



WAITING ON PRINCE CHARMING

I have never had a boyfriend in my 22½ years. Do I want to be married and have a family? Absolutely. But do I want to be married to a husband and have a family that's rooted in God? Even more so. I'm waiting for the love of my life.

I have seen far too many people my age settle down too quickly, only to have issues—or worse, fall apart—because they did not take their time in getting to know each other and because they didn't decide from the beginning that God would be a part of their relationship. So, I decided to put together a little field guide on how to prepare for a relationship, especially one with marriage in mind.

1. Put God first, always.

This is a definite first, and it can be done in many ways.

One idea that I absolutely love is starting the tradition of texting Bible verses to the other person, even when it's just on Sunday mornings. It's incredible when you can get to know a person through their favorite passages in Scripture, and it can serve as a gateway for studying the Bible later on.

I will say that placing God first is **much** easier if the faith backgrounds of the two people in a relationship are the same. I've seen couples be "unequally yoked," and sometimes it can succeed if the Christian is strong in her faith, but I've not seen this without fault, either.

Most of all, putting God first allows Him to place exactly who He wants in your life in His timing. Waiting on this can be easier said than done, though, which leads to my next point.

2. Waiting to choose a mate has benefits.

I've said it before and I'll say it again—I refuse to settle. Sometimes, refusing to settle means that you have to wait, but that's okay. I can think of three benefits to waiting.

First, waiting lets you figure out exactly what you want in a future spouse. As I've matured, my "list" of qualifications—especially the non-negotiables—have changed over the years. They are less about physical qualifications and more about leadership and emotional, mental, and especially spiritual support.

Second, waiting allows you to see what you want your relationship with your future spouse to be based on other relationships around you. I have been so blessed to have my own parents as an example of how I want my future marriage to be; they are rooted in God and they place each other before themselves, and I admire that greatly. They inspire me to wait for the one who will adore me, not just like me for a fleeting moment and move on to someone else.

Third, waiting allows you to set clear physical and emotional boundaries when you do start to date. Besides not having a boyfriend in my 22 years of life, I've actually never been kissed. I'm saving that kiss for the man who adores me, and whom I adore in return—my Prince Charming, if you will. I refuse to throw that kiss away on someone who wants me only for my physical beauty, or for his own gain and pleasure. Because of this, I am incredibly selective when it comes to romantic relationships. I would rather get to know the other person, and then let him hold my hand.

I have faith that the Lord honors me for honoring Him in waiting to share myself, and not give pieces of myself away to other guys. Besides, when the moment of my first kiss finally comes, it will be magical and joyous beyond my wildest dreams, just because I waited.

3. Keep your future spouse in mind.

Waiting can be hard, but the good news is that the person that God set apart to be with you **is out there**. It's an incredible concept. Here's what I would suggest that you do to keep that person in mind.

First, pray for your future spouse. Pray for him to seek God in all things. Pray for his future career, his hopes, his dreams, his highs and lows. Praying for him allows you to invest in his life well before you know who he is, and I bet it will help you once you are married.

Second, keep your own spiritual life in check. Make sure that you are following God's will for your life. If you do so, God will keep you on the right track, and will help you and your future spouse be together. This will help with the waiting part, too.

Third, do things for him that will benefit your future marriage. Write notes to him to open on your wedding night, or write him a journal to read that's full of love letters that were written before you even met. Things like this definitely keep your future spouse in mind and will more than likely make you stronger as a couple just because you showed him love well before you said, "I do."

I'll close with an anecdote. Let's say there's a princess whose bedroom is in a high tower. She waits and waits for her prince charming. Several men call up to her from the base of this tower, flattering her, but she turns them away ... until one day, a prince climbs the tower, brick by brick, without complaint. He knocks at the window of the princess's tower. Hearing the strange sound, the princess's father the King meets him at the window and tells him to go through the castle's front door—the **right** way. The prince is happy to, of course. He sits down with her and her parents, gets to know her, and then he offers her the chance to see the world. Over time, the princess realizes that the prince would do anything for her love, and thus she adores him in return. And so they marry, and they live happily ever after. ▲