

Premarital Counseling

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Of Frogs and Fantasyland . . .

Once upon a time an unhappy frog lived in the enchanted forest. Year after year the frog stayed in his swampy pond until the day he coaxed a beautiful princess to kiss him. In the twinkling of an eye, the ugly frog turned into a handsome prince. Then the beautiful couple married and lived happily ever after.

While children assume marriage is like a fairy tale, if you are seriously dating, you need to distinguish fact from fiction. If you believe marriage will meet all your needs or miraculously turn your marriage partner into a prince or princess, you're living in fantasyland! God's Word exhorts us to be wise about our expectations for marriage and wise about whom we let into our hearts.

*"Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life."
(Proverbs 4:23)*

Q: "Is there a real problem if I marry an unbeliever whom I love? I believe our love will overcome all our problems."

Although your fiancé may have many positive qualities, you need to be realistic about the long-term ramifications of marrying a nonbeliever. Assuming you become yoked to him in marriage . . .

- If he is headed toward darkness, where are you pulled?
- If he is headed toward death, where are you pulled?
- If he is headed toward destruction, where are you pulled?

The Bible says, "*Go out from their midst, and be separate from them.*"

*"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? . . . Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you."
(2 Corinthians 6:14–15, 17)*

The Biblical Requirements for Marriage

God designed marriage to be a committed, covenant relationship between a man and a woman—a sacred, sanctified relationship of mutual love lasting for a lifetime.

- **Look** only to a person of the opposite sex for marriage.

“The LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ . . . And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”
(Genesis 2:18, 22)

- **Leave** your lifestyle of being dependent on your parents.

“A man shall leave his father and his mother . . .”
(Genesis 2:24)

- **Link** with your mate legally.

“. . . and hold fast to his wife . . .”
(Genesis 2:24)

- **Live** together as one in sexual union.

“. . . and they shall become one flesh.”
(Genesis 2:24)

- **Love** your partner for a lifetime.

“What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
(Mark 10:9)

Unrealistic Expectations about Marriage

- **Expecting** sexual passion to be the same as authentic love.
- **Expecting** romance to sustain your marriage forever.
- **Expecting** marriage to solve your personal problems.
- **Expecting** religious differences to be insignificant.
- **Expecting** total agreement on how the home is kept and managed.
- **Expecting** communication to be natural and automatic.
- **Expecting** to always be defended by your spouse.
- **Expecting** to always be the number one priority of your spouse.
- **Expecting** to change your mate’s negative behavior after you are married.
- **Expecting** your in-laws to accept you individually and to approve of you as a couple.

“You looked for much, and behold, it came to little.”
(Haggai 1:9)

Our Commitment to Grow Together Spiritually¹

- We commit our lives to Jesus Christ and submit to His control. (Luke 9:23)
- We commit our bodies to each other, and vow to be sexually faithful. (Hebrews 13:4)
- We commit our finances to God and will honor Him with our tithe. (Malachi 3:10)
- We commit to not going to bed while still angry with one another. (Ephesians 4:26)
- We commit to growing with each other into a deeper relationship with the Lord. (Hebrews 10:22–23)

Key Verses to Memorize

*“It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.”
(Philippians 1:9–10)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

- We agree to set a time to talk when either becomes upset. (Proverbs 20:5)
- We agree to pray individually before we come together to talk. (James 5:13, 16)
- We agree not to act out our angry feelings. (Proverbs 29:11)
- We agree to seek to understand the reasons for each other's thoughts and actions. (Proverbs 19:8)
- We agree to accept suggestions for changing the way we respond. (Proverbs 22:3)
- We agree to forgive one another completely. (Ephesians 4:32)
 - We will choose not to dwell on the “offense.”
 - We will choose not to bring it up again.
 - We will choose not to repeat it to others.
- We agree to seek a wise godly mediator who is objective if we cannot come to an agreement. (Proverbs 15:22)

Related Topics . . .

- Communication:
The Heart of the Matter
- Dating:
The Waiting Game
- Intimacy:
Learning the Language of Love
- Marriage:
To Have and to Hold
- Sexual Integrity:
Balancing Your Passion with Purity
- Submission:
Yielding from a Spirit of Strength

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Premarital Counseling:
Are You Fit to Be Tied?

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. H. Norman Wright, *So You're Getting Married* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1985), 248.



*Together . . . Changing Minds.
Changing Hearts. Changing Lives.*

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