

COURSE 14 — PREMARITAL PREPARATION

# BEFORE YOU SAY I DO: PREMARITAL PREPARATION FOR A LASTING COVENANT

**Final Summary & Video Script Guide**

Lloyd Allen | Marriage Educator, Therapist, and Family Coach

MrMarriage.com • lloydallen.org • Fixing Marriage Academy, Inc.

*8 Modules | Each Module on Its Own Page*

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# MODULE 1 — KNOW YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CHOOSE

*The Most Dangerous Person to Marry Is Someone Who Does Not Know Themselves*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

Before you can build a life with another person you must be honest about who you actually are — not who you perform, not who you hope to become.

1: Examine Your Personal History Before It Shows Up Uninvited in Your Marriage

2: Develop the Emotional Maturity That Actually Sustains a Marriage

3: Invite God's Thorough Search of Your Heart Before You Give It Away

***Final word: Know yourself before God. Then bring that honest self to the altar.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Examine Your Personal History Before It Shows Up Uninvited in Your Marriage**

Your history will show up in your marriage whether you examine it or not. The wounds you carry, the patterns you witnessed — these do not disappear at the altar. They walk down the aisle with you. Awareness gives you power to choose differently.

### **Develop the Emotional Maturity That Actually Sustains a Marriage**

Feelings are not reliable guides for a lifetime decision. Emotional maturity — regulating emotions, taking responsibility, remaining present under pressure — is what sustains a marriage. Attachment theory confirms childhood patterns directly shape how adults handle conflict and intimacy. You cannot change what you refuse to examine.

### **Invite God's Thorough Search of Your Heart Before You Give It Away**

Psalm 139:23-24 — search me God and know my heart. The Hebrew chaqar means to investigate thoroughly, to examine to the very bottom. The willingness to be fully known before fully committing is the greatest gift you can bring to your marriage.

***Final word: Know yourself before God. Then bring that honest self to the altar.***

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## MODULE 2 — IS THIS THE RIGHT PERSON?

*Feelings Brought You Here — But Feelings Alone Cannot Tell You Whether This Person Is Right for You*

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### FINAL SUMMARY — FS

Attraction fades and chemistry shifts. The euphoria of early love was never designed to be your primary decision-making tool for a lifetime covenant.

1: Evaluate Character Over Chemistry — Marry Who They Are Not Who They Could Become

2: Take Every Red Flag Seriously Now Because Every Flag Multiplies Inside Marriage

3: Guard Your Heart With Wisdom the Way Proverbs 4:23 Commands

***Final word: Choose with your whole self — heart, mind, faith, and the counsel of those who love you well.***

### VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

#### **Evaluate Character Over Chemistry — Marry Who They Are Not Who They Could Become**

Character is what you are marrying — not potential. Who this person is under pressure, in private, when things go wrong — that is who shows up every day. Never marry potential. Marry demonstrated character. Compatibility in values, faith, and vision is the fuel that keeps the fire burning for a lifetime.

#### **Take Every Red Flag Seriously Now Because Every Flag Multiplies Inside Marriage**

Every pattern you are dismissing right now will be magnified inside the pressure of marriage. Neuroscience confirms romantic love activates the same brain regions as addiction — producing euphoria that impairs rational judgment. The feelings are real. They are not sufficient. Wisdom and honest counsel must accompany them before a covenant decision is made.

#### **Guard Your Heart With Wisdom the Way Proverbs 4:23 Commands**

Proverbs 4:23 — guard your heart. The Hebrew *natsar* means to watch with vigilance. God does not say ignore your heart — He says bring it under wisdom. The decision you are making is covenantal, spiritual, and generational. Choose with your whole self.

***Final word: Choose with your whole self — heart, mind, faith, and the counsel of those who love you well.***

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# MODULE 3 — EXPECTATIONS — THE HIDDEN MARRIAGE KILLER

*Name Them Now or Fight About Them Later*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

Every person walking into marriage carries a suitcase full of expectations — most unspoken, many unconscious, and some completely unrealistic.

- 1: Name Every Unspoken Expectation Before It Becomes a Preloaded Resentment
- 2: Align Your Expectations With Reality Before Disappointment Becomes Resentment
- 3: Root Your Contentment in Christ — Not Your Spouse

***Final word: Your partner cannot meet an expectation they do not know exists. Name it or own the consequence.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Name Every Unspoken Expectation Before It Becomes a Preloaded Resentment**

An unspoken expectation is a preloaded resentment. Every expectation you carry without voicing is a disappointment waiting to happen. Your partner cannot meet an expectation they do not know exists. Most expectations come from your family of origin — your normal and their normal are not the same. Collision is not incompatibility. It is an invitation to build something new together.

### **Align Your Expectations With Reality Before Disappointment Becomes Resentment**

Cognitive psychology confirms expectation violation is one of the primary triggers of relational dissatisfaction. Couples who explicitly discuss and align expectations before marriage show significantly higher satisfaction and lower conflict in the first five years than those who do not.

### **Root Your Contentment in Christ — Not Your Spouse**

Philippians 4:11 — I have learned to be content. The Greek autarkes means not dependent on external circumstances for internal peace. Healthy marriage does not complete you — it complements you. Entering marriage expecting a person to fulfill what only God can provide guarantees devastating disappointment. Align your expectations. Root your contentment in Christ.

***Final word: Your partner cannot meet an expectation they do not know exists. Name it or own the consequence.***

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# MODULE 4 — COMMUNICATION — LEARNING TO TALK BEFORE YOU FIGHT

*Build the Skills Now That Will Save You Later*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

Communication is not a gift you either have or you do not — it is a skill you either develop or you do not.

1: Know Your Pressure Patterns Before Your Spouse Discovers Them

2: Build the Listening Skill That Solves Half Your Future Conflicts

3: Speak Life the Way Scripture Commands — Before Damage Makes It Necessary

***Final word: The tongue has the power of life and death. Learn now to speak life — every single day.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Know Your Pressure Patterns Before Your Spouse Discovers Them**

Everyone communicates reasonably well when calm. The revealing question is what happens when you are hurt or afraid. Do you withdraw? Escalate? Shut down? Your pressure patterns are your real communication style — and your future spouse needs to know them before the wedding not inside the first crisis.

### **Build the Listening Skill That Solves Half Your Future Conflicts**

Most people listen to respond — not to understand. Gottman identified four patterns — criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling — as the most reliable predictors of marital breakdown. Contempt is the single greatest predictor of divorce. Every pattern is a learnable skill. Build them now before conflict demands them.

### **Speak Life the Way Scripture Commands — Before Damage Makes It Necessary**

James 1:19 commands — be quick to listen, slow to speak. The Greek tachys means prepared in advance. This is not natural — it is cultivated. Proverbs 18:21 is unambiguous — the tongue has the power of life and death. Learn to speak life now.

***Final word: The tongue has the power of life and death. Learn now to speak life — every single day.***

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# MODULE 5 — ROLES, HEADSHIP, AND PARTNERSHIP

*Build a Marriage Structure That Honors God, Respects Both Partners, and Actually Works*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

One of the most avoided and most necessary conversations in premarital preparation is how your marriage will actually function — before conflict forces the answer.

- 1: Understand Biblical Headship as Servant Leadership — Not Control
- 2: Discuss Every Role Explicitly So Life Is Built on Agreement Not Assumption
- 3: Build the Partnership God Designed When He Called Her Ezer

***Final word: Structure built on mutual love and respect produces security — not restriction. Build it before the pressure demands it.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Understand Biblical Headship as Servant Leadership — Not Control**

Biblical headship is servant leadership — nothing less and nothing more. Ephesians 5 calls husbands to love sacrificially and at personal cost. Submission is not inferiority — the Greek *hypotasso* means to arrange under, to support the mission. It only functions within the context of genuine sacrificial love from the husband.

### **Discuss Every Role Explicitly So Life Is Built on Agreement Not Assumption**

Who manages finances? Who makes final decisions? How are children disciplined? These are the architecture of your daily life. Research confirms couples with clearly agreed-upon roles report significantly higher satisfaction than those operating on unspoken assumptions. Clarity reduces anxiety. Structure built on mutual love produces security not restriction.

### **Build the Partnership God Designed When He Called Her Ezer**

Genesis 2:18 introduces the wife as *ezer* — strong helper, lifesaver. This same word elsewhere describes God coming to the aid of His people. The wife's role is not secondary — it is indispensable. Husbands lead from sacrifice. Build your marriage on that truth from the very beginning.

***Final word: Structure built on mutual love and respect produces security — not restriction. Build it before the pressure demands it.***

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# MODULE 6 — SEX, INTIMACY, AND PHYSICAL CONNECTION

*Prepare Honestly for the Most Misunderstood Dimension of Marriage*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

No area is more anticipated, more misunderstood, and more poorly prepared for than physical intimacy. Your marriage deserves truth — not silence.

- 1: Replace Shame With the Full Biblical Theology God Provides
- 2: Have the Honest Conversation About History, Expectations, and Fears Before the Wedding
- 3: Understand the Design Difference Before Conflict Reveals It

***Final word: Physical intimacy is a covenant expression of belonging — freely given, mutually cherished, and spiritually significant. Prepare for it accordingly.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### Replace Shame With the Full Biblical Theology God Provides

Sex in marriage is God's idea — and He had a very good one. Song of Solomon exists in Scripture to establish that God celebrates physical intimacy. Shame has no place here. Sex serves three biblical purposes — procreation, pleasure, and covenant renewal. Most couples have only been taught the first. Receive all three.

### Have the Honest Conversation About History, Expectations, and Fears Before the Wedding

Your history will show up in your bedroom. Past sexual experiences, pornography, trauma, and purity wounds all follow couples into marriage. Honest conversation before marriage is not optional — it is essential. Expectations about frequency, initiation, and what intimacy means to each partner must be discussed now not discovered through conflict later.

### Understand the Design Difference Before Conflict Reveals It

Men are generally more visually stimulated. Women generally require emotional safety as a prerequisite for desire. First Corinthians 7:3-4 establishes mutual authority over each other's bodies — a covenant expression of belonging freely given and mutually cherished. Couples who understand these differences before marriage navigate the adjustment period significantly more successfully.

***Final word: Physical intimacy is a covenant expression of belonging — freely given, mutually cherished, and spiritually significant. Prepare for it accordingly.***

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# MODULE 7 — MONEY, FAMILY, AND THE LIFE YOU ARE BUILDING

*Align on the Practical Architecture of Your Shared Life Before the Pressure Reveals the Gaps*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

Money and family are the two most common sources of marital conflict in the first five years — and almost never discussed honestly before the wedding.

- 1: Align Your Financial Values and Build an Actual System Before the First Bill Arrives
- 2: Establish In-Law Boundaries and Lifestyle Expectations Before Pressure Tests Them
- 3: Build Generosity Into Your Marriage From Day One as a Spiritual Discipline

***Final word: Financial faithfulness in marriage is an act of covenant trust — God is the owner. His principles are the operating system.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Align Your Financial Values and Build an Actual System Before the First Bill Arrives**

Your relationship with money reveals your values. Agreeing to handle money well is not enough — you need an actual system. A budget, a giving plan, a savings strategy, and clear agreements about who manages what. Financial stress elevates cortisol and triggers neurological threat responses. Couples with financial alignment show measurably lower stress and higher relational satisfaction.

### **Establish In-Law Boundaries and Lifestyle Expectations Before Pressure Tests Them**

Genesis 2:24 — leave and cleave. The leaving is not merely geographical — it is emotional, financial, and relational. Establish boundaries before pressure arrives not during it. Where will you live? Will both work? When will you have children? Discovering fundamental incompatibilities after the wedding is avoidable. Avoiding the conversation is not.

### **Build Generosity Into Your Marriage From Day One as a Spiritual Discipline**

Matthew 6:33 and Malachi 3:10 together establish the biblical framework — seek first the kingdom, bring the whole tithe, trust God with the rest. Financial faithfulness is an act of covenant trust — declaring that God is the owner and His principles are the operating system of your financial life together.

***Final word: Financial faithfulness in marriage is an act of covenant trust — God is the owner. His principles are the operating system.***

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# MODULE 8 — COVENANT COMMITMENT — WHAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY SAYING YES TO

*When You Say I Do — Know Exactly What You Are Saying Yes To*

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## FINAL SUMMARY — FS

The word covenant is used casually — but it is anything but casual. It is the most sacred and binding agreement a human being can enter.

1: Understand the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract — Choose Covenant

2: Know That for Better or for Worse Is a Promise Made for the Worst Moments

3: Enter the Most Sacred Human Agreement With Everything You Have

***Final word: You are not beginning a relationship. You are entering the covenant that reflects the very agreement God made with His people. Say yes — with everything you have.***

## VIDEO SCRIPT — VS

### **Understand the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract — Choose Covenant**

A contract is conditional — I will if you will. A covenant is unconditional — I will because I said I would. The moment you reduce marriage to a contract you introduce an exit clause invoked the moment conditions become difficult. Commitment is the single most reliable predictor of marital stability across all research demographics.

### **Know That for Better or for Worse Is a Promise Made for the Worst Moments**

Anyone can stay when everything is good. The covenant is proven in seasons of sickness, crisis, and failure. You are not promising to stay when it is easy — you are promising to stay when everything in you wants to leave. Love in covenant is a decision not a feeling. Decision is the driver.

### **Enter the Most Sacred Human Agreement With Everything You Have**

Ruth 1:16 — where you go I will go. The Hebrew dabaq means to cling, to pursue hard after, to refuse to let go. This is the posture of covenant — not passive remaining but active daily deliberate choosing. Your marriage is a testimony to a watching world. Say yes with everything you have.

***Final word: You are not beginning a relationship. You are entering the covenant that reflects the very agreement God made with His people. Say yes — with everything you have.***