



Marry Wisely Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation

Ernie Baker

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Does marriage matter anymore? If so, is it even possible to have a stable marriage? How do you choose the right one? Is there anything to work on now, even before being in a relationship?

Marry Wisely, Marry Well teaches you how to start building your future marriage house even before you begin a relationship. Learn to make a wise choice of a spouse, and how to start preparing yourself for a future relationship that is truly built on Christ.

Marry Wisely Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation Details

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From Reader Review Marry Wisely Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation for online ebook

Rebecca Ray says

Marriage has been on my mind a lot lately. It's not just that I'm celebrating fifteen years with my Hubby this year. It's also that my oldest child turned eleven in March. I suddenly realize that he's half grown, and he's not far away from having feelings for girls, and I realize that in a few short years, he (and my other three) will be at the age to begin contemplating marriage. I wonder how I will counsel them and what I will do as they being to choose their marriage partners. So, when I received the opportunity to review Marry Wisely, Marry Well, I thought it could be a great resource to me in helping to prepare my children (and the children I teach) for marriage.

Ernie Baker has a testimony of a long and fruitful marriage, and he desires to help others do the same by helping them to prepare for marriage and to build their marriages on the right foundation. In this spirit, he divides his book into three sections.

In the first section, he begins by discussing wisdom and Christ as our foundation of wisdom. He discusses growing wiser about attraction by considering our idols along with our attractions. He explains that many marriages fail or do not flourish because they're not built on the right foundation. He explains God's design for marriage using the foundational scriptures in Genesis 1 & 2.

In the second section, he explains the first floor of marital preparation. The chapters deal with wise living during your single years. (Love this chapter because of the new insight I took into I Corinthians 7!) He also discusses the relationship skills and character traits required in the marital relationship. He writes about how to know when you're ready for marriage using six qualities for women from Proverbs 31 and a composite view of scripture for the Biblical man. These are to be used for self-evaluation as well as spousal evaluation. He discusses one of the ultimate questions of marrying people. "How will I know the right person?" He also discusses different methods of finding a spouse and evaluates each of them in light of scripture.

The final section of the book is a simple chapter devoted to the result of building wisely and explains what it means to have a marriage that glorifies God.

I truly thought that this was an excellent book to help you or your child evaluate where they are in the spectrum of being prepared for relationships. There are many questions at the end of the chapter, including questions for evaluating a future spouse by. I also liked that this was a book about working on yourself, on your own readiness, and that the ultimate message of the book is that, if your satisfaction is not in Christ, you won't find the satisfaction that you're looking for in the marital relationship. That is a big message that I think young people need to hear over and over again. So many people are just waiting for the right person to "complete" them, and I think hearing that this is an unrealistic expectation is the best thing they can hear.

I love the evaluation of dating, courtship, online dating, and other spouse finding methods in relation to scripture. As a parent, it can be difficult to find the right Biblical mix for your teenagers without being overly legalistic. I like that Baker cuts through some of the arguments for and against each method by evaluating where it is adding to or taking away from scripture. I found this section very helpful.

All in all, I found this book to be a very helpful addition to our library, and it is one that I will refer to often as we continue into the years in which my children will begin to evaluate marriage and the relationships that

they wish to have in the romantic sphere of life.

Disclaimer: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Sherry Lynn says

And I thought...Marry Wisely, Marry Well is an excellent resource for young people. The excellence of this book is spoken for in the above video. This is a book filled with Wisdom. The book begins with the truth that a good and Godly marriage is built on Wisdom. Wisdom from God and building a firm foundation in and through Christ.

The book which is simple and easy to read is filled with scripture reference and stories.

I think what impressed me the most was the Marriage Project at the end of the book. The author makes a point of referring the

reader that isn't a 'Follower of Christ' back to chapter 2

Christ The Foundation of Wisdom.

Although this book is powerful and resourceful I would not expect a high school student to be ready for these resources.

This in my opinion is an excellent book for college students.

Although it is easy to read for an adult it is a little wordy for high school students. And the concept is more mature.

I could see this book as an excellent resource for studies for groups facilitated by youth ministers.

I could see home school students or students that are very ministry driven to be in a place to dive into the resources and wisdom of this book.

Chrys Jones says

Don't Skip the Subtitle!

Have you ever failed to read the subtitle of a book only to realize that you missed the main point before you ever started? If you read Ernie Baker's Marry Wisely, Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation without considering the subtitle, you could be missing the most important aspect of this fantastic book! Many times, young singles (I was one 3 years ago!) want a book that will tell them how to find the perfect spouse, start the perfect marriage, and give them a pain-free path to end their loneliness. This is not that book. This is a book about personal preparation for marriage and using God-given wisdom to find a godly spouse. I wish this book had been written when I was still single because it would have been a major help when I was pursuing my wife. Marry Wisely, Marry Well is a book that I will add to the biblical counseling section of my bookshelf for any pre-marital counseling I do with couples pursuing marriage.

Laying The Foundation: Wisdom Is Key

This first section about wisdom leans heavily on scripture and contains some insights about salvation, the “put off-put on” cycle of sanctification, God’s purposes for marriage, and the wisdom about attraction. His discussion of attraction was extremely insightful, and is absolutely necessary for singles as they pursue a godly mate. He shows how the culture says “let your heart be your guide” while scripture teaches us to “watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life“ (Proverbs 4:23). Ultimately, when we follow our deceitful hearts (Jeremiah 17:9) in attraction, we can easily fall into worship the following heart idols: control, pleasure, keeping people happy, success, material things, money, and comfort. Though none of these things are inherently sinful, if we chase them instead of God, they become greater than God and objects of our worship. Furthermore, God didn’t create marriage to point it to ourselves, and if we build our marriages on idols, we will be building on sand.

Personal Preparation

Baker aims for his teaching in this book to be practical as each chapter ends with a “starting to prepare now” section. The goal is not to wait until marriage is imminent to begin preparing for it; that reveals a heart that wants marriage more than true spiritual growth. Section 1 teaches the foundations of pursuing a spouse, but section 2 is where the highlighter and the notepad should definitely come for singles who are ready to use their singleness for God’s glory. Baker gives some very wise (and fatherly) teaching on how singles can live wisely, use wisdom in relationships, make wise choices about when to marry, and to discern that God’s providence is trustworthy. The final chapter in section 2, chapter 9, is one that should be read slowly, thoughtfully, and prayerfully by every single Christian seeking marriage. Here Baker discusses various methods of finding a spouse (cohabitation, traditional dating, courtship, etc.). Too many times Christian couples (myself included) simply follow the world’s standards on finding a spouse without every questioning what the bible teaches. Baker humbly states his opinion on how a spouse should be found, but he emphasizes being a godly person in search of a godly spouse using biblical wisdom more than any specific method.

An Excellent Resource

As a married man reading this book, I see so many aspects of my life that are still in need of improvement. Marry Wisely, Marry Well could be a useful resource for Christians who made some major mistakes in the pre-marital phase of their relationship with their spouse. For the single person, this book is a gold mine for areas that may not be on the radar (or that are being ignored because singleness is an area of struggle and weakness). This book is first, and most importantly, about becoming the spouse God intends His people to be. Only after pursuing God and His wisdom should Christians pursue a godly spouse to build a God-glorifying marriage with. If you are single and looking for ways to glorify God in your pursuit of marriage, buy this book and apply the biblical principles from it. If you are looking to help single people in your life set out on a path to a God-Glorifying marriage, Marry Wisely, Marry Well is one of many excellent resources to consider as you do so.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review for Cross Focused Reviews.

Joe Westbrook says

In "Marry Wisely, Marry Well", Ernie Baker lays out many things I wish I had been taught more consistently

during my formative and single years. Using the analogy of building a house, the reader is brought from the single life ("building a foundation") through married life (building the 1st and 2nd floors and the roof).

While any married couple would benefit from reading this book (no matter where you are in your relationship years, it's not too late to work on any problem areas), I would recommend this book especially to singles and those preparing for marriage. With thoughtful questions at the end of each chapter that ask the reader to reflect on him/herself as well as his/her potential spouse, there is potential for a great deal of discussion with friends, a pastor, and/or a marriage/pre-marriage counselor, and personal reflection.

Note: I received a free copy of this book through Cross-Focused Reviews in exchange for my honest appraisal. I was not required to provide positive feedback.

Peter LeDuc says

This is a crucial read for the youth and those who minister to them. He emphasizes wisdom, worship, and maturity in this guide to personal preparation for marriage. He shows that becoming a person worthy of marrying is to be prioritized in this process. This is the best pre-engagement resource I have read and have used with my counselees who desire to pursue marriage, but are ignorant and intimidated of the process.

"I would urge you to commit to starting the construction of your future marriage house even before being in a relationship" (20).

"Making another fallen person your chief security leads to nothing but frustration, anger and disappointment because they can't be God" (44).

"How do you know when you have grown up or are growing up?...When you have shown you are ready to assume the role of a biblical man or woman, you are then reaching the level of maturity necessary to be married...If we follow these criteria, there will be many ready for marriage before the mid-to-late twenties" (106).

"Readiness [for marriage] is not connected so much to age as it is to your maturity" (117).

"Becoming soul mates can happen only as you both practice the principles from God's Word. My wife and I are soul mates resulting from years of commitment, using proper relationship skills and understanding roles" (130).

"It is as blunt as this: whatever you have put into marriage preparation is what you will experience in your future marriage" (153).

Blake says

When it comes to relationships, more specifically, to dating and marriage relationships, I think of some excellent resources that are available for people to read. Perhaps, one of the best books available for a person who is single but is desiring to get married some day, or a single person currently pursuing a relationship, is Ernie Baker's book, "Marry Wisely, Marry Well." I have yet to meet a person who says, "Yeah, I want to

marry the wrong person." That kind of thinking is, in all probability, non-existent. Certainly, those of us who desire to get married don't want our marriage to end in divorce. We've all seen (or experienced) the horrific heartache when a marriage dissolves. In this wonderful, easy to read book, Baker provides an abundance of Biblical wisdom for those desiring marriage. In my humble opinion, every single person who desires marriage, should take some time to read through this book. It'll provide you with much insight into how your Creator designed marriage and how He provides for you all the necessary resources to choose wisely and to live well. (*For some reason, Goodreads only had the Kindle Edition pop up on its listing. I don't use kindle but whether you read the book via kindle or hard copy, the review stands the same).

Austin says

Baker does a fantastic job a laying biblical foundations for marriage. One of the best chapters was chapter 3 on attraction. I would wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone preparing for marriage or who is already married.

Beth says

Ernie Baker wrote his book Marry Wisely Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation "to bring home to those who are not married--in high school, college or beyond--a hope that you don't have to experience a failed marriage--hope that the Lord, through Scripture, will give you wisdom to choose a spouse. It is also written with the conviction that you can start preparing now for marriage--before you are in a relationship. Prepare yourself now by doing things that will lead to stability in your future home," (Kindle location 112).

The author uses the analogy that building a good marriage is like building a house. Mr. Baker notes that the foundation of the house is built on wisdom with Christ being foundation of all wisdom, then he likens the first floor of the house to the wisdom of the individual waiting for marriage, and finally, he points out that "the roof that crowns your marriage will be the glory of God," (Kindle location 2535). He uses a lot of Bible verses to support his contentions, but there are also many counseling questions and checklists (Kindle location 834, 1147, 1226, 2607, 2611, & 2626) and secular research results (Kindle location 99, 103, 186, 190, 906, 1369, 1743, and 1745) in his book that are not found in the Bible. Rather than exegeting what the Word of God says about marriage, Mr. Baker uses his counseling experiences along with current research statistics to show what he thinks is the best way to approach marriage and then looks to the Bible for support. This can be seen from his use of the phrase 'I believe' twenty-eight times, the phrase 'I do not believe' four times, and the phrase 'I think' four times (six times in all, but only four in the context of the author's knowledge of marriage). In contrast, he uses the phrase 'Scripture says' three times [the phrases 'the Bible says' or 'the Word of God says' are not in his book].

Because Mr. Baker is not drawing out what the Word of God actually says about marriage, he is able to make marriage into a works-based blessing from God. He encourages the reader to "think that God will bless you with a spouse if you are willing to serve him faithfully during your single years," and follows up this advice by quoting Matthew 6:33, 'But seek first his kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you,' (Kindle location 1238). This Scripture is taken from the middle of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where the context is not marriage. Similarly, he makes wisdom into a works-based blessing as well when he says: "Let me give you three reasons why the Lord reserves this wisdom for those who are willing to work hard to get it," (Kindle location 458). But James 1:5-8 tells believers to obtain wisdom by asking

God in faith.

The author continues to read his own ideas into the Bible as he looks at Genesis 1:26 and contends that "marriage provides a unique opportunity to glorify God when the husband and wife are in a redeemed relationship reflecting his image," (Kindle location 944). But the Bible tells us that redemption is found only in Jesus Christ (not through a spouse, nor the act of getting married) and that an individual believer is conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29), not the couple. Scripture plainly tells us that the marriage relationship is a picture of Christ and His Church, (Eph. 5:23), which the author agrees with (Kindle location 997 & 1359); but unlike Mr. Baker, Scripture does not liken the marriage relationship to the image of God. Mr. Baker also states that "we can legitimately say that marriage is the crowning action of creation," (Kindle location 958), and that "creation was not complete until Adam and Eve were united to live in relationship with one another to fulfill God's purposes for them as a team," (Kindle location 964); but there are no Bible verses that support these statements.

In addition, Mr. Baker includes the theme of Christianity-as-a-community when he states that "Christianity is about the group, and the world needs to see something radically different in the way we deal with one another," (Kindle location 1498). Christianity is about Christ and Christ alone, and each believer is saved individually by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, when dealing with the issue of whether or not someone will hear audibly from God when seeking a spouse, Mr. Baker concludes that "Scripture warns us to be careful of placing experiences and voices above the written Word of God," (Kindle location 2097) and that God's Word is honored "by showing that the Lord guides us primarily through his Word," (Kindle location 2130, emphasis mine). Unfortunately, the author does not come out and clearly state that no one hears the voice of God (the Father, the Son, and/or the Holy Spirit) outside of the Bible because the canon of Scripture is closed.

While the author has some good questions to ponder for those considering marriage, his advice is more pragmatic than biblical. After finishing this book, I asked myself if I thought it was profitable for my two young adult sons to read Marry Wisely Marry Well. Ultimately, I concluded that it would not be profitable for them; therefore, I can't recommend it to other Christians either.

"God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them," (The Baptist Confession of Faith, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2).

Melissa says

Coming from an ultra-conservative background, I had heard much of this before. I agreed with most of it, but didn't find a whole lot new. But it was good, and helpful in that it made me take a deeper look at my heart and what I can do to help prepare for marriage now.

As someone pointed out on amazon.com, the statistics mentioned in the book may scare away someone from marrying unless they have a really good job, but as they were just facts stated from polls, and not harped on, I don't think this a big issue.

Each chapter ends with a set of questions to ponder/write out the answers to.

Overall it is a nice, concise book on marriage, wisdom, and loving God with all your heart.

Thanks to crossfocusedreviews.com for my free copy to review! My opinions stated here are in no way coerced.

Bethany says

I really enjoyed this book. It brought up points that were new, and I hadn't thought of before. It helped me to think about what I would need to do if it was God's will for me to get married. It prioritizes God first and foremost and explains how things fall into place after that. This book was really encouraging especially if you're considering what boundaries you need to set up in your own life.

Janelle Grove says

Some stuff was pretty basic, but it had some really helpful tools for digging into my heart motivations and desires.

Abby says

The book audience was clearly written for early college age singles. Also at times it felt like marriage and a relationship are being presented as a reward for good behavior. All that being said it did spark interesting conversations at book club.

Aaron says

A cursory glance at the relationship section in any Christian bookstore reveals that there is a great interest in the topic of relationships. Many of these books are designed to help marriages that are in trouble or are experiencing some sort of difficulty. There are generally few books which prepare a young person for marriage. Those that do tackle this topic are generally promoting some sort of methodology which promises to be "the Biblical method". *Marry Wisely, Marry Well* by Ernie Baker is a different sort of book. The main principle running throughout the book is to pursue wisdom by fearing the Lord above a specific method.

Baker begins by laying a foundation for wisdom in the person of Christ. He helps the reader to see his or her attractions and encourages us to re-prioritize those things which capture our hearts around Christ. Baker gives many examples. For instance, a common scenario posed by Baker is one in which a woman marries a man because he was an assertive male; and divorces him because he was a domineering husband. Looking at this example, he demonstrates that her affections were set upon the wrong thing. Her heart was motivated by its affections and in doing so she lusted for a strong man who would protect her. Her affections were disordered and she created an idol out of her feelings of security. To be fair, Baker doesn't say that the desire for a strong husband is wrong, but when it becomes the driving motivation and that desire becomes the

"ruling desire of your heart" then your affections are fundamentally disordered. The same could be said for marrying a person simply because they provide a rich social life, are a romantic, or athletic. Whatever the desire is, it must be ruled by Christ. When it is not, we forsake wisdom for things which will absolutely disappoint.

The following chapters are focused on living as a single person. In here, Baker emphasizes the priority of being involved in a church and reorients the reader's mind toward a proper view of sexuality. In here, Baker discusses the role of sexuality within the life of the single person and counters the cultural myth that sex is something that we need for fulfillment. In this he points to Christ as "the most fully human person who has ever lived" and yet was celibate. While emphasizing that sex is a gift from God and a pleasure which He has given us for our enjoyment, sex in itself cannot meet the desire for fulfillment that we have. Sex, like all other things must be oriented toward Christ. Baker reminds us to keep an eternal perspective on marriage and points out that while we remain married here, there will be a time when the office of marriage is fulfilled in Christ and no longer binds men and women together.

Using Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3, Baker continues by listing key ingredients for a wise relationship. Among these are kindness, compassion, patience, and other fruit which scripture lists as being the mark of the believer. The following chapters help the reader to identify when they are ready for marriage and what to look for in yourself to know that you are ready. He ends the book by examining various methodologies for preparing for marriage such as betrothal, courtship, traditional dating, and cohabitation. In each of these he carefully examines where each methodology adds to or takes away from Biblical wisdom. While not prescribing a methodology he states that his belief is that the best model would lie somewhere between traditional dating and courtship/biblical dating but "leaning toward courtship". His only warning when assessing how this methodology can add to or take away from scripture is if it is promoted as the only biblical way. The reason for this, he says, is because it starts the process of promoting a methodology over wisdom. He endorses this not because it is the "only biblical way" but because it involves parental involvement and encourages purity. Finally, Baker gives a glimpse of what a marriage looks like when biblical wisdom is applied to the preparation for marriage. It's not perfect by any stretch, but is one which honors Christ.

I really appreciate the way in which Baker is committed to biblical wisdom over methodologies. While I am a strong supporter of courtship I recognize that scripture does not spell it out as nicely as we wish it would. This is a good thing. It confronts our desire to be able to cling on to something and say that we have done it. While I am not against methodologies in general, I agree with the author that we must not use a methodology as a means to promote self righteousness or to be closed off to what scripture might say that doesn't fit quite as neatly with an ideology. The general thrust of the book is to seek wisdom in Christ and through scripture and to prepare yourself as an individual who is characterized by the fruit of the spirit. Seeking these things and in yourself will form a strong foundation that will weather the many storms that a marriage relationship will bring your way. This book would be an excellent addition to a homeschooling character study since a lot of homeschooling is about building strong character in children. Parents and young adults alike will benefit from Baker's biblical approach and parental wisdom. *Marry Wisely, Marry Well* is a top-notch book on the topic of preparing for marriage and should read by anyone who will be facing these life decisions in the near future.

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Marry Wisely, Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation from christianbook.com

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Shepherd Press in exchange for an online review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Brian says

A good book for someone that hasn't had godly influence in their lives regarding dating and marriage. For those that have, it is a good reminder of the biblical principles regarding healthy relationships.

Harold Cameron says

"Marry Wisely, Marry Well by Ernie Baker is a book for such a time as this in our Christian culture when the God ordained and established institution of marriage is under fierce attack from all sides, when Christian dating all too often leads to immoral and ungodly behavior with devastating consequences, and the divorce rate among Christians is at an all-time high.

In his new book, author Baker provides solid Biblical wisdom as to how to plan and prepare for a Christ honoring marriage, explaining how to put Christ first in all things relating to getting married. He addresses the issue of how to deal with our "attractions" with others in a Biblical and godly way with someone that could potentially be our future husband or wife. As we struggle with the issues of our being attracted to someone with the idea of potentially marrying them, he offers invaluable insights regarding how to live during the single years before we get married. And when we think we have finally found "the one" for us that God has for us to marry, he skillfully shares about what to do and not to do during the dating process leading up to marriage.

The book is divided into 3 parts with Part 1 being "Laying the Good Foundation" offering practical Biblical steps how to do so...that is lay a good foundation for a Biblical marriage that will honor and glorify God. Part 2 "Building a Structure to Live In" he builds off the foundation he laid in Part 1 sharing what we need to know and do during our single years to prepare us for marriage and then moves us on to the things we need to know that will properly prepare us for marriage such as handling communication and relational issues properly and knowing when the time has finally come and it is right for you to get married. In Part 3 he shares about the outcome of being a wise builder, properly planning for marriage, leading to a marriage that glorifies God and produces good for all who are involved - the husband, the wife, the children, the church and the world. And at the end of each chapter there is a section "Starting To Prepare Now" and then "Questions to Ask" such as "Questions to Ask About a Potential Spouse" and others relating to the material in each different chapter of the book which you personally respond to.

If you are desiring to get married or are working towards getting married and want to have a God glorifying Christ honoring marriage, then this is the Biblical and practical book for you. It will help you immensely. I highly recommend your purchasing this book, reading it, responding to the questions and then applying what you have learned so when you finally meet "the one" you will be as ready as any Christian can be for marriage.

To learn more about the book Marry Wisely, Marry Well visit the publisher's website at

<http://www.shepherdpress.com>

I received the book from Cross Focused Reviews and Shepherd Press as part of their Book Review Blogger program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."
