

# Some Questions to Consider Before or During Marriage

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## Husband and Wife

- Why do you want to be in a relationship with me?
- What do you see as my best character qualities?
- What do you see as my weakest character qualities? Where would you like to see change in me?
- If you could change one habit in your own life what would it be?
- What does your vision of a happy family look like?
- In what ways do you anticipate your partner drawing out the best in you? And the worst in you?
- In what ways do you anticipate that you will draw out the best in your partner? And the worst?
- What attracted you to your partner initially and how does that fit with the whole of the person you have gotten to know? Have the other things you've discovered about your partner reinforced your attraction or sown doubts?
- What attracted your partner to you initially and how does that fit with whom you see yourself to be?
- What is your love language and what is your partner's love language?
  - How comfortable are you communicating in your partner's love language?
- What are our expectations for togetherness?
  - How much alone time do you need? How much time do you need in groups of people?
  - How can I communicate that I need time alone without causing offense?
  - How much time is it OK to spend with friends / family / entertainment / hobbies without one's partner?
  - What will we do if one of us really likes to hang out with so and so and the other doesn't?
- What is an ideal special evening together?
- What is an ideal non-special evening?
- What place will headship and submission have in our marriage?
  - What does the Bible say about a believing husband submitting to his believing wife?
  - When the Bible uses the term headship does it mean "decision making leadership", "source of life" or both?

- How do we intend to resolve differences of opinion concerning our sexual relationship?
  - What is our expectation concerning who initiates sex and how often?
  - When is it OK to say no?
- What expectations do we have about situations where one of us might be alone with someone of the opposite sex?
- What does appropriate modesty look like?
- What motivates and excites you? How does this fit with what motivates and excites your partner?
- What are the most significant interests we share in common?
- Handling emotions
  - What do you expect from a marital partner regarding emotional support during exciting times, sad times, periods of illness and job loss?
  - How do you react to stress? Which behaviors or traits come out when you are stressed?
  - Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and/or security when you are stressed?
  - How would you like your partner to help you fight stress?
- What are some matters about which the two of us have different opinions?
- What fears, concerns, or apprehensions do you feel about your anticipated marriage
  - How do you intend to deal with these concerns?
  - Are there any areas in which you are struggling to trust your partner?
- What did your parents' model for you concerning marriage relationships?
  - Do you feel this is a good pattern to follow?

## **Commitment**

- Describe what commitment means to you as you make plans to walk down the aisle
- Of all the persons in your life that you have met and could have married, why are you choosing your partner?
- What vows do you intend to make to your partner?
- What vows would you like your partner to make to you?
- Is divorce or separation an option?

## **Children**

- Do we want to have children together? (If so, why, when, how many, how far apart)?
  - Would we consider adoption (older/younger, disabled, international)?
- What children do you have from prior relationships?
  - What ongoing relationship and responsibilities do you have with them?
  - What kind of relationship do you want your new partner to have with your children?
  - What kind of relationship do you want to have with your partner's children?
  - Is it important to live close to children from former relationships? How important is it to travel to visit?
- For children living in the home, what are the appropriate roles for mother and father?
- What are the appropriate ways to discipline them?
- What are meaningful ways of connecting with your children?
- What about school? Home school? Christian school? Public school?
- Should one parent stay home when the children are home?
- What are your views of daycare for children?
- What are your thoughts on helping your children develop healthy spirituality?

## **Parents, In-Laws & Other Family**

- It is said, "You don't just marry the individual; you marry the whole family." How do you see this applying in your case?

- How do you think your relationship to your parents will change after you are married?
- What kind of relationship do you expect to have with your in-laws?
- What are our expectations about discussing details concerning our relationship with family members and friends (including any areas of conflict)?
- What are our thoughts about finding the healthy middle ground between benefitting from our parents or other family member's wisdom and being controlled?
- How much time do we anticipate spending with your parents, in-laws and other family members, (including holidays)? Do we expect to do this together or independently?
- What kind of relationship do you expect your kids to have with your parents?
- Is it important for you to live close to your parents either now or as they get older?
- What are your thoughts about having a parent or other family member live with you, including the possibility that they need care?

## Spirituality

- Are you in a faith relationship with Jesus?
  - How did this relationship start?
  - How has this relationship developed?
    - What are the main influences / experiences that have shaped your relationship with God?
  - How does it impact your life/behavior?
  - How do you nurture this relationship?
  - In what ways do you serve God?
- What doctrines are critical / non-negotiable to you?
  - You may want to find a statement of faith and discuss various Biblical doctrines
  - How have you come to believe what you believe?
  - What do you believe about the Bible and how do you handle the Bible?
- What Christian practices are critical / non-negotiable to you?
- What are our hopes / expectations for a shared spiritual life?
- What will our family devotions look like? Who leads out in this? Are we doing this now?
- How does your expression of your faith differ from that of your partner?
- What part does spiritual community play in your faith journey?
  - What do you look for when you are considering joining a faith community?
  - For those interested in house church, what are your thoughts about the points in this House Church DNA document (<http://rediscoveringthentchurch.com/download/623/>)?

## Beliefs About Self

- What do you believe about yourself?
- What is your sense of your value as a person?
- Are you a people pleaser?
- How important is it for you to be validated?
- To what extent is your sense of value based on your performance?
- Do you generally expect good outcomes or bad outcomes?
- Do you ever or often experience fear?
- Do you ever or often feel shameful?
- Have you ever been in a co-dependent relationship?
- How important is it to you that you agree with your partner on major topics?
  - Theology, politics, social issues
- How do you comfort yourself /medicate emotional pain?
  - Drugs, alcohol, TV, reading, shopping, emotional withdrawal, talking ...

## No Go Zones and Sacred Cows

- Do you have any “No Go” zones (topics that cannot be discussed)?
  - E.g., prior relationships, shame issues, fears
- Do you have any “Sacred Cows” (priorities that cannot be discussed, let alone changed)?
  - E.g., absolutely must watch every game your favorite team plays, exercise routines, family traditions, freedom to spend money without consulting your partner
- Are there topics where you are so sure you are right, that it’s difficult to respect individuals who hold different opinions? (E.g., politics, selected doctrines/Christian practices)
- How hard would it be to change in these areas/die to these behavior patterns?

## Honesty

- What does integrity look like to you? How important is it?
- Are there any circumstances in which it might be appropriate to be untruthful?
- Is it ever acceptable to make statements which are narrowly true, but which are intended to imply something untrue?
- How do you decide which difficult issues to raise with your partner?
  - Are there topics that are better not raised?
  - For topics you decide to raise, how do you select the timing and how do you communicate?
- Are there any circumstances in which you would not want to know the truth?

## Conflict

- What is your conflict style?
  - Assume the worst or assume the best?
  - Anger?
  - Passive aggressive?
  - Emotional withdrawal?
  - Refusal to discuss?
  - Denial?
  - Blame shifting?
  - Bringing up past issues?
  - Victim?
  - Personal attacks?
  - Manipulation and control?
  - Making threats?
    - E.g., threatening divorce
  - Have you ever used physical violence?
  - How is your conflict style influenced by your experiences growing up?
- What causes you to become angry or to respond harshly to others?
  - Do you ever give a \$10 response to a \$1 offense? If so, are you aware of patterns or roots in these responses?
  - How do you handle your frustration or anger?
- What style of response is most likely to defuse a situation which has triggered me into conflict mode?
- When I am feeling upset, are there things I can do to minimize any discomfort I may be causing to you.
- Can either of us ask for a timeout to calm down and be creative in our problem-solving?
- How easy do you find it to ask for forgiveness?
- What makes a good request for forgiveness?
  - How easy is it for you to say “I am sorry that I did ... which [describe impact]?”
  - Is it possible for a request for forgiveness to be offensive?
- What is important to you to help us reconnect after a conflict?

- Will we go to bed angry at each other?
- What does healthy disagreement look like?
  - Is it OK to disagree on certain topics long term?
  - What if we disagree both about what should be done and whether it is serious?
- What is our view of getting help from friends or counselors?

## Work

- Will we both work? Full time? Part time? Significant overtime?
- Is it better to be employed or self-employed?
- Should the wife work outside the home? Before kids? With kids at home? After kids?
- What do you hope to achieve in your work or studies in the near future? In the distant future?
- How would you describe a good work ethic?

## Household Expectations

- Describe your ideal living space?
  - How many dirty plates are there in the sink?
  - Is the bed made every day?
  - How often do toilets need to be cleaned, carpets need to be vacuumed, windows washed etc?
  - Do you like quiet or background noise (e.g., music, TV, conversation)?
  - Are you comfortable with clutter or does everything need to be in its place?
  - Is it important to you for your home to reflect your identity, and to be a place of beauty?
    - Lots of photos? Art? Color schemes?
  - At what temperature are you most comfortable (day / night, summer / winter)?
- What do you do with important papers / electronic documents?
- Is it your tendency to repair, replace, or live with something that is broken?
- Hospitality?
  - Do you like to have guests visit?
    - Planned or spontaneous?
  - Just the nuclear family lives in the home?
    - Tenants?
    - Long term guests (e.g., family members)?
- Do things that need to get done sometimes fall through the cracks?
- Are you a morning or evening person? When do you like to go to bed and get up?
- Do you think it's good or bad to have someone else have a key to your house?

## Household Chores

- Who is responsible for / how will we share chores?
  - Household shopping?
  - Cooking?
  - Cleaning up after meals?
  - Tidying and cleaning?
  - Yardwork?
  - Car maintenance?
  - Paying the bills and managing money?
  - Repairing things?

## Money

- Financial background and experience
  - What savings and other assets are you bringing into the marriage?

- Will any asset owned by one of us prior to marriage remain the sole property of the current owner?
- What debt if any are you bringing into the marriage?
  - E.g., car loans, education loans, credit card debt
- Any financial commitments / expectations to other family members?
  - Such as children, parents, siblings
  - Now and in the future
- What is your experience with saving and using credit (loans and/or credit cards)?
  - Handling uncertain expenses e.g., car repairs, medical expenses
  - Handling major expenses e.g., vacation, house down payment
  - How often / how carefully do you check bank and credit card statements?
- What is your history related to meeting financial obligations?
  - E.g., failed to meet a credit card minimum payment, defaulted on a loan
- Does one of you have more experience in managing finances?
  - Have you ever run a budgeting system? How did it work out for you?
  - What is the worst financial decision you have ever made?
  - What is the best financial decision you have ever made?
- Where are you on the spectrum from frugality to spendthrift?
  - Is it easy or hard for you to spend money?
  - Is it easy or hard for you to save money?
  - How much debt are you comfortable with?
  - What is your perception of your partner relative to these questions?
- What level of financial disclosure is appropriate both before and during marriage?
  - Do you prefer to have full disclosure or some level of privacy?
  - How much money will each of us be free to spend without consulting the other?
- What are your financial priorities?
  - Housing, food, clothing, transport, education (self and children), visiting family/friends, entertainment, vacations, giving, short term saving, savings to buy a house, retirement saving?
    - In which areas do you like to spend more and in which areas are you comfortable spending less?
  - What expenditures do you consider essential?
  - What expenditures do you consider highly desirable but discretionary?
  - What expenditures are optional?
  - What is a good amount of money to spend on a date night?
    - Restaurant meal? Entertainment?
  - What is a good amount of money to spend on birthday / Christmas gifts?
  - What types of expenditures by a spouse would offend you?
  - Where will you buy clothes?
    - Boutique? Department store? Thrift store? In between? Online? Why?
  - What level of savings have you typically had?
  - What kinds of expenses do you cover out of savings?
    - E.g., car repairs, vacations, emergency fund
- How will we make major financial decisions?
  - How will strong disagreements about spending money be resolved?
- How will you divide up financial responsibilities?
  - Who will pay the bills?
  - Will we have separate bank accounts or a joint bank account?
    - If we have a joint account, who will balance the checkbook?
    - If we have different accounts, who will be responsible for which expenses?
  - Who will complete the taxes?

- What emotions, if any, are triggered by the prospect of being financially responsible for / financially dependent on your partner?

## **Lifestyle**

- What determines where we will locate? Job? Whose job? Church? Family?
  - Do you hope to live in the same house or area for a long time?
  - Would you like to move to a different part of the country? Where? Why?
- Do you want to own a home or not? Why?
- What kind of neighborhood would you like to live in? Why?
- How many cars do we need? New? Used?
- What are your favorite ways to spend leisure time?
- Do you like to plan ahead or respond in the moment?
  - Do you find it easy to adapt if circumstances change?
- How important is it to be prompt?
  - How do you define promptness?
- What is an appropriate place for alcohol?
- What kind of vacations do we like?
- How many toys? Snowmobile, boat, cabin, workshop?
- What place do we want movies / TV / books / live entertainment etc to have in our lives?
  - What types and how much?
- What are the criteria for selecting appropriate movies / TV / books / live entertainment?
  - What purity standards will we have for ourselves and for our children?
- What are our convictions about obeying the law?

## **Health and Sickness**

- Do you have, or have you had any, sicknesses or physical problems that could affect our relationship?
  - Allergies, cancer, eating disorders, addictions, STDs, etc.
- Do you believe in divine healing, and how does prayer relate to seeking medical attention?
- How do you think about exercise and healthy eating?
- Do you have any habits that adversely affect health?

## **Pets**

- Do you want to have pets (cats, dogs, others)?
- Who will be responsible to look after them?

## **Personal Reflection**

- Why do I love him or her?
- Does he or she draw me closer to Christ?
- How does he or she treat/talk about his or her parents and family?
- How does he or she love those closest to him or her?
- What do his or her actions and priorities say are important to him or her?
- Is he or she secure in Christ or does he or she “need” me in order to be happy?
- Am I secure in Christ or do I “need” him or her in order to be happy?
- Can I see myself living the rest of my life with this person?
- Do you have strong convictions that your partner may not share?
- Have I prayed about this relationship and what is the Lord saying to me?
- What do the trusted people closest to me think about this relationship, and do they have any cautions?
- Is now a good time for us to pursue a relationship?