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Loving God First

I am always curious to see what the authors of marriage books consider important for success. The success of my marriage is important to me. I think most married women would agree that if our marriages are wonderful, the whole world seems wonderful. If things are not going so great, it's hard to feel like anything else matters. Knowing what will make a marriage happy is a big deal to a woman. I have become convinced, though, that every book on marriage should have this statement in big and bold print on the first page: **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HUSBAND!**

Wives, our relationship with God is the most important relationship we'll ever enter into. God must always be our first love. Of course, no one tries to hide that fact. In a devotional at a recent wedding, a minister talked about the "three-fold cord." Of course, he mentioned that God must be a third party in a marriage for it to succeed. But he mentioned that in passing and spent most of the time talking about the husband/wife relationship.

I understand why he did that. He knew the couple were Christians and assumed the foundation had already been laid. But I wonder if Christian marriages struggle at times because our foundation on Christ is shaky. Maybe too much is assumed. Maybe we need more reminders that *God must come first!*

Many of us have been Christians for many years. We're not supposed to need help in the spiritual department, but if our Christian life is lacking, there is nothing shameful

in admitting it. It is shameful to lack spirituality and to pretend everything is fine between us and God. If this is where we find ourselves, what has happened?

I'm sure we all start out in our Christian lives meaning well. I have a theory about new brides. In our exciting new relationship with our husbands, it's easy to cool off a little toward God. As we hit potholes and unexpected rough spots along the way, we pour more energy into our marriages and perhaps less into our relationship with God. As God blesses our union with children, the extra joys and pains they bring into our family relationship consume more of our time and attention. Considering these dramatic changes over the first several years of a marriage, is it any wonder that a wife's relationship with God can suffer?

One morning we may pull out our Bibles and can't remember when we read them last, or we may close our eyes to pray and feel like we don't know the One we are praying to. The Christian life feels meaningless; perhaps we even doubt our salvation. We can't float along, pretending nothing is wrong. Serious trouble requires serious action. We need to get up-to-date with God.

Here's a checklist I have used to evaluate my standing with God:

- › Do I feel sorry for my sins? (Not just sins of my past, but current ones such as my impatient outburst earlier today.)
- › Do I feel the Holy Spirit's promptings? (Can I think of a recent time when I felt His direction?)
- › Do I pray regularly—and meaningfully? (Am I familiar enough with God to pray in small snatches of time throughout my day?)

› Do I think about God and Heaven? (What is on my mind lately?)

› Do I love to read my Bible? (Do I miss it when I don't?)

For new wives or those of you who can't relate, this doesn't have to be everyone's situation. Continue to stay close to God; turn to Him when hard times come. Let's keep Him as our first love.

Why I Am Glad We Didn't Elope

Psalm 45:10-17



As our wedding day approached and planning became a bit stressful, we joked about eloping. (I'm sure we weren't the first couple to think it might have its advantages!) A wedding seemed like a lot of bother just to get married. Why is a wedding such a momentous occasion? Why all the fuss to carefully plan a special occasion for family and friends to join in? Why do we traditionally say our vows before a whole church full of witnesses?

I've concluded this is why: Marriage is a unique, intriguing union; there's no other occasion quite like a wedding. The vows we make are sacred and deeply binding. They publicly express our love for each other and bind us with commitments that we will hold even when our feelings waver. The marriage relationship was designed by God. It's fascinating to think that we are partaking in His plan for humanity by marrying. Even ungodly people join themselves in the bond of marriage, although they don't acknowledge the Designer of marriage.