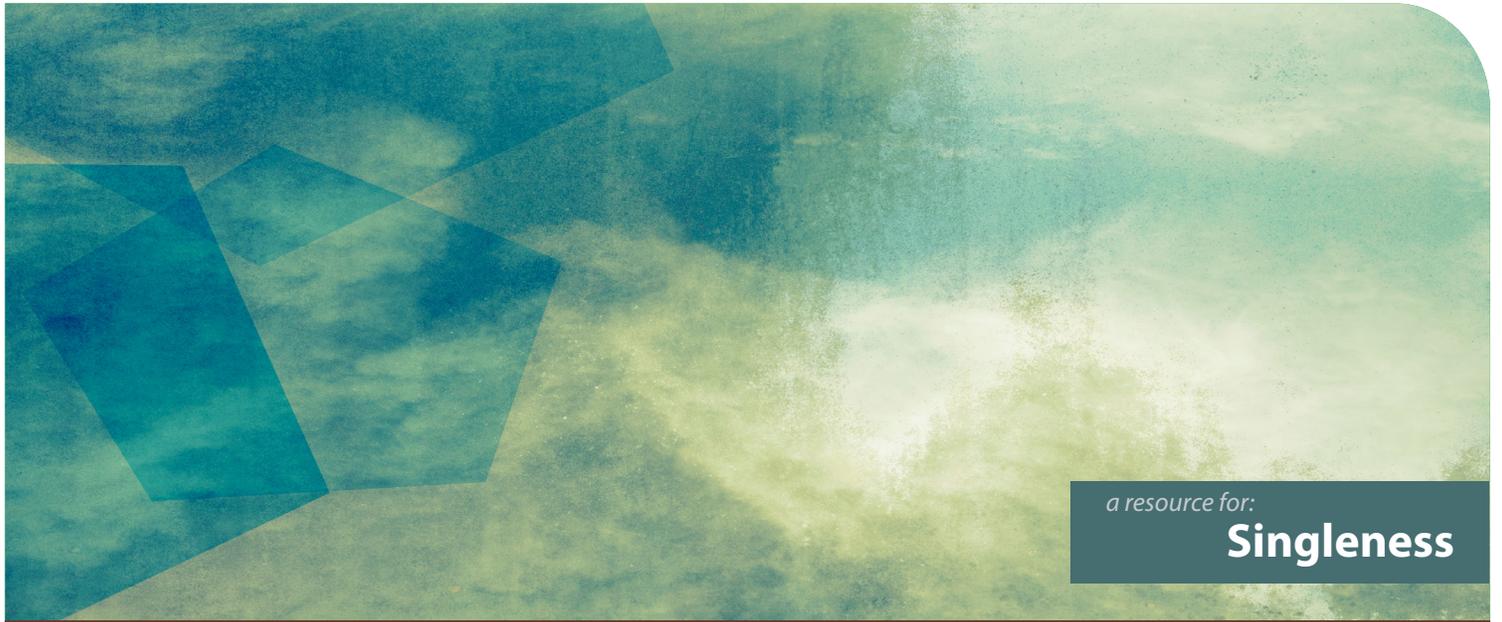


Marriage • Parenting • Spiritual Growth • Sexuality • Relationships • Mental Health  
Men • Women • Hurts and Emotions • Singles • Ministers and Mentors • Technology



*a resource for:*

**Singleness**

## A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

**Counseling and Family Services**

*Helping the hurting. Nurturing hope. Encouraging growth.*

Phone: (309) 263-5536 | [www.accounseling.org](http://www.accounseling.org)



# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the aspects of utilizing godly wisdom is performing self-reflection. The following are some topics which can guide this crucial process as you prepare to consider marriage. It is important to bear in mind every individual and couple enters marriage with “room for growth.” The intent of this document is to encourage you as you prepare your heart towards Christian marriage. It is meant to take time to work through and is best utilized when discussed with a trusted mentor.

This self-reflection document is designed to identify potential areas of weakness and provide you with the tools for growth in these areas. Prayerfully move through the document allowing the Spirit to confirm areas of strength and reveal areas of needed growth. When a weakness is revealed, linger on that area of growth and allow the Spirit of God to mature you in that particular area. Follow the example below.

Self-reflection topic

The topic description gives context and clarity, providing a basis for contemplation and discussion between you and a mentor. Listen to counsel and the Spirit’s prompting while answering the question, “Should I linger on this topic?”

### 1. My relationship with Christ is healthy.

Our personal relationship with God must be first in our life and more important than any human relationship, including a potential spouse. A marriage relationship should be built on the foundation of our relationship with Christ. It is essential our relationship with Christ be healthy and growing.

*Mark 12:30-31, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”*

Meditate on your relationship with Christ using His sermon to His disciples. – *Matthew 5-7*

Take a deeper look: *Spiritual Maturity PowerPoint and Spiritual Growth Discussion Aids*  
([www.accounseling.org/spiritualmaturity](http://www.accounseling.org/spiritualmaturity))

**Spiritual growth requires feeding on God’s Word. Change occurs according to God’s timing. Allow His Word to be engrafted on your heart by meditating on the given passage. Suggested method: prayerfully read/listen/rehearse the passage in repetition (every day for a period of time).**

Use the resources provided under “Take a deeper look” to flesh out the topic in tangible and applicable ways.

Prayerfully internalize the biblical reference.

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## II. AREAS OF GENERAL SELF-REFLECTION

### A. Relationship with Christ is vital.

#### 1. My relationship with Christ is healthy.

Our personal relationship with God must be first in our life and more important than any human relationship, including a potential spouse. A marriage relationship should be built on the foundation of our relationship with Christ. It is essential our relationship with Christ be healthy and growing.

*Mark 12:30-31, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."*

Meditate on your relationship with Christ using His sermon to His disciples. – *Matthew 5-7*

Take a deeper look: *Spiritual Maturity PowerPoint and Spiritual Growth Discussion Aids*  
([www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity](http://www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity))

#### 2. I want to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Marriage is designed to be an earthly representation of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Anyone wishing to enter into the covenant relationship of marriage should be willing to become conformed into the image of Christ.

*2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

Meditate on the "mind of Christ" in regard to relationships. – *Philippians 2*

Take a deeper look: *Spiritual Maturity PowerPoint and Spiritual Growth Discussion Aids*  
([www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity](http://www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity))

### B. Personal history impacts marriage.

#### 1. I have no unconfessed sin in my life.

Unconfessed sin is a seedbed for future hurt. Deal with sin before it hurts spouses and children.

*Psalms 51:3, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."*

Meditate on David's repentance. – *Psalms 51*

Take a deeper look: *Repentance is Necessary for Spiritual Rebirth* by Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz  
([www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity](http://www.counseling.org/spiritualmaturity))

#### 2. I am living an overcoming life in Christ.

An overcoming life is demonstrated by consistent spiritual progress whereby a Christian is quick to repent for

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

sin, is determined to resist temptation and relishes God's peace and favor. One is not dominated by sin, responds quickly in a setback, and continues to grow toward greater understanding of the biblical meaning of overcoming.

*Romans 6:11, "...Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Meditate on living in the Spirit and not the flesh. — *Galatians 5*

Take a deeper look: *What does an Overcoming Christian Life Look Like?*  
([www.accounseling.org/spiritualmaturity](http://www.accounseling.org/spiritualmaturity))

### 3. I view God in a healthy way.

Often our image of God can become distorted from experiences in life or inaccurate interpretations of God's Word. It is critical we are constantly examining our views in the light of the Word and conforming our view of God to this truth.

*John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

Meditate on God's attributes. — *Psalms 139*

Take a deeper look: *How Clearly do You See God? PowerPoint* ([www.accounseling.org/biblicalviewofgod](http://www.accounseling.org/biblicalviewofgod))

### 4. I acknowledge and am willing to work through unresolved emotional or relational issues in my life. I am also willing to share this with my potential spouse.

Some people have gone through various life experiences which can impact the marriage decision. Experiences of any kind of abuse, trauma, past inappropriate intimate relationships, dysfunction in your family-of-origin, mental illness, etc. can all become obstacles in a good decision if they are not dealt with appropriately. Seek wise counsel for help dealing with these issues. These issues are not reasons to avoid marriage; rather, they are issues which need to be worked through. Unresolved issues hinder your ability to be who God wants you to be in marriage and can interfere with making wise choices.

*2 Corinthians 2:11, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."*

Meditate on the hope and power offered through the gospel to every aspect of our life. — *Ephesians 2*

Take a deeper look: Appendix A: *Factors that Could Potentially Lead to Marital Struggles*

### 5. I do not view marriage as an escape or solution to my problems.

Marriage is not a good escape from problems. Only God can truly "settle" us. If we seek this settling in relationships, things, or by escaping a current situation instead of trusting God through it, it can lead to further spiritual detriment for ourselves and others. Seek to be content in "whatsoever state" you are.

*1 Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."*

Meditate on the true meaning of contentment. — *Philippians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 5:5 - 11*

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

Take a deeper look: *Christ Centered Self-Worth* ([www.accounseling.org/biblicalviewofself](http://www.accounseling.org/biblicalviewofself)) / List out several unhealthy reasons for someone to get married. Are any of these evident in your life currently?

## 6. I have established a pattern of healthy relationships, emotional health, and life skills.

Marriage will bring light to unhealthy patterns and habits in the areas of relationships, emotional health, and life skills. It is imperative an individual recognize their relational strengths and weaknesses and be willing to purposefully grow areas of weakness.

*2 Timothy 2:20-21, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."*

Meditate on the "put offs" and "put ons" of *Ephesians 4:17-32, Colossians 3*

Take a deeper look: Appendix B: *Characteristic of Emotionally Healthy People*

## C. Marriage gives rise to commitments.

### 1. I am willing to commit to a life-long covenant relationship.

Similar to how God's covenant with us is meant to be eternal, the marriage covenant is meant to endure as long as we have life.

*Matthew 19:4-6, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Meditate on God's covenant and the sanctity of vows. – *Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:38-41, Ecclesiastes 5:4-7*

Take a deeper look: Appendix C: *An Example of Apostolic Christian Marriage Vows*

### 2. I am ready and willing to "leave" my father and mother and "cleave" to a spouse.

When two people enter into marriage, they are to leave their family of origin, cleave to their spouse, and establish a new family unit. Anyone thinking about entering into a marital relationship must be ready and willing to "leave" his or her family and "cleave" to a spouse. This means relationships with family and friends will change and a spouse should become the preeminent relationship in your life. This might also mean significant geographic or even cultural changes. These "costs" should be counted.

*Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

Meditate on "oneness" as we see it in and with the Trinity. – *John 17:21-26, Ephesians 4:1-14*

Take a deeper look: *Growing in Love: Leaving and Cleaving PowerPoint* ([www.accounseling.org/growinginlove](http://www.accounseling.org/growinginlove))

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

### 3. **I am willing to take on the responsibility of children should God provide my spouse and I with children.**

God designed marriage to be the context in which children are born. When considering marriage, both men and women should evaluate their willingness and ability to take care of the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of children. Having children is a blessing. However, they also require parents who will selflessly devote themselves to the parenting journey and its blessings and challenges.

*Deuteronomy 6:6-7, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and 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."*

Meditate on the duty to train children. – *Deuteronomy 6, Ephesians 6:1-4*

Take a deeper look: *The Christian Home* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritalresources](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritalresources))

### 4. **I currently build a rapport of trust and confidence with others and will build this trust and confidence with my spouse.**

Marriage unites two into one (*Eph. 5:31*). For this to happen fully, there must be a high level of trust between the individuals. This pattern of trust should first begin in one's single life if it is to transfer into a marriage relationship. One's appearance and behavior should carry the overtones of a character quality which values singularity and trust. In one sense, marriage is a deeper level of singleness.

*Proverbs 31:11, "The heart of her husband (his wife) doth safely trust in her (him)..."*

Meditate on the singularity of marriage. – *1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5*

Take a deeper look: *Write out a description of why you should be considered trustworthy by others. Be specific in your examples.*

## **D. Marriage requires a willingness to set aside one's own desires for the sake of the marriage relationship.**

### 1. **I am willing to submit to a spouse.**

Christian marriage models the submission of the Trinity - unity born out of diversity through the vehicle of preferring the other.

*Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*

Meditate on the power of submission. – *Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7*

Take a deeper look: *Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making in Marriage* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation))

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## 2. **I am able and willing to be flexible, forbearing, and forgiving.**

Marriage naturally results in changes, transitions, and challenges. Therefore, anyone entering into marriage will need to make adjustments and be willing to sacrifice in order to accommodate the other person and to grow in Christ-likeness. Differences in personality, family background, decision-making, usage of time, and preferences/taste can be areas of conflict and polarization or opportunities for developing mutual understanding and appreciation. Having a forgiving and forbearing spirit is an essential quality people considering marriage should be cultivating.

*Colossians 3:12-14, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*

Meditate on *Ephesians 4: 17-32*

Take a deeper look: *Forgiveness: What is, Isn't, and How to Do It* ([www.accounting.org/forgiveness](http://www.accounting.org/forgiveness))

## E. **Marriage is emotionally and physically intimate.**

### 1. **I am not overly influenced by outward appearances.**

God created us with physical attraction. It is understandable and natural to notice and be drawn physically toward others. Furthermore, it is appropriate to be well groomed and be a good steward of our physical health and body. However, an over-focus on outward appearance in ourselves or how others look can distract us in the marriage decision. While it is impossible to not notice another person's outward appearance and physical attractiveness, Scripture teaches that valuing appearance and external qualities over the heart is unwise. How a potential spouse looks is guaranteed to change with time and age; character is one of the most enduring aspects of one's life over time.

*1 Peter 3:3, "... Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning..."*

Meditate on true beauty. – *Proverbs 31:30, 1 Peter 3: 1-7*

Take a deeper look: *List ten internal virtues you believe are important in a potential spouse.*

### 2. **I find solid Christian character and virtues in a person to be beautiful.**

A host of virtues fill out the spiritual appearance of a Christian. Some of these include kindness, righteousness, servant heart, helpfulness, generosity, gratefulness, humility, godliness, contentment, maturity, etc. The marker of true beauty is these virtues. It is good and right to notice and appreciate these virtues in a potential spouse.

*1 Peter 3:4, "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."*

Meditate on Christian virtues. – *Titus 2 and 3*

Take a deeper look: *List ten virtues you wish to portray in your own life. Provide at least one example from the last two weeks in which you have lived out each virtue.*

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## 3. I understand true physical intimacy is born out of true emotional intimacy. My future spouse will be able to trust me with their heart.

Physical intimacy is private, sacred and singular. It is a physical expression of emotional and spiritual oneness. Being able to open your heart to and receive another's heart is important to physical intimacy and a healthy marriage.

*Proverbs 31:11, "The heart of her husband (his wife) doth safely trust in her (him)..."*

Meditate on the trust demonstrated between the sheep and the Shepherd. – *John 10:1-5*

Take a deeper look: *A Triangular Model of Love* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritalresources](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritalresources))

## 4. I am ready to love my spouse biblically.

True love is sacrificial. When facing the marriage decision, we must consider whether we are committed to developing love for a spouse. One must be committed to love both romantically and in a self-sacrificing way. The Christian command to love self-sacrificingly becomes even more important, and often challenging, in marriage. Romantic love, as well, is very important in marriage. It grows and develops over time in different ways for different people. It takes effort and intention to learn how to express this romantic love in a way our spouse can feel it.

*Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

*Titus 2:4, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,"*

Meditate on the attributes of true biblical love. – *1 Corinthians 13*

Take a deeper look: *List the attributes of biblical love described in 1 Corinthians 13. Give example as to how they are evident in your life currently.*

## F. The marriage proposal leaves us uncomfortably vulnerable.

### 1. I am surrendered to the potential outcome of a marriage proposal.

One of the most difficult aspects of a marriage decision is that even though individuals strive for surrender and submission to the Lord in such a weighty matter, it still ends with a decision which two people must agree upon. There are times when despite each individual's best efforts to surrender and align to God's will in this matter, two wills still do not align and disappointment occurs. True surrender allows someone to be open to the response no matter what it might be and turns such disappointments into growth opportunities, not seeds for bitterness. It is important to remember we are accountable for our own actions, not the actions or decisions of another.

*1 Cor. 7:39 "...she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."*

Meditate on God's sovereignty and our call to trust in Him. – *Psalms 84:11-12, Romans 8:18-39*

Take a deeper look: [www.accounseling.org/unmetexpectations](http://www.accounseling.org/unmetexpectations)

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## III. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR MEN

### A. I am actively pursuing to grow as a spiritual leader.

Men considering marriage need to be willing and ready to assume the role of a spiritual servant-leader who will watch for and guide the course of the family. This includes being the spiritual “pace-setter” for the family and loving in a self-sacrificing way that does what is necessary to make a wife and children feel nourished and cherished.

*Ephesians 5:25-30, “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, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”*

Meditate on the Christ-like pattern of being a husband. – *Ephesians 5:21-33*

Take a deeper look: [www.accounseling.org/spiritualleadership](http://www.accounseling.org/spiritualleadership)

### B. I am willing to learn about and be sensitive to the needs of a wife.

Men considering marriage need to be intentional about learning to understand the emotional needs of a wife. They must learn about differences between men and women and how to be sensitive to a woman’s emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual needs. Failure to do so can hinder one’s spiritual walk. Women are designed by God differently than men but are to be valued equally. This concept is important to remember in the marriage relationship.

*1 Peter 3:7, “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.”*

Meditate on the sensitive care of God our Father. – *Psalms 23, 103, 112*

Take a deeper look: *Affection, Love Languages, and Gender Differences in Marriage* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation))

### C. I am handling my finances using principles of Biblical financial stewardship and have a sound plan for how I can provide materially for a spouse.

Men who are considering becoming married should reflect whether they are able to financially provide for a wife and children. While it is important to not be materialistically focused, when asked to marry, women should ensure a potential husband has a reasonable plan and ability to provide for her and a family. There are exceptions, but in general the man will be asked to be the primary income provider.

*1 Timothy 5:8, “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.”*

Meditate on the need to take on responsibilities in the appropriate time. – *Ecclesiastes 3:1-15*

Take a deeper look: *Money Matters in Marriage* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation))

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## IV. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN

### A. I am willing to respect my husband and yield to his spiritual leadership.

Women considering marriage need to consider whether they are willing to be submissive to and respect a husband. They must be willing and ready to assume the role of a wife that is a helper who is suitable (i.e., “*help meet*” – *Genesis 2:18*) to respect and encourage her husband.

*1 Peter 3:4-6, “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. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”*

Meditate on Christ’s submission to the Father. – *John 17*

Take a deeper look: *Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making in Marriage* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation))

### B. I practice kindness and contentedness over a critical or demanding spirit.

A critical spirit does not motivate the heart of her husband towards the true change she might desire.

*Proverbs 31:26, “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”*

Meditate on the attributes of true biblical love. – *1 Corinthians 13*

Take a deeper look: *List the attributes of biblical love described in 1 Corinthians 13. Give evidence as to how they are evident in your life currently.*

### C. I am willing to help provide for the family by careful use of resources and contributing what I am able without neglecting the family.

The burden of responsibility for provision often falls on the husband. In these cases, being thankful and supporting this effort will communicate love and respect to your husband. There are exceptions to these circumstances, but, in all cases, it is important to remember healthy communication concerning financial matters is key to a healthy marriage.

*Proverbs 31:27, “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”*

Meditate on the respectful initiative of a godly wife. – *Proverbs 31*

Take a deeper look: *Money Matters in Marriage* ([www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation](http://www.accounseling.org/premaritaleducation))

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## Appendix A

### Factors that Could Potentially Lead to Marital Struggles

Below is a list of factors that, if unaddressed or unresolved, can lead to marital distress. Go through these items with a support person, and discuss how any of these factors have affected you in the past or may affect you currently. If you have questions or concerns about whether any of the items below might affect you in marriage, seek counsel from your elder or ACCFS.

1. History of abuse or trauma. This may include issues such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse, rape, serious accidents, etc.
2. History or strong potential for alcohol or drug (illegal or prescription) addiction/abuse.
3. History of growing up in a dysfunctional family. This may include having a disconnected, chaotic, overly involved, rigid, or abusive family of origin.
4. Serious history or concern with pornography, compulsive masturbation, or other sexually inappropriate behavior. One should not assume that marriage alone will remedy problems with out-of-control sexual behavior.
5. History or concern with same-sex attraction, gender confusion, or homosexuality.
6. History of being hurt in close relationships leading to difficulty trusting, fearing commitment, or fearing abandonment by others. This could include growing up in a home where divorce took place, being taken advantage of by someone you trusted, abuse, etc.
7. History or strong potential for serious mental health issues or personality disorders. This may include situations where ongoing need for counseling and/or medication will likely be needed.
8. History or strong potential for being controlling or emotionally abusive.
9. History or strong potential for disabilities or medical conditions that could impact the relationship.

# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## Appendix B

### Characteristics of Emotionally Healthy People

While there are many characteristic of healthy emotional well-being, the list below (adapted from Shedler & Weston's 2009 Psychological Health Index) provides a good summary. Please review the list along with a support person and discuss whether each item represents a strength area, a growth area, or an area of deficit you need to actively work on. A potential spouse will not necessarily be perfect in all areas but should demonstrate healthy tendencies.

- Is empathic; is sensitive and responsive to other peoples' needs and feelings.
- Tends to be conscientious and responsible.
- Is able to use his/her talents, abilities, and energy effectively and productively.
- Is able to form close and lasting friendships characterized by mutual support and sharing of experiences.
- Tends to express emotions appropriate in quality and intensity to the situation at hand.
- Appreciates and responds to humor.
- Generally finds contentment and happiness in life's activities.
- Is creative; is able to see things or approach problems in novel ways.
- Has moral and ethical standards and strives to live up to them.
- Is capable of sustaining a meaningful love relationship characterized by genuine intimacy and caring.
- Is able to assert him/herself effectively and appropriately when necessary.
- Finds meaning in belonging and contributing to a larger community (e.g., organization, church, neighborhood, etc.).
- Is able to find meaning and satisfaction in the pursuit of long-term goals and ambitions.
- Is articulate; can express himself/herself well in words.
- Enjoys challenges; takes pleasure in accomplishing things.
- Is capable of hearing information that is emotionally threatening (i.e., that challenges cherished perceptions, and self-perceptions) and can use and benefit from it.
- Is able to find meaning and fulfillment in guiding, mentoring, or nurturing others.
- Has the capacity to recognize alternative viewpoints, even in matters that stir up strong feelings.
- Appears to have come to terms with painful experiences from the past; has found meaning in, and grown from such experiences.
- Tends to elicit liking in others.
- Appears comfortable and at ease in social situations.
- Has a healthy view of sexuality and is not controlled by it.

Why does all of this matter? The items above are the building blocks healthy people possess, and as a result, healthy relationships are formed from. Note each level affects, and is affected by, one's relationship with Christ.

Graphic from *Counseling and Marriage* by Friesen & Friesen, 1989.



# A Guide For Self-Reflection During Marriage Decision Making

## Appendix C

### An Example of Apostolic Christian Marriage Vows

At this time you may arise and join hands to take your wedding vows.

Do you realize the seriousness and the sacredness of the marriage vows you are about to take?

Brother \_\_\_\_\_, can you now tell us as your love and affection grew for Sister \_\_\_\_\_ that you counseled with your God and asked Him to give you the faith that she should be your future wife?

Sister \_\_\_\_\_, can you tell us when the proposal came to you, that you counseled with your God and asked Him to give you the faith to believe that Brother \_\_\_\_\_ should be your future husband?

Now, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, will you pledge your faithfulness to Sister \_\_\_\_\_ in all love and honor, in all kindness and sympathy, in all faith and tenderness, to cherish her and respect her as your wife, in the holy bonds of matrimony according to the ordinance of God?

Now, Sister \_\_\_\_\_, will you pledge your faithfulness to Brother \_\_\_\_\_ in all love and honor, in all kindness and sympathy, in all faith and tenderness, to cherish him and respect him as your husband, in the holy bonds of matrimony according to the ordinance of God?

Brother \_\_\_\_\_, do you now promise and covenant before God and these many witnesses to be a kind, loving and faithful husband in days of want or plenty, in sorrow or joy, sickness or good health so long as ye both shall live?

Sister \_\_\_\_\_, do you now promise and covenant before God and these many witnesses to be a kind, loving and faithful wife in days of want or plenty, in sorrow or joy, sickness or good health so long as ye both shall live?

Will you both strive to keep your home in priestly order reading the Word of God and praying together, realizing that the family that prays together stays together?

Should the Lord bless your home with children, you have a duty to rear them in the fear and nurture of the Lord. Your lives are to be an honor unto God, unto the Church, and a blessing to each other.

God has heard your corresponding vows and by the authority granted by the Word of God, I now pronounce Brother \_(first and last name)\_\_\_\_\_ and Sister \_(first and last name)\_\_\_ as husband and wife and this is done in the name of the Lord. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

*“May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”(Numbers 6:24-26)*

