



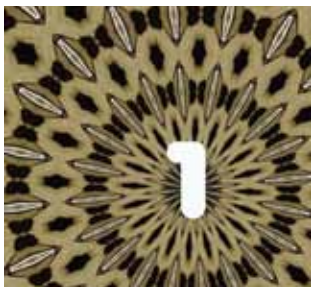
MAY 2010

I've always loved weddings. I planned my first wedding for Barbie and Ken when I was just five years old. Barbie had the dress, the groom, the cake, the flowers, and even the decorated car. And, of course, she had something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue.

I'm still just as single as I was when I planned that wedding for Barbie. The closest place that you'll find something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue in my life is my makeup bag (yes, I still wear Lip Smackers lip balm, blue eye shadow, and I still have the lip gloss that I borrowed from a friend in high school).

It's not that I don't want to get married – I do. But in all honesty, my life is crazy enough already and I just haven't had the time to spend on finding Mr. Right. Being a bride seems like something in the distant future, but in reality I am already a bride. I, as a saved Christian, am the Bride of Christ. And so are you.

So how do we prepare to meet our Heavenly Groom?



WEEK ONE

DECIDING TO LIVE A LIFESTYLE OF PURITY

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13).

When a bride walks down the aisle, she wants to be the most beautiful woman in the room. One the most important decisions when planning a wedding is picking out the perfect dress. In our culture, brides usually dress in white to represent purity. No matter how you would dress for an earthly groom, remember that our Heavenly Groom, Jesus, sees us from the inside out. In order to be the most beautiful bride for Him, we need to commit to lives of purity so that our hearts are pure and white when He comes for us.

When we think about purity, we usually think about sex. We are supposed to remain sexually pure until we are married, but living a lifestyle of purity is so much more than just saying no to sex. When we commit to God that we will be pure, it's a lifestyle commitment that affects our friendships, our thoughts, our actions, and every decision we make.

In 1 Corinthians 7: 34 Paul said, "...The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit."

I know what it means to be "boy crazy." Trust me, I have been there. There's nothing wrong with us having crushes or boyfriends, but we have to put God first. As unmarried young women, we have to "keep [our hearts] with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23). The people (boys and girls) that we hang out with, the music we listen to, the places we go, the clothes we wear... all of these things influence our hearts. If we want our hearts to be pure, we have to keep these other areas of our lives pure, too.

Our greatest hope for remaining pure is walking with Christ. Walking with Him doesn't mean that we won't ever be tempted, but staying in His presence and in His Word gives us a greater defense against Satan's lies. This week, memorize Titus 2:12-13 and write a prayer asking God to teach you how to live a lifestyle of purity for Him below.

Dear God, _____



WEEK TWO

DREAMING ABOUT THE FUTURE

“...dating is not a game. It’s not about casually playing with someone’s heart. If you don’t intend to marry him, don’t date him. Know what you are looking for and only date the guy that fits that dream.”

—*And the Bride Wore White* by Dannah Gresh

What do you want out of life? Maybe you want to be a doctor, or a missionary, or a teacher. What are the desires of your heart?

Those are hard questions. Trust me—I know.

I thought I had everything figured out when I graduated high school. I was going to go to college and major in Real Estate, then I was going to buy and flip houses, make tons of money, marry a hot contractor that was equally as rich as me, have three kids, a white picket fence and a dog named Charlie.

My plan sounded pretty good to me, but the problem was that I didn’t talk to God about it. I just decided all on my own that it was what I wanted.

Since I graduated high school, every part of my plan has fallen down around me. And since my plan crumbled, I finally did what I should have done in the first place and asked God to show me what HIS plan was. When I finally did that, He started showing me the desires He had for me. His plan has ended up being so much better than mine was.

Ephesians 5:22 and 25 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

When a woman marries, she is supposed to submit to her husband’s leadership. When we get saved and become the Bride of Christ, we are supposed to do the same thing.

God loves for us to have big dreams. He loves watching His daughters make plans and set goals, but He especially loves it when we let Him in on the process.

What are your future plans? Write them down and pray about them this week.

Just like we need to have plans and goals for our lives, we need to know what we are looking for in an earthly husband. God has given us examples of godly men in His Word and in our lives (think about your dad or your pastor, for example). What are some things that you are looking for in your future husband? Pray and ask God to show you what kind of person He wants you to find.

*This can be really fun – for example, one of my requirements is that my future husband loves baseball. I know it may seem silly, but I have always dreamed of watching my husband coach my kids in little league. Other things on my list include: a strong relationship with God, a great sense of humor and a love of music.



WEEK THREE

DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

Have you ever been around a couple that has been together for so long that they act alike? When you spend time with someone, you are probably going to pick up some of their habits or tendencies.

When a bride and groom leave the altar as husband and wife, they start a new journey through life together. They are no longer two separate people, but they are one.

When we give our hearts to our Heavenly Groom, we become one with Him. The more time we spend with Him, the more we will become like Him.

Check out these verses and summarize what they say about becoming like Christ:

Philippians 2:5-11 _____

Now match the following verses with the characteristics of a Christlike mind. (From *The Mind of Christ Youth Edition* by T.W. Hunt and Claude V. King)

PURE

Titus 1:15

SINGLE-MINDED

Romans 8:6

PEACEFUL

2 Corinthians 11:3

RESPONSIVE

Philippians 2:3

LOWLY

Luke 24:45



WEEK FOUR

DITCHING THE SINS OF OUR PAST

Something Old... it's a tradition for a bride to carry something old with her down the aisle. What do you think you might carry?

My mother carried a handkerchief that her grandmother gave her. I have a New Testament that a family friend gave me when I was born that I am planning carry with my bouquet. Some brides wear heirloom jewelry or even a dress that has been passed down for generations.

One thing is for sure...when you walk down the aisle, you don't want to be carrying old sins.

Jesus came so that we "may have life, and that [we] may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10). In Psalm 103:12, David said "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." He came to set us free from the sins that held us captive.

Just like a bride walks away from her past life for her groom – she leaves her parents' house and joins her husband in a new life – we are to do the same for Christ. We have to turn away from our sins and turn to Jesus.

Your Prince is waiting to sweep you off your feet. Will you turn to Him today?



If you want to learn more about living a pure life for Christ, check out **And the Bride Wore White** by Dannah Gresh. The book includes excerpts from Dannah's diary about the challenges she faced during her dating years as well as interviews with people like Joshua Harris, Rebecca St. James and Josh McDowell. Ask your mom to help you lead a study based on this book with your YWAC group.



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Christina Hopper is 23 years old. She attends Sulphur Springs FWB Church in Northport, Alabama. She is an active member of her local WAC group and coaches UPWARD Cheerleading at her church. Her favorite hobbies include reading, cooking, and photography. Check out her Facebook page, "Bible Study for Teens and Young Adults" or send her an email at cmhopper.warrior@gmail.com. She would love to hear from you!