

HELPING FAMILIES GROW HEALTHY



Ron Wells and grandson, Hayden, with Doug Stone

The  
Point  
by Ron and Beth Wells  
Centrepoint Ministries

## Developing a PREFLIGHT PLAN for Marriage

— The Ten Commandments —

IN A RECENT VISIT WITH A COUPLE WANTING TO MARRY, I was reminded of flying with a friend named Doug Stone. Doug, who directed the USA Space Station in the late 90s, would carefully go over a preflight checklist before each of our takeoffs. Our lives depended on his inspection of the many flight details and the condition of his single engine plane. In the same way, couples entering marriage should go over their own “Preflight Checklist” before they begin their journey. The Bible’s “checklist for marriage” begins in Exodus 20:3-8 where God gives 5 commandments for a spiritual relationship with Himself. Before marriage, Christians should become very aware of how the person they are dating relates to God on a daily basis. Consider simple things like their desire to worship God and pray; their respect for God’s name; and their willingness to serve and follow God’s will.

In Exodus 20:12-17, the Commandments outline the next steps in the checklist for marriage by moving from a vertical relationship with God to a horizontal relationship with other people. **Verses 12 commands we are to honor our parents.** In a broken world of imperfect people, all families struggle relationally. However, a very good indicator of how someone will treat his or her future spouse is observing how that person treats family members and other loved ones.

**V13: Beware of the person who becomes angry/enraged on a regular basis.** In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus said the root of murder is uncontrolled anger; anger can become lethal to a healthy marriage relationship. In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus speaks of a person leaving before worship to ask forgiveness of another person. Within a healthy marriage, we regularly have to ask for and give forgiveness to each other.

**V14: God warns against adultery.** What does your prospective mate think about sex before or outside of marriage? Does he or she believe it violates the sanctity of a healthy covenant marriage? Research shows the divorce rate is significantly higher in couples living together before marriage than those who wait. Timothy Keller states in the *Meaning of Marriage*: “In counseling with many young adults today, I often hear them insist that it is unwise to marry someone before you have lived with them for a couple years... “dating” today is basically nothing

but a round of entertainment venues and sexual encounters. I have come to realize that many turn to cohabitation because they have no other way to get into the other person’s everyday life enough to assess their character.” Jesus taught that adultery begins first in the heart and in the playgrounds of our sexual imaginations [pornography] (Matthew 5:27-28). “Jesus clearly shows a different angle. Instead of focusing on the outward sin of sleeping around, Jesus turns inward and shines a bright light on the human heart, where sin is conceived and developed. He knew that men don’t do what they haven’t first imagined or fantasied,” *Every Man’s Bible* (p.1094).

**V15: Look carefully at the way your potential marriage partner handles finances and business deals.** Stealing and dishonesty are highly destructive to a marriage covenant.

Ask questions of people who know your partner. In a social networking culture, we often enter relationships based only on what the person has revealed to us. Transparency and trust are essential before and during marriage.

**V16: Telling the truth is closely related.** If someone is stealing from truth, they steal the means of having authentic communication with others.

Lying might involve a partial truth or “shading” the truth. Observe the way a person treats truth in insignificant ways. For example, they may ask you to say you are not home if they do not want to talk to someone, or they may lie on income tax statements. These are actions that are consistent with dealing loosely with truth. As Christians, we are to “practice” what we preach. These behaviors are warnings on a Preflight Checklist to marriage.

**V17: Coveting our neighbors’ good things.** A covetous person is a selfish person. Though selfishness may appear “cute” in a dating relationship, it is lethal to a long-term covenant marriage. Be sure your eyes are wide open to recognize a covetous spirit, both in yourself and in the person you plan to marry. Our greatest desire should be Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Lust has been described as “putting secondary things in primary position.” None of these things in themselves may be wrong, but they become so when they violate our priorities. ♦

“If things go well with the family,  
life is worth living; when the family  
falters, life falls apart.”

Michael Novak

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## Centrepoinc Activities: 2014

- Jan 5 Preaching at Southern Oaks Baptist Church, Tyler, TX
- Jan 7–12 Pastor/Family Conference, Jamaica
- Jan 26 Preaching at FBC Hawkins, Hawkins, TX
- Feb 22 Speaker, Statewide Cowboy Church Conference Tyler, TX
- Mar 8 Speaker, Men's Breakfast Lakeside Baptist Church, Canton, TX
- Mar 16 Preaching at First Baptist Church, Hawkins, TX
- May 4–7 Speaker, "Hope for the Home" Conference, Corbin, KY
- Jun 14–21 Pastor's Retreat at Bandera Lodge, Taylor Park, CO
- Jul 26 Speaker, Men's Conference at Central Baptist Church, Tyler, TX
- Sep 12–13 Retreat for Pastors/Wives at Timberline Baptist Camp, Tyler, TX

### 2014 Tentative Dates

- April Family/Marriage Lectures in East Asia
- July Speaker, Salmon Frenzy Anchorage, AK
- October "Hope for the Home" Conference, Uganda, Africa

### 2015 Tentative Dates

- January "Hope for the Home," Jamaica

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## Benefits of a Marriage "Flight Plan"

**"Home is the bottom line of life, the anvil upon which attitudes and convictions are hammered out—the single most influential force in our earthly existence. No price tag can adequately reflect its value."**  
Chuck Swindoll

As my pilot friend, Doug, methodically went over his checklist before takeoff, his last step included filing a "Flight Plan" with the air traffic controllers. Each marriage should also have a Flight Plan—a higher destination than happiness and family, beautiful houses and wonderful trips to exotic places. God created Covenant Marriage to be the most powerful mission force in the world. In Covenant Marriage, Christian families develop and train upon a lasting foundation that allows our families to grow and thrive. During the dating/engagement phase, we must remember that one day there will be more boarding the plane—our future children and grandchildren.

Doug shared with me another very important aspect of flying protocol that pilots use during "flight emergencies." Pilots are trained to "Climb, Confess and Communicate"

when faced with trouble of any kind. "Climb"—to put some distance between yourself and what is going to cause pain (the ground, a mountain); "Confess"—to admit to yourself and the passengers that you are in trouble; "Communicate"—to admit to the rest of the world you need help! These emergency commands are expedient for marriages as well.

Flying takes training, preparation time and mentoring. In the church family, we must become "flight instructors" for families by teaching and encouraging them for training in life. Marriage is more than a contract; it is a lifelong covenant between God and two people for life. Marriage not only brings great joy and pleasure, but it also gives definition and meaning to our families and world. It allows families to "mount up with wings like eagles" and fly as God meant for them to fly. ♦