



# Desire the Very Best Marriage

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him:  
for the marriage of the Lamb is come,  
and His wife hath made herself ready.”*

Revelation 19:7

*C*ome on, Victory,” the sixteen-year-old girl said softly as she mounted her faithful horse and began the journey to the castle. Her blonde hair, highlighted by the sun, flowed behind her, and the crystals on her thin golden headband sparkled brightly. Canteringly gracefully with his dark mane waving in the wind, the chestnut horse was nearly as beautiful as the girl. As they raced across green meadows colored by wildflowers, over small streams, and through the countryside, many people would stop their activities or conversations in order to watch them pass.

“A lovely girl,” one elderly lady commented as she was hanging out linens to dry. “A precious gem, if ever there was one, I say.”

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*A jolly old man sat on a bench in the mountain village with his young grandson by his knee. As the girl rode by, he turned to his grandson and declared, "You do know who she is, do ye not? She is none other but the daughter of the king."*

*"Then she is a princess, Grandfather?" asked the little boy with wonder and delight, his eyes gazing at her until she had disappeared into the distance.*

*"Ahh, but she is more than a princess," the wise grandmother who stood nearby interjected. "For not only is she a princess in lineage, but she is also a princess in conduct. We may admire her outward beauty, but I tell you that it is her inner beauty that is worth one hundred times more—and inner beauty is a quality rare even among princesses."*

*And so you see, this young lady was known and respected throughout the kingdom not only because of her royal birth, but even more importantly for her kindness, gracious words, and evident maturity beyond her years. No one doubted that she was a princess indeed.*

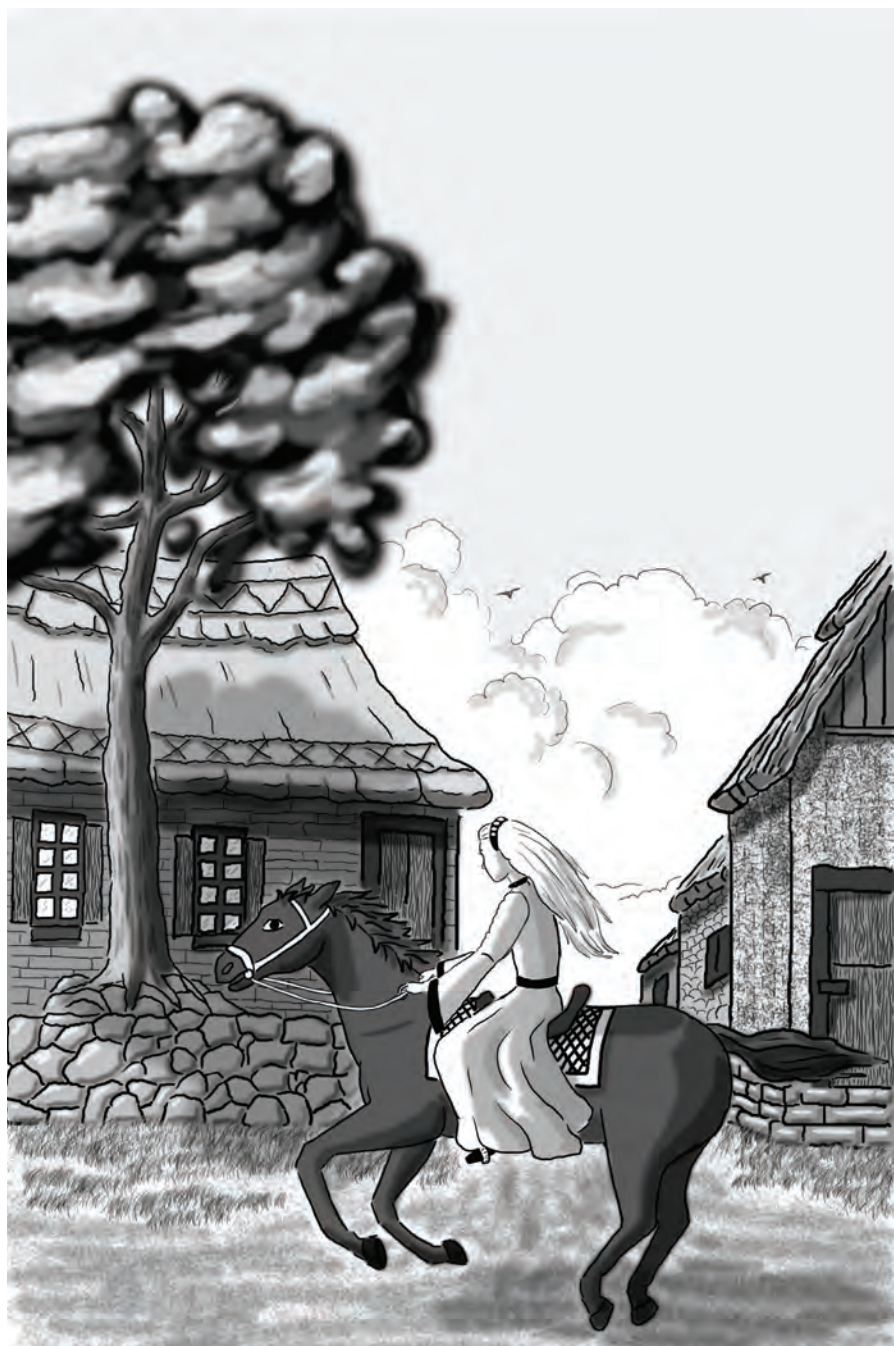
*Yet, lest you begin to believe that this princess was perfect, it must be noted that even though she was wise, she was not as wise as her father, the king. She was young. She had much insight and discernment, but she was nonetheless still subject to the emotions, fears, and longings that tug and pull at a girl's heart and mind. It was not easy to recall her father's words of wisdom in every situation. And sometimes the wrong advice of others was quite persuasive, sounding so close to the truth that it was easy to accept without due caution.*

*"I wonder," the princess thought aloud as she reached the top of the small hill from which the castle came into view, "why Father speaks so often of the dangerous ways and opinions of the people in the kingdom. They seem so peaceful and good."*

*"And I wonder," she continued, "what my future will hold? I suppose Mother is right. It is not for me to know. I must concentrate on the work that God gives me to do each day and trust Him to direct my paths."*

*"We'd best hurry," she said again to Victory as she gently pressed her legs against his sides. She realized that they had slowed their pace*

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*considerably. Peering into the distant sky, the princess noticed that it seemed strangely dark, and she wondered if it was already past the dinner hour.*

*Resuming her thoughts, she spoke again. "If the biggest enemies of the kingdom are not the seen but the unseen, and if the villagers are as easily led astray as Father says, I wonder what can be done in order to—"*

*Suddenly hearing the sound of galloping, she forgot her questions and looked up to see a horseman coming quickly to meet her.*

*"How does it fare with thee, my lady?" he asked, coming to a halt.*

*"All is well, sentinel," she replied. "What be thy hurry?"*

*"Thy father sent me to look for thee. The western sky gives warning of a brewing storm. He was concerned that thou hadst been delayed at Sand Crossing."*

*"Thou knowest how it is visiting Aunt Prudent and Uncle Justheart, the Duke and Duchess of Wisdomton," she said with a smile. "It is always difficult to get away. And yes, the ride home took longer than expected. The rough parts of the mountain trail are somewhat overgrown. Also, I stopped to help an elderly lady who had dropped her basketful of vegetables in the midst of the path."*

*"I will report to the king and leave thee to enjoy thy quiet ride. Thy father will be glad to know that thou hast very nearly arrived at the castle."*

*"Thank you, sentinel," she answered. "Please tell the stable hand to have hay ready for Victory."*

*"As thou sayest," he declared as he turned around and galloped away.*

*You may be wondering why a princess was riding alone throughout the kingdom with no guards or escort. It was a time of peace, and the land was well protected by the many good knights and warriors scattered throughout. In addition, the king desired that the princess follow not the custom of royalty, who isolate themselves from the common people, but rather that she learn to serve and minister to everyone from the greatest down to the least. He knew that the kingdom was in need of such examples.*



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*Yet, the king was by no means negligent to protect his daughter. On the contrary, because of his great love for the princess, he was committed to doing everything necessary to safeguard her in every way. Indeed, many considered him to be too careful. He often perceived as dangerous those activities that most people believed were quite harmless. And many times he took precautions that others mocked as extreme and unnecessary. For you see, in his wisdom he understood that it was not the outward threats that were most deadly, but the inward pollutants and evil influences that attack the heart and the mind.*

*The princess, walking by faith, happily accepted this protection and guidance. Even so, it is questionable whether she fully treasured this most valuable gift bestowed upon her. She loved her parents, but it is unlikely that she had a full understanding of what a significant part they played in her life. She appreciated their protection and occasionally thanked them for it, but it is certain that she did not have any idea how much this protection would benefit her life, how vital it was for her future, and how much grief it had already spared her.*

*Like most princesses, this young lady was full of hopes and dreams for her future. There were places she wished to visit, people she hoped to meet, and great things she wanted to accomplish. Most of all, she desired to use her life to nourish and strengthen others. For you see, she understood (as few princesses do) that a true princess is actually a servant. But amidst her many noble dreams, the one most deeply rooted in her heart and the one she thought of most frequently, was ... (you'll never guess) ... yes, she dreamed of the day when she would fall in love with her Prince Charming and live with him forever. But, of course, she was only sixteen. She didn't need to be thinking about that yet!*

*And so it was, on this quiet evening, that as the princess alighted from her horse and led him along the stone path outside the castle walls, she began to dream of her future. She stood still for a moment to kiss Victory's nose and to gaze at the distant mountains, which reminded her of the horizons that lay ahead in her life. The princess was enjoying these peaceful moments alone when her thoughts were unexpectedly interrupted by the low and soothing voice of the alligator swimming in the moat below the bridge on which she stood.*

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*“Good evening to thee, fair princess,” he began.*

*“Why, thank you, and a good evening to thee as well,” she answered.*

*“What brings such a lovely young lady outside tonight?”*

*“Oh, I be just returning from a visit with my aunt and uncle, and I had a mind to capture a quick walk around the castle to enjoy the evening breeze.”*

*“Alone?” the alligator questioned.*

*“I like to be alone. It gives me time to think and to pray.”*

*“Oh, I see,” he said slowly.*

*After a moment of silence the alligator continued, “May I ask what the princess enjoys thinking about when she is not interrupted by an annoyance such as myself?”*

*“My father tells me that my time is precious and must be used wisely. I was just considering how many things I hope to do in my life, how I can best serve the kingdom, and how I might be able to bring hope and joy to those who have none.”*

*“My princess, thou art very ambitious and wise, but I fear thou art forgetting one minor point. You live in a castle. You live with your parents. You are sheltered. You have neither the knowledge nor the experience necessary to do the things of which you dream.”*

*“My father says I do.”*

*“Thy father is indeed a noble man, but dear Princess, he cannot possibly be right about everything. He loves you and therefore fears that harm may come to you if you are not constantly by his side. It is true he wants only your best, but Princess, I fear he is misguided. In the end, you are the one who will face the consequences of his unintentional yet serious mistakes.”*

*“What are you saying I should do?”*

*“Nothing as of yet,” replied the alligator. “But when the time comes, be ready to make your own decisions, or you will never survive in the real world.”*

*Feeling a few sprinkles of raindrops on her arm and hearing the first roll of thunder, the princess took Victory to his stall and hurried inside.*

## Safeguards to Embrace

Most princesses like to think about romance—and I suspect that you are no exception. As a daughter of the King of Kings, your heavenly Father has only the very best in store for you. A true princess must not settle for anything less.

I have known many young ladies who were consumed with dating and thoughts about boyfriends, and thus wasted the years of their youth. I have seen many girls who had much potential for the Lord but who followed the typical way of most teenagers and missed out on God's best. On the other hand, I have had the joy of seeing the Lord bring together some outstanding couples and bless them with beautiful marriages. What made the difference?

The difference was not ultimately a result of how they met, how they got to know each other, or whether they called their relationship “dating,” “courtship,” “betrothal,” or anything else. Rather, the difference was the result of decisions made long before—decisions to put Jesus first in every area of life, to stand alone for what was right, and to patiently follow God's way even when the road was uphill or difficult. The decisions we make in our youth play a huge role in determining our future.

Temptation in this area of boy/girl relationships is one of the biggest snares that the enemy uses to damage the lives and testimonies of Christian young people. Many lives have been destroyed. Many others have survived only with scars, pain, and heartache.

A true princess realizes this danger and understands her own need to be protected. This is not evidence of weakness or fear, but rather it is evidence of true courage. It requires courage to do things God's way, to wait for His timing, and to trust that He will bring you and your husband together according to His perfect plan. It takes courage to obey when you do not understand.

For this reason, one of the wisest decisions you can make now is to embrace specific safeguards of protection. Notice that I say *embrace*. Many young ladies will *tolerate* what they consider to be “rules” or “laws” made by others. But tolerating them is not enough; you must make them your own. It is your *heart*—your own internal commitments before the Lord—that will make the difference. Only



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those who have formed their own personal convictions will have the strength required to remain pure and the discernment needed to escape temptation.

### DESIRE THE BEST

As you are beginning this book, commit yourself to wanting God's *best* in your life—God's *best* in your future marriage. Maybe this seems obvious to you. Maybe you're thinking, "Of course I desire the best in my marriage." But when it comes right down to it, are you truly willing to make the required sacrifices and to wait for the best?

Since marriage is a picture of our relationship with Christ, God created marriage to be the most beautiful, joyful, and fulfilling earthly relationship we will ever experience. A good marriage is priceless. No one would want to trade it for anything—or *would they?* Countless young people are willing to forfeit the beautiful marriage God wants to give them in exchange for short-term thrills. If we could grasp how wonderful God's plan for us is, don't you think we'd be willing to wait? Don't you think we would purpose to enter into marriage pure rather than with emotional baggage and scars?

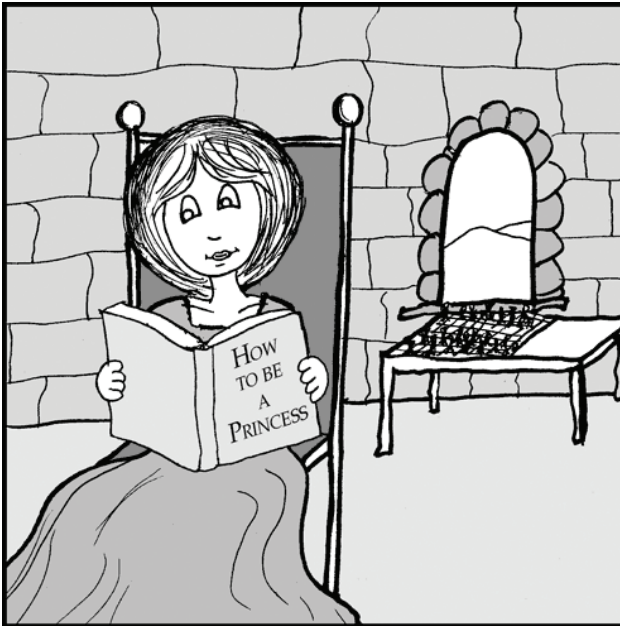
Think of your favorite storybook romance. You know, one where the couple lives happily ever after. Those fairy tales are just a joke, right? I mean no one actually has a marriage like that, do they? That is what Satan wants you to think—that there are no happy marriages. He doesn't want us to experience the blessings and the fulfilling marriage God wants to give. Even though all marriages have trials to work through, God's design is for them to be successful, fulfilling, and joyous. Jesus says, "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (Jn. 10:10).

By observing the reckless way most young people live, you'd never know that deep down in their hearts they desire to one day have a wonderful marriage. They actually do desire a good marriage, but they've lost sight of this dream because they've already done so much to destroy it. In an effort to defend their actions, they will claim that such a marriage is idealistic or impossible, but in reality, they are

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simply unwilling to pay the price. It is too hard for them to wait—too hard to trust God.

Of course, your marriage will not actually be *perfect*. We live in a sinful world. But choose to *desire* the very best marriage, and refuse to lower your standard or settle for average. Many happy couples who faithfully prepared and waited can joyfully testify that God’s blessings and rewards are more than worth the sacrifice.



*To be rescued, one must first be a princess.*

## NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE

“You know what, Sarah?” a fifteen-year-old friend told me recently. “It’s really true. God’s plans are so much better than we could ever imagine. My older brother is planning to be a pastor. He had such a long list of specific requirements for his future wife that our family used to tease him. We insisted that he’d never get married—that such a girl didn’t exist. But then he met Lori! She is so perfect for him. She not only fits every one of his qualifications—she far surpasses them! It’s incredible to see how God brought exactly the wife he needed. He wasn’t willing to lower his standards, and God blessed his faith.”

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Stories like this are exciting. They remind me that our God is powerful, faithful, and concerned about every detail of our lives. Now obviously, if we truly desire God's best in our lives, then we need to be willing to marry *God's* choice. It's equally important to recognize that a happy marriage takes two people. If we desire a godly, loving husband, we need to do our part by preparing to be the best marriage partner that we can be. This starts today. Right now.

### WHAT IS PURITY?

There are many young ladies who feel that because they have already made mistakes, purity is no longer possible for them. Therefore, it's important for all of us to understand that there are two kinds of purity.

First, there is the *innocent*, or *clean* type. Imagine a white cloth which has never been dirty or contaminated—it is pure. This idea of “innocence” might be the first thing that comes to our mind when we think of purity.

But there is a second kind of purity—the *washed* kind. Something was dirty, but it's been washed, it's been cleansed. A white rag may have been used to clean up a filthy mess, but once it has been thoroughly cleaned, it is pure and spotless again. It was black, but now it's white. “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (II Cor. 5:17).

When it comes to our relationship with Christ (our salvation), we all have the “cleansed” type of purity. Proverbs 20:9 asks, “*Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*” The obvious answer is none of us. We are all guilty before God (Rom. 3:23). We all need to be cleansed and washed by the blood of Jesus. He is the One who dealt with our sin, taking it upon Himself on the cross, and who now offers us His perfect righteousness if we believe on Him. He is the One who is able to make us clean, to make our heart pure. He is able to turn filthy rags into pure white righteousness. “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*” (Is. 1:18).

When it comes to our future marriage, there are many benefits

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that come from the “innocent” kind of purity, and we do not want to take that lightly! But, on the other hand, no matter what our past has been, we do not want to underestimate the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to wash, to cleanse, and to restore!

In light of this, it’s important to realize that purity is offered to anyone—no matter what your past has been, no matter what mistakes you have made. As you are reading this book, the enemy may try to discourage you. Satan wants you to think it’s too late to change. He wants you to feel hopeless and worthless. He wants you to give up. Do not believe his lies. It is never too late to turn to the Lord and experience the joy, peace, and abundant life He offers. If you begin to think that it is too late for you, then I encourage you to skip ahead to pages 194-198 and read the miraculous stories of what God can do through the life of one who is truly repentant. Regardless of how impossible it may seem to you, God is still calling you to purity, and not just to purity—to radiant purity!

### WHAT IS RADIANT PURITY?

Well, I believe that *inward* purity is *outwardly* visible. It’s seen in our countenance. It’s seen in our eyes. It’s seen by our joy. It’s seen as we boldly take a stand—not just “going along” with this idea of purity, but excitedly making it known to others.

You see, radiant purity is much more than simply “innocence,” it is the commitments, convictions, and attitudes that maintain innocence and that proclaim it to others. The essence of purity is not what our past has been, but where our heart is *now* before the Lord. Radiant purity comes from a close relationship with Jesus Christ—and this relationship is made available to every one of us by the blood of Jesus! He is the One who cleanses us and gives us His purity.

Here is another way to look at it: Is purity something we *don’t* do? Or is purity something we *do*? Well, obviously it is both (I Cor. 6:18, II Tim. 2:22), but I think it is more of something that we *do*. If we are merely following a list of rules of things we “can’t do,” we have missed the essence of purity. Purity is wholeheartedly pursuing Jesus. It is realizing that we are set-apart *for* Him and *to* Him.



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Believe me, radiant purity is noticed by the world, and it will lead others to follow the same path!

### BEFORE YOU READ ANY MORE...

... I'd like to explain that as I write this book I'm assuming that you already agree with the following presuppositions. I want you to know where I'm coming from. If you don't, then you may be confused by some of the things I say.

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and should govern every area of our lives.
2. There is a problem with boy/girl relationships in our society. In this book I don't think it's necessary to go into detail about the sin and devastation happening in many lives around us, but I'm making the assumption that you agree there is a problem. The world's approach to relationships isn't working very well. Unhappy marriages, divorce, and broken, hurting families are not the way God intends things to be.
3. We want something different. I'm writing to young ladies who are seeking the Lord with all of their heart and who genuinely desire God's best. For this reason, I'm going to be courageous and honest as I share what I have observed and learned. Some things that I encourage you to consider may not be easy, but because I believe you are sincerely longing for God's very best way, I have confidence that you are not afraid to take the narrow road, to stand for righteousness, and to put Jesus first—even when it's hard.

One last thing I need to tell you is that often in this book I am going to mention parents and the benefits that can come from our parents' help. I realize that many of you come from hurting families. Some of you do not have parents involved in your life, and some of you have parents who are not Christians. Do not let this discourage you or lead you to say, "Well, this can't work for me."

God has put you in exactly the family in which He wants you to be. He knows your parents' shortcomings, and He will not neglect you even for a moment. If you are seeking the Lord, He will faithfully

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supply the help you need (Phil. 4:19). When parents are not protecting or leading, He may choose to guide you through a wise older couple at your church or other godly mentors. Keep these things in mind as you continue reading.

### **SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSE:**

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready”*  
(Revelation 19:7).