

Why You Should Wait for a Godly Man

After 20 years of marriage, my husband, Jerome Haywood, is still pliable under the hand of God. I don't know if women realize the value of a man whose heart is soft toward God. I think most women value other qualities that are useless in 20 years.

We got married on the first day of spring in 1993.

Just last weekend, we both received prayer several times at our church after the service. The glory of God swept over us. In one moment of God counseling us at the altar, my focus for the purpose of our marriage was restored. God brought us into each other's lives for His glory.

Since that one moment, we've prayed together and went on a date. We have a zest about being with each other. This would not have been possible if my husband didn't have a soft heart toward God.

My advice to young women who want to marry a godly man is to become a godly woman. Marry a man who has a soft heart toward God. A man who hears and responds to God is a treasure to his friends and his family.

And choose a guy based on his potential in 20 years. I see too many woman that want the hunk or the guy flowing in cash. How about the quiet guy at church who serves faithfully and works hard? No, you want the bad boy who just walked into church, or maybe you met him at work and hope he comes to church with you.

When Sarah married Abraham, he wasn't a father of nations.

When Bathsheba married King David, it was after he sent someone to kill her husband.

When Ruth married Boaz, she was a widow in a foreign land.

God called Abraham to be a father of nations and to a land he had never visited. How would you like your husband to come in and say, "Honey, pack your bags! God spoke to me and told me that we were to go, but I don't know where."

Or how about when Bathsheba's first son dies because David killed her husband. How do you handle that tragedy because of your marriage to the king?

Or Ruth, who has to follow her mother-in-law's instructions to the letter to catch Boaz's attention?

These remarkable women married remarkable men. Do you really want a godly husband? Then plan to have no control. Plan to let him lead you to God only knows where because he is trying to figure it out himself. Be resilient, flexible, trusting God.

When I married Jerome, I asked him about his five-year-plan. He said his plan was to take care of me and his kids. He had no specifics, but his goal was to be a good husband and father.

I remember his marriage proposal at Shelter Rose Garden in Columbia like it happened yesterday. He shared with me his heart and the calling on his life. Then he asked me if I was game for the adventure: "Will you join me in walking with God?"

Marrying a man who is after God's heart is marrying someone who is walking with God. He is changing and growing in his own walk with God.

There have been moments where I was frustrated with Jerome. But instead of harping on him about my frustrations, I cried out to God. Every time, God would change me. Then my husband would repent of the very thing I was frustrated about. I've always been amazed at how faithful God is to keeping our marriage together.

I think this dynamic of God is a lost treasure for most marriages. Most couples don't even consider God's concerns or cares about their relationship. They are focused on what they want to get out of it.

I know I was self-centered, manipulative and critical when we first got married. The poor guy had no idea what he was getting into. He thought God was answering his prayers, but was he in for a surprise—I needed to be changed!

Jerome worked in retail, so he came home late at night. I would go out with my girlfriends for coffee and get home around 9 p.m. to throw dinner together. One night he came home to a piece of chicken on a plate.

Jerome never complained. He made himself mashed potatoes to go with his piece of chicken and told me about his day. I'm amazed at how resilient and uncomplaining he has been all these years.

When the kids arrived, he never complained about going out in the middle of the night because we ran out of formula or our son, Alex, wouldn't sleep without his pacifier. Or when he had to change diapers or stay up with the boys because I was too exhausted to get up at 3 a.m. to feed them.

Girls, if you want a godly man who will be a great dad, look at that guy you're dating and ask yourself if he would go out in the middle of the night to buy a pacifier for your kid. Or does he read his Bible every day and pray? Does the guy have any interest in God or church?

I'm telling you that what you're dating is what will be laying next to you in 20 years. You cannot change him. Only God can change him, but you have to change too.

For the love of a godly man, what are you willing to do to prepare yourself for him?

I believe there are godly men in my church who are always

overlooked by gals wanting the flashy types with hardly any character. These guys are not going to be on the cover of *GQ* magazine, but neither are you going to grace the cover of a magazine. They will go out in the middle of the night to buy the pacifier to help get your child to sleep. Or get up at 3 a.m. to take care of your child so you can sleep.

For the love of a godly man, become a godly woman. Let God have His way in your life now. Trust Him to bring you the person you want to be with. And trust Him completely while you're waiting.

*Adapted from **Leilani Haywood's** blog, **Keeping It Real**. Leilani is the editor of SpiritLed Woman. She is a Kansas City, award-winning writer and columnist. Her work has been published in the Kansas City Star, Metro Voice, Focus on the Family and other publications. Follow SpiritLed Woman on Twitter @spiritledmag or on Facebook.*