



YOUR Current LIFE,

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Church Magazines

Marriage may seem far away, but what you do now can have a big impact on your future family.

Eternal marriage. You've probably heard a lot about it in your Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood classes. You are constantly reminded how important it is to be married in the temple. The time for you to be married may soon be approaching, or it may be years away. So why talk about it so much when you're still too young? It's because the habits, skills, and attitudes you form now in your teenage years can help or hinder your future marriage and family happiness.

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" is a good guide for preparing for marriage. It states, "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129). So if you want to have a happy marriage, focus on the Savior and developing Christlike attributes. The proclamation also says "successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities." Those are all things you can work on in your youth, so let's focus on these principles.

Faith. There is a reason faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). It's because it is needed in everything you do. Developing faith in Christ will give you hope for the future and a positive attitude. Faith will be required not only in choosing a spouse but in everything you do together after marriage.

To work on developing faith in Christ now, you can:

- Strive to follow Heavenly Father's plan for you.
- Listen to and act upon the promptings of the Spirit.
- Study the scriptures each day.

Prayer. In addition to having faith, you need to learn how to communicate with your Heavenly Father. If you learn in your youth to include Him in all that you do, it will be much easier to continue doing so with your spouse (see Alma

YOUR Future FAMILY



37:37). Praying is also a good way to strengthen relationships by overcoming feelings of anger and resentment.

Starting today, you can:

- Develop a habit of daily prayer—every morning and evening.
- Pray to Heavenly Father about important decisions.

Repentance. There are no perfect people on this earth, which means you are going to make mistakes. Learning how to repent now will help you in your marriage when you make mistakes and must ask forgiveness from your spouse and your Heavenly Father.

Learn now to:

- Ask for forgiveness daily for the mistakes you make.
- Forsake past sins.

Forgiveness. In addition to repentance, it is also important that you learn how to forgive others for their mistakes (see D&C 64:9–11). Just like you, your future spouse will not be perfect and will make mistakes. Being able to forgive will help your marriage stay strong even when challenges arise.

To practice this now:

- Forgive your friends and family members.
- Let things go when others have wronged you.
- Treat everyone with kindness, even your “enemies” (see Matthew 5:44).

Respect. Learn to respect yourself. Putting yourself down is not humility, and disrespecting yourself may lead you to forget your true value. Also, remember to respect your Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments and trusting in His plan. Then learn to respect those around you, including your family members.



KEEP AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

“I would admonish you to maintain an eternal perspective. Make certain that the marriage in your future is a temple marriage. There is no scene so sweet, no time so sacred as that very special day of your marriage. Then and there you glimpse celestial joy. Be alert; do not permit temptation to rob you of this blessing.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Whom Shall I Marry?”
New Era, Oct. 2004, 6.

To practice respect now:

- Remember that you are a child of God, and so is everyone else.
- Practice effective communication by sincerely listening to others and responding with courtesy.

Love. Jesus Christ taught that the two greatest commandments are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart” and “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37, 39). When we love the Lord, we strive to keep all His commandments, which also makes it easier to love others. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Pure love is an incomparable, potent power for good. Righteous love is the foundation of a successful marriage” (“The Eternal Blessings of Marriage,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 96).

Right now you can:

- Show the Lord you love Him by following His commandments (see John 14:15).
- Tell your family members that you love them.

Compassion. Loving others leads you to see them for who they truly are: children of God. When you have compassion, you forget yourself and serve. There is no room for selfishness in a happy marriage and family. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “A happy marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion” (“What God Hath Joined Together,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 73).

You can learn to have compassion now if you:

- Serve those around you, including your family members.
- Put others’ needs before your own.
- Tune out the world so you can pay attention to the Spirit when He prompts you to help someone.

Work. Marriage and family life involve a lot of hard work. Just think about everything your parents do for you. In a few years, you will be doing all of those things!

You can prepare for those responsibilities if you:

- Help your parents with household duties.
- Keep up with your studies in school.
- Fulfill responsibilities you have been given at home, school, and work and in the Church.

Wholesome recreational activities. Even though family life includes a lot of work, that doesn’t mean you won’t have fun. If you learn to love fun, wholesome activities now, you



can share the things you love with your future spouse and children.

To do this now:

- Don't spend all your time in front of a television, computer, phone, or video game.
- Figure out what kinds of things you like to do.
- Take up a hobby or two.
- Participate in activities at church, at school, and in your neighborhood and community.

This is not a comprehensive list of everything you need to do to prepare for marriage, but it's a good start of things to work on. Another great list of things to help you prepare are the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*.

You may have heard someone say that if you want to marry the right person, you need to *be* the right person. This time of your youth, when you're too young to be looking for a marriage partner, is the perfect time for you to start becoming the right person. Start developing Christlike qualities that will help you in your life now and in your future marriage and family. It will give you the best chance for eternal happiness. **NE**

Get More in This Issue

For more information on how to prepare to be worthy for a temple marriage, see page 37 in this issue.

THEY'VE BEEN THERE

We asked some married adults what they learned as youth that has helped them in their marriage. Here are some of their responses:

Follow the Spirit

Staying true to the gospel principles as a youth has helped me to become a stronger married adult. Listening to and acting on spiritual promptings has helped me in my life and especially in marriage.

Ashley Reed, Montana, 1 year of marriage

Work on Yourself

Someone told me if you want to find the right girl to spend forever with, then you need to prepare yourself to be the person that woman wants to marry. I thought it sounded very selfish at first to just work on myself, but the more I thought and prayed about it, the more sense it made. I know I needed to work on daily scripture study and prayer. Once I truly looked inward and thought about what my future companion would want in a spouse, I made sure to become that man and priesthood holder.

Joshua Steward, Virginia, 3 years of marriage

Be Worthy and Prepared

When I was a young woman I made the decision to always be worthy and prepared to enter the temple. The habits my husband and I created separately as youth have continued in our marriage together—prayer, scripture study, following the prophet, and attending the temple—and bless our relationship every day.

Marci Preece, Utah, 5 years of marriage

Appreciate Others, and Serve a Mission

I learned to appreciate other people's perspectives. Once we learn how to listen to someone's concerns, we can address them in an appropriate way. My missionary experience was also the best preparation, because living with another person all the time taught me to be more aware of others' needs. I now put what my spouse or children would want and need before my own wants.

Alan Withers, Michigan, 15 years of marriage

Learn Skills

I learned to sew, and it has blessed my husband and my children in many ways. My husband and I are always looking for ways to save money, and with this talent, I can create or fix things as needed.

Mindy Cuthbertson, Arizona, 21 years of marriage

Choose a Spouse Who Loves Heavenly Father

Growing up, I was blessed with a loving mother and father who helped me to understand how gospel principles made their marriage work. They taught me about loyalty (not speaking down against your spouse), the importance of open communication, and serving for the right reason. Most importantly, I was taught that you should choose someone who loves and reveres Heavenly Father as a child would. There is no greater unity than that which comes from having your hearts, hopes, and lives centered upon Him.

Cammi Larsen, Utah, 30 years of marriage