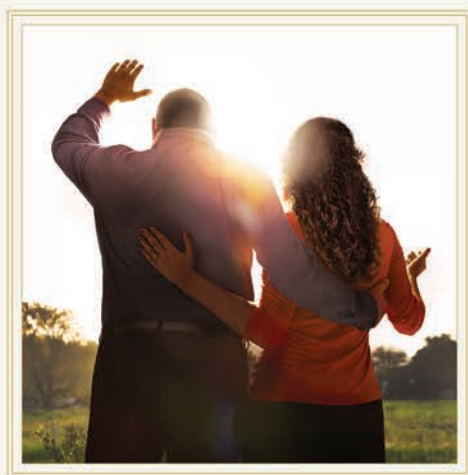


A COUPLE'S WORKBOOK TO
CONNECTING WITH GOD'S PURPOSE



PREPARING
— *for a* —
KINGDOM
MARRIAGE
TONY EVANS

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TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

Preparing for a Kingdom Marriage: A Couple's Workbook to Connecting with God's Purpose
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A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

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Editor: Kathy Davis

Cover design by Eva M. Winters

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For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-800-323-9400.

ISBN 978-1-58997-937-6

Printed in the United States of America

24 23 22 21 20 19 18
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO *PREPARING FOR A KINGDOM MARRIAGE*. We are so excited that you and your future spouse are taking the time to prepare for this monumental decision and transition in your life! Your marriage will be the foundation for your future, in more ways than you can even imagine. That's why we've put together this workbook to help you open up the lines of dialogue and expand your thinking on some of the more critical aspects needed to turn your *vow* into *wow*! It is my desire that your marriage will be the single most rewarding, satisfying, and encouraging area of your entire life. When that is true, there's no telling how God will use you both as individuals and as a couple for His purposes and His glory.

A few pointers as we start our time together. This workbook is intended to be used alongside my book *Kingdom Marriage*. Now, keep in mind, *Kingdom Marriage* is written to couples who are already married. So as you read it, you may need to look ahead into your relationship a bit through forecasting, or take my word for it if it's something you can't even imagine you and your partner one day doing (like arguing!). Each lesson coincides with a chapter in *Kingdom Marriage*, so be sure to read that chapter prior to watching the video segment or doing the personal and couple reflection and lesson questions.

In addition, we've put together several appendixes, three of them for you to use *before* you start your time in this study. These appendixes go into some discovery aspects about you and your partner that will be helpful information and a framework for moving through these lessons. We cover things such

as communication, personality, spiritual gifts, purpose, mission, and vision statements—and even your own couple’s logo!

In Appendix C there is a list of service opportunities. Read through them together and choose which one(s) fit your schedule, the needs of those around you, and your interests. You can choose one or you can do all of them. It is entirely up to you. What we want you to do, though, is to serve somewhere every single week of this study, beginning this week. Your oneness will develop organically as a couple when you serve others together. So look over that appendix before you start lesson 1.

Appendix D includes a chapter from my book *Raising Kingdom Kids*, in which I talk about the very common occurrence of blended families. If one or both of you already have children, please take the time to read this appendix. I also want to encourage you to view the study questions and lessons through the grid of your entire family, not solely your new marriage, as you go through each week.

Appendix E provides a home budget template to use with lesson 10. And Appendix F offers coaching for mentors working with engaged couples.

Each week’s lesson gives you some time to review the reading material, go deeper in personal application and Bible study, discuss what you are learning, and meet with a mentor or mentoring couple who can serve as guides. It is my desire that as you both move toward your wedding day, you will experience God’s supernatural hand of alignment, unity, and love drawing you together at a level deeper than you even imagined possible.

Marriage truly is the greatest gift given to us on earth. Cherish it and honor it by preparing wisely for it.

Cheering for you,

Tony Evans

VIDEO LINKS INFORMATION



AS YOU BEGIN to use the thirteen lessons in this workbook, you'll see that the first part of each lesson is the "Time with Tony Video Segment." These are brief videos in which I introduce the subject of that lesson and encourage you in your study. I hope this personal touch will convey to you and your intended how much I care about you and the success of your approaching marriage.

These videos are part of the program and are provided at no extra charge. To access them, simply go to FocusOnTheFamily.com/MarriagePrep, enter a little information about yourself, and enjoy!

PART I



The Foundation of a
**KINGDOM
MARRIAGE**

LESSON 1



ORIGIN

SECTION 1: *Time with Tony Video Segment*

Begin your time together by opening in prayer, then watch the lesson 1 video segment. (See page ix for link.)

SECTION 2: *Study Time*

Heart Highlights

Read chapter 1 of *Kingdom Marriage* individually. Rewrite the following highlights from the chapter in your own words, or, if you prefer, simply reword the statements in a conversation you have with your fiancé at a later time. Make sure to write them or speak them in such a way that they will personally apply to you and your future spouse.

1. The foundation of civilization is the family, and the foundation of the family is marriage; therefore, the destruction of marriage naturally results in the destruction of civilization. This is why it is critical that we make strengthening marriages and families an integral part of our lives.
2. The number one way to bring God glory is through surrender to His sovereign rule. This acknowledges His supremacy over every area of life. When we operate our marriages based on these principles of the kingdom agenda, we are free to experience God's hand of blessing and His promise to work all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

3. The reason so many of us as believers are struggling in our marriages is that we want God to bless our agenda for our relationship rather than us fulfilling His agenda. We want God to okay our plans rather than our fulfilling His. We want God to bring us glory rather than us bringing Him glory through honoring the marriage covenant as He intended it.

4. Happiness is to be a benefit of a strong marriage, but not the goal. The goal is the reflection of God through the advancement of His kingdom on earth. Happiness occurs as an organic outgrowth when this goal is sought.

5. Kingdom couples must view marriage through God's kingdom lens. Marriage is a covenantal union designed by God in order to strengthen the capacity of each partner to carry out His plan in their lives.

Digging Deeper

1. Read Psalm 103:19. In what ways does an earthly king receive allegiance and obedience from those he rules? Compare and contrast how God should receive our allegiance and obedience in all that we think, say, or do.

2. Read Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:3-6. What does it mean to "rule" on behalf of God's kingdom authority on earth? Describe what "managerial responsibility" looks like as stewards of God's resources such as your time, talents, and treasures.

3. Keeping in mind Philippians 4:13, list the potential areas of your upcoming marriage that are impossible to fix or work out within your own power.

4. In what way does Matthew 19:6 address issues of priorities in a marriage?

5. First Corinthians 7:4 is not a license to control or dominate each other in a marriage. Describe what is meant in this passage and how this verse can and should be honored in your relationship as a married couple.

SECTION 3: *Personal Time*

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

GENESIS 2:24

You and I can't improve on God's idea for anything. God created the covenant of marriage, so we will have greater power and greater pleasure in our marriages when we follow His plan. The foundational thought of marriage is simple: leave, join, and become one. Notice the reason for the closeness of the marriage union according to Genesis 2:23-24. A man is to join himself totally to his wife "for this reason," because woman "was taken out of Man" (verse 23). Woman came from man's flesh; thus a man and wife are to become one flesh *again*.

The tragedy today is that a lot of people have these words read at their weddings, but they don't know all that is involved. In particular, too many young people who get married have not really left their parents emotionally, and even at times financially.

Ask yourselves: Is your mate a nice *addition* to your life, or is he or she your *life*?

When you are married, you must be willing to place second in your life

anything or anyone that seeks to be more important than your spouse. Now, that doesn't mean you sit around all day and look into each other's eyes. No, but it does mean that your priority shifts to making the needs of your spouse more important than the needs and demands of other things in your life, outside of God Himself.

Reflect & Respond

Spend a few moments discussing with your fiancé the answers to the following questions based on this week's devotional thought.

1. In your own words, what does it mean that “a man shall leave his father and his mother”?
2. What are some ways people do not leave their parents when they get married, and how can that prove to be detrimental to their marriage relationship?
3. Think about and share who/what you feel will be the most challenging person(s) or thing(s) for you to place beneath the priority of your new marriage. (Note: It may not be your parents. It could be a friend, job, dream, hobby.)
4. Discuss why or how this could be a challenge to you. What has this particular commitment meant to you in the past?

5. Come up with ways to hold each other accountable to the priority of the marriage relationship, in light of other commitments and attachments in your life. Give yourselves freedom to remind each other of the priority of your marriage in a non-controlling, respectful way.

SECTION 4: *Take-It-In Time*

Mentor Moment

Couples who stick together understand that marriage is a sacred and solemn mystery in the eyes of God. As a result, they enter the relationship with the attitude that *divorce is not an option*. They understand that marriage is a life-long *adventure*, filled with triumphs and defeats. Like Jesus, “who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2), they press on toward the goal in both good times and bad.

1. If you had to define “marriage,” what words would you use? What makes marriage unique and different from any other human relationship?
2. How would you describe your “long view” of your relationship? Where do you see yourselves in five years? Ten years? Twenty?
3. When you run into obstacles, roadblocks, or conflicts in your marriage, what will be your “default” reaction? Will you get angry? Run home to Mother? Blame one another? Or will you look for ways to solve the problems and move forward?

4. Did you see lifelong commitment modeled in your family of origin? How has your experience affected your view of this concept? In the Marine Corps they say, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” Does this maxim apply to marriage? If so, how? Would you describe your future marriage as an adventure? Would you like to make it *more* adventurous? If so, how?

5. The Bible says, “A man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). What do you think it means to be “one flesh”?

SECTION 5: *Time Together*

Date Night Discussion

Summary Statements: Set aside time to explore the following summary statements and reflection questions in the context of a date or while sharing a meal. Open your discussion time in prayer, asking the Lord to draw you both together in alignment under Him. Begin by reading these foundational principles aloud to each other. Afterward, discuss what they mean to you personally and how you want them to be displayed in your marriage. Finally, discuss the Talking Topics that follow the foundational principles.

- The kingdom agenda is the visible manifestation of the comprehensive rule of God over every area of life.
- Every thought, word, or action in our marriage must align itself under God’s rule and within His will and purpose for our lives, both individually and together as one.
- Our marriage shares a mission, not just our emotions.

Talking Topics: Take time to discuss what you believe is your personal calling. If you do not yet know your calling, discuss what your gifts, skills, experiences,

passions, and interests are and how those may intersect in bringing glory to God. Share how you hope that your marriage will strengthen each of your individual callings and purposes, and if there are any points of convergence in your callings where they could be carried out together.