



Family Christian Center

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CLASS NAME: Prep for Marriage – Ring Rights | Lesson 2: Ringside Seat – Best Seat in the House!

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Ringside Seat

Where's My Invitation?

Proverbs 25:6-7

New Living Translation

⁶ Don't demand an audience with the king
or push for a place among the great.

⁷ **It's better to wait for an invitation** to the head table
than to be sent away in public disgrace.

Just because you've seen something,

"Where's my invitation!" Some of your family and friends may ask you "where's my invitation" when it is time to attend your wedding celebration. Consider this, as you plan for your wedding you will begin to quickly find out who is for your marriage and who is against your marriage. **Unfortunately, those that disappoint you the most are those that you may suspect the least.** However, our goal in Prep for Marriage is to prepare you for those that may be invited to your wedding but still may be *ineligible* to go.

We also want to encourage you to be prepared for feelings of entitlement from those you hold dear. Those who feel they have a right to insert their opinion into your marriage. Those that feel that their way is the best way. These are people who once had a **ringside seat** in your life but now will have to give up *the best seat in the house* and give it to your spouse. Take it from us, these individuals never like the new seating arrangements in your life. We encourage you to prepare. Be prepared for those, who are upset that you moved them to the **nosebleed seats**. Those who once provided "*wanted advice*" now provide *unwanted advice* that now interrupts your marital peace. So, ask yourself **"Is it disrespectful to invite yourself to someone**

else's wedding?" Essentially, that is what those with unsolicited advice will be doing within your marriage. Yep! Their number one goal is to attempt to take over your wedding and invite themselves to do so.

Remember, to take a seat that is higher than the one given to you, can cause disorder and undue strife in your marriage. It is also a form of competition, in which family members, in-laws, and especially friends want the life that you have because they see something they have not attained on their own.

- **Is that what you want for your marriage?**

In the many years of teaching Prep for Marriage and officiating weddings, we have seen just that. On numerous occasions, so many unwanted guests and their unsolicited advice slip in under the radar.

RSVP

Did you RSVP or did you just show up?

Unwanted wedding guests have RSVP'd to wedding ceremonies only to never show up or just the opposite, some guests that the happy couple intended to celebrate their wedding with, RSVP, carelessly, waiting to the last minute, assuming that they have plenty of time to respond. These guests, with no regard for the time, or that the wedding feast is fast approaching take their sweet time before responding. Think about how inconsiderate it is to an engaged couple's wedding plans, to show up unannounced, not ever considering the cost, or the inconvenience this may cause a new marriage. However, even invited guests are inconsiderate of new marriages. For instance, at our own wedding reception, we noticed people who *were* invited brought uninvited additional guests, to our wedding unannounced.

However, in the parable of the wedding feast, overview in the book of **Matthew 22: 1-14**, there is no such thing as bringing extra people, at this wedding feast, you stand alone. Remember, many were called by the King, of the wedding banquet yet few were chosen to attend. Why? Well, some opted out of the invitation, some didn't value the invitation and others were not worthy of the invitation in the first place.

- **If the King of Kings (Jesus), invited you to His wedding feast, where would you stand?**
- **What if you were not invited at all? How would you feel to be left behind?**

Parable	Symbolism
Invitation	The Proposal
The Ring	The Chosen
Groom	Jesus
Bride	The Church
The Wedding Banquet	Heaven

Ringside Seat

The Best Seat in the House!

Ringside Seat - *an advantageous position from which to observe or monitor something.*

Marriage is an elite club that few are allowed access to. To be married is to have the best seat in the house only if your marriage is a God-match. Some people will never be married and that's okay. Marriage is not a calling for everyone. Yet, there are some that are called to marriage but through past experience find it hard to gain an advantageous view of marriage.

Essentially, they are denied the call of marriage. Not because they are denied access by marriage officiants, pastors, or by the marriage covenant itself, but because some forget to petition access in the right time frame. Some forget to RSVP to God through prayer, to gain access to marriage. Remember, marriage is a perfect gift only given by God. Everything good and perfect comes from Him.

James 1:17

New Living Translation

¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all

the lights in the heavens.^[a] He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.¹

Some marital seekers purchase front row seats in marriage from **marital scalpers** who provide false realities of marriage, these marital scalpers only look to sell the look of a healthy marriage and not the real thing, leaving unsuspecting couples to feel cheated when they realize that the one or two examples of a so-called good marriage are really counterfeits. In other instances, some individuals and couples self-eliminate their opportunity to purchase ringside seats because they are **looking** for ½ off discounts; unwilling to put in their fair share of the work required for marriage, and limited their outlook on marriage to a glance, unfit to see their marriage through to the end. Then there are the individuals that are last-minute shoppers that pay the price for anything just to get a seat in the arena, begging for access saying they will pay anything to get a ringside seat, worried because they are of a certain age that marriage won't come. This fear is exasperated when these same individuals see others entering the bonds of marriage before them. They often are taken advantage of, and it is often too late before they notice the lasting impacts of an indecent proposal.

Nosebleed Seats

Front Row Seats in Marriage...

You may have a nosebleed seat view of what marriage is. A nosebleed seat refers to jocularly or the effects of extremely high altitudes on the body which can cause nosebleeds. Essentially the nosebleed seats have restricted views and are seats high in the back of the bleachers, stands, or balcony which is usually cheaper and has poorer views than other seats. However, why is this? Why do so many couples seek marriage only to never have a true view of it? Well, typically due to past experiences they really do have the worst seats in the house causing limited views of marriage. Why do so many individuals miss their opportunity to gain access to a **Ring Side Seat** in Marriage? Essentially, taking what's available rather than fighting for the ringside seat view that they are due. Well, the answers are all around us... due to poor depictions of wedded bliss and even fairy tales that simply state to unsuspecting little girls and boys, "and...they lived happily ever after", the most dreaded words heard by premarital counselors. Those words, "and...they lived happily ever after", provide more of a disservice to those seeking marriage than hope, with no other explanation on how success in marriage is measured or how one sentence with no depth could adequately explain a lifetime of joy, pain, challenges, and bliss.

When you reflect on those old fateful fairytale endings doesn't it seem a little misleading? Yes, it does! Modern day couples of this day and age must learn both the positive and the negative aspects of marriage. Without true understanding of marriage and what God intended it to be, we begin to only focus on getting the ring, then anything else.

"It Don't Mean a Thing, If You Ain't Got that Ring!"

But...According to Who?

Not to be confused with the famous song by Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald, "***It Don't Mean a Thing (If You Ain't Got That Swing.)***" For teaching purposes, we decided to swap out the word "swing" for the word "ring". However, in modern-day society, the ring does have more swing in comparison to the marriage itself. The wedding day cost has risen to such exuberant amounts, that many millennials are turning away from marriage and those that do marry are spending outrageous amounts just to have the "coveted" wedding ring.

The wedding ring and all its ornate adorning still do not ensure marriage security or longevity. The pursuit of an engagement ring without understanding the *real* meaning of the covenant behind the ring has caused many women and men to enter ill-fitted matches just to say, **"He put a ring on it! Or "I put a ring on it!"**

Dangling “Carats” Over Your Head

One trend that we have seen that affects both genders but impacts women at a greater level is a term we coined “**engagement layaway**”. It is when a man that is dating a woman is essentially “*dangling carat’s (diamonds rings, a proposal, promise rings or an engagement ring) over the head of a mate.*”

One dictionary defines the idiom of “**dangling carrots over someone one else**” as “*offering a positive consequence or incentive to a person in exchange for them taking an action which they are not internally motivated to take for themselves.*” **This means some individuals may accept moving in with a mate, sharing finances with a mate, or having children before marriage something they would normally not accept over the lure of marriage.** In our example this means, making promises of marriage without an engagement ring or giving a promise ring but never committing to a wedding date. Furthermore, after the 3-year mark of engagement (outside of pursuing a higher education degree or starting to date at a young age (18-21) one mate becomes tired of waiting for an engagement. So typically, the male suitor, only to appease his mate short-term will extend the marriage time frame by proposing thus extending the relationship another 3-5 years after the initial 2-3 years of dating, without marriage. This essentially extends the shelf life of the woman they are dating and gives them more time to, in some instances sow their royal oats.

- ***Would you be surprised to know, that in our experience, that after 5, 10, or even 15+ years of dating the man in the relationship will break up with his would-be-fiancée only to marry someone else 6 months later?***

Engagement Layaway keeps one person from moving forward with anyone else while typically the man can have their cake and eat too! As marital instructors, we have unfortunately seen this issue happen time and time again. Though some extended engagement relationships end in marriage. However, often, after saying, “I do” they do not remain married unless they have a strong spiritual foundation. Please keep in mind, we have seen this occur in both men and women however typically women tend to stay in **Engagement Layaway** for far too many years only to give up their best years to someone who didn’t appreciate them in the first place.

My Precious, Precious*

If you are seeking marriage this may be hard to hear but your value system is called into question by God before marriage. Why? To check your motives.

James 4:3 Amplified Bible

³ You ask [God for something] and do not receive it, because you ask ^(a)with wrong motives [out of selfishness or with an unrighteous agenda], so that [when you get what you want] you may spend it on your [hedonistic] desires.

In our experience, of mentoring and counseling over 1800 couples those that tend to have an “unnatural” value of engagement more than the love of God tend to sell themselves short for an engagement ring. Rather than seeing the value in the “big picture” of marriage and not simply living in the moment, they accept less in the hopes of receiving more later. This is not intended to condemn those found in this predicament but to bring a spirit of conviction into your life. Marriage is intended to make you and your fiancé/fiancée better. The Bible calls for us to be fruitful and multiply in marriage, but let’s be clear we aren’t just talking about making babies. God wants us to be an example for others through our marriage. The Bible calls us to be imitators of Christ, not imitators of the wedding day. If this applies, consider this to yourselves:

- *If the thoughts of marriage turn into fantasizing thus pulling you farther and farther away from God, marriage in this season may not be best for you.*

Furthermore, if the lure of engagement has a stronger draw to you than seeking a relationship with the Lord then unfortunately your desires fall into idol worship. We encourage you if you feel you are in this head space, to cast down imaginations and anything held above the knowledge of whom we all know God to be. The one and only true King worthy of praise!

2 Corinthians 10:5 King James Version

⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

How Precious is the Cost?

The average cost of a "**precious**" wedding ring has changed from generation to generation. At one point, braided tweed threaded together in a circle was enough in Egyptian times to signify marriage. Oh my! How things have changed! How many men would receive a '**yes**' to grass or straw-bound rings in society today? Based on our experiences, not many.

However, don't misunderstand, ladies are not at fault alone in this. No, not all! This is not a one-sided desire anymore; men **also** have skin in the game when it comes to the cost and look of an engagement ring. Many men sporting more diamonds like celebrities or music artists, causing diamonds not only to be a girl's best friend but a man's new best friend. In return, many men are asking for a show of devotion in the form of diamonds from their intended spouses. Today the cost of the ring is strongly associated with a man's ability to provide. In a way, the ring has become a silent status symbol to men, announcing to *other* men, "**she's taken!**"

Considering this, some archeologists believe the first wedding rings can be traced to a Roman custom in which wives wore rings attached to small keys, indicating that the wife's responsibility is over the household and that upon betrothal the wife now belonged to her husband. At that time, treating women as the property was the norm. However, giving the ring as a pseudo-cattle brand rather than a tribute of love devalues the real meaning of engagement rings. Don't you think?

- **Ladies and Gentlemen is that love?**
- **Do believe the exchanging of rings in this manner exemplifies Christ's love for the church?**

Did you know that marriage is the first ordained relationship created by God? The wedding ring is a beautiful gift to give to a bride, but there is no greater gift than eternal life! In **Genesis 2:17**, God told Adam and Eve if they ate from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* that they would die. The serpent came to Eve and Adam in the garden and told them that they *would not* die and that they would become like God's instead (**Genesis 3:4-5**) and they believed him and ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil! The punishment was death. The curse of death was the judgment applied to Adam and Eve and all their descendants including us, from that day forward. However, our God always provides a way of escape from our sinful nature. Our escape is JESUS! **Yes, Jesus came to reverse the curse!**

Galatians 3:13

New International Version

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.

The moment Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross he broke the curse of death from our lives to allow each one of us to receive eternal life in Heaven.

Scripture teaches us in John 11:24-26:

John 11:24-26

New International Version

“²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Remember, we all have a choice to believe. Our God is such a gentleman that he will always ask for your permission before he moves forward in covenant with you. Husbands are to do the same before entering the same “right” of passage and ask permission of their earthly bride. ***Never forget, the true meaning of marriage is to exemplify Christ’s love for the church.*** Did you know we are the church?

1 Corinthians 3:9

King James Version

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building

Yes, and Jesus is the bridegroom, and the church (us) is His bride. And because Christ loved the church so much, he gave himself up for her. In marriage, husbands are called to love their wives in this same way. Men, are you willing to die for your wife? That is the ***real*** meaning behind the covenant of a wedding ring. When you exchange vows with your (future) wife, you are saying:

- ***“I will sacrifice myself for you.”***
- ***“I will protect you.”***
- ***“I will die for you...yet live for you”.***

Men don’t take the vow of marriage if this is something you can’t commit to doing. If you can’t be bound to the vows of this covenant than you are ***not*** ready for marriage.

Ephesians 5:25

New International Version

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

The Meaning Behind the Ring

What is a Signet Ring?

In biblical times, an engagement ring or a wedding ring was not explicitly described in the Bible. However, many rings were mentioned to describe the status and the importance of the individual receiving it. For instance, the **signet ring** is the earliest example of a ring mentioned in the Bible.

Luke 15:22

Amplified Bible

²² But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly bring out the best robe [for the guest of honor] and put it on him; and give him a **ring for his hand**, and sandals for his feet.

In Luke 15:22, in the parable of the Prodigal son, who squandered his father's inheritance. The prodigal son returned to his father's house with self-disdain for himself believing that he was no longer worthy to be his father's son; let alone to have a **position** within his father's household. However, his father readily accepted his son back and established him as a guest of honor by **placing a signet ring on his finger**. He made it clear to both his son and the world that his son, had his seal of approval.

"Ancient kings used signet rings to designate authority, honor, or ownership. A signet contained an emblem unique to the king. Official documents were sealed with a dollop of soft wax impressed with the king's signet, usually kept on a ring on his finger. Such a seal certified the document as genuine, much like a notary public's stamp today."

Got Questions | What does it mean that Zerubbabel was the LORD's signet ring (Haggai 2:23)?

What Are Ring Rights?

Understanding the Rights and Privileges of the Ring

Ring Rights are the rights and privileges provided to you by God the moment you enter the covenant bonds of marriage. It is a prestigious right to have that happily married couples hold in high regard.

However, just as the wedding ring can authenticate or notify others you are happily married. Likewise, while wearing a wedding ring, the actions of one spouse can signal that one or both spouses are unhappily married. Meaning, if the husband or a wife accepts a marital ring but doesn't honor his or her marital vows, he or she brings shame to their spouse, to their household and most importantly they bring shame to the covenant of marriage. Remember, when you are married you are an example of Christ's love for the church, and whenever you act "outside" of the marriage mandate (covenant). The guilty parties can effectively teach others seeking marriage to question the purpose and value of marriage in the first place. **Did you know you have a responsibility to act Godly in marriage?**

Scripture teaches us in 1 Corinthians 7:2-4 that each man should have one wife and each woman should have one husband:

1 Corinthians 7:2-4 Amplified Bible

² But because of [the temptation to participate in] sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ³ The husband must fulfill his [marital] duty to his wife [with good will and kindness], and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have [exclusive] authority over her own body, but the husband *shares with her*; and likewise the husband does not have [exclusive] authority over his body, but the wife *shares with him*.

A Little History...

The betrothal ring predates its use in Christian and Jewish wedding ceremonies. In fact, Egyptians believed that the ring finger contained a "**vena amoris**" or a "vein of love" that led from the fourth finger on the left hand directly to the heart. Greeks first adopted this tradition of placing a ring on the fourth finger as a form of devotion to their loved ones.

The Romans then adopted this belief after conquering the Greeks and began giving wedding rings in matrimonial ceremonies even though "*vena amoris*" is not anatomically correct. It is true, the Egyptians are the ones that shaped wedding rings into circles to imitate the shapes of the sun and moon their demigods. But the ultimate reason a ring was provided was to show an eternity of love since circles have no beginning or end.

The King that Blesses the Ring

He Loved it so HE put a Ring on It!

Haggai 2:23

Amplified Bible

²³ On that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, My servant,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you [through the Messiah, your descendant] **like a signet ring, for I have chosen you** [as the one with whom to renew My covenant to David's line],'" declares the LORD of hosts.

At the time, Zerubbabel was the living descendant of King David and Jesus the future Messiah. Zerubbabel was also the governor of the rebuilt city of Jerusalem. Years earlier, Jehoiachin lost his throne and was deported to Babylon. Jehoiachin, was described as **God's signet ring removed from God's finger** (Jeremiah 22:24). However, Zerubbabel was viewed as the signet ring put on God's finger that would never ever be removed. By God, symbolizing Zerubbabel as his signet ring he was stating that Zerubbabel was "chosen" for a higher purpose. **Thus, being set apart as special and in a place of honor in the Kingdom of God.**

Psalms 4:3

Amplified Bible

³ But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself [and dealt wonderfully with] the godly man [the one of honorable character and moral courage—the one who does right].

The LORD hears *and* responds when I call to Him.

This makes sense, that God not only set Zerubbabel apart but hears the call of a Godly man. Many men don't know that the way that a husband treats his wife can determine if his prayers will be heard by God.

1 Peter 3:7 Amplified Bible

⁷In the same way, you husbands, live with *your wives* in an understanding way [with great gentleness and tact, and with an intelligent regard for the marriage relationship], as with ^{la}someone physically weaker, since she is a woman. Show her honor *and* respect as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that **your prayers will not be hindered or ineffective.**

Furthermore, Zerubbabel reestablished the lineage of David, the line from which Jesus was born from. Zerubbabel was chosen to bring His purpose and to also bring glory to God. Additionally, upon marriage wives are also set apart and in marriage to bring glory to God for His purpose. The way the wife acts and if she can accept the spirit of **submission** upon the moment her husband puts an engagement ring, followed by the bridal band upon her finger. ***Accepting the ring exemplifies to others not only that the wife belongs to her husband in marriage but that she is also special, set apart, and held in high esteem just as Christ esteemed the church in a special place of recognition in her husband's life that no other woman can ever hold...nor take.***

Do You Have the “Submission” Sparkle?!

As a wife, the best way for submission to sparkle not only on your wedding finger but in your marriage is to understand that the word “**submission**” is not a bad word. ***Submit***” means “**to give over or yield to the power or authority of another.**” It does not mean that you as a woman are inferior, **Ephesians 5:22-24** lays out the line of succession, in marriage, the heavenly hierarchy of the household. However, to be clear submission is not domineering either.

The truth is many wives would feel more confident in submitting to their spouses if their husbands cultivated the atmosphere of love around them better. Meaning, sometimes it is hard to submit to being led down an unclear path if you do not trust where your husband is leading you to. Wives need a destination, a marriage plan to trust, and to understand where the future of their relationship

is going. A wife needs to know where she stands in her marriage, this cannot be a mystery. A flourishing marriage must be rooted in submission to gain submission. ***In Ephesians 5:21, it states, submit (or yield) to one another out of reverence for the Lord.*** This is where husbands and wives must cultivate ***“yielding”*** communication. As co-heirs to the throne of grace, make your feelings known to one another. Be ***“Naked and Not Ashamed”*** in dating leading to marriage so that clear communication is not foreign to you and tell each other what you need to feel safe. Submission in this context also mirrors Christ’s love for the church. Submission simply means “respect”.

- ***Wives, will you respect your husbands’ position in the household as the initiator of love, as protector, and as the spiritual head of your family?***

If you cannot honor your husband...then why get married? If you can’t, **don’t** get married.

Build Your Marriage on the Rock!

Marriage is not for the weak or faint of heart. You must be rock steady if you are going to endure the hurdles that can challenge you, your spouse, and your marital vows themselves. If you are getting married to feel loved, or to bring wholeness to yourself, then you may need to seek a relationship with God first and not be married at this time. And that’s okay, God wants you at full strength so you can stand the test of time. This may sound tough, but our assignment is to ensure you and your significant other as well as your spouse know exactly what you are walking into and how to overcome in marriage once you do get married. Marriage is servanthood, it is putting the needs of your mate over your own. Get ready!

Look At the Size of That Rock!

Psalm 62:1-2

New International Version

Psalm 62^[a]

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

¹ Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.

² Truly he is **my rock** and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

Remember, it is not the size of the rock on your wedding ring that will make you happy, it's not even about how pretty your wedding dress is, or how handsome you will look in your tuxedo. We believe these items are beautiful...for one day. **It is not how big your Rock is, it's how big your God is! He is the rock of your foundation he is the Lord of your life!** In this season, lean on God like never before. We know from personal experience and countless couples; God is a way maker! However, what you do from the moment you say **"I do"** is for a lifetime; it is a covenant. It is meant to be unbreakable. However, it is only unbreakable if you do it God's way. It is what will make your marriage a marriage. It's what makes your marriage shine bright like a diamond!

Pressure Makes Diamonds

Just think of the pressure as a work in progress. We are faced with trials and temptations to test us. Can you stand the test? If you can sooner or later, you will be turned into a diamond. We all start out carbon and then God forms us into a diamond, His precious gem, a child of God.

Romans 5:3-4

And not only that but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Just like that element of carbon experienced pressure to become diamonds, we face pressure in the form of temptation and trials to help form us into a diamond. It is only when we keep pressing on that the diamond is formed. When we face these tribulations and overcome it with God, we will bring perseverance. Note the keyword is with God because we cannot do anything without God!

(Philippians 4:13)