

READY FOR MR

Many of us go around looking

GOOD LOOKS

DRESSES WELL

PHYSICAL

ETHNICITY

ATHLETIC

SPIRITUAL

FRUITS OF
THE SPIRIT

GODLY
CHARACTER

SPORTS TRAVEL

COMPATIBLE
INTERESTS

LOVES TO READ



OR MS RIGHT?

for that Mr or Ms Right, but **Joshua Harris** says to first be the right person.

CAREER

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

MOTIVATED

LOVES CHILDREN

SHOWS TRUST

CONFIDENT

SOCIAL/
EMOTIONAL

HUMOUROUS

CHIVALROUS

MENTAL

INTELLIGENT

ENJOYS
PHILOSOPHICAL
DISCUSSIONS

GOOD TASTE
IN ART/CULTURE



Whether or not you have a biological clock, and whether or not it's ticking, marriage will inevitably sneak up on you. Your friends' wedding invitations will begin arriving by the dozens. Suddenly, what once seemed far off and unimaginable has become very real. At this point in your life, people who find out you're unattached often develop that matchmaking gleam in their eyes.

Being of "marriageable age" and single is a precarious condition. Even if marriage isn't at the forefront of your mind, it's guaranteed to be on the minds of those around you.

If you've reached the same stage, maybe you're asking the same questions I'm asking: Does the fact that I could get married mean I should make it a priority to find someone? Do I assume I'll get married soon or act as if I never will? What am I supposed to do now?

BE THE RIGHT PERSON HUSTLE WHILE YOU WAIT

My mom uses the phrase "hustle while you wait". If one of us children stands around, picking at food while she cooks dinner, Mom will snap, like a football coach to his players, "Don't just stand there! Hustle while you wait!" That means set the table, put away groceries, or load the dishwasher; be productive during a lull in the action.

God has entrusted us with gifts and talents, and He expects us to guard and use them wisely. Will we give Him a return on His investment in us? Even though we don't know the next step regarding our romantic

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relationships, we still have work to do. We have bad habits to get rid of, good habits to develop, and character to build. Let's hustle!

Yes, we'll still have a lot of questions – we may not know who or when we'll marry. But we must not allow what we can't know to hinder us from acting on what we do know. And what do we know? We know that we have today to move with resolute energy toward maturity and Christlikeness, a calling of every Christian whether he or she will marry next week or ten years from now. Our faithfulness in small things today earns us the right to handle bigger responsibilities down the road.



BE THE RIGHT PERSON

WATERING CAMELS

In the Old Testament, Rebekah is a young woman who faithfully fulfilled her current obligations. We could learn a few things from revisiting the story of how she prepared for, met, and married her husband. The story begins when Abraham sends his most trusted servant to his hometown to find a wife for his son Isaac. Catherine Vos continues the story this way:

At last, after several days of travel, he reached the place where Abraham's brother Nahor now lived. This city was called Haran. In that dry country there was often only one well for a whole city. Every night the young girls of the city went to the well, let down their pitchers into the well and drew water. Then they carried the filled pitchers home on their heads for the family to use.

Abraham's servant believed in God. He had come safely on his journey and had reached the city to which Abraham had sent him. He thought to himself, "How shall I be able to tell which young girl is the one God wants Isaac to have for his wife?" He knelt down on the ground beside the well and bowed his head. He prayed, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, help me

this day! When the daughters of the people of the city come down to draw water, and I say to one of them, 'Let down your pitcher, I pray you, that I may drink,' and she shall say; 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also,' let that be the one whom You have appointed as a wife for Isaac."

Before the servant had finished praying, a girl named Rebekah came to the well. The servant thought, "Can this be the right one?" He ran to her and said, "Let me, I pray you, drink a little water out of your pitcher."

The girl said, "Drink, my lord, and I will draw water for your camels also, till they have finished drinking." She took the pitcher down from her head and let him drink. Then she emptied the rest of the water into the drinking trough for the camels, till all had had a drink.

The servant was very astonished to have her say and do just as he had prayed. When the camels had had enough water, he gave Rebekah a rich, gold ring which he had brought with him, and he put on her arms two beautiful gold bracelets. Then he asked her, "Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to stay?"

She answered, "I am Nahor's granddaughter. We have plenty of room for you to stay with us, and straw and food for your camels." Nahor was Abraham's brother. When the servant heard this, he was so happy that he bowed his head down to the ground and worshiped, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has led me to the house of my master's family."



Although we don't study the story as a model of how every couple should meet and marry, we can learn from Rebekah's attitude and actions. **Rebekah was able to meet God's divine appointment for her life because she was faithfully carrying out her current obligations.**

For Rebekah, the trip to the well that particular evening was nothing special. She made that trip every night. Though her task was mundane, she had a quickness to her step and a ready willingness to serve others. These qualities put her in the right place at the right time with the right attitude when God intended to match her with Isaac.

We all have our own camels to water – current relationships and responsibilities we can too easily take for granted. If we're wise, we'll see our duties not as unimportant ways to bide our time, but as springboards, launching us into God's plan and purpose for our future.

BE THE RIGHT PERSON PRACTICE NOW

For a moment, take stock of your current attitude. Are you so caught up in dreaming of marriage that you're neglecting your present responsibilities as a son, daughter, brother, sister, or friend? We cannot ignore our current responsibilities and expect to magically gain the strength of character and virtue that will make us good husbands and wives.

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Someday I want to be a godly husband. I want to nurture my wife, love her, respect her, and protect her. How can I train for that? I believe God has given me a mother and sister to practice understanding and honouring women. If I can't love and serve my mother

and sister today, what makes me think I'll be ready to love and serve a wife in the future? I have to practice now: The reverse is true for girls and their dads and brothers. Girls can view their relationships to the men in their lives

as training sessions for loving and respecting a future husband.

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We have to practice now what we want to be in the future. Let's look at a few areas we can prepare for while we're still single.

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While we want to avoid premature intimacy in romantic relationships,

we should practice intimacy in other committed relationships starting with our families. God has given us families to learn the art of sharing lives.

A close female friend of mine realised she had developed bad communication habits with her parents. Whenever they'd try to talk to her, she would clam up and refuse to share her feelings. "It finally hit me," she told me. "If I shut out the people closest to me now, I'll do the same thing someday to my husband." To reverse this trend, my friend now works hard to build intimacy and openness with her folks. Instead of retreating to her bedroom after dinner, she hangs around and talks with them. This process, which wasn't easy at first, not only strengthens important relationships currently, it teaches her skills she'll need one day as a wife.



Each of us must develop a dynamic, growing,

personal relationship with God. But in preparation for marriage, we also need to learn to seek God with another person. You might start this process with your family, then branch out to pray and study the Bible with safe, non-romantic friends from church. Learn to share with others the lessons God teaches you. Learn to pray with someone else. Be honest about your areas of weakness, and ask God for a trusted person to keep you accountable in your growth in the Lord.

We need to make sure we don't develop patterns with money that will jeopardise a marriage. We also need to establish our own philosophy toward finances. What kind of lifestyle does God want us to pursue? What is His view of money and possessions? Left unanswered, these issues can cause serious stress in a marriage and serious regret if we waste our lives pursuing the wrong things.

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Children are not one of the risks of marriage;

they are one of the rewards. While being a parent is in a totally different league from being a brother, I can "practice" parenthood now by investing time in my siblings' lives, by doing my best to direct them toward godliness, and by including them in my activities.

A friend of my family's is the youngest in her family, and so she never had the opportunity to be around small children. To make up for lost time, Jeanne volunteers as a mother's helper free-of-charge for a family with seven kids. One day a week she apprentices in all their household's activities, including watching the children, cooking, doing laundry, and cleaning.

Another important part of preparing for parenthood is **observing good parents in action**. One man told me he tries to observe and spend time with dads whom he



Not only do we need to learn to make money

and support ourselves, we also need to learn how to manage our money responsibly. Now is the time to learn how to budget, save, and tithe consistently.

wants to be like. He asks himself these questions: “How do these godly dads handle discipline? How do they teach and instruct their kids?” I have a feeling his study will payoff when he one day faces the biggest test of manhood: being a dad himself.



PRACTICE
PRACTICAL
LIFE SKILLS

Practice
practical
life skills.
Practical life

skills involve the maintenance of your house – including shopping, planning menus and cooking meals. While these sorts of skills aren’t glamorous, they are an important part of managing a household. We have no excuse for not preparing ourselves in this area. And the best preparation is actually doing it.

Though I’ve improved my skills in the kitchen, I’m still woefully unprepared in the area of home maintenance. I’m sure you have your own weak spots too. Let’s get to work strengthening them! Write down these skills, and establish a plan to master each one.

BE THE RIGHT PERSON MARRIAGE IS NOT THE FINISH LINE!

Perhaps I’ve struck a chord with you. Maybe you can think of a few ways to redeem your time so that you can feel confident that you’re using your singleness for God’s glory. What might you put into practice even today?

We all can actively choose ways to prepare ourselves for marriage, if God wills it for our future. But let’s

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remember the real reasons for our preparation. Preparing for marriage is a by-product of growing in maturity and Christlikeness. But **while marriage is optional, developing Christlike qualities is not.** Each of us must develop love, humility, patience, forgiveness, and responsibility. **These are some of the attributes of godly character!**

As singles, part of good stewardship involves gaining the skills we’ll need in marriage. But marriage is not the finish line. Statistically speaking, most of us will eventually marry. But we need to make sure we “redeem the time” to glorify God, not to earn brownie points from Him so we can demand marriage. We prepare and develop our characters so we can become as flexible and useful for Him as possible, no matter what he plans for our future. Biological clocks can tick all they want; let’s redeem today!

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