

## “A Letter To A Daughter About Marriage”

How should a Christian parent guide his daughter when it comes to the pursuit of marriage? Since many Christian parents feel ill-equipped to answer that question, here is a generic letter written to a daughter that provides guidance. It is my prayer that dads will find it useful in directing their daughters. Likewise, I pray it will be helpful for single moms (or those in marriages where the dad is not taking the initiative to instruct).

Dear Daughter,

I know that most girls dream of the day they will walk down the aisle in a breath-taking dress, flowers in hand, and the focus of their guests' attention. I also know that this vision is shaped by a barrage of input from magazines, television, and the internet—all of which can determine the kind of man you pursue and the kind of marriage you want. Because I love you deeply and want God's very best for you, I am sharing with you some very important reminders as you lean ever so hard toward that day.

To begin, it is important for you to fill your vision of the ideal husband, wedding, and marriage from what the Bible says and no where else. After all, God reveals his will to us for our good (Deuteronomy 10:13), that we might make our way prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8), that we might avoid paths that hurt us (Proverbs 1:8-10; 4:24-27), and as the only guide to equip us for the good works that should fill our future (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible teaches us that marriage is designed to provide a picture of how Christ relates to the Church and the Church to Christ (Ephesians 5:32), as well as how the persons of the Trinity are equal, yet different in their roles (1 Corinthians 11:3). Additionally, it is to provide companionship (Gen. 2:18), as well as the atmosphere in which godly children are to be raised (Malachi 2:15). This divine multi-faceted design for marriage demands that both husband and wife be new people who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:1-16) and long to glorify God through their partnership in the gospel (Philippians 1:3-6), their mutual pursuit of holiness (Hebrews 12:14), and the biblical training of their children (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

We should not be surprised, then, the Bible instructs believers that we must not marry unbelievers (1 Corinthians 7:39). After all, marriage is the most intimate of relationships with the greatest and most eternal of purposes. How can a Christian partner with a non-Christian in such a close bond and expect to share the same passions for their life together (2 Corinthians 6:14)? How can they expect that an unbelieving spouse would want to train their children to know and serve Jesus Christ and to pray to those same ends? Without such commitment, training, and prayer, you most likely are setting your children up to stumble and to miss Christ (Matthew 18:5-6).

So, daughter, begin to pray now as to whether or not the Lord would have you marry. If he would, pray that you can find a husband who knows Jesus Christ as Savior, who loves God and others deeply (Matthew 22:37-40), who ultimately seeks his pleasure and

treasure in Christ (Matthew 6:19-21; Philippians 1:21-23), who pursues holiness and purity (including sexual purity in relationships [1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Hebrews 13:4]), and who respects and honors women as a coming attraction of the treatment he will give his wife (1 Peter 3:7).

Such a man will understand that whatever career he is in (be it janitorial work, brain surgery, farming, or pastoral ministry) it is a vocation, that is, a calling from God to serve God (Gen. 2:15; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10) and so he will work hard at it as he trusts God to provide for him and his family (Psalm 20:7; Proverbs 3:5-6, 9-10). He will also value making disciples through regular involvement in the Church (Matthew 28:19-20; Hebrews 10:24-25).

Whether the parents of such a man are Christians or not, he will do his best to honor them (Exodus 20:12). He will also desire to honor his Lord by leading his future family in a Christ-like servant way, knowing that he will ultimately answer for their direction (Ephesians 5:21-33). This does not mean he will be controlling or demanding. It does mean he will be resolute to pray for his family, instruct them, and lead them toward godliness (Ephesians 6:4).

Of course, your vision for what you believe God wants you to do (and where) must match his. If, for example, you believe God has called you and your future husband to serve Christ in urban compassion ministry or in overseas missions, yet, you meet someone who believes God wants him and his wife to live on a farm, this may be an indication God does not want you to marry—especially if you cannot bring your two visions together.

You might think to yourself that it is impossible to find such a young man out there to marry! On the one hand, I tend to agree with you, simply because young men do not naturally turn out like this (Romans 3:10-12). Yet, on the other hand, “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26) and so he is saving and molding young men and boys into this kind of future husband every second of the day.

What should you do that you might find such a man?

- (1) Pray. Ask God to bring you to such a man, if it is his pleasure for you to marry.
- (2) Act. As you pray, act out your convictions. Do not date any men whom you would not marry. Too many Christian women have thought to themselves, “It doesn’t matter, since we are not serious and are only dating. We are not getting married.” Yet, they find all too quickly they become attached and the next thing they know they are married to someone who does not share with them the same God-honoring, Christ-centered vision for life.
- (3) Pursue. Pursue Jesus Christ ultimately (and not a husband), in holiness, modesty, love, great passion, and without falling in love with the world (Philippians 3:1-11; 1 Timothy 3:9; 1 John 2:15-17). If you trust in him, he will make your path straight to that right man, if marriage is what he has for you (Proverbs 3:5-7). Keep in mind that this kind of young man will be looking for a young woman marked by godliness. He

will not be won by the immodest display of yourself or your ungodly sexual pursuit of him. Instead, he will ultimately be repelled by such a God-dishonoring lifestyle.

(4) Hold on. Hold on tightly to the word of life, for this is how you pursue Christ and honor God (Philippians 3:16). Drink deeply and often from it and God will guide you.

Please know that I am praying for you and for your future spouse. May God strengthen you according to his gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ and may you glorify him always (Romans 16:25-27), not the least of which in whom you will marry!

With much love,

Your Dad (or Mom)