, it might mean that the said relationship is either not right or not yet time.

You might need to give yourself or your partner some time to further develop emotionally and then probably revisit the relationship later. As they say, a broken relationship is better than a broken marriage!

3) Financial Maturity:

This needs no elaborate discussion at all. However, I will like to state that there is a difference between financial maturity and having a lot of money. To be mature financially means to have come of age to take financial responsibilities without shying away from them or passing them over to the other partner.

No man or woman who can't pay their bills as individuals should consider getting married. So sister, stop hoping that

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a multi-millionaire will just pick you up and all your troubles will be over!

No individual who is still a slave to his or her insatiable desires should be thinking of marriage. As long as you don't have the discipline to walk past a shoe store when you haven't budgeted for it despite the fact you have more than fifty pairs in your wardrobe including more than ten you have never worn, you are not ready for marriage. Trust me, such an individual might just divert money separated for the children's fees to satisfy their personal needs!

Guys, if your lady doesn't pick your calls again because she asked for something that you haven't bought, God might be showing you something. Sister, if "handsome" wouldn't see you because you are not able to help his business proposal financially, you may have to rethink. Worse off, if you find as a lady that you pay the man's bills, pay his rent and he drives your car around without doing anything about taking financial responsibility, you should know that the relationship won't work.

Like I advised earlier, do not say you are earning a good enough salary to take care of the both of you. Stay in your

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position as the helper and don't carry the whole weight yourself.

Please note that these are only considerations before the marriage. The moment you are married, you are now one and own all things together!

4) Intellectual Maturity:

There is nothing as frustrating as not being able to expressly communicate with someone because of their level of understanding. The development of your mind is, therefore, something you can't take lightly at all. Everyone intending to get married must work on their ability to comprehend stuff. In differentiating between schooling and education, we say that to be schooled means to have a certificate in a definite area while education means to know something about everything.

A major advantage of going to school, therefore, is that you will have exposed your mind and increased your ability to comprehend things. Even the interpersonal relationship with fellow students, teachers, and lecturers all sum up in your development. You get to learn a thing or two from virtually everyone you met in school as opposed to if you never went to school. So beyond the certificate, endeavor to get an education.

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I can never forget a movie I saw with my wife sometimes ago, a young chap was interested in this pretty lady. Though his mother had objected because of her family background, he went on with the relationship anyway. One day, he decided to take her along as he went visiting his friends. When they got there, a discussion came up about a global problem that was not tackled at the last G-8 summit.

One of the guys present there noted that he even heard that at the North Pole, the ice has melted and it's causing floods everywhere and soon the whole human race will disappear! Then one of them turned to this lady and asked "my dear, what do you think about this?" and she responded "you mean the climate change?" and he said " Yes! Don't you think that it's a problem?" She said "yes" and they asked her "do you think anything should be done at this initial stage so that they could calm the situation before it gets out of hand?" Then she responded by saying "well, I actually think that instead of the ice melting away, the government should send it to us so we can use it to cool our drinks!"

With utmost surprise in his eyes, one of the men said "I don't understand" Then she went on to explain what she meant. She said "what I am trying to say is that; you know we don't have light and people spend so much money trying to buy ice to cool their drinks. So instead of us allowing the ice to melt away, the government should just bring it down so we can use it to cool our drinks."

As expected, the men burst into a serious laughing session that saw to her exit from the group and that was the natural

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death of the relationship! The problem here was that the lady wasn't developed intellectually for the man she was dating.

While people from different walks of life could meet, fall in love and get married, it takes people of the same level of intellectual exposure to relate seamlessly. So read and develop your mind so that you don't find yourself asking for the government to send you ice to cool drinks when they are discussing matters as serious as global warming!

5) Sexual Maturity:

Most people have an unbalanced sex education (if they have any at all) and that's why most counseling sessions with newlyweds bother on sex in the marriage. For example, if all through an individual's life, all he knew was that sex was a sin, except he is reoriented, he may have problems with it in marriage.

If an individual grew up seeing sex only as a means of procreation and settles to only have sex when she wants to have children, there might be a problem in the marriage. In much the same way, varying views on the use of contraceptives might also pose a problem to a couple in marriage. Hence the importance of dialogue during dating.

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Also, as a man or woman, you should know about the sexuality of the opposite sex. You should understand the sexual needs of the other gender. You should know that you are a completely different entity from your partner and be willing to go the extra mile for their satisfaction.

As a matter of fact; marriage is about meeting the needs of your partner and not really about meeting your own needs. Your partner doesn't necessarily need what you need to be willing to compromise for them. This is why you must understand what love really is before you think about getting married!

While the men need sex, the women need affection. So each partner must be willing to go to any length to provide for the needs of the other. I like an illustration Dr. Myles Munroe once used in this light. He said the reason we go to the gas station is not necessarily because we need gas to function. As long as you want your automobile machines to function properly for you and take you where you want, you should be willing to fuel it.

As a man, you may not be into this affection thing but if you are going to keep your wife function rightly, you will have to show her some real affection. The woman may not want sex but if she wants her man functioning rightly, she should be willing to offer that to him too.

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Let me round this up by saying there is no need for you as a woman to book appointments with your pastor just to report how many times your husband wants to have sex in a week. He was wired that way just as you were wired to love attention. If the men don't think that there is something wrong with you loving teddy bears at thirty-six years, you shouldn't think there is anything wrong with him for wanting to have sex on two consecutive nights!

Conclusively, I want to say that even though we have talked about how to find a mate here, this doesn't mean that the married ones have nothing to do with this information. As a matter of fact, you should measure up your relationship with these parameters and take up the responsibility of training yourselves into what the word says even if you weren't so.

Do not read this and say "Oh I see why my marriage isn't working!" Rather say "now I see how I can make my marriage work"

In case you are wondering the place of being led of the Spirit of God in the choice of your life partner, I wouldn't be talking about that here because we already dealt extensively with that subject in another book. I will recommend that

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*you place an order for the book titled "Reigning
in Life"*

FINAL WORDS

Congrats on what you have already learnt from this book. It is our conviction that if you put these to work, you would set yourself up for a blissful and prosperous home.

But beyond knowing these things, there is someone you need to meet to truly have a blissful home. His name is Jesus. He is the maker of the universe, the Alpha and Omega and the architect of the never-failing life.

All these only make sense if you have received Jesus to become the Lord and Saviour of your soul. So I invite you to do just that by saying the following words of prayer out loud.

Prayer Of Salvation

Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ. I believe with all my heart in Jesus Christ, Son of the living God. I believe He died for me and God raised Him from the dead. I believe He is alive today and I confess with my

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mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life from this day. I declare that I have eternal life. I am born again. Thank you, Lord for saving my soul and welcoming me into Your family.

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